Intellectual and Political Elites of the Enlightenment
Edited by Tatiana V. Artemyeva and Mikhail I. Mikeshin

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The main topic of this collection of papers is the complicated interaction between political and intellectual elites in the Enlightenment. The authors analyze the system of intellectual communication, the activities of academic and other social institutions, and also certain cases from the rich histories of the structures of power in various countries.

The name of the epoch of Enlightenment is defined by the metaphor of light. Light proper as a symbol of the divine presence had always been one of the cultural archetypes, but from the eighteenth century it started to ‘illuminate’ other sides of life. The political elite of the past had been served by intellectuals such as scholars and poets, who had been treated and paid as craftsmen, but the new epoch raised learning and intellect to the rank of ‘new noble virtues’. Erudition was valued highly at European courts and it opened a way up the social ladder, together with good birth and wealth. Good education and citizenship of the Republic of Letters acquired high social status, and to be enlightened became as essential, as being courageous, lucky and successful. Knowledge became a luxury and, like other kinds of luxuries, became an integral part of the highest elite’s consumption. Sovereigns and their entourages began to converse with philosophers, to write philosophical treatises, to demonstrate their patronage of scholarly institutions, and to

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1 Lumières (Fr.), Aufklärung (Germ.), Illuminismo (It.), etc.
initiate the creation of such institutions. In certain countries, in Russia, for instance, the ideas of the Enlightenment were apprehended and propagated by the nobility, that is, by the ruling elite. It became apparent mostly in the reigns of Peter the Great, who established Petersburg Academy of Sciences, of Elisabeth Petrovna, whose favourite, Ivan Shuvalov, together with polymath Mikhail Lomonosov established the first Russian university, and of Catherine the Great, who actively patronized sciences and corresponded with the most distinguished European intellectuals of the time.

Among the greatest figures of this age who regarded themselves as intellectuals or at least as people who supported enlightenment, the sciences and arts were the rulers of major European states — Russia, Sweden, Prussia, Spain, Portugal, Austria, France — Catherine II, Gustav III, Frederick II, Charles III, Joseph I, Joseph II, Louis XVI.

Jonathan Israel convincingly shows how the ideas of the Enlightenment influenced the system of ideas in modern society. He categorizes the Radical Enlightenment (the theoretical sources of which he sees in Spinoza and Spinozism), the Moderate Enlightenment, and the Counter-Enlightenment. For the Radical Enlightenment, it is philosophical reason that shows what is right and what is wrong. It is the only true and reliable guide in human life, when morality, humanistic and social values are in question. The Moderate Enlightenment believes that science and philosophy can conceive and evaluate only part of the reality. All that is beyond the reach of reason — the spiritual and divine world — should be discussed according to the principles of tradition and authority, the Revelation and theological truths. The Counter-Enlightenment denies any possibility of a free search for the truth by human reason. It insists that real guidance for human life, especially in the spheres of moral principles and political doctrines, systems of values and vital orientations, should be found in religious judgments. The Counter-Enlightenment does not refute scientific theories, but considers them dependent on religious dogmas.

Israel writes that the Radical Enlightenment, as represented by Spinoza, Bayle and Diderot, developed principles which became the foundations of modern society, namely, democracy, equality of the sexes, the equality of races, freedom for different ways of life, freedom of thought and speech, religious tolerance and freedom of the press.

Israel's intellectual model makes it possible to see the heterogeneity of the Enlightenment from the point of view of the ideas born at that time. Besides, every country had formed its own unique balance

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2 Israel 2001; Israel 2006; Israel 2011.
of institutions of power and academic institutions, together with social structures to secure intellectual communication.

Academic institutions and various cultural institutions, such as newspapers and magazines, together with theaters, cafés, and private salons, where a free and easy exchange of ideas was possible, played important roles in the development and distribution of ideas. They forged and spread widely held public opinions, values and tastes. Madame Geoffrin’s literary salon in Paris was one of the most illustrious in 1750–1777. D’Alembert, d’Holbach, Diderot, Montesquieu, Stanislas Poniatowski, Horace Walpole, Adam Smith, Ben Franklin and many other eminent intellectuals of that time from France and other countries were guests of her salon. Catherine the Great corresponded with Madame Geoffrin, and the Russian empress took the lead in the exchange of letters. Catherine’s letters were certainly widely discussed in the salon, and this provided the empress with an opportunity to influence public opinion on many political issues and to sharpen her intellectual reputation among enlightened Europeans.

In addition to personal, intimate correspondence, the epistolary dialogue, which was intended to have a public, literary and socially important character, was also quite wide-spread. The space of the epistolary communication of the Enlightenment resembles the modern blogosphere. Perhaps the most famous ‘blogger’, who had among his ‘commentators’ royal personages, was Friedrich Melchior Baron von Grimm (1723–1807), who was the author of a handwritten newspaper *Correspondance littéraire, philosophique et critique*. Among his ‘friends’ we see Catherine II, Gustav III, Louisa Ulrika of Prussia (Queen of Sweden between 1751 and 1771 as the spouse of King Adolf Frederick of Sweden), the King of Poland Augustus III, and others.

Being the ‘moderator’ of the intellectual network by which he distributed among his titled ‘subscribers’ scholarly and political news, Grimm acquired wealth, nobility with the title of baron. A modest pastor’s son from Regensburg, he became the Court of Saxe-Gotha’s envoy at Paris (1775–1792) and minister plenipotentiary of Russia at Hamburg, Bremen and Luebeck (1796–1798).

3 Aldis 1905, 384.
4 Smiley 1947, 44–46, n1.
5 Строев 2004.
Representatives of the intellectual elite often became involved in complex and contradictory relationships with the political elite, and, sometimes, like Leibniz, entered court service. The authors of this collection thoroughly explore the intellectual contacts of their heroes and give various examples of intellectual communication between thinkers and grandees.

Hanns-Peter Neumann in his paper tells us about the correspondence between Christian Wolff with his Maecenas Ernst Christoph Count of Manteuffel and shows how the philosopher had to present himself as a specific social or intellectual type in order to propagate reliably what he and his adherents called the ‘truth’ of his philosophical worldview. They also discussed the idea of creating a popular *Philosophie pour l’usage du beau sexe*. Henrika Tandefelt, Krisztina Kulcsár, and Nick Treuherz dedicate their papers to ‘enlightened monarchs’ Gustav III, Joseph, II and Frederick II and realities of their governing.

Mathias Persson writes about the intellectual atmosphere at the Royal Academy of Turku. Robert Collis analyzes the system of intellectual communication between high-degree Freemasonry in Catherine the Great’s Russia. Some themes of the Enlightenment in Russia and the role of the noble elite in it are examined in papers by Alexander Woronzoff-Dashkoff, Tatiana Artemyeva, and Mikhail Mikeshin.

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Enlightened Monarchy and Enlightened Monarchs

“Enlightened Monarchy” in Practice. Reforms, Ceremonies, Self-fashioning and the Entanglement of Ideals and Values in Late Eighteenth-Century Sweden

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“Enlightened Monarchy” in Practice. Reforms, Ceremonies, Self-Fashioning and the Entanglement of Ideals and Values in Late Eighteenth-Century Sweden

Henrika Tandefelt

This article sets out to study the entanglement of different political, ideological and moral ideals and traditions in the Kingship of Gustav III, King of Sweden 1772–1792. Political thinking and practice in Eighteenth-Century Europe offered many elements and examples that different monarchs could apply in their own particular circumstances. Gustav III was one of the European Kings that openly supported the French enlightened thinkers fashioning himself as a Reformer–King. He was also very influenced by the French culture over all, and the culture of the traditional royal court in particular. In addition the Swedish political history with a fifty-year period of decreased royal power before the coup d'état of Gustav III in 1772 influenced how the European trends and traditions were put into practice. The article pursues to understand the way different elements were bound up together and put to action by the King in his coup d'état 1772, his law reforms in the 1770s and in the establishment of a court of appeal in the town Vasa in Ostrobothnia in 1776 and the ceremonial, pictorial and architectural projects linked to this.

In this article I examine what has been called the enlightened absolutism of the Swedish king Gustav III (1746–1792) during his reign of 1772–1792. Gustav III’s reign began with a royal coup d'état in August 1772 and ended with the king being murdered during a masquerade ball at the Royal Opera in Stockholm in March 1792. In 1772 the King was hailed as an enlightened reformer and presented himself as a champion against tyranny; twenty years later he was murdered as a tyrant. The reign of Gustav III was, from beginning to end, a balancing act between absolutist and enlightened ideals, tendencies and traditions.¹

¹ On the image of a reformer and a good King, see Alm 2002; Alm 2003; Tandefelt 2008; Tandefelt 2011. On the image of Gustav III the tyrant, see Alm 2002; Mattsson 2010.
The aim of this article is not to argue that one or other aspect, or perspective, represented the true ambitions of the King. Rather I would like to argue that this reflects a dualism typical of the ‘enlightened absolutism’ of the 18th century. The politics and culture of this century consisted of both new and old traditions, practices and examples with which to imitate and interact. Different ideals, practices and concepts, as well as different interpretations of such concepts, existed side by side and could be used and put into action in different situations in a very sophisticated way. All the so-called enlightened monarchs were Janus-faced in different ways. The case of Gustav III shows very clearly this multiplicity of objectives and results, and even the early years and upbringing of the Swedish King reflects this contemporaneity and entanglement of different traditions and ideals in eighteenth-century society. The beginning of the King Gustav’s reign in Sweden also illustrates what H. M. Scott has said about the reforms in the Habsburg Monarchy during the reigns of Maria Theresa and Josef II: “Enlightened absolutism here, as elsewhere, resulted from an attempt to apply the recent theories to a particular set of circumstances.” Different circumstances demanded, or enabled, different sets of theories, ideological arguments and elements.

The history of Gustav III as an enlightened monarch is also about the self-representation, or self-fashioning, of a monarch, and I argue that this was a process in which enlightened ideals and practices, which the King had met in early childhood, formed an important part. Yet eighteenth-century Europe also nurtured the self-fashioning of a monarch with other elements. Traditional Christian conceptions of the monarchs’ duties were still vigorous and influenced kings such as Gustav III, and his subjects, whose conceptions of the world also had an effect on how the monarchs acted and presented themselves.

2 Notions of Gustav III as an enlightened monarch were commonplace in the Nineteenth Century and early Twentieth Century. See Odhner 1885; Stavenow 1901. The concept of enlightened absolutism has of course been called into question on a general level, and the enlightened character, aims and ideals of Gustav III in particular have been relativized and challenged (Boberg 1951). To this I also have to question the concept of absolutism. The Diet, the Swedish Assembly of Estates or Riksdag, continued to gather regularly about every six years during the whole period. Until 1789 the monarch ruled together with a Council of the Realm, or the Senate, consisting only of noblemen. The power of the Diet and the Council were diminished in the Instrument of Government that was imposed after the coup d’État of 1772, but these institutions were not abolished at that time. To talk about Gustavian absolutism is hence more accurate when dealing with the period after 1789 when the competence of the Diet was restricted even more by the Act of Union and Security (Förenings- och säkerhetsakten). The son of Gustav III, Gustav IV Adolf (1796–1809), only assembled the Diet once as the Act of Union and Security gave the monarch the right not to assemble the estates. In this article the concept of enlightened absolutism is treated as an image that Gustav III strived to develop for himself.

3 For a discussion on “Enlightened Absolutism”, see Scott 1990a.


5 Scott points out that Austria’s international failure and Prussian success made the Habsburg rulers accept the priority of administrative and economic reforms. The policies that were adopted, Scott continues, “were the product of varied intellectual forces and the responses they dictated to the Monarchy’s problems”. The Prussian influence on the Habsburg reformers was immense. (Scott 1990b, 150.)
The *doxa* of classic rhetoric – meaning what the audience considers to be right and true – was as important as what the King himself thought.\(^6\) Other influences also affected the way Gustav III saw himself and his rule, and presented it to the surrounding world. The ceremonial and splendid court of the Sun King in Versailles – and his later emulators – was an important political example and model for Gustav III, as were the virtues and royal heroes of Swedish history. Gustav III was designated from birth as “the third Gustav”, the previous Gustavs on the Swedish throne being the founder of the Vasa dynasty and the modern Swedish nation state in the 16th century, Gustav Vasa, and “the Lion from the North”, Gustav II Adolf, who successfully led Sweden to becoming a European great power and a centralized monarchy with a strong bureaucracy in the 17th century.\(^7\)

Beside these other impressions and role models, Gustav III was also influenced by contemporary enlightened ideas that were transmitted through his mother, his teachers – most efficiently by his governor Count Carl Fredric Scheffer, who had lively contacts with French enlightened thinkers – and his reading of Voltaire and other *philosophes*.\(^8\)

Gustav III’s mother Lovisa Ulrika, sister of Frederick II of Prussia, the *philosophe de Sanssouci*, transmitted many values as well as practices to her son. Queen Lovisa Ulrika was a patron of literature, art and science, hosted a large library in Drottningholm Palace, founded a Royal Academy of Letters (*Vitterhetsakademien*) in 1753, and corresponded with enlightened celebrities such as Baron Grimm. Like her brother Frederick II, she liked to present herself as a *philosophe*, or in a female role, as the goddess Minerva.\(^9\) Besides an interest in the arts, philosophy and history, another of Lovisa Ulrika’s legacies to her eldest son was a deeply rooted belief in the

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6 Rhetoric was an important part of all eighteenth-century elite education and not only formed the way in which orators, or anybody wanting to persuade an audience, talked or wrote. It also formed people's views on how the world and relations between men worked. On the importance of rhetoric in the education of Gustav III, see Skuncke 1993. On rhetoric as a system of thinking, see Hansson (ed.) 2003.


8 Count Scheffer (1715–1786) was an influential Swedish politician, for many years part of the so-called Cap Party, and Swedish minister in Paris. Charlotta Wolff has described his contacts as “remarkable”, corresponding to “the whole panoply of contemporary French critical thought and its development over three intellectual generations” (Wolff 2005, 262). In the 1760s the political ideals of Count Scheffer turned towards the physiocrats and embraced the thought of enlightened despotism that he previously had repudiated, endorsing the Swedish Instrument of Government of 1720 that hailed the liberty of the Estates and the Council of the Realm from the Monarch's sovereignty. See Wolff 2007; Wolff 2005; Wolff 2003; Alimento 2010. See also Magnusson 1995, Herlitz 1974 on physiocratism in Sweden.

beneficial effects of royal power and the endeavour to strengthen the power of the Swedish monarch, which had been very limited during the Age of Liberty (1720–1772), before the coup d’état of Gustav III in August 1772.\textsuperscript{10}

Examples of enlightened reforms and the rule of his neighbours and relatives, Catherine II of Russia and Frederick II, and of the enlightened opinions of his day overall, were also important frameworks for the rule of Gustav III. Perhaps the words of Count Mirabeau, praising the beneficial influence of Frederick the Great on the German states and the rest of Europe were idealized, when he in De la Monarchie prussienne sous Frédéric le Grand (1789) asserted that “profound contempt is now the fate of anyone wishing to use force to repress or punish freedom of thought”, and that “the princes and the men of letters now restrain each other”.\textsuperscript{11} T.C.W. Blanning also argues that Frederick II had set an example of enlightened kingship that influenced how other German states were governed. Enlightened arguments, values and concepts were integrated in the language and rule of monarchs that did not adopt the whole philosophical package.\textsuperscript{12} This also applies to rulers outside the German states, for instance in Sweden.

I will now place Gustav III in the context of the different influences and examples that formed the reign, reforms and self-fashioning of the King, and the Swedish background that shaped the Gustavian version of ‘enlightened monarchy’. Gustav III’s kingship and way of ruling is presented with reference to his coup d’état in 1772, his most notable judicial reforms and one particular law court project that was given high status in its time by Gustav III himself. This is the foundation of a court of appeal in the city of Vasa (in Finnish Vaasa) in Ostrobothnia, in today’s Finland, in 1775, three years after the coronation of Gustav III in May 1772 and the coup d’état of that same year.\textsuperscript{13} In examining the foundation of the Court of Appeal, I will pay more attention to how ceremonies, public speeches, medals and other images as well as architecture were used to work for Gustav III, and will not study what importance the Court had for the administration of law in Finland.\textsuperscript{14}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{10} Skuncke 1993. On Sweden during the Age of Liberty, see Roberts 1986.
\item \textsuperscript{11} Count Mirabeau is cited in English in Blanning 1990, 276. Original quote in De la Monarchie prussienne sous Frédéric le Grand, vol. V, 348.
\item \textsuperscript{12} Blanning 1990, 276.
\item \textsuperscript{13} This draws upon my study Konsten att härska. Gustaf III inför sina undersåtar (Helsinki 2008) that puts the court of appeal project in the context of Gustavian political culture, rulership and power.
\item \textsuperscript{14} A dissertation in the history of law has been written on this subject in Finnish, see Vepsä 2009.
\end{itemize}
**The Swedish Reformer-King and His Law Reforms**

The foundation of a Court of Appeal in Vasa, only three years after the *coup d'état* of 1772, can and should be seen as a project through which the King could manifest himself as a good and just monarch engaged in questions of his subjects’ legal rights, security and prosperity, values that were championed by enlightened thinkers. Law and justice were central topics in the enlightened discussions of the century. The writings of the *philosophes* as well as the legal and administrative reforms conducted in Prussia, Russia, the Habsburg lands, Tuscany etc., fashioning the monarchs as enlightened reformers, gave a design or model that showed what was expected of an enlightened ruler.

Queen Lovisa Ulrika, the mother of Gustav III, and his uncle Frederick II, were close examples of how to adapt and enact this role. Close to Sweden another star on the heaven of enlightened monarchs was ascending during the adolescence of Gustav III. When he was sixteen years old, the Grand Duchess Catherine of Russia dethroned her husband Peter III in 1762. When he began to attend meetings of the Council of the Realm in 1767, the twenty-one-year-old Crown Prince Gustav was informed of the reforms of the Russian empress through reports from the admiring Swedish envoy in St. Petersburg, Baron Carl Ribbing, whose impressions of Catherine II were solely positive. Catherine II appeared in front of both her subjects and an international audience as an enlightened *legislatrix*, as a late Solon or Justinian. The summoning of a legislative commission, and the instruction that the Empress wrote to guide its work, were the talk of Europe. Furthermore, the Swedish press wrote about the Empress and her Instruction, which was published in many European languages.\(^{15}\)

In the late 1760s and 1770s, Gustav III corresponded with European enlightened writers and he met many of them – for instance d’Alembert and the translator of Cesare Beccaria to French André Morellet – in the literary salons of Paris during his journey to France in 1770–1771. The young King certainly felt the expectations of the *république des lettres* when he ascended the throne. As Crown Prince, Gustav III had adopted the role of enlightened royalty – both inpersonally meeting

the leading figures of the French enlightenment and in his correspondence. As King he had to live up to this reputation.\textsuperscript{16}

Like Catherine II, Gustav III was, for the first decade after his coup, engaged in reforming laws and the administration of the law. The laws for the Swedish realm had been brought together in a code of laws in 1734, and the jurisdiction and administration of the realm had already been unified and organized in the seventeenth century. The needs for a standardized body of law and functional jurisdiction – something that had been called for by the \textit{philosophes} – was fulfilled. Yet the code of law of 1734 was a codification of older law practice, not the result of a law reform. Sixty-eight crimes were deemed worthy of the death penalty.\textsuperscript{17}

There are two studies expressly concerned with the law reforms of Gustav III: one deals with the King and his laws regarding the Freedom of the Press and another with his criminal law reforms. These studies, which date from the 1950s and 1960s, are thorough investigations on the origins and establishments of the Gustavian laws in these two subjects, and both touch upon the question of the degree to which the King was influenced by enlightened philosophy and reforms.\textsuperscript{18}

The Freedom of the Press during the time of Gustav III was studied by Stig Boberg in his dissertation in 1951. Boberg concluded that Gustav III successfully managed to present himself in public as a disciple of the \textit{philosophes} but that his actions and the actual law texts did not echo the ambition of the enlightened thinkers that saw Freedom of the Press as a counterbalance to royal power. The King issued a Freedom of Press Act in 1774 but his main objective was to protect the Monarch, the Government and polity from criticism.\textsuperscript{19} The Freedom of Press Act of 1774 was an adapted version of an earlier Act from 1766, issued by the Swedish Government during the last years of the Age of Liberty. This earlier Act had abolished all censorship except for theological literature and consisted of a short list of topics that were not allowed to be written about and published. It also consisted of a list of topics that should be dealt with in print to the benefit of the

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{16} Boberg 1951, 36–40; Anners 1965, 185–186; Alimento 1997, 141–142, 147–148. The meeting of the Danish King Christian VII with the \textit{république des lettres} in Paris 1768 has been discussed by Langen 2010. Christian VII also visited the Academy of Sciences where d’Alembert gave a welcoming speech in which he talked about the mutual advantage of cooperation between Princes and the \textit{philosophes}. Langen points out that d’Alembert understood the value of receiving crowned heads in the Academy of Science as a means to disseminate \textit{a l’esprit philosophique} in Europe. He gave many similar orations to visiting princes, including the reception of Gustav III in 1770. The oration to the Swedish Prince was entitled \textit{Dialogue entre Descartes et Christine}, paying tribute to Queen Christina of Sweden as a patron of science and philosophy. (Langen 2010, 43, 47–50.) On the friendship and correspondence between Gustav III and Countess d’Egmont and Countess de Boufflers, see Hennings 1920 and Hennings (ed.) 1928.

\textsuperscript{17} Kotkas 2003, 119; Inger 1988 (1986), 159–161.

\textsuperscript{18} Boberg 1951; Anners 1965.

\textsuperscript{19} Boberg 1951, 75–76.
\end{footnotesize}
general public and stated what public documents were allowed to be published for the common good.  

The Instrument of Government of Gustav III had abolished all laws with the status of fundamental law – including the Act of 1766 – that dated from the time after the reign of Gustav II Adolf (1611–1631). This is why Gustav III had to issue a new Freedom of Press Act, but he did not do so until the Svea Court of Appeal asked for the Monarch’s comment on a situation that had arisen. Gustav III had not appointed a new censor and had, according to Boberg’s interpretation, preferred the existing vague and floating praxis. A new Freedom of Press Act was issued in 1774 and, in public, paired with the King’s speech to the Council of the Realm in 1773, in which Gustav III talked about the importance of the Freedom of the Press. In this speech Gustav III was especially influenced by physiocratic theories.

The physiocrat’s concept of despotisme legal attracted the young King who had been reading le Mercier de La Rivière’s L’Ordre naturel et essential des sociétés politiques (1767) carefully. However, the physiocrats also implied that subjects should be free to express and publish critical remarks, which would guide a Good Monarch. In his speech to the Council in 1773, Gustav III hailed the important effects of freedom of the press for society. The speech and the Freedom of Speech Act of 1774 were published in French in the Physiocrat’s mouthpiece Les Nouvelles éphémérides économiques in 1775. Gustav III also sent the documents to Voltaire, who wrote a polite answer to the King. When studying the law text itself, and comparing it to the law of 1766, it is though evident that the freedom of the press had been diminished considerably. The right to publish public documents and protocols was cut down and the list of prohibited topics was extended. In the following years, Gustav III continued to curtail the possibilities for the political opposition to publish critical texts and public documents that could harm the King.

In his study on the Gustavian reforms of Swedish penal law, Erik Anners gives a more positive description of Gustav III as a monarch influenced by the enlightenment although he also mentions that the King was very conscious of the political points he could win as a Reformer-King. Anners shows that Gustav III was well acquainted with and interested in the European debate on criminal law.

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20 The government – called in Swedish Kunglig Majestät (Kungl. Maj:t) – consisted of the Council of the Realm including the King, at this time the father of Gustav III, King Adolf Fredrik. The Freedom of Press Act of 1766 was a product of the Estates, and especially of the so-called cap party that had a majority in the Diet during this time. Boberg 1951, 17–22; Bennich-Björkman 2003; Skuncke 2011.
22 Boberg 1951, 34–55, and passim. A royal proclamation in 1780 and an addition to this in 1785 gave Gustav III more instruments to stop the publishing of criticism. On Gustav III, his former teacher and advisor Count Scheffer and the physiocratic theory, see also Alimento 2010; Wolff 2007; Alimento 1989.
law. He also states that the King did not use criminal law as a means to punish, pursue or silence his opponents.\(^{23}\) The strategy of the Monarch was quite the opposite. Instead of repression he used communication as a means to attain control over a situation, legitimacy and power.\(^{24}\)

As part of this active and communicative strategy, Gustav III announced, in 1772, only a few days after the coup in August, that all governors and higher courts of justice in the realm should be informed that all torture-rooms (\textit{pinorum}) were to be destroyed immediately.\(^{25}\) This was a splendid act so typical of Gustav III, who usually acted quickly and with an element of surprise, though not always very well considered. The King’s wish to lend lustre to the coup and to legitimize it was combined with a campaign against torture.\(^{26}\) Later in the 1770s, the King’s interest in enlightened reforms and criminal law led to a Royal Ordinance on infanticide (\textit{barnamordsplakatet}) in 1778 and a reform of the criminal law, which was debated by the Diet of 1778–1779 and issued in 1779. Infanticide was a much debated question in Europe that also engaged Gustav III. His writings and actions show that he had adopted Beccaria’s view that the death penalty was an inefficient means to deter people from crime.\(^{27}\)

Anners’ study shows that Gustav III did not campaign against the death penalty with great vigour but that he acted, when he saw an opportunity coming, quickly and often taking people by surprise. In advocating the abolition of the death penalty for infanticide and some other crimes, Gustav III did not choose a path that was hailed by many in Sweden. The clergy and many judges and experts in jurisprudence in the country were very much against abolishing the death penalty. On the other hand, the King hoped to win the respect of the enlightened audience in Europe. Yet it must be noted that the proposition of Gustav III to the Diet in this matter coincided with the formal report of the Council of the Realm.

In his proposition to the Diet, Gustav III did not propose the abolition of the death penalty for crimes that threatened the position of the Monarch or the Government. Knowledge of a treasonable conspiracy, defamation of the Monarch and the Government was still to be punished

\(^{24}\) See also Alm 2003 who has characterized the strategy of Gustav III as “an aggressive struggle for discursive authority”. Alm 2003, 25 (quotation) and 25–29. As Alm and others have stated, the repressive strategies increased over the years. However, a regime of repression was only established under the son of Gustav III, Gustav IV Adolf. (Alm 2003, 29–33.)
\(^{25}\) Anners 1965, 186. Jurisdiction prohibiting torture were issued in Prussia in 1740 and 1754, in Saxony in 1770, in Denmark in 1770, which was taken back after the fall of Struensee, in the Habsburg lands in 1775, in France in 1780 and 1789.
\(^{26}\) Anners 1965, 186–197.
by the death penalty.\textsuperscript{28} He never compromised his own power or position. The criminal law reform did not enforce all the changes that Gustav III had proposed to the Diet, but Anners states that the result of the reform was not insignificant. The number of death penalties fell in the following years. Also crimes that still by law were to be punished with death sentence led in a lesser degree to this sentence.\textsuperscript{29}

\textbf{The Swedish Political Context: The Royalist Argumentation in 1772}

Besides the obvious international influences and context for these Gustavian reforms, they must also be seen in direct relation to the Swedish political context, particular Swedish circumstances, expectations, political imagery, and also in relation to King Gustav’s path to the position and power that he possessed. It is necessary to bear in mind the \textit{coup d’état} of 1772 and the arguments and images that were developed and put into action in that process to understand the context in which, for instance, torture was abolished in 1772/1774,\textsuperscript{30} or the Court of Appeal in Vasa was founded, and to interpret arguments, ceremonies, festivities, architectural and other artistic projects and images in relation to the foundation of this court of appeal.

The coup of Gustav III ended a period of some 50 years called the Age of Liberty. During this time the four political estates, assembling every three years in the Diet, and the Council of the Realm (contemporaries used the term \textit{Senate} in French), consisting only of noblemen were the two most powerful political institutions, whereas the monarch’s role was limited, even though it was seen as indispensable. The noble estate was the most influential and all high government officials were noble. The peasantry was not allowed to participate in the most important committee of the Diet, \textit{Sekreta utskottet}, the Secret Committee. The epoch did though broaden the political field to include wider social spheres and the two rudimentary political parties that were created were active within all four political estates.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{28} Anners 1965, 205–297. In the proposition to the Diet, Gustav III proposed that the death penalty would be abolished in cases of witchcraft, false rumours about the security of the realm, bigamy, sexual intercourse with animals, the causing of injury with a lethal weapon during a church service or legal proceedings, assault and battery of a public official, rape, manslaughter, theft (third and fourth offence), theft of church property, single adultery (fourth offence), double adultery and incest. The criminal law that was issued in 1779 was a compromise. The wishes of the King and Council were not totally accepted. Anners 1965, 252–253.

\textsuperscript{29} Anners 1965, 295–297.

\textsuperscript{30} The decision to destroy torture-rooms did not turn out to be a total abolition of torture. The law of 1734 knew the concept of hard prison (\textit{svårare fängelse}). A total prohibition of all kind of torture was given in December 1774. (Anners 1965, 188–197.)

\textsuperscript{31} The political estates which had the right to assemble in the Diet were the noble estate, the clergy, the burgher estate and the peasant estate. See Roberts 1986, Metcalf 1977, Metcalf (ed.) 1987, Sennefelt 2011, Wolff 2011, Ihalainen 2011, Wolff 2007. About the role of the monarch and the royal family in the Age of Liberty, see Nordin 2010 and Nordin 2011.
This half century of Estate power that had emerged as a reaction against the absolute power of the Carolinian kings – the last being Charles XII – had brought negative connotations to the concepts of absolutism, autocracy, sovereignty and absolute monarchy in Sweden. In the coup of 1772, Gustav III aimed at increasing the power of the monarch, but he had to persuade his subjects that this had not happened because of the King’s lust for power, which was the mark of a tyrant and a despot, and that it would not lead to a restitution of absolute monarchy. If this was to succeed, previous rulers had to be presented as bad, arbitrary, self-indulgent and unjust whilst the young monarch would be portrayed as their opposite, as a Good King. Ten years earlier, Catherine II had successfully used this same strategy, and it was in fact a very traditional rhetorical technique used by politicians and in political argument for centuries, and millennia. Gustav III was well acquainted with descriptions and discussions about ‘the good monarch’ and ‘the tyrant’ in philosophy, literature, drama and mythology. He had grown up with moral, political and educational stories and deliberations about good and virtuous monarchs, Voltaire’s epic poem *Henriade* (1728) being his favourite for many years. The political cocktail was combined with the physiocratic notion of despotisme legal, which successfully argued the need for an impartial monarch, a safeguard of the laws, at the head of the res publica. This was not a belief in the monarch’s arbitrary power; on the contrary, laws were to govern society. Inherent to the idea of legal despotism was the belief that the law could and should be guarded by strong monarchs.

The rule of the Council of the Realm had already been accused as one of “ministerial aristocracy” in the meaning of a despotism of the few before the attack of Gustav III, as Charlotta Wolff has pointed out. When Gustav III in August 1772 charged the old political establishment with

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32 Sovereignty was, in this political context, mainly conceived as royal absolutism. Ihalainen 2011; Tandefelt 2011; Wolff 2007.

33 To laud and to defame were central in the classical rhetoric that was part of the education of all men of standing in the 18th century. The *genus demonstrativum* or *laudativum* was a special category of eloquence designated for orations and texts in this branch, but the capability of lauding and defaming was also useful in forensic (*genus iudiciale*) and political (*genus deliberativum*) argumentation. In the education of noblemen (and of some women that were given teaching in formal rhetoric) it was part of their early learning to exercise the ability to compose presentations of virtues and vices, and to describe selected individuals positively or negatively. The so-called progymnasmata exercises that were practised all over Europe up until the 19th century and the exercises of ‘commonplace’ or ‘koinos topos’, ‘encomium’ and ‘vituperation’ all dealt with this vital knowledge and ability of every citizen (in the old meaning of a virtuous member of society). On rhetoric and progymnasmata, see Eriksson 2002, 63–72, 136–164; Skuncke 1993, 13–18; Johannesson 1990. On Catherine II, see Proskurina 2011, 23–25, 42–43; Wortman 1995. Also see Dixon 2001, 35–37.

34 Skuncke 1993; Tandefelt 2011, 48.


notions of “unendurable aristocratic despotism” he not only trod the classic path of the rhetoric of defamation. He also very consciously followed in the footsteps of the Hat politicians, who, in 1769, had accused the Cap Senate of “abominable aristocracy”, transforming liberty into lawlessness and promoting foreign ambitions.37

Gustav III and his circle of friends, advisors and supporters could continue the line of argument that had been opened in 1768–69. The rule of the estates and the last years of the Age of Liberty were pictured as chaotic, tormented by corruption, dangerous party strife and instability – not totally untrue –, and the power of the old elite was represented as despotic and aristocratic, as a despotism of the few. In this light, the power that was given to the King in the new Instrument of Government, which Gustav III introduced and the Diet accepted in August 21, 1772, could be seen as a salvation and the young King could be represented as a disinterested force which, driven by concern for his subjects and the realm, had put the old and selfish elite aside. On the day of the Coup, Gustav III recruited his Life Guard for the revolution with a speech in which he promised to suppress licentiousness and abolish aristocratic power. He affirmed that he was not going to introduce “the abominable royal absolutism or the so-called sovereignty, which would deprive me of my utmost honour to be the first citizen of a righteous free people”.38 No blood was shed in the coup of August 19, 1772 even though the King needed an armed force to enforce the new regime. This too strengthened the legitimacy of the regime, as did the fact that the Instrument of Government defined and restricted the power of the King, not only those of his subjects. This was an important characteristic of a good and enlightened monarch.

Gustav III thus sought to direct the focus away from the fact that the power of the estates – that had been seen as holy in the Age of Liberty – had been dramatically diminished and on to other circumstances and associations. His use of the concept of ‘aristocratic sovereignty’ to defame his opponents, and the concept of ‘citizen’ to create a positive image for himself thus had an important Swedish political context and rationale, as well as roots in contemporary enlightened discussions and examples. This is also true of the use of the concept of ‘liberty’ or ‘true liberty’ that came to occupy a central place in the political language of Gustav III. ‘True liberty’ was in

38 Quoted and translated into English in Wolff 2007, 365.
this argumentation guaranteed only in a system where the law was placed above the rulers. This distinguished the new Gustavian rule from the previous rule of the Estates and the Council/Senate, in the royalist argumentation of Gustav III.  

**Founding a Court of Appeal and the Representation of the Reformer-King**

Gustav III founded the Court of Appeal of Vasa during a journey in southern Finland in the summer of 1775. Previously the King had visited southern and western parts of his realm encountering local officials and elites and other subjects in person, listening to their worries and strengthening his subjects’ goodwill towards the new regime by his personal presence. In Finland, in 1775, Gustav III similarly received complaints and petitions from high and low and on 20th of June 1775 he issued a royal proclamation about the establishment of a new Court of Appeal in the realm and an increase in the number of administrative provinces (län) in Finland from four to six. The judges of the Court of Appeal in Åbo (Finnish: Turku) had called attention to the large number of cases that delayed the administration of justice in the area under its jurisdiction. In his proclamation, in June 1775, Gustav III stated that the new Court of Appeal was established to “remove all these obstacles, and win what is always fondly cherished by Us, namely that Our loyal subjects should enjoy Law and Justice without cessation”. This was totally in line with the aims of enlightened thinkers calling for a functioning jurisdiction so as to avoid unnecessary delay.

The time, energy and money that Gustav III invested in the Court of Appeal project suggest that Gustav III saw more potential in this establishment of a court of law than just efficient administration of law. The Court of Appeal project was a response to existing problems in Finland, but also very much a means for the King to develop the image of himself as a just and reforming King who was everything that the previous aristocratic elite of the Age of Liberty had not been.


40 In the Swedish realm, the administration of law had been organized on three levels since the early 17th century. There was the local level with district courts in the countryside and in the towns. A second level was the Courts of Appeal (hovrätt) that were established to superintend the work of the district courts. The first Court of Appeal was Svea hovrätt that resided in the Royal Castle in Stockholm. It was founded in 1614. The third level was the Council of the Realm, of which a section including the Monarch (justitierevisionen) handled appeals from the second level. Their duty was to examine and ensure that the verdicts of the Courts of Appeal were in accordance with the law, but they could also reduce sentences, for instance change a death penalty to imprisonment. This often happened. After the reform of the criminal law in 1779, which did not abolish the death penalty for as many crimes as Gustav III had proposed, the justitierevision changed, more often than had been the case before, the death penalty to less harsh penalties. (Anners 1965, 295–297). The competence of this section of the Council should not be confused with the competence of the Monarch to grant an amnesty, a role that was founded on grace, not justice. In 1789 Gustav III founded a Supreme Court (Högsta domstolen) to replace the section of the Council called the justitierevisionen. I will not go into this court project of Gustav III here.

41 Tandefelt 2008, 146–147. “At för all framtid undanrödja alla dessa swärigheter, och att winna hwad Oss altid ömt om hiertat är, nämligen, at Wäre trogne undersåtare mage Lag och Rätt utan uppehåll til godo niuta.”
Ceremonies, rhetoric, images and architecture were used to create and spread this message, and to inculcate the notion of a King that was deeply interested in the wellbeing of his subjects as well as a steadfast head of justice in the realm. Gustav III could have confined himself to locating the Court of Appeal in an already existing building in Vasa and it could have been installed discreetly. The first Swedish court of appeal, *Svea hovrätt*, founded in 1614, was inaugurated only in the presence of the Council of the Realm. Instead, Gustav III himself participated in a large-scale inauguration ceremony in the Royal Castle in Stockholm in which he gave himself a visible role. He also initiated an expensive building project in the fairly remote region of Ostrobothnia, ordering, in 1776, the chief architect of the realm, Carl Fredrik Adelcrantz, to plan a new law court building to be built in Vasa. It was completed in 1786 and inaugurated in a local ceremony that same year.

During the years 1776–1786, Gustav III was engaged in the building project. He decided the principal outline for the court building, commented on the drawings of the architect and decided that the limestone frieze on the avant-corps of the façade should be decorated with the words Gustavus III R. S. Anno Imp. XII extruxit Themidique dicaVit, “Gustav III King of Sweden erected in the twelfth year of his reign and consecrated to Themis”, that is Justitia, the goddess of justice. The architect had suggested a passive wording: ANNO. VI. REGNI. GUSTAVI. III. THEMIDI. HÆC. AEDES. NOVAE. EXSTRUCT, “This building was erected to Themis in the sixth year of the reign of Gustav III”.

The Court of Appeal in Vasa began its work on the 19th of August 1776, four years to the day after the coup d’état. The date was chosen by Gustav III, and, in a letter to the president of the Court of Appeal, Baron Kurck, the King expressed a wish that the first session be held bearing in mind the happiness with which the fatherland (fädernesland) had been blessed four years earlier. In Stockholm Gustav III planned the installation ceremony of the Court of Appeal, which was held on the 28th of June 1776 in the Royal Castle in Stockholm, in the presence of the King and the Royal family, and he ordered both a medal and a painting to commemorate the act.

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42 The difference in years – sixth and twelfth year of the King’s reign – is due to the time taken to complete the work. The text line that Adelcrantz had planned for the façade facing the yard – DISCITE IUSTITIAM MONITI – that talked about the court’s mission to explore justice was never realized. (Tandefelt 2008, 211–212.) Regarding the building of the Court of Appeal in Vasa, see, ibid. 192–196, 201–223.

43 Tandefelt 2008, 191.
The Court of Appeal in Vasa has not been recognized as one of the important reforms of Gustav III. Its importance was chiefly local. Yet in the early years of his reign Gustav III did incorporate the Vasa project in a narration of his supposedly glorious epoch on the Swedish throne. This narration started with the coronation in May 1772, continued with the institution of the Royal Order of Vasa – to reward people within agriculture, mining industry, art, trade and technological advances – that same month, the coup d’état and Instrument of Government in August 1772 and concluded with the establishment of the Court of Appeal of Vasa in 1775. The King planned a pictorial presentation of these important events in his reign, starting with the coronation and the introduction of the new Instrument of Government in 1772. In 1778, two years after the installation ceremony of the Court of Appeal of Vasa in Stockholm, the King ordered a large-scale painting of the judges kneeling in front of the king swearing the oath of allegiance from the artist Carl Gustaf Pilo. The choice to depict precisely this scene of the inauguration ceremony is very telling. The principal character of the scene would have been clear to anyone looking at the painting. The artist also made a painting of the coronation in 1772, which was never entirely completed but can be seen today in the National Museum in Stockholm. The painting of the ceremony of 1776 was not realized at all. Pilo only completed a pen-and-ink drawing of the scene that the king wanted to be captured for posterity in an oil painting.

Another royal painting project that was planned but never completed during these years was an oil painting depicting the four speakers of the Diet signing the Instrument of Government in August 1772. Gustav ordered this painting from the artist Lorenz Pasch the younger who painted many portraits of the king. The painting was to be six Swedish ells high and broad, which is about 3.5 x 3.5 meters. None of these large oil paintings, which the King had ordered, were realized except for the painting of the coronation which was not finished. The reason for this is not clear. Perhaps Gustav III’s finances were insufficient to carry through the orders. The large building project in Vasa swallowed a lot of money over the following ten years. It is also possible that the

44 On the work of the Court of Appeal, see Vepsä 2009.
45 Vasa here did not refer to the city of Vasa but to the Vasa Dynasty from which Gustav III, being a Holstein-Gottorp, was also descended. Both the Royal Order and the Court of Appeal were part of the King’s project to create links between himself and the name of Vasa. (The city of Vasa was founded 1606 by Charles IX, son of the first Vasa King, Gustav Vasa.) Among others, the philosophe the Marquis de Mirabeau was made a Knight Commander of the Order of Vasa in 1772. Abbé Michelessi, a learned writer, savant, teacher of rhetoric and cosmopolitan wanderer travelling from court to court, wrote a poem in Italian, Per l’Ordine Reale di Wasa, celebrating the creation of the Royal Order and the enlightened King, who in this way supported science, agriculture, the arts, etc. Tandefelt 2008, 59, 61–63; Alimento 1997, 144.
King’s interest was directed to other projects, and the artists may have found other paintings and projects more interesting and lucrative.\textsuperscript{47}

Even though the two paintings were never realized, the projects bear witness to Gustav III’s wish in these years to start a series of paintings depicting important moments of his reign. The coronation, the Order of Vasa, the Instrument of Government and the Court of Appeal in Vasa were all important stages in the King’s own story that Gustav III wanted to tell and make convincing. It was a story of a reformer, but equally a story of a strong monarch leading his realm with a steady hand, and standing at the centre of all decision making. The Janus face, the balancing act between different ambitions and the entanglement of traditions, values and examples permeated the project. A close-reading of the inauguration ceremony reveals further layers.

**A Lit de Justice in Stockholm 1776**

The aims of the King can also be read in the inauguration ceremony of the Court of Appeal. It was held at the royal castle in Stockholm on the 28th of June 1776. It was a splendid ceremony, apparently, to a great extent, designed by the King himself. Studying the orations and spatial and pictorial programmes of the ceremony, as well as the festivities arranged in honour of the inauguration act, it is apparent that the message that the King wanted to transmit was a mixture of many traditions, talking both about enlightened reforms and the supremacy of the monarch.\textsuperscript{48} Setting it all in Stockholm, at the Royal Castle, gave the ceremony and the Court of Appeal visibility and prestige.

After the coronation in May 1772 no state ceremony had been organised on such a grand scale. Three courts of appeal had been founded in the realm, all in the 17th century. Svea, Åbo and Göta courts of appeal were founded in 1614, 1623 and 1634 respectively in Stockholm, Turku and Jönköping but there was no given pattern as to how a court of appeal should be installed, and no written documentation.\textsuperscript{49} Gustav III had a free hand in designing a ceremony that satisfied his needs and ambitions. The installation ceremony was organized in the Royal Castle, in the Hall of the Palace Halberdiers of the Queen, a military guard with ceremonial tasks at the royal court. As the courtier, Baron Gustaf Johan Ehrensvärd wrote in his diary, the purpose of the King was

\textsuperscript{48} Tandefelt 2008, 161–185.
\textsuperscript{49} Ehrensvärd 1877, 58. A superior court of justice in the German states that Sweden acquired in 1648, Tribunalet i Wismar, was founded in 1653. The installation ceremony was preserved and published in Lünig in 1720, 1397–1398, but was not treated as a model for the ceremony in 1776. The difference between the situation and context of these courts was too great.
to organize a ceremony that could be seen by many. A small and exclusive installation would not have reached this purpose, “it would not have resembled a lit de justice”, baron Ehrensvärd wrote. The lit de justice (bed of justice) was a ceremony with medieval roots, originating from the world of French royal ceremonies and from the Parliament of Paris, a Court of Appeal that also had political rights related to the King’s legislative competence.50

In the late eighteenth-century, the lit de justice ceremony in the Parliament of Paris signalled absolute royal power and the parliament’s constitutional opposition to it. On a more general level, the lit de justice represented the monarch’s judicial rights and duties, and his role as the supreme judge of the realm. Justice was also in the monarchy of the ancien régime “le base & le fondement du Thrône des Rois” and “l’ame de toutes les autres vertus” – “the base and foundation of the throne of Kings” and “the soul of all other virtues” – as the French jurist Claude-Joseph de Ferrière declared in his Dictionnaire de Droit et de Pratique, Contenant l’explication des termes de Droit, d’Ordonnances, de Coutumes& de pratique (1740). The Monarch’s duty to render justice to his subjects was in the opinion of Ferrière every Prince’s principal, most important right and duty, the most beautiful pearl in his crown.51

Gustav III wanted to install the Court of Appeal in Vasa as a great public act, and the fact that Baron Ehrensvärd talks about a lit de justice in his diary makes it plausible that this was a concept that was used in the royal court when planning the ceremony. After ascending the throne in 1771, Gustav III had reorganized the royal court, its organisation and etiquette using the court of Louis XIV as model. Paradoxically, life at the Swedish court became formalised and was guided by more ceremony and etiquette at a time when such tendencies were in decline at the French court.52 In line with this the inauguration of the court of appeal was designed to be splendid and ceremonious, and the King himself was to participate. The conceptual connection to the lit de justice hints that the reason for making this ceremony in particular so magnificent and demonstrative was that it allowed the King to enact his role as protector of law and order in the ceremony. Gustav III created a situation and scene in which he could personify and exhibit this

50 The Parliament of Paris had the right to register the edicts that the King of France had passed in the Cabinet. In the 18th century the parliament of Paris acted against the monarch, opposing Louis XV. If the parliament did not want to register the edicts, the King could force registration by participating in parliament in a lit de justice. Louis XV closed the parliament of Paris in 1771. Four years later his successor Louis XVI again allowed the parliament to return to its duties, and celebrated this with a formal lit de justice ceremony. See Hanley 1983; Hanley 1985; Giesey 1985; Harouel 1990a, 883–884; Harouel 1990b, 1151–1153, Harouel 1996, 746–748; Chaline 1996, 960, 963–964; Shennan 1994, 547.
51 de Ferrière (1740) 1749, 137–138, quoted in French in Tandefelt 2008, 152.
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royal function and show that he had devoted himself to the good of his people, as he had promised
to do in 1772. The overt ceremony of the occasion was not only an expression of the increased
formality of the Swedish court. It was also chosen because Gustav III needed this ceremony at
this particular time.

Gustav III was not alone in his use of grand ceremony. Only eight years before the Court of
Appeal of Vasa was inaugurated in Stockholm, Catherine II had inaugurated the great Legislative
Commission in Moscow, in the Kremlin, in the summer of 1767. The ceremony, in which all the
members of the commission from all parts of the empire participated, was magnificent, and
organized only five years after the dethroning of the empress husband, Peter III in 1762. The
commission, and the Instruction, as well as the inauguration on July 30, 1767, presented the
empress as a just monarch who ruled more through the wisdom of her laws than by force. The
metropolitan of Moscow, Dmitri, in his oration described the empress as a new Justinian, and the
Vice Chancellor of the Empire encouraged the members of the council to follow the example of the
Empress and act as unselfishly as she did.

The crowned heads of Russia and Sweden not only shared an interest in judicial reforms,
they were also both part of the same European ceremonial political culture, in which abstract
actions, personal relations, power relations, transitions, life and death, etc. were materialized and
communicated through ceremonies, words, images, music, space, and relations. In this culture,
things were not real if they were not shown to be real, manifested. That is why ceremonies were
so important and are to be found on all levels of early modern society, throughout the Eighteenth
Century. A ceremony is a planned programme that communicates a message. It is a programme
that has a designed message or messages, but is also an open process where the organizer can
never totally control the audience’s or the participants’ interpretations and acts, even though this
is usually what it seeks to do.

The reception of a ceremony was never the same as the intention of the sender, but the latter is
always much easier to study. The sources usually tell us much more about the intentions and visions
of those who planned the programme. However, ceremonies could be very persuasive as they did

53 This was also how the member of the Russian Academy of Fine Arts P. P. Chekalevskii explained the marble
statue of the empress that was sculpted by F. F. Shubin – “Catherine the Legislator” – in Potemkin’s Tauride
Palace. The empress was, according to Chekalevskii, shown ruling “more by the strength of wisdom of her laws
than by monarchical power”, cited in English in Dixon 2001, 45, and in Hartley 2008, 171.
often referred to as Corpus juris civilis, was issued from 529 to 534 by order of Justinian I, Eastern Roman
Emperor.
not just consist of spoken words, something that is also true today. Visual images, ornaments, objects, textiles, music, and the architectural surroundings are all part of the ceremony and shape the experience of it. They talk to the audience on different levels, through different means. They mediate messages to the heart, mind, eyes, and ears, and appeal to reason, emotions and aesthetic perceptions.

Words and Images in Stockholm in 1776

Gustav III gave two speeches during the inauguration ceremony, one to the audience and the other to the newly appointed court. Gustav III, who had given his first public speech when he was three years old and had got a thorough education in rhetoric, wrote and gave most of his speeches himself. His two speeches on this day in July 1776 were short but well-ordered and striking, austere and well adapted to the solemnity of the situation. There were no excessive metaphors, hyperboles, allusions or personifications, no references to ancient mythology or literature.

The first speech was about why the king had founded the court of appeal, and why it was necessary. A central phrase came at the beginning: “Rättwisans ovälduga skipande har förnämligast fästat min uppmärksamhet”, “the unbiased administration of justice has in particular drawn my attention”. Gustav III attested that during his journey in Finland in the summer of 1775 “my chief aim has been to remedy the deficiencies that pestered my subjects in the regions I have travelled through”. The focus is very much set on the aims and roles of the eighteenth-century enlightened monarchs: unbiased and reliable justice and the monarch’s duty to relieve his or her subject’s pains and torments. Yet Gustav III did not refer to the contemporary monarchs of Europe in his speech. Instead he claimed legitimacy by referring to his predecessor on the throne, the great seventeenth-century king Gustav II Adolf. In the coup d’état in 1772,

56 On the role of rhetoric in the education of Gustav III, see Skuncke 1993. In a comparison between Gustav III and Gustav IV, Adolf Mikael Alm has concluded that the former was a king that used language to gain and maintain authority whereas the latter was a silent and silencing king. For instance, the father gave many public speeches whereas the son did not speak in public very often. (Alm 2002; Alm 2003, 25–33.)
57 PROTOCOLL, Hållit vid Kongl. Wasa Hof-Rätts Installations Act På Stockholms Slott then 28 Junii 1776. Förmiddagen, Stockholm s.a. For a full scale analysis of the message and rhetorical elements and construction of this speech, see Tandefelt 2008, 167–171. The minutes from the inauguration act in Stockholm were also translated into French: Traduction De L’Extrait Du Procès Verbal, Tenu au Chateau de Stockholm, à L’Installation du Parlement de Vasa. Vendredi 28 Juin 1776, du Matin, Stockholm S.A.
58 PROTOCOLL, Hållit vid Kongl. Wasa Hof-Rätts Installations Act […] S.A.; Tandefelt 2008, 168. “... har mitt förnämsta föremål warit, at bota the brister, som trykt mine Undersåtare i the Landsorter Jag genomfarit.”
Gustav III had also claimed that he had reintroduced the political order of the time of Gustav Adolf, before the absolutism of the Carolinian kings (1681–1720).

In a crescendo directing the attention on Gustav III himself and his forefather, the King said:

These are the achievements [the King’s endeavours in Finland in the summer of 1775] that I today in your presence complete: when I, according to the example that King GUSTAF [II] ADOLF has given to Me, with My Royal Power and Authority, invest them I have chosen, with the task to be My Supreme panel in Vasa.59

The number of references to “I”, “Me” and “My” is impressive in just a few lines. When the members of the Court of Appeal stood on the first step before the throne, their authorization document was read aloud and then Gustav III spoke to them, reminding them of their duties to the Monarch and to the inhabitants of their jurisdiction. As the representatives of the King in Ostrobothnia they were, like Gustav III himself, to intimidate the evildoer and protect the innocent.60 Finally, Gustav III talked about how the Court was to act in relation to the different social categories and estates, presenting society in its hierarchical, ancient-regime form.61

The Chancellor of Justice read the eighth chapter of the Code of Judicial Procedure, about the tasks of the Court of Appeal, the judges pledged their oath of allegiance to the King and Government, and then the president of the court of appeal, baron Adolf Fredrik Kurck, was allowed to give a speech and to kiss the King’s hand. Then Gustav III himself presented Baron Kurck with the law of 1734, the Instrument of Government and the seal of the Court of Appeal.62

The objects and images used in the inauguration ceremony in Stockholm in 1776 accentuated the monarch’s duty and inherent competence to uphold justice, to protect the good and to punish the criminal. The sword of the realm was the most visible of the regalia in the ceremony, reminding the audience of the king’s obligation and right to maintain justice in the realm. The Code of Laws from 1734 and the Instrument of Government from 1772 were other crucial objects that were carried in procession and handed between the participants, and most importantly from the king

60 PROTOCOLL, Hållit vid Kongl. Wasa Hof-Rätts Installations Act [...] s.a.; Tandefelt 2008, 171.
to the judges of the court of appeal, which could be read as an act symbolizing that law and justice came from the monarch. The authorization document that was signed by Gustav III and the seal of the Court of Appeal were also objects that the Chancellor of Justice brought to the king on velvet cushions and that were then presented to the judges. Both the fact that the objects were given to the members of the court by the King and the objects themselves communicated meaning.\(^{63}\)

The Code of Laws and the Instrument of Government were of course natural objects to integrate into the ceremony that inaugurated a Court of Appeal. The basis of the judicial system was the law, and the president swore his oath of allegiance to the King and the Government with two fingers on the Code of Laws and the Bible. As shown above it was important for Gustav III to be strongly associated with the law at this point of his reign, and the ceremony in the Royal Castle provided a setting for staging this connection between monarch and law in live acts, words and images.

The expensive and time-consuming paintings mentioned above were never carried out but other media and art forms were used. The seal of the court of appeal of Vasa was engraved by Gustaf Ljungberger and represented a known mythological topic, Hercules crushing the Lernaean Hydra. In his other hand Hercules held a shield with the coats of arms of the Vasa and Oldenburg dynasties. The king himself was credited with inventing the image by the courtier Baron Ehrensvärd. The Baron thought that Hercules represented the court, and criticized the imagery because the Court of Vasa had not yet had the opportunity to vanquish the Hydra.\(^{64}\) Ehrensvärd must be mistaken here. It is more likely that Hercules represented Gustav III and that the hydra represented the bad rule of the previous regime that Gustav III had vanquished in 1772. In an engraving by Johan Fredrik Martin from 1784 this same representation is used and given the following words of explanation: “Gustave III armé de la massue d’Hercule ecrase l’hydre de la discorde et de l’anarchie.”\(^{65}\) The Hydra was the licence, discord and anarchy of aristocratic rule in the Age of Liberty, as portrayed by Gustav III. Ehrensvärd’s mistake gives us a salutary reminder that the symbolic images, metaphors and allegories that were invested with a particular meaning by their creator or inventor were not always understood in that sense by the intended

\(^{63}\) Tandefelt 2008, 176–185.
\(^{64}\) Ehrensvärd 1877, 62.
recipient or audience. People misunderstand, and they also consciously come up with alternative interpretations.66

Even though mythological images and representations were lacking in the speeches of Gustav III and of president Baron Kurck, they were not totally missing in the ceremony, as Hercules on the seal of the court of appeal shows. Another personification from the world of mythology was *Justitia*, the female personification of justice that was engraved on the medal that Gustav III had also ordered from Ljungberg in order to commemorate the foundation and inauguration of the Court of Appeal of Vasa and put to his series of medals, his *histoire métallique*. “MISERIS PERFUGIUM MALIS PERNICIES” (“refuge for the wretched, the death of the wicked”),67 was the legend of the medal, a line from the Roman historian Sallust’s *Coniuratio Catilina* (*The Conspiracy of Cataline*): “Caesar dando sublevando ignoscundo, Cato nihil largiundo gloriam adeptus est. in altero miseris perfugium erat, in altero malis pernicies.”68 Inscriptions and legends, like images, were often taken from ancient Roman literature that provided a large stock of lines like this, which could be used for different purposes, as well as useful allegories, stories, exempla (*exemples à imiter*), etc.

The line from Sallust leads us to the occasion where Cato and Caesar talk to the roman senators and argue for and against – the traditional *pro* and *contra* of classical rhetoric – the death sentence. Caesar argued against, Cato in favour of a sentence of death, and Sallust describes the two orators: “They both attained glory: Caesar by giving, helping and forgiving; Cato by not bribing. In one there was refuge for the wretched, in the other death for the wicked.”69 Sallust, and later Gustav III, here caught two traditional aspects of kingship, two traditional ways of ruling that appear time and time again in literature.

Sallust wrote about the last centuries of the Roman republic and its crises. He saw man’s greed and lust for power as a peril for society and was particularly critical of the nobility (*nobiles*) and described it as a decadent and corrupt class that held the highest offices in the empire. Some virtuous men (*virtute clari*) had had the capacity to influence the course of history, among

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69 Sallust 2010, 42–43.
them Cato and Caesar. Sallust’s description of Rome corresponded well to Gustav III’s view of the moral and political status of Sweden in the Age of Liberty. It resembled the arguments of Gustavian political rhetoric, which described the previous political elite as greedy, biased, power-seeking and unjust. The legend quoting Sallust was presumably intended to direct the thoughts of contemporaries in this direction. The monarch himself took the role of the ‘virtuous man’ in this setting, returning justice, liberty and security to his subjects. In Sweden in the middle of the 1770s, Sallust could talk to people assembled in the Hall of the Palace Halberdiers and they could share a moral universe of values, stereotypes and expectations. *Coniuratio Catilinae* was used in the teaching of Latin and rhetoric at the time because it consisted of many useful speeches and orations for students to imitate and learn from, in many senses. Also the ones that did not accept the story that Gustav III was telling about himself and his aims were raised with the same classical political concepts and values. And they certainly knew and identified their Sallust.

### Representing the Good and the Bad Monarch

The audience in the Hall of the Palace Halberdiers consisted mostly of courtiers, high government officials and foreign diplomats and only a small element fell under the category of ‘general audience’. Later in the evening the same noblemen and noblewomen could take part in the festive programme in the court that most certainly was linked to the ceremony and message of the day. The King and Queen gave a reception, a *cour*, in the Queen’s Great Gallery and after this Gustav III held a Grand Public Supper in the King’s dining-room. This was a ceremony that Gustav III had introduced when becoming king, when he initiated many new court ceremonies borrowed from the court of Louis XIV. After this, supper was served to the courtiers, the members of the Court of Appeal of Vasa and to other participants, the diplomats, public officials, etc.

The night was completed with two plays at the Royal Theatre. The first performance was that of the first act of the play *Thetis et Pelée* by Fontenelle, in a Swedish version, translated by Johan Wellander and Gustav III. *Thetis och Pelée* was the first big attempt at Swedish opera

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70 Paananen 1980, I–III, X.  
71 Wolff 2007.  
72 Rangström 1994. In Versailles the practice of royal grand public suppers – with the king eating alone in public – was abandoned at this time.  
73 Tandefelt 2008, 185.
and marked the beginning of national opera when it was inaugurated in Stockholm in 1773. The goddess of water Thetis is loved by a mortal, Pelée, and by two gods, Neptune and Jupiter. In Gustav III and Wellander’s version, the two gods were made into examples of the good monarch and the tyrant, a theme that was in concord with the political message transmitted during the inauguration ceremony. After this an opera-comique of Marmontel, *Lucile*, was performed in translation by Anna Maria Malmstedt, more known in Swedish literary history by her married name Madam Lenngren. Here the theme was the good subject and the comic story revolves around loyal peasants. This probably was not a coincidence as both the good king and the good subjects/peasants had been present in the inauguration ceremony and its speeches.

**For Whom Was All This Performed?**

Who was the intended audience for all this? How can we know the effect of all these efforts of the King and his circle of supporters, favourites and advisors? Was it of any importance what plays were performed in the Royal Castle? Many questions remain open, although some of them can be at least partly answered. The diplomats were the channel to the monarchs and courts of Europe. That is why the diplomatic corps was always invited, and why the court festivities actually reached a much larger audience than one might at first think. To reach this important European audience the protocol from the inauguration ceremony was also translated into French thus allowing it to be more widely distributed outside Sweden. Gustav III wished to present himself as an enlightened King in the eyes of the enlightened circles of Europe.

It is also important to remember that the noblemen and women at Court, who were both audience and co-players in the court’s rituals, were also influential members of society and political life, belonging to a political estate that was still the most important estate of the Diet. The opinion of this estate was very important for Gustav III. The persuasive images and conceptions that the King sought to create and strengthen by organizing ceremonies, buildings, pictures and speeches was intended to be noted in all estates, and also in the countryside. The support of the lower estates was also important for Gustav III. The Court of Appeal was given a lavish building in Vasa, decorated with few but well thought-out and particular ornaments on the façade and in the

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interior. Local peasants were involved and contributed to the building with building materials. The peasants were thanked for their contribution by inscriptions. A stone tablet on the inner wall of the building, which today is a church, tells us of the contribution of the peasants of Ilmajoki and Isokyrö parishes.

A broadsheet with a popular poem about the inauguration ceremony in Stockholm was also published, as was the protocol of the act. The ceremonies in Vasa in 1776, and in 1786 when the building was used for the first time, could also attract a socially more differentiated set of observers than the programme in Stockholm.\textsuperscript{75}

Finally, the ceremonies, the building, the images and concepts were all messages for posterity. Gustav III sought to impress future generations and win their admiration. Gustav III like all other monarchs sought to influence and control the way in which he would be remembered by posterity.\textsuperscript{76}

### Conclusion

Gustav III was an *ancient-régime* monarch, a product of the old world, integrating new ideals, concepts and figures of thought with old models. His court was very much a ceremonial court and the court’s culture was an instrument to serve his political aims and ambitions in domestic and foreign politics.

The new, ‘Gustavian’ realm was built through new public buildings, new cities, roads and fortifications; on a judicial level through new laws, judicial reforms and ordinances; and on a symbolic level through concepts and images, in ceremonies, pamphlets, medals, pictures, plays, operas and belles-lettres. The court of appeal in Vasa was part of this construction of a Gustavian Sweden that involved all of these levels.

\textsuperscript{75} Tandefelt 2008.
\textsuperscript{76} Delblanc 1965.
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**Printed sources**


The Travels of Joseph II in Hungary, Transylvania, Slavonia and the Banat of Temesvar,¹ 1768–1773

Krisztina Kulcsár

Joseph II is often considered to be a much travelled emperor. While his travels abroad under the pseudonym of Count Falkenstein have been widely studied, his tours within his own realms are much less researched. Rather than pursuing Romantic adventures, his principal aim was to learn about the political, military and social conditions of his realm and its inhabitants. The purpose of this contribution is to analyse the travels Joseph II undertook in Hungary, Transylvania, Slavonia and the Banat between 1768 and 1773. With the help of examples, the article explores how the various experiences Joseph II had during his visits influenced his ideas, his reform policy and ultimately his practice of rule.

Introduction

Joseph II is widely known as the travelling emperor. Already in his lifetime, several contemporary publications concentrated on the tours of this ‘eccentric’ Emperor.² This theme was highlighted subsequently by historians. Amongst these journeys, the ones that attracted particular attention were the trips undertaken abroad ‘incognito’ under the pseudonym of Count Falkenstein.³ However, arguably it was not these trips but the Emperor’s travels within his own realms that are of key importance. There is a clear link between Joseph II’s personal experiences of domestic

¹ The Banat of Temesvar was an area on the north bank of the River Danube. Nowadays its territory is divided between Romania, Serbia and Hungary. Hereafter it will be referred to as the Banat.
² Anonymous 1777; Coudray 1777a; Coudray 1777b; Duval-Pyrau 1777; Geisler 1777; Mayer 1778; Lemaire 1781; Geisler 1781.
travel and the decrees he later issued as sole ruler. Despite their formative nature, these tours have so far attracted little scholarly attention.\footnote{For a detailed bibliographical survey of contemporary scholarship on the subject see Kulcsár 2004b. In this paper, it is impossible to provide a comprehensive overview of the various types of travels. This is partly due to the fact that the topic has recently attracted renewed scholarly attention. Let it suffice here to name the major works that contain a discussion of the most recent trends in this field of research together with the relevant secondary literature: Adams 1983; Brenner 1990; Maurer 1999; Bauerkämper, A., H.E. Bödeker & B. Struck 2004.}

Joseph II famously attempted to form a unified state from the various Habsburg lands. The state he envisaged was standardized, homogenized and based on a truly meritocratic principle. These aims, and the language in which it was couched, namely, the promotion of the greater public good, religious toleration and the service of the state led the Emperor to be classified as a representative of ‘enlightened absolutism’. It is beyond the scope of this paper to contribute to the debate on ‘enlightened absolutism’ or even to engage with the contested issue of what ‘enlightened’ means in this context. However, it is clear that the inception of the policies of introducing uniformity and stamping out exemptions and immunities that earned Joseph II this epithet is to be found in his early domestic travels. This paper attempts to prove this by examining three particular journeys of the Emperor. One of the destinations, the Banat (a region marked out by the rivers Danube, Maros and Tisza) is especially instructive in this regard as it served as a testing ground for several experimental reforms conducted directly from Vienna. First, the theory behind the Emperor’s travels is addressed and then compared with the actual practice. Then the paper focuses on the duties of the co-regent and how Joseph II influenced Maria Theresa’s decrees, if at all, and finally on how the Emperor’s priorities evolved with special regard to religious tolerance, linguistic uniformity and the question of humanitarianism.

The travels in question are the three journeys that the co-regent undertook in the eastern part of the Habsburg Monarchy: the Banat (17 April to 9 June 1768), Hungary (23 April to 19 June 1770), the Banat again, together with Transylvania and Galicia (6 May to 13 September 1773). These travels had the same aim as the Emperor’s earlier visits to Bohemia and Moravia (6 to 14 October 1764,\footnote{Wandruszka 1965, Vol. 1. 107. The diaries of Archduke Leopold: Bleckwenn et al. 1984.} and 1 October to 17 November 1771\footnote{Weinzierl 1954 and see Brambilla 1790, 30–32.}) and the Austrian duchies (18 August to 7 November 1779), namely, to get acquainted with the various lands that constituted the Habsburg Monarchy. This emphasis on personal experience was a new element in Habsburg rule. The three journeys under consideration provided the Emperor with his first impressions of these vital regions. These
territories included border areas that had been subject to various experimental reforms from the mid-1760s onward. Between 1768 and 1773, Joseph II sought to visit these regions repeatedly in order to observe any changes that may have resulted from his reforms. These travels provided him with a chance to inspect and supervise, and helped crystalize the Emperor’s ideas about how to rule in the future.

In this paper, I seek to contrast and compare Joseph II’s notes in his travel diaries, that is, his personal opinions with the royal decrees that were issued in the Kingdom of Hungary, in Transylvania and in the Banat. The primary focus here is on the fields over which Joseph II exercised control during his co-regency, namely, military affairs: the effective protection of the Monarchy’s borders, matters relating to fortifications and the billeting of regiments. When on tour, however, Joseph II consciously examined the effects of Maria Theresa’s decrees on the individual regions, with special regard to everything that had to do with the economy. In general, the ideas that found expression in the Emperor’s iconic decrees such as the Edict of Toleration, his Language Decree and decrees concerning a uniform and rational state administration, not to mention his attempts to protect ordinary subjects are already present in one form or another in these travel diaries. Hence, these up to now relatively little known sources are crucial in understanding the inception of Joseph II’s future policies.

The travel diaries of these visits, although subjective, are a rich source material for the territory in question in the late 18th century. Joseph II kept these travel diaries during his journeys, and wrote into them daily. His notes were not just written for him but partly for the benefit and information of Maria Theresa. This is why a finalized version of them was always presented to Maria Theresa after the individual tours. After the death of Maria Theresa, Joseph II tellingly stopped the practice of keeping a travel journal.7 Joseph II did tour Hungary as sole ruler (25 April to 11 July 1783, 16 June to 14 October 1786) but he did not keep a travel diary for himself, hence these travels are not included here. His Bohemian and Moravian trips, as well as his visits to the other hereditary provinces are also omitted. These tours have not been sufficiently explored by historians and only a few travel diaries have been published.8

7 Kulcsár 2004b, 112, 115.
In the early stages of his travels, from 1765 onward, the co-regent not only handed over a copy of his travel diaries to Maria Theresa but also his reports as well. These were usually thematically organized: first, the current situation was described and then reform proposals were put forward. By this stage, Joseph II was able to compare and contrast reality with his own ideas and principles, and could propose changes on the basis of actual cases. However, it was not unknown for the Emperor to ignore specific local circumstances if it suited his argumentation.

These two types of sources (travel diaries and reports) give us an insight into the ideas of this emblematic figure of ‘enlightened absolutism’ at the turn of the 1760s and 1770s. It is informative to examine what new ideas were already incorporated into these sources. With the help of a few specific examples, it is also possible to show what experiences might have influenced Joseph II’s reform agenda. Here it is impossible to provide a comprehensive treatment of the subject.

The Emperor’s Journeys in Theory and Practice

The following data speak clearly of the importance of travel in Joseph II’s life: between 12 September 1765 and 20 February 1790 (during his time as co- and sole ruler) he spent 2,683 days out of the total of 8,928 days away from Vienna. This equals more than seven whole years. During this time, he travelled across Europe as well as within his own realms or was on military expeditions commanding his army. In other words, he spent every third day of his reign in one of his lands, on the Italian Peninsula, in France or Russia. The usual reasons given for this peripateticism are: his heartache caused by the loss of his beloved first wife, Isabella of Parma, who died on 27 November 1763; his way of avoiding from tedious court ceremonies and etiquette; his uneasy relationship with his mother and co-regent, Maria Theresa. Besides visiting his siblings abroad, his foreign travels gave him a chance to get to know the workings of other states and collect first-hand knowledge about governmental practices, economic theories and methods. Of all his journeys, the impact his travels in France had on Joseph II is the best explored. Nonetheless, in addition to his foreign tours Joseph systematically travelled across his own lands from an early age. The aim of the latter visits was to acquaint himself with his realms. His image of the ideal

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9 May 1985, 4, for corrected data see Kulcsár 2004a, 40–41.
10 Kulcsár 2004b, 109–110, with further references, mostly in German.
11 Wagner 1965.
monarch, induced by his education, was of a ruler who gets to know his own dominions intimately through personal visits.

This ideal was shared by some contemporary monarchs who conducted regular inspection tours in their countries. Johann Josef Khevenhüller-Metsch, the Imperial Majordomo of Maria Theresa noted in his diary that the example of the Prussian King, Frederick II inspired Joseph II, particularly when it came to military reviews (Revuereisen, Inspektionsreisen). Frederick II visited his regiments annually and took part in military exercises. Another ruler famous for travelling was Catherine II, who toured Russia extensively with the express purpose of getting to know it.

Joseph II viewed ruling as a ‘profession’, and the ideas of service and improvement were central to his thinking. One of the key means he applied to reach these ends was to travel widely and collect information on the local effects of centrally administered government policy. Already at the end of 1765, he produced a political memorandum (Denkschrift) about the Habsburg Monarchy. In the 17 points contained in this writing, the young and ambitious Emperor provided a detailed and thorough analysis of his realms but also explored his own role in their government. In the penultimate Point 16, he emphasized the importance of journeys for a monarch. By this, however, he did not mean the traditional representative imperial visits. Owing to the central importance of this source it is quoted at some length:

> it is vitally important to observe what is going on politically, in civilian life and in the military sphere. I am not so naive as to believe that my personal presence and inspection will solve every problem. However, the ones that are solved are worth the trouble. We are presented with a favourable though veiled picture; nonetheless, if we keep returning differences will emerge: we hear the complaints, get to know our subjects, assess their potential use, judge the conduct of others, observe the physical attributes of the countryside and the settlements and finally form our own opinion of the capabilities and diligence of our ministers [administrators].

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12 Khevenhüller & Schlitter 1917, 187; Hinrichs 1940, 105; Pfeiffer 1965, 27 29–70.
15 Arneth 1868, 359.
16 Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Habsburg-Lothringische Hausarchive, Hausarchiv, Hofreisen Kt. 1. Nr. 4. fol. 3r–v.
Apart from a theoretical exploration of the subject, the Emperor also drew up a programme of travel. He summarized his own approach and provided a timetable for his future visits:

It is obvious to me why it is useful to travel and see our own lands and those of our neighbours, if we apply true means, carefully remove all obstacles and if the traveller possesses the mental and physical ability to forgo every comfort and pleasure and seek solely what is useful and necessary.¹⁷

The co-regent produced a gruelling plan. He was to tour Bohemia and Moravia in 1766, and the southern frontier (the Banat and Slavonia) in 1768. Other parts of his realms were to be visited in the course of four lengthy tours. These were all considered ‘essentiellement necessaire’, and pencilled in yearly for the period of 1769–1772. Joseph II explained the intensity of his travel plan by the peace that prevailed in Europe at the time, his good health and his belief that his presence in Vienna was unnecessary. He proposed to visit the Austrian Netherlands in a journey that was also to include a two-week stay in the Netherlands. The second tour hoped to take in Inner Austria and the Italian Peninsula, while the aim of the third trip was to see Croatia and the Littoral. The fourth journey was to Transylvania and parts of Hungary.¹⁸ Joseph II laid special importance on surveying the border regions of his realms. His itinerary was so detailed that it included specific roads. This shows how methodically Joseph II planned to acquaint himself with his provinces.

**Joseph II’s Travels within the Habsburg Monarchy**

It is important to emphasize that Joseph II’s habit of travelling as Count Falkenstein only applied to trips abroad. Within the Habsburg Monarchy, he toured as himself. His so-called ‘inspection tours’ (the name itself was borrowed from Frederick II), however, are hardly known and have not been properly studied by historians.¹⁹ These travels were nothing like the stunning ceremonial journeys undertaken by some of his contemporary rulers whose aim was to impress. These ceremonial, courtly visits were ‘official’ and for the most politically motivated. The Habsburg court itself was sometimes away from Vienna. In these cases the ruler travelled with a vast entourage. The trips followed a given ceremonial blue-print and cost enormous amounts of money.

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¹⁷ Ibid.
¹⁸ On his programme, see also Beales 1987, 251–255.
The occasions for such visits were royal and imperial coronations, the ceremonial opening or closing of diets, and royal weddings. The Imperial Majordomo’s Office (Obersthofmeisteramt) was responsible for the organization of these ceremonial trips. It coordinated the work of other Viennese central court authorities. The Office of the Master of the Horse (Oberststallmeister) delivered the required number of carriages and horses, while the Office of the Senior Court Marshall (Obersthofmarschall) arranged the accommodation. The Imperial War Council secured the routes, provided guards and gun salutes.

Joseph II’s tours within his lands could not have been more different from the practice described above. The Emperor arranged his travels in such a way that they would cause as little disruption in the territories he visited as possible. Joseph II used the term ‘incognito’ (‘in dem vollkommensten Incognito’) to indicate this special way of organizing and undertaking his journeys at home. It was not meant to conceal his real identity. His aim was to avoid the cumbersome ceremonial occasions that were part and parcel of representative visits. He disliked ceremony and thought it would unnecessarily burden the inhabitants of the lands concerned. Moreover, travelling ‘incognito’ in this understanding was probably to his liking: “Only the greats possess the ability to change their existence and circumstances and if they so wish become little or common individuals while no matter what the others do they always remain commoners.”

This is why he opted for a simple carriage and took only a small entourage. Joseph II strictly forbade the representatives of the Estates and local authorities to greet him with speeches and gun salutes or express their respect in any other ways. He ordered his accommodation to be in inns, at the local priest’s house or in buildings owned by the Royal or Imperial Chamber. He also decreed that no special road or bridge repairs should be carried out on the occasion of his visit. The Emperor specifically instructed the local authorities how many horses to supply and where to obtain them. He also specified how much would be paid for his accommodation and the food consumed. From 1768 on, he allowed his subjects to present signed petitions (Memorialien).

From the 1770s on, the co-regent increasingly relied on the Imperial War Council in organizing his travels. For instance, when the route of a trip was to be decided, it was the job of a military

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20 Arneth 1868, 359.
officer to test the planned route. It was horse regiments that supplied the necessary horses, particularly in the military frontier zone, an area bordering the Ottoman empire which was under direct military control. Normally, it was regimental commanders or colonels whose task it was to escort the Emperor. The military guarded Joseph II’s baggage, his lodgings at night and also served as his personal guards. Nonetheless, it was the civilian authorities (counties, cities) of a given territory that provided coachmen and (between 54 and 74) horses to pull the Emperor’s 9–13 carriages. It was also the latter’s job to secure enough food for 30–50 people at the designated accommodation each evening.\textsuperscript{22}

\textbf{The Duties of the Co-Regent and the Decrees of Maria Theresa}

As co-regent, Joseph II’s main area of concern was the military. As a natural consequence of this, the Emperor’s primary aim was to survey the state of military regiments and fortifications within his realms. All three journeys under consideration concerned the defence of the Habsburg Monarchy’s borders. In these cases, the Emperor focused on border defence. It was particularly so in the Banat (a territory he visited on all three trips), and Transylvania; both regions bordered on the Ottoman Empire. Amongst Joseph II’s travel companions were expert military engineers such as General Ferdinand Philipp Harsch, Colonel Claude-Benoit de Querlonde and General Karl Clemens Pellegrini. With them, the co-regent visited and inspected the following fortifications that were in the process of being rebuilt or further fortified: Szeged, Arad [Oradea]\textsuperscript{23}, Temesvár [Timişoara], Pétervárad [Petrovaradin], Gyulafehérvár [Alba Iulia]; and in Slavonia: Eszék [Osijek], Bród [Slavonski Brod], Racsa [Stara Rača], Ógradiska [Stara Gradiška]. In Hungary and Transylvania, the Emperor paid a visit to the fortresses of Komárom [Komárno] and Győr but also took in such strategically insignificant but formerly important strongholds such as Munkács [Mukachevo], Huszt [Khust], Lipótvár [Leopóldov], Szamosújvár [Gherla] and Marosvásárhely [Târgu Mureş]. The Emperor penned or dictated detailed notes about these fortifications ranging from their quality down to the state of the moat. Joseph II judged the fortifications of Arad and Szeged totally inadequate, and found plenty to criticise in Temesvár, Pétervárad, Eszék, Bród and

\\textsuperscript{22} Kulcsár 2004a, 79–164.
\textsuperscript{23} A settlement’s current name is given in square brackets if the settlement in question is not on the territory of present-day Hungary.
Ógradiska as well. He often selected high-ranking officers to travel with. Field-Marshall Count Franz Moritz Lacy (the President of the Imperial War Council) and General Count Friedrich Moritz Nostitz accompanied the Emperor on military exercises and parades, which gave them a chance to assess the state of individual regiments. Joseph II regularly called on cavalry and infantry regiments but in Arad and Pétervárad he also inspected artillery regiments and units. He often commanded his troops in person, and was a very critical observer of the officers and the recruits. He paid attention to the horses as well. The border region was of special interest in the Banat (where these years saw the inception of the idea of a purely military frontier zone) and Transylvania, where military frontier regiments were organized between 1762 and 1764. In both cases, the travellers came to the conclusion that the system of border defences needed improving. In 1768, Joseph II was exercised by this issue and made specific proposals concerning how the Habsburg Monarchy might better defend its borders against a potential Ottoman attack.

It is a well-known fact that in 1766, during his first inspection tour, Joseph II visited the battle fields of the Seven Years’ War.\textsuperscript{24} From his report on his travels in the Banat, it also transpires why he did so. He was no mere ‘tourist’, nor did he want to pay his respects to the achievements of former military grandees (particularly Eugene of Savoy). He was there to learn, specifically to learn from the strengths and weaknesses of former military practices, strategies and tactics. When the Emperor took in the battle fields of the Seven Years’ War, he was in fact considering the chances of a Prussian (or even Austrian) attack. He had a similar motivation in 1768, when he looked at the major scenes of the war against the Ottomans at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries and the War of 1737–1739. The details concerning this aspect of his journey were scattered throughout his diaries but in his report he summarized them: he considered the quality of the roads, whether it was easy to move cannons on the terrain and how defendable a given territory was. In the case of the Banat, the co-regent worked out a specific military tactic and assigned various positions to individual regiments in the eventuality of a war against the Ottoman Empire. In case of an offensive, he believed it was of vital importance to take Old Orsova and the isle of Orsova since these Ottoman strongholds secured control of the Danube.\textsuperscript{25} Another target was Belgrad, which

\textsuperscript{24} May 1985, 70.
\textsuperscript{25} Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Habsburg-Lothringische Hausarchive, Hausarchiv, Hofreisen Kt. 3. alter Fasc. 3. fol. 362r–370r. Joseph II’s report on military affairs, also see his diary: Hofreisen Kt. 2. alter Fasc. 3. fol. 13r–v. Zsupanek [Jupanic], 30. April 1768 and Dubova, 1. May 1768.
Krisztina Kulcsár

had a key position in terms of the navigation of the Danube. An inspection that was carried out by boat showed that the strong current made it impossible to take Belgrad from the river side. These personal observations were to be of benefit later. In 1788, when a war was indeed being waged against the Ottomans, Joseph II’s earlier plans were influential. A surprise attack against Belgrad failed. The Habsburg troops were gathering near Pancova and Mehadia but they were spread over a long strip of territory and were moving too slowly for a surprise attack. Joseph II and his co-travellers had established in 1768 that the weakest part of the Habsburg frontier was at Mehadia, and it was precisely at that spot that the Habsburg forces were subject to a considerable Ottoman onslaught twenty years later.

Another focus of Joseph II’s early travels was his concern to establish how efficient the civilian administration was. He was particularly interested in the implementation of decrees that had been issued in Vienna. The subject that especially stands out was the Urbaria, the central regulation of seigneurial rights over serfs, which began in 1766. Joseph II witnessed various phases of this long drawn-out process within Hungary, whilst in Transylvania he was confronted by the negative effects of the lack of such regulation. The Emperor was most inquisitive about the living conditions of recent settlers in the Banat, a territory which was still only sparsely populated. He insisted on professionalism in all fields of life, especially when it came to the economy. He was always seeking out the company of experts who could inform him about numerous aspects of the conditions of a given land. In his diaries, he devoted pride of place to industries that were promoted by the cameralists. These German and Austrian economists believed that a state’s strength was in its wealth and this wealth could be maximized with the help of export subsidies and the promotion of domestic industries. Industries of key importance were, for example, silk production, forestry and mining. Both Maria Theresa and Joseph II vigorously promoted silk production and the plantation of mulberry trees, as well as the cultivation of industrial crops such as flax cotton and dyer’s woad (isatis tinctoria). These were to provide raw materials for budding Austrian industries. Whether on horseback or travelling by carriage, the Emperor always made a special point of inspecting the woodlands and informed himself about the state of the lucrative lumber industry, a steady source of income for the Treasury. Even at the stage of preparation for the individual trips, state-run

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26 Ibid. fol. 33r. Zimony [Zemun], 24. May 1768.
27 Beales 2009, 555–582.
mines were invariably included in the itinerary. Hence, Joseph II visited the iron mines in Zalatna [Zlatna], the salt mine in Sóvár [Solivar] in Upper Hungary, various salt mines in Transylvania like Parajd [Praid], Torda [Turda], Désakna [Ocna Dejului], Rónaszék [Coştiui] and precious metal mines in Szászka [Sasca Montană] and Szlatina [Slatina-Nera] in the Banat. He also showed an interest in the social and economic conditions of his subjects. Consequently, he went to see orphanages, workhouses, prisons and schools. At the latter, he paid attention to their educational achievements as well as the living conditions of the pupils and the state of the buildings.

**The Evolving Priorities of Joseph II as Sole Ruler**

Joseph II's method of government was characterised by centralisation, attempts at introducing uniformity, clear guiding principles and the stamping out of exemptions and immunities. The Emperor had already given expression to these aims during his travels in the various lands of the Habsburg Monarchy. As noted above, during his co-regency Joseph II visited the Banat three times. This region had a special status amongst Habsburg provinces. After 1718 (the year of its re-conquest from the Ottomans), this territory was ruled directly by the monarch who was also the only landowner there. The province was run directly from Vienna by the central imperial authorities. However, these authorities lacked experience and knowledge of the area. Both in 1768 and 1770, the Emperor displayed his dissatisfaction with this state of affairs. He was also unhappy with the local authorities that were busy undermining each other. Joseph II's visit of 1768 resulted in an inquiry that dragged on until 1774. The purpose was to find out why the Emperor's instructions concerning the lack of formalities during his tours had not been observed.\(^28\) In order to improve the administration of the region, Joseph II proposed alternatives to Maria Theresa.\(^29\)

He suggested that state-owned land should be sold off, a suggestion he repeated in 1773. He also proposed the militarization of the whole province. The third option he offered was the least practical. It was merely to improve the existing arrangement. However, Maria Theresa opted for this third option: she intended to remedy the situation by a change of personnel and the reform of the local administration. As a result, the mostly Vienna-based Count Perlas, the president of

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\(^{28}\) Kulcsár 2004a, 315–329.  
the administration of the Banat was pensioned off.\textsuperscript{30} His successor was Count Karl Ignaz Clary-Aldringen.\textsuperscript{31} With a few exceptions, most administrators were dismissed as a result of Joseph II’s report. This tinkering, nevertheless, did not solve the underlying fundamental problems. The quality and efficiency of the administration did not improve. The new administrators again were busy discrediting each other.\textsuperscript{32} Joseph II witnessed this in person in 1773. Despite the reform plans coming from Vienna, the efficiency of the administration hinged on reliable and effective people on the ground. Count Clary permanently feuded with his underlings, who in turn complained about him to the State Council (\textit{Staatsrat}).\textsuperscript{33} This state of affairs was deemed unacceptable.\textsuperscript{34} As a result, state-owned land was put up for sale, the Hungarian county system was introduced and the province was incorporated into the Kingdom of Hungary in 1778.\textsuperscript{35}

Joseph II was particularly struck by the various legal jurisdictions that co-existed in Transylvania. This might have driven him to try to abolish this colourful patchwork of legal entities and govern Transylvania as a single, uniformly governed province. He suggested that Transylvania (with the exception of the military frontier zone) should be united with the counties of the eastern part of Hungary as well as those of Maramaros and the Banat. He named Nagyvárad [Oradea] as the centre of this planned larger territorial unit. He also considered merging the Chanceries of Hungary and Transylvania (a plan that was indeed realized in 1782\textsuperscript{36}). The Emperor envisaged that this new territorial unit would exist in a personal union with the Kingdom of Hungary, hence practically have a similar relationship to Hungary as Croatia. He argued for this scheme by claiming that such an arrangement would provide uniform rights and obligations to the inhabitants who currently were made up of various denominations and ethnic groups enjoying

\textsuperscript{30} Don Francesco de Paula Ramon comte Vilana Perlas-Rialp (1704–1773), as president of the administration between 1753 and 1768. See Feneşan 1997, 84–85.
\textsuperscript{32} Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Habsburg-Lotringsische Hausarchive, Hausarchiv, Hofreisen Kt. 7. alter Fasc. 7. fol. 31r-v., 29r. Kvin [Kovin], 15. May 1773.
\textsuperscript{33} Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Kabinettsarchiv, Staatsrat, Protokoll 1774. Nr. 20.
\textsuperscript{34} Szentkláray 1879, 224–225; and Pietsch 1996.
\textsuperscript{36} Beales 2009, 340.
different legal rights. He identified these differences as the main source of unrest, jealousy and strife. His advisers in the State Council (Staatsrat) opposed his proposal, and argued against it by referring precisely to the heterogeneous nature of the territory.

Joseph II’s idea cannot be dismissed as simply ill-informed or naïve. Its primary source was the principle that Joseph II so passionately espoused during his co-regency and after he became Emperor: the idea of a unified state. For such a uniform and unified state, it was an anathema to have regions of special legal standing such as the Banat or the various ethnic and religious groups of Transylvania. This dislike was behind Joseph II’s proposal to sell off land in the Banat and form private landholdings similar to those that existed in the other provinces of the Habsburg Monarchy. It was this consideration that prompted him to suggest the introduction of private landownership in the ‘mixed’ territory of the proposed Transylvania–Maramaros–Banat, although he surely did not want to replicate the situation in the Kingdom of Hungary where powerful Estates were a political force to be reckoned with. There is another example that illustrates that the Emperor was not so vehemently opposed to the Estates. He reached a similar conclusion after a visit to Galicia. In his suggestions concerning the administration of this newly acquired land, he planned to give an important role to the Estates. Maria Theresa, who spent much of her reign wrestling with the Estates, was not surprisingly against this notion.

Joseph II’s knowledge of his lands came to the fore in his new system of administration set up in 1785. A new system of administrative districts was introduced in Hungary, Transylvania as well as in Lombardy and the Austrian Netherlands. The Emperor had an awareness and knowledge of the individual territories’ agricultural and industrial potential together with the ethnic and religious composition their population. As a result, the freshly chosen commissar of each district was handed a detailed set of instructions with specific information on various aspects of his district from local roads to municipal leaders, from the navigability of the waterways to the economic activities of the inhabitants.

37 Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Habsburg-Lothringische Hausarchive, Hausarchiv, Hofreisen Kt. 8. alter Fasc. 7. fol. 608v–609r. Only a few historians have mentioned this plan of the co-regent: Arneth 1879, 153.; Teutsch 1907, 159.; Schuller 1967, 309–310.
38 Rumpel 1946, 48 and Jordan 1967, 82.
41 Hajdu 1982, 207–220.
During his journeys, Joseph II paid close attention to the administrators and the administrative structure of the lands he toured. He was known to take notes at audiences and informal talks, including comments on the local officials' abilities, the potential capacity in which they could serve and their opinion on various subjects. These meticulously drawn character sketches that were laced with the irony so typical of the Emperor were presented to Maria Theresa: Count Lajos Kálnoky, High Sheriff of Torda County was in Joseph II's opinion “a young man who might have a good disposition but whom the Almighty has not blessed with enough talent, and he is unlikely ever to possess enough of it”. Georg Schell, a high-ranking Sekler official in Segesvár was characterised as “a fat man whom I regard to be knowledgeable about the law but nothing much else”.\footnote{Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Habsburg-Lothringische Hausarchive, Hausarchiv, Hofreisen Kt. 8. alter Fasc. 7. fol. 1039v, 1041r.} Finally, the Emperor described Count József Apor as “a bit batty, just like me; [he] has spoken so well and articulately about his position that I am convinced that he is not mad”.\footnote{Ibid. Hofreisen Kt. 7. alter Fasc. 7. fol. 259r. Marosvásárhely [Târgu Mureş], 11. July 1773.} It is obvious from these remarks that Joseph II possessed an ability to gauge his subjects and form an opinion of them. However, in order to be able to do this, personal acquaintance was vital. For instance, on 5 July 1773 the Emperor unexpectedly turned up at a regular Monday session of the Transylvanian Chamber (\textit{Thesaurariatus}). He was there from 10am until 1pm. During this time, he observed the session and took notes.\footnote{Ibid. fol. 224r., 230r–231r. Nagyszeben [Sibiu], 5. July 1773.} On the following day, he appeared at a session of the provincial government (\textit{Gubernium}) where he was informed about the state of local affairs. He was also presented with a Latin summary of the issues under discussion and again made his own observations.\footnote{Ibid. fol. 232r, 233r–235v. Nagyszeben [Sibiu], 6. July 1773.} He found the administration unsatisfactory: the councillors were bogged down by too many insignificant cases. The Emperor also criticized the fact that, unlike in Vienna, the cases were not dealt with in a given way and order. He hoped that replacing the current councillors with reliable and hard-working ones together with the introduction of Viennese bureaucratic procedures would solve these problems in Transylvania.\footnote{Ibid. Hofreisen Kt. 8. alter Fasc. 7. fol. 621r.}

Joseph II mentioned the fact that the practice of the principle of religious parity (\textit{Proportio Geometrica}) in Transylvania made administering the province even more cumbersome. He, as always, was against any type of exemptions. Then again, if these exemptions put inept and
unsuitable people in high positions, his opinion was that this system “should be abolished and in the future always the worthiest should be given offices irrespective of what the accepted religions in the land were”. This statement already foreshadows the Emperor’s policy during his rule as Emperor that a candidate, providing he was suitable, did not have to be a Catholic in order to qualify for an office.

Personal audiences made it possible for the Emperor to meet and quiz lower-ranking officials about their superiors and any matters of concern. Joseph II was, of course, not uncritical of the information so gathered. He preferred to rely on personal impressions collected during ad hoc meetings and official hearings. During the latter, he fired off a list of questions to the officials and expected practical, useful answers and proposals in return. Joseph II would draw up a different list of queries for different office holders: one for councillors at the Transylvanian Gubernium, another for local High Sheriffs and so on. A 14-point questionnaire was specially designed by the Emperor for military officers. These varied questions covered all sorts of fields. Once back in Vienna, Joseph II would then report upon them to the State Council (Staatsrat). These reports also contained suggestions on how the administration could be reformed with special reference to financial matters.

These personal inspection tours often had an immediate effect: in 1768 in the Banat and in 1774 in Transylvania, the Emperor’s visit resulted in a considerable change of personnel. Several high-ranking officials, high sheriffs and administrators were dismissed, transferred or reassigned to a new post. From that time on, the key positions in the government of Transylvania were filled by suitable locals instead of the earlier practice of appointing people from outside the province, ‘foreigners’ who were placed there from Vienna. It is clear that the new administrators were people whom Joseph II praised in his travel diaries. These were individuals whose aptitude for the positions he had personally established. These gifted administrators, some of them Protestant, acquired leading positions in 1784.

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47 Ibid. fol. 623v.
48 The questionnaires: Ibid. fol. 1264r–1267r. “Puncta super quibus quislibet Tabularum Praeses, Supremus Comes, ac officialis Majestati Suæ Caesareae plenam informationem, opinionemque Suam conscientiose scripto exponet”; ibid. fol. 1251r–1252v. “Puncta, worüber jeglicher der Herrn Thesaurariats Räthe allehöchst Sr. des Kaisers Maj. die vollständigen Auskünften nach seinen gewissenhaften Befund und die pflichtmässige Wohlmeynung schriftlich zu eröfnen haben wird.”
49 The order of Maria Theresia on the personnel changes in Transylvania: Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára (Budapest), Erdélyi országos kormányhatósági levéltárak, Gubernium Transylvanicum Levéltára, Gubernium Transylvanicum (in politicis), Ügyiratok (F 46) 1774/6092.
50 Order on the personnel changes of 1784: Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára (Budapest), Erdélyi kancelláriai levéltár, Erdélyi kancellária regisztratúrája, Acta generalia (B 2) 1784/1311.
Religious Tolerance

It is a well-known fact that Joseph II was tolerant in terms of religion. In his private life, he was a practising Catholic who took his faith seriously but as a ruler when it came to the relationship between state and church he promoted a policy of tolerance. His travel diaries are testaments to his openness in this field: he visited churches of various denominations, and was outraged if representatives of minority religious groups were mistreated. When in Debrecen the Protestants complained that they dared not have a Protestant version of the Bible imported from abroad as the Jesuit censors in Pozsony [Bratislava] would impound it on religious grounds, the Emperor had the following to say: “Bestialiter illi agunt, because if I have an Ottoman serf, I must allow him to use the Koran, if a Jewish one then the Talmud.” He produced the first version of his idea of how to practise tolerance in 1768. This was triggered by a comment on the non-Catholics of Hungary (mostly Protestants). Joseph II argued in favour of allowing them the free practice of their beliefs, although at the time they were allowed to practise their faith only at designated (so-called ‘articulated’) places. He was against strict restrictions since he thought that restrictions on religious liberty led to more zealous behaviour, as had been shown in the case of the Catholics in the Netherlands. He detected this very situation in Hungary, but in this case the statement applied to the Protestants. Another proposal rested on impressions gathered during his journeys: wherever he visited Protestant places of worship, he found them small and dilapidated. This is why he suggested that it should be made easier for Protestants to obtain permission to repair their places of worship or to build new ones. At the time, obtaining these permissions was subject to a lengthy and tedious process in the course of which the community had to produce various applications. It is clear from the arguments Joseph II used that his concern about the Protestants

53 Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Habsburg-Lothringische Hausarchive, Hausarchiv, Hofreisen Kt. 2. alter Fasc. 3. fol. 263r. Joseph II's report on religion.
was that the restrictions under which they were forced to operate might well make them less reliable subjects. This went counter to the principles of the ruler who claimed that his erstwhile ambition was to serve his lands and do everything for the good of his subjects. In 1768, the State Council (Staatsrat) did instruct Prince Georg Adam Starhemberg to hold a joint session with the Hungarian Chancery in order to discuss this ‘topic of extreme importance’ and draft a common opinion on the subject that could be presented to the ruler. At that time, Joseph II’s proposals did not lead to any tangible changes. It would have gone against Maria Theresa’s strict Catholicism. However, they provided early evidence of the Emperor’s thinking on the issue and hinted at his future Decree of Tolerance, which regulated private and public religious practice in his realms in 1781. The Edict of Toleration gave Protestants the opportunity to hold public office, which had not been allowed before. When we consider the Protestants who reached high office (for example, such as the above mentioned office of district commissars) during the reign of Joseph II, it becomes obvious that the Emperor had met many of them personally during his journeys. He established in person their suitability for state service.

Linguistic Uniformity

In the course of his tours, Joseph II not only came across communities that were mixed religiously but encountered many different groups speaking various languages. He knew from first-hand experience how tricky it was to find a common language with his subjects. He needed interpreters when he communicated with them. This plethora of languages created particular problems in processing the numerous petitions with which the Emperor was presented during his travels. In 1773 in Transylvania, he received altogether 16,148 petitions on countless issues: military service, land disputes, peasant complaints, job applications, etc. These petitions, of course, helped Joseph

56 Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Kabinettarchiv, Staatsrat, Protokoll 1768. Nr. 2064.
58 For example the Calvinist Farkas Bánffy was nominated as high commissioner in Transylvania: Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára (Budapest), Erdélyi kancelláriai levéltár, Erdélyi kancellária regisztratúrája, Acta generalia (B 2) 1778/1226. and later as president of the Transylvanian Chamber: Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára (Budapest), Erdélyi országos kormányhatósági levéltárak, Gubernium Transylvanicum Levéltára, Gubernium Transylvanicum (in politicos), Ügyiratok (F 46) 1787/4160.
60 Kulcsár 2001.
II form an understanding of the issues that exercised the inhabitants of his lands. Nevertheless, he needed officials who were familiar with the languages spoken at any given locality. The complications that resulted from this state of affairs might have been the source of the Emperor's desire to introduce an imperial language (*Reichssprache, Universalsprache*). Beforehand, the administration of the hereditary provinces was conducted in German, but in Hungary and Transylvania the official language was Latin. This caused difficulties in communication between the various authorities. It also made it hard to produce uniform minutes, tables and statements. This situation led the Emperor to decree in 1784 that German should be the official language of government in the military and civilian administration as well in the judiciary in all of his lands, including Hungary.\(^61\) This meant not only that the various Hungarian authorities had to communicate with the central offices in German but that they had to correspond with each other in German too. From 1787 on, German became the language of law courts and legal documents. This meant that only those who spoke adequate German could be employed in central Hungarian offices, as well as at county level, and in cities and towns. At middle and higher levels of education, German was to be taught instead of Latin. It is not hard to see how this decree was inspired by Joseph II’s experiences in his multilingual realms. He was driven by ideas of uniformity and utility but did not count on their psychological effects: he did not anticipate the reaction of the Hungarian Estates despite the fact that he had personal as well as indirect knowledge of them. He was well-aware of these Estates’ fixation on traditions, including the use of Latin in official documents, but he disregarded it in his search for a higher purpose. The language decree in Hungary was interpreted not only as the abolition of Latin in Hungary but as an attack on Hungarian as a language and as an affront to ancient Hungarian customs. The Hungarian Estates also feared that when sufficiently ‘Germanized’ they could be integrated into the hereditary provinces and that posts in the local Hungarian administration would be filled by ‘foreigners’, potentially Austrian administrators. It would be a mistake to see the language decree as one of Joseph II’s pet ideas that derived exclusively from his travelling experiences. The precursor of the decree was probably a proposal by Prince Wenzel Anton Kaunitz from 1761. In his proposal, Kaunitz suggested to Maria Theresa that the inhabitants of the Austrian Netherlands should be obliged to teach their

children German, otherwise they would not be allowed to hold office. At the time, the Queen rejected this idea. Nonetheless, this principle of language learning might have been taken later to its logical conclusion by Joseph II in his language decree. In 1777, in Hungary the so called Ratio Educationis, based on the Austrian Allgemeine Schulordnung of 1774, prescribed the teaching of German at schools. Hence, the Emperor might have thought that there were enough German-speaking people available in the country. His idea of utility was interpreted completely differently by contemporary Hungarians, who took it as a frontal attack. Many construed that the decree would abolish Hungarian (and other languages) in everyday communication as well. In another rescript on the subject, Joseph II emphasized that the language decree served the greater public good, and highlighted the point that the decree was silent on the subject of the use of the inhabitants’ mother tongues. As before, teaching in primary schools continued to be conducted in the children’s vernacular.

**In the Name of Humanitarianism**

Amongst social institutions, it was prisons and workhouses that fascinated Joseph II the most. In Temesvár [Timișoara] prisoners were placed in a dungeon. This, unlike many other prisons, the Emperor found dry and adequately spacious. 18th-century prisons were not designed to house large numbers of inmates for a long period of time. The travel diary entries suggest that the visitors saw more than the usual number of prisoners in Temesvár. In May 1768, Joseph II was astonished to find, for example, in the above mentioned prison 171 civilian prisoners (31 of whom were women) and 80 prisoners of war. In the prison cells of Nagyvárad [Oradea] 70, mostly Romanian, criminals were waiting to be sentenced. Some of the prisoners, in the spirit of utility, were put to work. For instance, in Pétervárad [Petrovaradin] they powered the water works. Larger cities put convicts into workhouses (Domus Correctoria). In Brassó [Brașov], the building of the new workhouse,

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62 Kaunitz probably took his example from the practice of Stanisław Leszczyński, the former Polish king, who had prescribed on pain of punishment that after the issuing of his order on 16 November 1748, that every legal transaction, every contract, even the official drafts must be taken in French in his Duchy of Lorraine. (Balázs 1989, 1065.)


64 On prison conditions under Joseph II: Ammerer 2012, 88–92.


the housing of the prisoners within it and their working conditions all met with the Emperor’s approval. The majority of the convicts worked on the construction site. Joseph II praised the fact that they were “chained to the wheelbarrow and hence they are freer to move than had their ankles been in irons”. During his journeys, Joseph II was confronted with the practice of torture. In Transylvania two types of it were in use: a mild form where the person was only threatened with torture and another form, which was actually carried out with classical instruments of torture. As a horrible example, Joseph II wrote in detail about the case of a Romanian man who endured the whole process of torture from finger twisting to burning his chest and stomach, while three others bore witness against him. The person who was tortured suffered horrendously but refused to admit to the crime of which he was accused. He was allegedly the leader of a group of robbers who had burnt a woman to death in the course of a robbery. At the time, torture was not illegal in the Habsburg Monarchy. The influence of Beccaria’s ideas on punishment can be detected on the decree that abolished torture in the Banat and Galicia on 2 January 1776. The same issue was dealt with in Hungary and its constituent parts on 6 April the same year. A decree in 1769 ordered that the legal code, the *Constitutio criminalis Theresiana* (also known as *Nemesis Theresiana*) that was in force in the Austrian duchies, be adopted in Transylvania. The process of translation and modification took years, although the Transylvanians themselves were keen to have a unified system of justice that was codified in a legal code. The humanitarianism of Joseph II also comes through in his concern about the well-being of his subjects. This was one of the reasons why he rejected torture. He also preferred workhouses over overcrowded prisons. He was against the death penalty, and favoured useful work and productivity instead. Convicts worked on public projects such as the draining of marshes, building fortresses or were involved in *Schiffziehen*, the hard labour of pulling barges upriver. The latest research draws attention to the fact that in the course of the 1780s due to the inhuman conditions of prisons and of the notorious *Schiffziehen* more people actually died than the number of those executed in the course of the previous few decades.

69 In 1774, the translation was still unfinished: Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Kabinettsarchiv, Staatsrat, Protokoll 1774. Nr. 760.
Conclusion

Joseph II’s travels and the relevant sources illustrate how the Emperor tried to transcend the ethnic and religious divisions of his lands and sought to promote the greater public good and what he called the ‘happiness’ of his subjects. His experiences and his reactions to them were all voiced passionately, ironically, bitterly or even sometimes with humour in his travel diaries. All his projects promoted the enrichment, education and improved health of his subjects. His proposals were drafted in this spirit. This aim, however, often jarred with reality. It is a fact but Joseph II’s desire to do good remains unquestionable. His methods and individual policies naturally underwent considerable changes in the course of the 15 years of his co-regency and later during his sole rule. A strong common thread throughout his diaries and something that remained unchanged from the time of his early travels to his premature death, however, was his complete dedication, verging on mania, to his own vision of a meritocratic, unified state, which he strove to create, and his micromanagement of the process of creating it out of his disparate lands. No doubt, it was a key contributing factor to the failure of the Emperor’s mission.

Perhaps, given Joseph II’s controlling nature, it is appropriate to end this chapter with his own, somewhat fatalistic words. As his wrote to Franz Moritz Lacy, the president of the Imperial War Council in 1773:

During my tours, I observe, strive to inform myself and take notes [...]. I might benefit from this immediately but surely it will prove useful in the future. Then it might not. Everything depends on Providence but I will never regret having spent the trouble and many nice years on improving and instructing myself, and on collecting information that might be useful in the uncertain future.\textsuperscript{72}

Translated by Orsolya Szakály

\textsuperscript{72} Joseph II. to Lacy, Kolozsvár [Cluj], 26. June 1773. Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Habsburg-Lothringische Hausarchive, Hausarchiv, Sammelbände Kt. 72. Konv. 2. fol. 12r.
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Useful Lies:
The Limits of Enlightening the Common Man.
Frederick the Great and Franco-German Cultural Transfer

Nick Treuherz

This article asks if the role of the Enlightenment philosopher was, as understood by contemporaries, to work against elites, or to underpin them. Concentrating particularly on the arch-elitist Frederick the Great and his court philosophers, we will track the notion of the elite and their position as holders of truth and enlighteners. The central tenet of the debate will concern the notion of lying to the masses and the utility of truth. It will be shown that advocacy of absolute truth was rare and often dissimulated by philosophers keen to avoid censure. This dividing line will be used to show the cultural transfer of Francophone debates to the German intellectual sphere.

The connotation of the concept of ‘elite’ is determined by the context in which it is used. In current usage, talk of ‘elitism’ or ‘political elites’ instantly brings forward notions of unearned privilege and inequality. However, an ‘elite athlete’ or an ‘elite soldier’ connotes exceptional talent and merited success. What lies at the crux of this dichotomy is perhaps equality of opportunity. In the Enlightenment era, talk of equal opportunities was rare. Elitism did not carry its modern negative connotation. Yet the notions of the masses and the people certainly did. The people always exist in a binary relationship with ‘leaders’. But what about equality? Diderot and d’Alembert’s Encyclopédie defined ‘natural equality’ as:

that which is found among all men solely by the constitution of their nature. This equality is the principle and foundation of liberty . . . Since human nature is the same in all men, it is clear that according to
natural law everyone must value and treat other people as any other beings who are naturally equal to himself, that is to say, as men like himself.¹

This definition represents the traditional natural law conception of all men sharing an essentially equal constitution and a consequent duty of care. Political elites did not widely share this idealistic view of the masses as peers, and, as we will see, state paternalism was a useful notion behind which tyrannical elites could hide. If natural equality could be acknowledged, social equality certainly could not. The notion of elitism is a useful dividing line then, which can be applied to gauge the extent to which we can consider a philosopher’s political outlook to transcend the hierarchical social orders of the absolutism of their age. Of course, the fraught relationship between the so-called elites and the masses was not a new phenomenon. Horace’s infamous odi profanum vulgus et arceo (I hate the rabble and keep them away) shows the conflict is perennial. Our study is therefore limited to the eighteenth century.

In this essay, we will consider whether certain eighteenth-century philosophers viewed the ‘project’ of the Enlightenment as an opportunity for all, or whether they considered that the advances of philosophy and science should be restricted to an elite. To do this, we will focus on the French philosophes and the court of Frederick II, King of Prussia.

Recent scholarship of the Enlightenment has been dominated by Jonathan Israel’s project of defining the ‘Radical Enlightenment’.² However, the precise characteristics of what constitutes radicalism can sometimes be more transient than one might wish. One dividing line could be seen in the utility of lies, or the absolute necessity of truth. As one indicative source on the issue, we can usefully consult the Encyclopédie article ‘Lies’, written by Jaucourt, which states that there is a distinction to be made between lying and speaking falsehoods, between ‘lying’ and ‘uttering a falsehood’:

Lying is a dishonest and condemnable act, but we can utter a casual falsehood; we can utter one which is permissible, praiseworthy, and even necessary. Consequently, a falsehood that the circumstances render as such, must not be confounded with a lie, which reveals a weak soul or a vicious character. We must not therefore accuse of lying those who use ingenious fictions or fables in order to teach, to protect the innocence of someone, to calm an enraged person ready to hurt us, or to help a sick person accept

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¹ Diderot & d’Alembert 1969, I, 1100. Art. ‘Egalité naturelle’. Original: “Celle qui est entre tous les hommes par la constitution de leur nature seulement. Cette égalité est le principe & le fondement de la liberté . . . Puisque la nature humaine se trouve la même dans tous les hommes, il est clair que selon le droit naturel, chacun doit estimer & traiter les autres comme autant d’êtres qui lui sont naturellement égaux, c’est-à-dire qui sont hommes aussi bien que lui.” All translations are my own.
² Israel 2002; Israel 2006; Israel 2011.
treatment, or to hide state secrets which must not be revealed to the enemy, or any similar cases where legitimate and entirely innocent use can be obtained for ourselves or others.3

Eighteenth-century discourse thus distinguished between lying and a fiction designed to teach, protect innocence or avoid conflict. There existed a defence of falsehoods when they are meant well and will procure legitimate and entirely innocent utility.4 The question we will consider here, then, is what constituted utility, and who controlled the politics of knowledge.

This essay is not an answer to the question of how the philosophes, a diverse agglomeration of thinkers in any case, envisioned education of the masses, a task which has been done elsewhere.5 Neither is it a retelling of the responses to the question posed by the Berlin Académie's essay competition, “Is it useful to mislead the people?”6 Instead, we will consider the issue of the perceptions of the political and philosophical elite attitudes towards the ‘people’, with a focus on Frederick the Great, King of Prussia, and his philosophical interactions with the French philosophes. The paternalism of government, then, and its use of lies towards the governed are the subject of our analysis. Given the range of relations various philosophes held with this so-called Enlightened Despot, it is the constellation around the monarch upon which we will focus our study. In the Encyclopédie, the very notion of philosophe is defined as being a part of the world, and not a separate entity. Du Marsais even evokes the utilitarian aspect of the philosopher: “Our philosopher does not feel exiled in this world or believe he is in enemy territory . . . he wants to enjoy himself with others . . ., he is an honest man who aims to please and make himself useful.”7

Were the philosophes democratic? Elitist? Egalitarian? Was their aim to spread the ‘Enlightenment’s ideals’, in the broadest sense of the term? Or were they contemptuous of the uneducated masses? Of course, when we ask questions like these, the notion of taking different thinkers as a homogenous group of programmatic philosophes disintegrates. The differing

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3 Diderot & d’Alembert 1969, III, 845. Art. ‘mensonge’. Original: “Mentir est une action deshonnête & condamnable, mais on peut dire une fausseté indifférente; on en peut dire une qui soit permise, louable & même nécessaire: par conséquent une fausseté que les circonstances rendent telle, ne doit pas être confondue avec le mensonge, qui décele une ame foible, ou un caractère vicieux. Il ne faut donc point accuser de mensonge, ceux qui emploient des fictions ou des fables ingénieuses pour l’instruction, & pour mettre à couvert l’innocence de quelqu’un, comme aussi pour appaiser une personne furieuse, prête à nous blesser: pour faire prendre quelques remedes utiles à un malade; pour cacher les secrets de l’état, dont il importe de dérober la connoissance à l’ennemi, & autres cas semblables, dans lesquels on peut se procurer à soi-même, ou procurer aux autres une utilité légitime & entièrement innocente.”

4 Such a falsehood would be known as a ‘mensonge officieux’.

5 Payne 1976.


7 Diderot & d’Alembert 1969, II, 1368. Art. ‘philosophe’. Original: “Notre philosophe ne se croit pas en exil dans ce monde; il ne croit pas être en pays ennemi . . . il veut trouver du plaisir avec les autres . . . c’est un honnête homme qui veut plaire et se rendre utile.”
opinions mean we cannot ask such a leading question, and must concentrate on particular cases, so as not to impugn an entire category of thinkers.

A preliminary word about literacy and reading habits is also necessary. Although literacy figures for the past will always be estimates, it has been stated that in 1700, only 5% of the population of the German territories was literate (80,000–85,000). This situation did change through the course of the eighteenth century, however, and the same study estimates that 350,000–500,000 Germans could read in 1800 – though definitions of ‘literate’ vary widely. Ruppert estimates that by 1800, the literacy rate had risen to 30% of the population.\(^8\) There has been considerable academic focus on the growth of reading in Germany in the Enlightenment era. Catering initially to a very restricted number of literate people, the book trade grew massively throughout the century, with exponential growth from the 1760s onwards. Despite the initial low literacy rates, there are many other factors which point to an increasing engagement with philosophical works. The spread of reading and books manifested itself in Germany in the rapid expansion of reading societies, known as Lesegesellschaften. By the end of the eighteenth century, there were more than 400 such groups in Germany.\(^9\) These functioned on the principle that their members bought material collectively thereby giving them access to material which would otherwise have been restricted to wealthy private libraries. Thus when considering philosophers’ claims about the reading habits of the masses, we must keep this context in mind.

In the first part of this essay, we will examine the evolution of Frederick the Great’s attitude towards ‘lying’ to the masses, and specifically how this determined his relationship with La Mettrie, the French exile to whom he offered asylum in Prussia. We will then consider Frederick’s particular reaction to d’Holbach’s *Essai sur les Préjugés* (1770) before offering an analysis of how this context shaped the Berlin *Académie’s* 1780 essay competition question, “Est-il utile de tromper le peuple?” Finally, this series of Francophone debates will be considered in terms of its impact on German debates of the role of Enlightenment and the autonomy of the individual in relation to elites. We will analyse two very different German-language philosophers – Immanuel Kant and Heinrich Friedrich Diez – to show that French-language reflections on the questions of elitism and concealing knowledge had echoes beyond linguistic borders.

Frederick’s own position on elitism and paternalism changed radically during his lifetime. In 1740, the then Prince anonymously penned his French *Anti-Machiavel ou Examen du Prince de Machiavel*, shortly prior to acceding to the throne that year. The work also owes a great debt to Voltaire, who

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8 Ruppert 1980, 342.
Indeed, Frederick’s interest in Machiavelli was triggered by Voltaire’s glowing reference to the Italian in *Siècle de Louis XIV*, to which the future monarch objected. Machiavelli was thus the subject of correspondence between the two, with Voltaire encouraging the prince to write his refutation, which, because of the mounting pressures on Frederick due to his father’s illness, was entrusted to Voltaire in the final stages of production, for light editing and the printing process. Frederick’s negative opinion of Machiavelli was undoubtedly informed by Pierre Bayle’s *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, which described the maxims of Machiavelli as “très mauvaises”.

Frederick thus repeats this condemnation of Machiavellianism and propounds honesty and transparency as the route to virtue. The book is introduced with clear intentions: “I dare to defend humanity against this monster who wants to destroy it, I dare to oppose reason and justice against sophistry and crime . . . I have always seen Machiavelli’s *Prince* as one of the most dangerous works.”

Frederick maintained his belief in the importance of absolute monarchy, but on the condition that the monarch be benevolent and thus help the people:

> How deplorable is the people’s condition when they have everything to fear from the abuse of sovereign power and their needs are prey to the avarice of the prince, their freedom to his caprice, their peace to his ambition, their security to his perfidy, and their life to his cruelties?

Frederick thus accepts that the fate of the masses lies at the whim of monarchs, and by extrapolation, an elite. However, this seems acceptable, because, in his view, the monarch is benevolent, and strives for virtue.

He then establishes his position that honesty must trump Machiavellian plotting:

> Artifice and dissimulation, therefore, will live in vain on this prince’s lips. In his words and actions, ruse will be useless: men are not judged on their word – we would always be deceived – but we

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10 [Frederick II, King of Prussia] 1996 (London, 1741). The work also appears in the Complete Works of Voltaire, which is the edition we will cite from in the following analysis.


12 Frederick 1996, 116. Original: “combien n’est point déplorable la situation des peuples lorsqu’ils ont tout à craindre de l’abus du pouvoir souverain lorsque leurs besoins sont en proie à l’avarice du prince, leur liberté à ses caprices, leur repos à son ambition, leur sûreté à sa perfidie, et leur vie à ses cruautés?”
compare all their actions, and then their actions to their words. Falsity and dissimulation cannot stand up to such persistent cross-examination.\textsuperscript{13}

Frederick thus adopted the position whereby ruse and artifice would always be revealed as such by an examination of a man’s deeds. Thus lying apparently serves no purpose. However, Frederick is not, even at this early point of his life, a naïve believer in truth above everything. Indeed it has been suggested that whilst he was writing the text, his position began to evolve as he came to discuss foreign policy. Frederick’s invasion of Silesia and the Treaty of Breslau of 1742 were denounced as Machiavellian across Europe.\textsuperscript{14} The later chapters of Anti-Machiavel are characterised by increasing concessions to Machiavelli, as Bahner and Bergmann describe in their introduction.\textsuperscript{15} Indeed, if the people of Prussia were given this text as a political manifesto in a democracy in the 1770s, Frederick would have been hoisted by his own petard.

Frederick’s confusion comes to the fore when he begins to accept certain Machiavellian positions, particularly concerning warfare. Keen to expand a just war theory, he defends the opinion that: “There are pre-emptive wars, which Princes are wise to engage in. They are offensive to truth, but no less just.”\textsuperscript{16} Reasoning that more bloodshed can be averted by a pre-emptive war, ‘truth’ can be trodden on for utilitarian reasons. This explanation seems to be echoed in the argument for the mensonge officieux that Jaucourt would later outline in his Encyclopédie article on ‘Lies’.

We thus have a rather idealistic and confused notion of the acceptability of elite lying. In any case, what becomes clear when Frederick’s ‘virtue’ is put to the test by other philosophical ideas advanced by French writers is that the very position of the elite is challenged. That the proper functioning of a nation led by a monarch who ruled by divine right depended on the contingency of a kind and caring prince surely invalidated its premise. What was needed, certain philosophes argued, was more autonomy for and participation of the people, aided by a greater understanding of the issues, and more freedom of expression and thought. Self-autonomy in thought would naturally raise doubt about the future of those merely born into privilege, as evidenced by Frederick’s reactions to the way the philosophes subtly undermined the authority of divine right, absolute monarchy.

\textsuperscript{13} Frederick 1996, 195–6. Original: “L’artifice donc et la dissimulation habiteront en vain sur les lèvres de ce prince, la ruse dans ses discours et dans ses actions lui sera inutile: on ne juge pas les hommes sur leur parole, ce serait le moyen de se tromper toujours; mais on compare leurs actions ensemble, et puis leurs actions et leurs discours: c’est contre cet examen réitéré que la fausseté et la dissimulation ne pourront rien jamais.”

\textsuperscript{14} Pollitzer 1966, 58.

\textsuperscript{15} Frederick 1996, 33.

\textsuperscript{16} Frederick 1996, 329. Original: “Il y a des guerres de précaution, que les Princes font sagement d’entreprendre. Elles sont offensives à la vérité, mais elles n’en sont pas moins justes.”
Frederick’s flirtation with radicalism was always seen as an elite activity, which makes his occasional autocratic edicts on censorship all the more difficult to understand. On the 11 May 1749, the Prussian monarch issued the *Edict, wegen der wieder hergestellten Censur, derer Bücher und Schrifften, wie auch wegen des Debits ärgerlicher Bücher, so ausserhalb Landes verleget werden*.\(^{17}\) This established a system of censorship for Prussia separate from the apparatus of the Frankfurt-based Imperial Book Commission, ostensibly aimed at stopping the flow of ‘scandaleuse Schriften’ apparently infiltrating Prussia.\(^{18}\)

One of the principal victims of this move, and indeed perhaps the principal reason for it, was the French doctor and philosopher Julien Offray de la Mettrie (1709–1751). La Mettrie had fled France after the publication of his *Histoire naturelle de l’âme* (1745), which was immediately confiscated and burnt following an *Arrêt by the Parlement* of July 7, 1746.\(^{19}\) In turn, he was forced to flee Holland after the publication of his *Homme machine* in 1747. The fact that La Mettrie was forced to flee from Holland speaks volumes, given the generally high levels of toleration for which the country was renowned. After the intervention of Elie Luzac and Maupertuis, a compatriot already settled in Berlin, La Mettrie was afforded refuge in Berlin by Frederick II, who offered him the position of *lecteur* to the King. He was thus able to continue writing and publishing philosophical works. Their relationship, however, was strained and underlined the limits of Frederick’s views on Enlightenment.\(^{20}\)

It was *La Mettrie’s Discours sur le bonheur* (1748) which really outraged Frederick.\(^{21}\) This text was uncompromising in its hedonism and its permissive morality. The anti-authoritarianism was anathema to Frederick’s commitment to the divine right of kings. To follow the precepts of La Mettrie’s thought would liberate the masses from the constraints of authoritative, despotic government and elite power structures.

This links in with our current concern with elites and eighteenth-century philosophy in that La Mettrie was obliged to write a new *Discours Préliminaire* to his collected *Oeuvres*.\(^{22}\) This prefatory text contains many clues as to La Mettrie’s genuine thinking on the politics of knowledge.

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17 The *Edict* can be viewed at [http://digitale.bibliothek.uni-halle.de/rd18/content/titleinfo/5836863]. References to online sources are accurate as of 24 March 2014. Writings published by universities or the Berlin Académie were exempt from censorship.

18 It is noteworthy that the *Edict* uses this terminology of ‘scandaleuse’, derived from the French, which denotes a link between the concept of scandalous writings and French origins.


20 For more details on this strained relationship and the potential links to La Mettrie’s early death, see Pénisson 2006.

21 See La Mettrie 1975 for the critical edition, edited by John Falvey, who suggests that this text led to Frederick’s censorship edict.

Here, the provocative Frenchman was writing in order to justify his lifetime’s work and to gain official permission for the work to be published. The context in which he composed this work, by extension, could be seen to be conditions of persecution in the ‘Straussian’ sense, and thus allow for a hermeneutical approach for reading between the lines.\(^23\) This model of interpretation considers the true ideas that are to be expressed behind the forms of expression that are acceptable to a reigning authority. If expressed without inhibitions, such ideas would have been subject to censure. That is to say that La Mettrie is here forced to dissimulate his true views, and justify the role of the philosopher in society. He had recently come to realise that Frederick would not tolerate views which put his authority and the position of absolute monarchy at risk. Thus La Mettrie adapted his discourse to align with the dominant perceptions of elites and masses. It is from this context that we can analyse these writings, which seek approval and the stamp of authority.

In relation to the people, La Mettrie wrote in his *Ouvrage de Pénélope ou Machiavel en médecine*, published under the pseudonym of Aletheius Demetrius, that “all nations are monstrous composites which resemble each other . . . Isn’t the people everywhere stupid and imbecilic, a slave to opinions and prejudices, isn’t it the world over a kind of Hydra with a hundred and one thousand crazy, empty and light heads?”\(^24\) There is no mistaking a certain level of contempt for non-elites here – they are described as stupid and enslaved by prejudice. Yet by terming them slaves, there are, by extrapolation, slave-masters. Is this a critique of the power of elites, or an embrace of a ‘natural’ situation, presaging later Nietzschean perspectives in philosophy? Even the metaphor of the endless heads of the hydra, as well as connoting threat, also permits us to view La Mettrie’s philosophy as a mission. He is perhaps the knight wishing to continue chopping off these heads to enlighten the people. In his most famous work, *L’Homme Machine* (1747), written prior to Frederick’s censure, he writes that the task of the philosopher is to proclaim and diffuse the truth they have found: “It is not enough for the wise man to study nature and truth, he must dare to speak the truth in favour of the small number of those who want to and are able to think; because for the others who are willingly slaves to prejudice, it is no more possible for them to attain truth than for frogs to fly.”\(^25\) This is perhaps an allusion to the philosopher-king. For whilst

\(^{23}\) Cf. Strauss 1952.

\(^{24}\) La Mettrie 1750, 315. Original: “Toutes les nations sont des composés monstrueux qui se ressemblent . . . le peuple n’est-il pas partout sot, imbécile, esclave de ses opinions et de ses préjugés? n’est-il pas dans toute la terre une espèce d’Hydre, à cent mille et mille têtes folles, vuides et légeres?”

\(^{25}\) La Mettrie 1987, 63. Original: “Il ne suffit pas à un sage d’étudier la nature et la vérité; il doit oser la dire en faveur du petit nombre de ceux qui veulent et peuvent penser; car pour les autres, qui sont volontairement esclaves des préjugés, il ne leur est pas plus possible d’atteindre la vérité, qu’aux grenouilles de voler.”
La Mettrie’s metaphor is perhaps insulting, the verb ‘attain’ does not mean that the masses should not be offered the truth.

Other later remarks by La Mettrie would not perhaps allow us to maintain such an interpretation, if it were not for the fact that our interpretation must take account of the restraints on the author. It is possible to isolate quotations from their context and misread La Mettrie. The following is drawn from the *Discours préliminaire*: “The people do not live with the philosophers. People do not read philosophical books. If, by chance, one should fall into their hands, they will either not understand anything, or will not believe a word.”26 Here, La Mettrie claims that the people do not read books and cannot understand them. This offers philosophers immunity – for they can carry on writing, given that philosophy, La Mettrie claims, has no impact on society – and certainly holds no danger for political elites – for the masses are incapable of instruction. It disguises the radical potential of the philosopher to enlighten the masses. For Frederick, it is reassuringly contemptuous of the masses, underlined by a later passage which emphasises the stupidity of the people who will not even believe what they are told by philosophers: “Materialists can prove all they like that man is only a machine, the people will never believe any of it.”27

Taken out of context, such partial and tendentious statements as these offend our modern ‘democratic’ sentiments. However, we must view these statements historically. There are two crucial aspects of the context that we need to take into consideration in order to avoid thinking of La Mettrie as an unreconstructed elitist. Firstly, in the age we are studying, a statement about the lack of readers for philosophical works would be perfectly correct, as outlined above. Thus La Mettrie can claim that the masses did not read, even though this was changing rapidly and books were increasingly entering wider society. In any case, La Mettrie is perhaps not being honest in his appraisal of European literacy. His statements elsewhere about the courage of philosophers provide insight into his view of the role of a philosopher as a beacon of knowledge which would allow society to reduce harm and increase pleasure. Indeed, his interest in being published was to be read, and to effect change.

It is antithetical to see La Mettrie as contemptuous of reading or the masses. La Mettrie’s claim that the people do not read is to be seen as a disingenuous plea for freedom from censorship. He does not seriously see philosophy as harmless to existing orders. It was, after all, the printed

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26 La Mettrie 1987, 24. Original: “Le peuple ne vit point avec les philosophes. Il ne lit point de Livres philosophiques. Si par hasard il en tombe un entre les mains, ou il n’y comprend rien, ou il n’en croit pas un mot.”

27 La Mettrie 1987, 20. Original: “les matérialistes ont beau prouver que l’homme n’est qu’une machine, le peuple n’en croira jamais rien.”
word, in the form of the Bible, which kept the masses in order, and thus other forms of printed matter would surely be capable of ending this order.

The provenance of the *Discours préliminaire* only underlines this Straussian reading. La Mettrie had originally planned that his *Discours sur le Bonheur* would be the first text of his completed works, the *Oeuvres philosophiques*, which had been commissioned by Frederick. However, the monarch rejected the *Discours sur le Bonheur*, and so La Mettrie was forced to write a new work to introduce the volume. He used the occasion to write a defence of philosophy. Thus he claims that philosophy cannot change things, and that the *esprits forts* are simply an elite, who live completely separately from the masses, and have no intention of attempting to enlighten the uneducated. They are, in Voltaire’s terms, the “athées de cabinet”, or closet atheists.\(^{28}\) La Mettrie would have his reader believe that philosophy can affect no change in society. In the *Système d’Epicure* he even states that “Philosophy is only a science of nice words.”\(^ {29}\)

Yet all this can be seen as a strategy by La Mettrie to plea for the constraints of censorship to be relaxed. His real intention is to spread materialism and for the elites to share knowledge with the masses. By claiming that elite philosophy is not for the masses, he stakes a claim for freedom for writers:

Thus all our writings are mere fairy tales for the masses, frivolous reasoning for those unprepared to receive the germination; for those who are ready, our hypotheses are equally without danger. . . .

But what, couldn’t the common man be seduced after all by some philosophical glimmers, easily glimpsed in the torrent of enlightenment that the philosophy of the day seemingly pours forth.\(^ {30}\)

La Mettrie’s pessimism belies a desire for enlightenment to spread further, as illustrated by this quotation from the *Ouvrage de Pénélope ou Machiavel en médecine*: “It is all too rare to be doubly famous, that is to say among savants and among the people.”\(^ {31}\)

La Mettrie uses the *Discours préliminaire*, addressed to Frederick, to conform to the distinction between a philosophical sphere and a public, social sphere:

\(^{28}\) Voltaire 2011, 162.
\(^{29}\) La Mettrie 1987, 368 (§XLII). Original: “la Philosophie n’est de même qu’une Science de belles paroles.”
\(^{30}\) La Mettrie 1987, 20. Original: “Ainsi chansons pour la multitude, que tous nos écrits: raisonnements frivoles, pour qui n’est point préparé à en recevoir le germe; pour ceux qui le sont, nos hypothèses sont également sans danger . . . Mais quoi, les hommes vulgaires ne pourraient-ils être enfin séduits par quelques heureux philosophiques, faciles à entrevoir dans ce torrent de lumières, que la philosophie semble aujourd’hui verser à pleines mains?”
\(^{31}\) La Mettrie 1750, 352. Original: “Il est trop rare d’être doublement célèbre, c’est-a-dire parmi les savants et parmi le peuple.”
I do not speak in society of all those high philosophical truths, which are not made for the masses.

If one dishonours a great remedy by giving it to a patient beyond hope, one prostitutes the august science of things by discussing it with those uninitiated with its mysteries, those who have eyes but do not see and have ears but do not hear.\(^{32}\)

In the *Discours préliminaire*, La Mettrie is thus arguing, disingenuously, that philosophy is a discipline reserved for elite minds, and not applicable to the practice of life. To drive home this point, La Mettrie uses the analogy of mathematics to ask what difference any philosophical findings make:

I think I have proved that remorse is a prejudice born of education and that man is a machine governed imperiously by an absolute fatalism. Perhaps I am mistaken, I want to believe so, but supposing that, as I sincerely believe, it is philosophically true. Why does it matter? All of these questions can be classed as the mathematical point, which only exists in the heads of mathematicians, and other problems of geometry and algebra for which the clear and ideal solution shows the force of the human mind.\(^{33}\)

That achievements in mathematics are said to be demonstrative of the strength of the human mind is an indication of the importance of philosophy too. That there is no application in everyday life for mathematics is a further clue as to La Mettrie’s sentiments. If men were to believe that man was a machine and believe the world to be governed by fatalism, there are obvious consequences for the existing organisation of society. To deny this is clearly a smokescreen. This divide between theory and practice, and between philosophers and the masses, is the central tenet of the *Discours préliminaire*. Indeed the distinction is expressed clearly for La Mettrie’s protector – Frederick – as the divide between philosophy and politics: “philosophy, desirous only of truth, tranquil contemplator of the beauties of nature, incapable of temerity or usurpation, has never encroached on the rights of politics.”\(^{34}\) It is crucial to note that La Mettrie here makes clear he does not want to

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\(^{32}\) La Mettrie 1987, 33. Original: “Je ne parle point dans la société de toutes ces hautes vérités philosophiques, qui ne sont point faites pour la multitude. Si c’est déshonorer un grand remède, que de le donner à un malade absolument sans ressource, c’est prostituer l’auguste science des choses, que de s’en entretenir avec ceux qui n’étant point initiés dans ses mystères, ont des yeux sans voir, et des oreilles sans entendre.”

\(^{33}\) La Mettrie 1987, 21. Original: “J’ai cru prouver que les remords font des préjugés de l’éducation, & que l’homme est une machine qu’un fatalisme absolu gouverne impérieusement: j’ai pu me tromper, je veux le croire: mais supposé, comme je pense sincèrement, que cela soit philosophiquement vrai, qu’importe? Toutes ces questions peuvent être mises dans la classe du point mathématique, qui n’existe que dans la tête des géometres, & de tant de problèmes de géométrie & d’algebre, dont la solution claire & idéale montre toute la force de l’esprit humain.”

\(^{34}\) La Mettrie 1987, 16. Original: “la philosophie, amoureuse de la seule vérité, tranquille contemplatrice des beautés de la nature, incapable de témérité & d’usurpation, n’a jamais empiété sur les droits de la politique.”
usurp the monarch’s absolute power and that philosophers are “far from wishing, as is commonly imagined, to destroy everything.”

Thus La Mettrie’s seemingly dismissive attitude to the possibility of educating the masses must be understood, given its context, to be nothing of the sort. This explicit reference to the ‘danger’ of philosophical writings is a disingenuous claim about the impotence of philosophy: “Let us not, therefore, fear that the mind of the people will never model itself on that of the philosophers, too far out of its reach.” His strategy becomes crystal clear with his invocation to the censor, namely, Frederick: “Let us be free on our writings.”

La Mettrie’s death in November 1751, in Berlin, prevented the further disintegration of his relationship with Frederick. Five years later, Frederick’s main philosophical interlocutor, Voltaire, wrote on the subject of lying to the people in Jusqu’à quel point doit on tromper le peuple (1756). It was here that Voltaire gave his reflections on the question “to what degree the people, that is to say nine out of ten humans, must be treated like monkeys”. This short text recounts a string of historical superstitions which have been overcome and is in truth too cryptic to be of much use in determining Voltaire’s true feelings regarding the question he had set himself.

Fortunately, it is a question Voltaire discussed elsewhere throughout his career. Chapter XX of Voltaire’s Traité sur la Tolérance (1763), a work with a very specific intention following the Calas affair, examines whether “it is useful to maintain the people in superstition”. Even here, writing within the context of a Protestant having been wrongly sentenced to death for the murder of his own son – a miscarriage of justice motivated by Catholic prejudice – Voltaire defends the need for prejudice: “man always needs a brake.” Moreover, he repeats his consistent anti-atheist argument: “A reasoned, violent and powerful atheist would be a scourge every bit as gruesome as a bloodthirsty superstitious man.” This rather meaningless comparison – given that regardless of convictions, the qualifiers ‘violent’, ‘powerful’ and ‘bloodthirsty’ determine these cases – shows

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35 La Mettrie 1987, 17. Original: “loin de vouloir, comme on l’imagine communément, tout bouleverser.”
36 La Mettrie 1987, 23. Original: “Ne craignons donc pas que l’Esprit du peuple se moule jamais sur celui des Philosophes, trop au dessus de sa portée.”
37 La Mettrie 1987, 45. Original: “Soions donc libres dans nos écrits.”
38 Voltaire 2010, 37. Original: “jusqu’à quel degré le peuple, c’est-à-dire neuf parts du genre humain sur dix, doit être traité comme des singes.”
Voltaire’s inherent contempt for the masses and his defence of elites (in direct contradistinction of Pierre Bayle’s paradox): “everywhere where a society is established, a religion is necessary.”

Without bringing the religious foundation of society into question, Voltaire seeks to distinguish religion from superstition. Religion, for Voltaire, is natural religion whereby a supreme artisan creator acts as a providential arbiter of reward and punishment in the afterlife in order to regulate human behaviour, which is unseen by the institutions of society. This is, therefore, no defence of Christianity or existing revealed religion. Indeed, Voltaire argues in this chapter of the *Traité sur la tolérance* that “Every day, reason penetrates in merchants’ shops in France, as in the abodes of the lords.”

Voltaire stringently attacks those religious leaders (“Masters who have been paid and honoured for so long to daze the human race”) whom he considers to be exploiting their disciples and teaching outright superstition by labelling them “Bêtes farouches”. So Voltaire navigates a middle path concerning the relative positions of the elites and the masses. Nowhere does Voltaire defend a modern democratic anti-elitist model of society, in keeping with the majority of his contemporaries. Even in private correspondence, he defended the monarchy: writing to Damilaville in 1762 about the posthumous publication of Boulanger’s *Recherches sur l'origine du despotisme oriental* (1761), he claimed that “brothers must always respect morality and the throne.”

As with most philosophes, there are numerous expressions of Voltaire’s view of the wider masses as incapable of thought: “the populace, who are not made for thinking.” What distinguishes Voltaire’s views, however, is that he considers the masses merely unprepared for the truth. In the 1734 *Lettres philosophiques* (section XIII), he maintains that the philosophes “do not write for the people”, which explains why “one must never fear that a philosophical sentiment could harm the religion of a country.”

As we saw when analysing La Mettrie’s *Discours Préliminaire*, is dissimulation, and not to be taken at face value. Sixteen years prior to La Mettrie’s text, Voltaire, having suffered at the hands of an absolute monarch, including a spell in the Bastille, knew full well that he had to plea for clemency from the censors, and play down the danger of philosophy in

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43 Voltaire 2000, 244. “Chaque jour la raison pénètre en France dans les boutiques des Marchands, comme dans les hôtels des seigneurs.”
44 Voltaire 2000, 244. Original: “Maitres si longtemps payés et honorés pour abrutir l’espèce humaine.”
47 Voltaire 1964, 175. Original: “n’écrivent point pour le peuple.” And “il ne faut jamais craindre qu’aucun sentiment philosophique puisse nuire à la Religion d’un Pays”.

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what was an unsuccessful attempt to circumvent censorship of his text. So Voltaire’s statements about the innocence of philosophy is a strategy. Yet in contradistinction to La Mettrie, Voltaire’s whole philosophy relies on an afterlife of reward and punishment.

In *Dieu. Réponse au Système de la nature* (1770), Voltaire differentiates between the “athée de cabinet” (a virtuous scholarly atheist, literally a ‘closet atheist’) and the “athée de la cour” (literally the ‘court atheist’, depicted by Voltaire as a hedonistic, seemingly crazed madman bent on destruction and bloodshed). He admits that virtuous atheists exist, using the example of Spinoza: “Spinoza never acted wrongly.”\(^{48}\) He concludes, however, that these virtuous atheists have a pernicious effect on practical atheists, above all rulers: “The closet atheist is nearly always a peaceful philosopher, the fanatic is always turbulent, but the court atheist, an atheist prince, could be the scourge of the human race.”\(^{49}\)

In his *Dictionnaire philosophique* (1764), Voltaire’s most consistent claim is that atheism cannot prevent crime.\(^{50}\) He confounds atheism with lawlessness and thus holds a fundamentally elitist position. Voltaire concludes “that atheism is a very pernicious monster in those who govern, and also in those in retreat, although their lives are innocent, because from the closet they can reach those in power . . . it is nearly always fatal to virtue”.\(^{51}\)

His conviction that humans have an innate tendency to unvirtuous behaviour informs his desire for a system of control. Religion is a necessary control mechanism, which also necessitates an elite to run society and in some way to lie, by insisting on the contingent truth of religion. Whilst Voltaire’s worldview does not preclude autonomy, it does not encourage all members of society to emancipate themselves from instruction.

In several places, another *philosophe*, Helvétius, expressed the belief in the necessity of truth and the futility of superstition. Aligning himself with Diderot and d’Holbach, he complained of the Enlightenment’s lack of progress, in a chapter heading in *De l’Homme*: “Progress of truth – of the slowness by which truth spreads.”\(^{52}\) In a footnote to section VII of the same text, he writes that “In morality . . . the only really harmful thing is not looking [for truth]. Whoever preaches

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\(^{48}\) Voltaire 2011, 162. Original: “Spinosa n’a pas commis une seule mauvaise action.”
\(^{49}\) Voltaire 2011, 162. Original: “L’athée de cabinet est presque toujours un philosophe tranquille, le fanatique est toujours turbulent mais l’athée de cour, le prince athée pourrait être le fléau du genre humain. Le malheur des athées de cabinet est de faire des athées de cour.”
\(^{50}\) Voltaire 1994a, 388. Art ‘Athée, athéisme’. “L’athéisme ne s’oppose pas aux crimes.”
\(^{51}\) Voltaire 1994a, 391. Art ‘Athée, athéisme’. Original: “Que l’athéisme est un monstre très pernicieux dans ceux qui gouvernent, qu’il l’est aussi dans les gens de cabinet, quoique leur vie soit innocente, parce que de leur cabinet ils peuvent percer jusqu’à ceux qui sont en place . . . il est presque toujours fatal à la vertu.”
\(^{52}\) “Progrès de la vérité – De la lenteur avec laquelle la vérité se propage.”
in favour of ignorance is a rogue who wants to dupe fools." In correspondence with Martin Lefebvre de La Roche, Helvétius writes: “You ask me if it is good to educate the people. And why could education do harm? If a few men have an interest to deceive, nobody has an interest to be deceived. The greatest number must therefore be allowed the greatest freedom to examine the pros and cons.” This freedom implicitly involves the work of philosophers targeting the greatest number as an audience.

Writing to Frederick the Great, Diderot’s collaborator on the *Encyclopédie* d’Alembert claimed that: “The people is an imbecilic animal who allows itself to be led into darkness.” One can infer that the addressee of this letter has perhaps altered the terminology with which d’Alembert expresses himself. These rather harsh terms denote a criticism of the extant situation, rather than a call to exploit the people even more. Also, d’Alembert’s desire for Enlightenment ideas to spread far and wide is attested by his desire to produce a cheap version of d’Holbach’s *Bon Sens* (1772), which he suggested in a letter to Voltaire in August 1775: “I think like you about this Bon Sens which seems to me a much more terrible book than the *Système de la Nature*. If the book was abridged any more (which could easily be done without loss) and it was published cheaply, it could be bought and read by cooks.” Thus Enlightenment, as represented in printed books, was in d’Alembert’s view, a democratic ideal for the philosopher to share with the people. It was of course d’Alembert who helped Frederick to formulate the Berlin *Académie* essay question in 1780. Before we consider that, however, we will turn to the reactions to d’Holbach’s *Essai sur les préjugés*.

D’Holbach’s campaign against religion and superstition changed strategy after his initial phase of publishing amended translations of works by English deists and freethinkers and the printed versions of texts by French libertins, such as Fréret, whose atheistic works had previously only

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55 d’Alembert, Jean Le Rond. “Letter to Frederick II: 30 November 1770.” In *Electronic Enlightenment* Original: “Le peuple est un animal imbécile qui se laisse conduire dans les ténèbres.”
56 d’Alembert, Jean Le Rond. “Letter to Voltaire: 15 August 1775.” In *Electronic Enlightenment* <http://www.e-enlightenment.com/item/voltfrVF1260139_1key001cor/>. Original: “Je pense comme vous sur ce Bon Sens qui me paroit un bien plus terrible livre que le *système de la nature*. Si on abrégéoit encore ce livre (ce qu'on pourrait aisément sans y faire tort) & qu'on le met au point de ne coûter que dix sols, et de pouvoir être acheté et lu par les cuisinières.” Friedrich Melchior, Baron von Grimm also saw *Le Bon Sens* as a book which the non-elites would be capable of reading, but unlike d’Alembert, was fearful of its potential: “C'est l'athéisme mis à la portée des femmes de chambre et des perruquiers.”
existed in manuscript form. D’Holbach instead turned to write his own original texts (though heavily influenced by his previous reading) and, through his contacts in Holland, published a series of programmatic, prescriptive texts. The *Essai sur les préjugés* caused a great stir in France, although it was not banned, according to Negroni. Unfortunately, the ‘French Book Trade in Enlightenment Europe’ database contains no sales statistics for the *Essai sur les préjugés* from the Société Typographique de Neuchâtel. We cannot, therefore, judge the diffusion of the book in Prussia or elsewhere. However, by examining the reaction of Frederick the Great, we can ascertain that it had a substantial impact.

Reading the text, it becomes obvious why Frederick was moved to publish a refutation. D’Holbach’s text, published under the pseudonym of Mr. D.M., alluding to Du Marsais, clearly continues the discourse on the utility of the truth for the masses, announced in the first pages: “truth is necessary to man, and error can only ever be dangerous to him.” Later on in the text, the sovereign would find himself as a direct interlocutor: “truth is equally necessary, to both the sovereign in order to shore up his power, and to the subjects to be happy, submissive, and peaceful. . . . A good king, far from fearing truth, will always take it himself as a guide, and will want it to enlighten his people.”

Frederick’s sensitivities were triggered by sentences like the following: “a despot who commands irritated subjects does not become a victim of truth, but of imprudence and impetuous ignorance.” He did not take well to the prescriptive elements of the text, such as: “equitable princes will recognize that they do not have the right to deprive them [their subjects] of truth.”

That the book caused a stir across Europe is illustrated by the book-length refutation by Frederick, *Examen de l’Essai sur les préjugés*, published in 1770. Mark Curran has commented that Frederick’s *Examen*, “at seventy octavo printed pages, was relatively lengthy but ill-conceived. It was an unruly piece, occasionally intelligent but poorly structured, which amounted to little

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58 Negroni 1995. Dawson 2006 also contains no mention of this work.
59 For the French Book Trade in Enlightenment Europe, see <http://fbtee.uws.edu.au/stn/interface/>. This project has made available the database of the archives of the Société Typographique de Neuchâtel, a key source for work on the eighteenth-century French book trade, as originally made famous by Robert Darnton.
60 D’Holbach 1770, 2. Original: “la vérité est nécessaire à l’homme, & l’erreur ne peut jamais lui être que dangereuse.”
62 D’Holbach 1770, 142. Original: “un Despote qui commande à des sujets irrités ne devient point la victime de la vérité, mais de l’imprudence & de l’ignorance impétueuse.”
63 D’Holbach 1770, 143. Original: “les Princes équitables reconnaîtront qu’ils n’ont pas le droit de les priver de la vérité.”
more than a collection of the prince's immediate thoughts." The refutation shows its author to be reactionary and dismissive of the capacity of the non-elite sections of society. Superstition is said to be a foundation of order. The evolution of Frederick's thought is complete. Here, he sees that truth should be reserved for a minority of men: "If truth was made for man, it would present itself naturally to his eyes, he would receive it without effort." He dismisses d'Holbach's ideas as the "vanity of the philosophical spirit." Study of Frederick's correspondence shows that these ideas can be traced back further than the publication of the *Essai sur les préjugés*: he wrote to the duchess of Gotha, declaring that:

> There is no idea more extravagant than wishing to destroy superstition. Prejudice is reason for the people – does this imbecilic people deserve to be enlightened? Don't we see that superstition is one of the ingredients that nature has placed in man's composition? How can you fight nature, how can you destroy such a universal instinct?  

Moral and social order, contended Frederick, rely upon superstition, which is an essential component of the human mind and has shaped all civilisations. This explains why religions have continued for centuries: "This shows that the majority of human opinions are founded on prejudice, fables, errors and imposture . . . man is made for error . . . truth is not made for man." These prejudices and superstitions of the lower orders are needed to funnel the natural fears of men. Frederick's argument relies on the paternalism of the *mensonge officieux*: "What would one gain from disabusing a man of illusions which make him happy?"

Frederick argues that were all superstitions to be effectively wiped out, it would not be long before a new set of superstitions would replace them: "I dare almost to guarantee that in a state where all prejudice would be destroyed, it would not be thirty years before new ones would arise, and, well, the errors would quickly spread and entirely overrun it."

65 Frederick 1770, 5–6. Original: "Si la vérité étoit faite pour l’homme, elle se présenteroit naturellement à ses yeux, il la recevroit sans efforts."  
66 Frederick II 1770, 7. Original: "vanité de l’esprit philosophique."  
67 Frederick 1851. Letter to the Duchess of Gotha (1763), 215. Original: "Il n’y a point d’idée plus extravagante que celle de vouloir détruire la superstition. Les préjugés sont la raison du peuple, et ce peuple imbécile mérite-t-il d’être éclairé? Ne voyons nous pas que la superstition est un des ingrédients que la nature a mis dans la composition de l’homme? Comment lutter contre la nature, comment détruire généralement un instinct si universel."  
68 Frederick II 1770, 11. Original: "Voilà donc la plupart des opinions humaines fondées sur des préjugés, des fables, des erreurs & des impostures . . . l’homme est faite pour l’erreur . . . la vérité n’est pas faite pour l’homme."  
69 Frederick II 1770, 14. Original: "Que gagneroit-on à détromper un homme que les illusions rendent heureux?"  
70 Frederick 1770, 19. Original: "J’ose presque assurer que dans un état où tous les préjugés seroient détruits, il ne se passeroit pas trente années qu’on en verroit renaitre de nouveaux, & qu’enfin les erreurs s’étendroient avec rapidité, & l’inonaderoient entièrement."
dilemma in the interpretation. This could be cultural pessimism fit to grace any era, or it could be argued that Frederick is engaged in a specific justification of his own elitist position.

The Prussian monarch recognised that the *Essai* could not have been by Du Marsais, stating that “this book can only have been written by some resuscitated head of the League, who, still breathing the spirit of factions and troubles, wants to rouse the people into rebellion against the legitimate authority of the Sovereign”.\(^71\) Frederick’s critique limits itself to the French context of the book, and leads him to make an apology for both Louis XIV and Louis XV. France’s debt is attributed to the former’s war of succession, “the most just of all those that the monarch had undertaken”\(^72\) whilst the latter is excused as “innocent”.\(^73\) It is not surprising that the monarch defends the established order, preferring “softer means” rather than “overthrowing the established order”.\(^74\)

D’Holbach’s long-time collaborator, Diderot, came to the defence of his friend’s view of enlightenment established in the *Essai sur les préjugés*. In 1771, Diderot composed a text which remained undiscovered until Franco Venturi’s 1937 edition, at which point it was conferred the title of *Lettre sur l’Examen de l’Essai sur les préjugés ou Pages contre un tyran*.\(^75\) This work was a stringent attack on Frederick the Great. Diderot did of course snub Frederick’s invitation to visit the Prussian Court and attacked Voltaire and Helvétius for not doing likewise. Diderot also attacked Frederick in his *Principes de politique des souverains* (1774). In *Pages contre un tyran*, Diderot takes d’Holbach’s defence against Frederick’s attack in the *Examen de l’Essai*:

> The author of the *Essai* represents the world as it is: full of liars, scoundrels, and all kind of oppressor. There are despotic and nasty kings in this world; did he say that there weren’t? There are violent, wasteful, greedy ministers in this world; did he say that there weren’t? There are corrupt magistrates; did he say that there weren’t? There are deceitful, foolish, fanatical priests; did he say that there weren’t? There are men in this world blinded by all kinds of passions, harsh and negligent.

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\(^71\) Frederick 1770, 52. Original: “ce livre ne peut avoir été écrit que par quelque chef de parti de la Ligue ressuscité, qui respirant encore l’esprit de faction & de trouble, veut exciter le peuple à la rébellion contre l’autorité légitime du Souverain.”

\(^72\) Frederick 1770, 59. Original: “la plus juste de toutes celles que le monarque avoit entreprises.”

\(^73\) Frederick 1770, 56.

\(^74\) Frederick 1770, 23. Original: “boulversant tout l’ordre établi.”

\(^75\) Diderot 1963, 127–148.
fathers, ungrateful children, deceitful spouses; did he say that there weren’t? He did not, therefore, depict an idealized world.\(^7\)

These barbs, aimed at the monarch though never received, emphasised the negative aspects of society — despotism, corruption, violence — and thus undermined Frederick’s criticism that the *Essai sur les préjugés* was too idealistic and ignored the true nature of the world. Diderot is then explicit that truth is always preferential to superstition, as the author of the *Essai*, d’Holbach, had written. Diderot writes:

> But he did maintain, and still maintains, that man loves truth. All men love truth, because truth is a virtue; man is constantly seeking truth; it is the aim of all his studies, of all tasks, of all work. He hates error because he knows well that in whatever area, he cannot be mistaken without harming himself. True happiness is founded on truth. \(^7\)

Pointing out flaws in Frederick’s refutation was a simple task for Diderot. Yet he went further to support the original text’s supposition that truth was always necessary and always a basis of virtue. Diderot also criticized Helvétius for his fawning over Frederick, to whom Helvétius dedicated his posthumously published *De l’Homme* (1772). Diderot’s own attitude towards enlightened despotism is dealt with in the *Mémoires pour Catherine II and the Observations sur le Nakaz*, where anti-elite sentiment is particularly strong in sections I, VI, IX and XX.\(^8\)

Frederick’s position must not be misunderstood. He did not wish the people to be kept in a state of superstition to be exploited. He does admit to this danger in the *Examen*. He even wishes that the public read more, mentioning to Voltaire that some works are more accessible than others: “Boulanger’s work is superior to the other, and more accessible to the people, for whom long deductions tire the mind, loosened and relaxed by the frivolities which constantly

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\(^7\) Diderot 1963, 135. Original: “L’auteur de l’*Essai* s’est représenté le monde tel qu’il est, plein de menteurs, de fripons, d’oppresseurs en tout genre. Des rois despotes et méchants, il y en a dans ce monde, a-t-il dit qu’il n’y en eût point? Des ministres violents, dissipateurs, avides, il y en a dans ce monde, a-t-il dit qu’il n’y en eût point? Des magistrats corrompus, il y en a dans ce monde, a-t-il dit qu’il n’y en eût point? Des prêtres fourbes, insensés, fanatiques, il y en a dans ce monde, a-t-il dit qu’il n’y en eût point? Des hommes aveuglés par toutes sortes de passions, des pères durs et négligents, des enfants ingrats, des époux perfides, il y en a dans ce monde, a-t-il dit qu’il n’y en eût point? Il n’a donc pas fait un monde idéal.”

\(^7\) Diderot 1963, 135–136. Original: “Mais il a prétendu et prétend encore que l’homme aime la vérité. En tout genre l’homme aime la vérité, parce que la vérité est une vertu; l’homme cherche sans cesse la vérité; c’est le but de toutes ses études, de tous ses soins, de tous ses travaux; il déteste l’erreur, parce qu’il sait bien qu’en quoi que ce soit, il ne saurait se tromper sans se nuire à lui-même; son vrai bonheur est fondé sur la vérité.”

\(^8\) See Israel 2011, 270–274.
excite it.” Conversely, Frederick feels that enlightened absolutism is the key to peace, and that philosophy is the preserve of the elite.

This social and political elite clique of philosophy is epitomised by the *Correspondance littéraire*, the hand-written philosophical organ of the elite – its circulation was limited to European Courts, usually numbering around sixteen subscribers.\(^\text{80}\) Its editor Melchior Grimm reinforced this view among his royal and aristocratic readers, insisting that the truth is “for a small number of chosen ones . . . The people never participates”.\(^\text{81}\)

Diderot fell out with Grimm over his relationships with various monarchs. Whereas Diderot remained constant and unchanged in the company of Catherine the Great, making no concessions to the monarch, he felt Grimm had mutated.\(^\text{82}\) Writing to Grimm in 1781 regarding one of Diderot’s prefatory notes addressed to monarchs, Diderot told him: “If you have the puerile vanity to think that you are targeted and are offended by the page addressed to kings . . . I pity you . . . My friend, I no longer recognize you. You have become, without realizing it maybe, one of the most veiled, but most dangerous anti-philosophers. You live among us, but you hate us.”\(^\text{83}\)

This intellectual history so far has considered Frederick as the sole German participant in a Francophone debate. This final section will show that the influence of this whole debate about the elitism of knowledge politics, culminating in the French-speaking Berlin *Académie’s* debate, was felt in the wider field of German *Aufklärung*.

Arising from correspondence between d’Alembert and Frederick in the late 1770s, the Berlin *Académie’s* essay competition question for 1781 was “Is it useful to mislead the people?” The history of this competition and the answers received have been edited and published by Krauss.\(^\text{84}\) It is taken into consideration here as a continuation of Frederick’s involvement with this issue.

Two prizes were issued, one for each side of the argument. The winning answer for the ‘yes’ side came from Frédéric de Castillon. In his answer to the question, he followed the distinction between philosopher and people, deciding that: “Error is made for the masses, and the masses

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\(^{79}\) Frederick II, king of Prussia, “Letter to Voltaire: Friday, 5 January 1767.” In Electronic Enlightenment [http://www.e-enlightenment.com/item/voltfrVF1150267b_1key001cor/]. Original: “L’ouvrage de Boulanger est supérieur à l'autre, et plus à la portée des gens du monde, pour qui de longues déductions fatiguent l'esprit, relâché et détendu par les frivolités qui l'énervent continuellement.”

\(^{80}\) Cf. Kölving & Carriat 1984. There were usually 15 or 16 subscribers, all from royalty or the nobility, and very much concentrated in the German states. For the full list of subscribers, see vol. I, xviii–xix.

\(^{81}\) Grimm 1878, 328. Original: “pour un petit nombre d’élus . . . Le peuple n'y participe jamais.”

\(^{82}\) Wilson 1972, 701.


\(^{84}\) Krauss 1966. Original: “Est-il utile de tromper le peuple?”
are the people of all classes. Let us separate the small number who are called philosophers, such a beautiful name, formerly so respectable, and so degraded nowadays, dragged through the mud.”

He concluded that: “It can, therefore, be useful to the people to be misled, as much in politics as in religion.”

This view was opposed by Bernard Nicolas Lorinet, who used a theological argument: “I hold as impious he who claims that the people must be misled in order to be happy. This implies God had not provided the means for happiness.”

Yet this French-language debate was not limited in its impact to Francophone circles. Indeed, the question of the relationship between elite philosophy and lying to the masses goes to the heart of the German debate of what exactly the Enlightenment was. To show this, we only need to refer briefly to the most well-known of definitions of the Enlightenment: Immanuel Kant’s answer to the Mittwochsgesellschaft’s question “Was ist Aufklärung?”

Kant’s famous opening sentence to this essay demonstrates a familiarity with these debates: “Enlightenment is mankind’s exit from its self-incurred immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to make use of one’s own understanding without the guidance of another. Self-incurred is this inability if its cause lies not in the lack of understanding but rather in the lack of the resolution and courage to use it without the guidance of another.”

This self-determination, an essentially anti-elitist position, could not, however, simply arise within the elitist systems of eighteenth-century religious and political control. Yet Kant argues that a strong political state (an enlightened absolutism) is necessary to facilitate the spread of enlightenment. Indeed, his essay explicitly names Frederick the Great as the prime model of the creator of the ideal preconditions of enlightenment. Though Kant claimed the enlightened age had not yet arrived, he did consider himself to be living in an age of enlightenment, which is synonymous with the age of Frederick the Great:

When we ask, are we now living in an enlightened age? the answer is: No, but we live in an age of enlightenment. As things now stand it is still far from true that men are already capable of using

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87 Krauss 1966, 51. Original: “Je tiens pour impie celui qui prétend qu’il faut tromper le peuple pour le rendre heureux; comme si Dieu n’avait donné les moyens du bonheur.”
88 On other answers to this question, see Schmidt 1996. Cf. Knudsen 1996 on the particularities of the German debates on Volksaufklärung in the 1780s.
their own reason in religious matters confidently and correctly without external guidance. Yet we have clear indications that the field is now being opened for them to work freely toward this, and the obstacles to general enlightenment or to the exit out of their self-incurred immaturity become even fewer. In this respect, this age is the age of enlightenment or the century of Frederick.90

Prussia is seen as exemplary. How can this be? After all, Frederick issued decrees on censorship in 1749 and 1772, whereby all texts had to be submitted to a panel for consideration before publication. And as we have seen, Frederick came to adopt a position where he endorsed lying to the masses to protect his own authority. Kant’s naming of Frederick, still in power (he died in 1786), is pure artifice, and yet another example of Kant’s strategy, or a concession to the absolutist monarch, which historians need to read in context.

Yet the idea of a strong monarch capable of creating the conditions necessary for enlightenment was very much present in French writings on the subject. D’Holbach’s lesser-known Ethocratie ou, Le gouvernement fondé sur la morale (1776) also seems to advocate the use of absolute power, but in order to bring about change in public ideas: “Wisdom and equity armed with great power are capable of quickly changing the face of the state. Absolute power is very useful when it intends to crush abuses, abolish injustice, correct vice and reform mores.”91 Louis-Sébastien Mercier’s best-seller L’an 2440 (1771), a science-fiction dream, envisaged a revolution in society linked to the work of a philosopher-king: “The revolution was carried out effortlessly by the heroism of a great man. A philosopher king?”92

Conditions in Prussia would worsen with the accession of Frederick William II to the throne. The Wöllner Edict on Religion of 1788 would only strengthen censorship and cause more problems for Kant, as evidenced by the publication of Kant’s Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft.93

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91 D’Holbach 1776, 6. Original: “La sagesse et l’équité armées d’un grand pouvoir, sont capables de changer en peu de temps la face d’un État. Le pouvoir absolu est très utile quand il se propose d’anéantir les abus, d’abolir les injustices, de corriger le vice, de réformer les mœurs.”
93 Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason. Cf. Allen Wood’s account of the publication details in Kant 2001 [1793], 41.
A second, much more marginal and almost forgotten German thinker provides further evidence that the radical ideas of this French-language discourse on deceiving the masses were not lost on the German intelligentsia. Heinrich Friedrich Diez (1751–1817), was an outspoken defender of d’Holbach’s *Système de la Nature* (1770). He wrote on many heretical topics in the period before he left Germany in 1784 to become the Prussian Ambassador in Constantinople, which curtailed his own writings on materialist ideas. He was also a prolific collector of manuscripts of la littérature clandestine and the influence of these French texts is evident in his own writings.

In his 1772 essay *Advantages of Secret Societies for the World*, Diez takes up the theme of the autonomy of individuals regardless of their social class and background: “Thus the educated knave can already be their own guide.” To get from the state of ‘knave’ to autonomous citizen, Diez explains in his 1781 text *Apologie der Duldung und Preßfreiheit* that it is the responsibility of educated citizens to spread their learning – this is seen as a duty:

If the acquired skill of speech has raised us above animals, then the acquired skills of reading and writing raises us above the rabble, in that these activities are exceptionally adept at enlightening our understanding and clarifying our perceptions. It is therefore a great duty on the educated mind to share with others these insights and knowledge, and thereby increase the number of clever and happy people in the state, in that he seeks to reduce the great crowd of rabble.

Diez is adamant that books can change people’s ideas, but this does depend on the ambition of the masses – they must be “ambitious enough to court the applause of the dispersed, clever thinkers – and all this through the only way befitting investigators of truth: writings.” Yet this sharing of knowledge and the ambition of the people need norms which can facilitate the process of enlightenment.

For this radical thinker, superstition will destroy society’s laws. A secular state cannot tolerate superstitions in the public sphere, let alone promote them:

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94 Diez’s early works have recently been republished, edited by Manfred Voigts.
95 Diez’s 856 manuscripts, held in the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin, have been catalogued by Ursula Winter 1986–1994.
96 *Vortheile geheimer Gesellschaften für die Welt* (Halle: Carl Hermann Hemmerde, 1772).
Superstition, if it would only remain at the level of opinions, would be just as harmless as unbelief. But because it oversteps this boundary, . . . it undermines national laws, in that it destroys civil peace and appoints itself as the tyrant of the people, who have committed no other crime than to profess other religious maxims.\textsuperscript{100}

This leads Diez to his position of arguing against all forms of censorship: “The abolition of all censorship would firstly be a great benefit for freedom of thought.”\textsuperscript{101}

Unlike Kant, Diez is forthcoming in his support for a secular morality, devoid of beliefs in providence: “I nonetheless respect the virtue of honest Christians, even if I think that their virtue is – oh why should I conceal it! – in no way superior to mine.”\textsuperscript{102} This anticlerical position is inherently anti-elitist in that it allocates marginal, non-conformist ideologies the same level of toleration as Christian morality. It is also inextricably linked to the view that each citizen is autonomous in their reasoning.

In a second, slightly amended \textit{Apologie der Duldung und der Preßfreiheit}, which was published in the \textit{Berichte der allgemeinen Buchhandlung der Gelehrten} in 1781 at Diez’s expense, Germany’s intellectual situation is compared unfavourably with England’s. Like many eighteenth-century observers, Diez sees England as a centre of freedom, allowing progress: “Through liberty, England has soared to be a giant of mind and character, which is foreign to all other peoples. . . . Germany has always been a slave of its faith. Its philosophy has thus remained as old as its faith.”\textsuperscript{103} This criticism of Germany (before such a political entity existed) is an implicit criticism of the elitist nature of its intellectual milieu.

In a tactic similar to La Mettrie’s in the \textit{Discours Préliminaire}, Diez attempts to maintain that freethinkers’ books cannot cause any harm and thus should not be subject to censorship: “The use and harm of books is never as considerable as one imagines. A book is always a corrective to the impression of the other.”\textsuperscript{104} Just as La Mettrie had done, Diez justifies his advocacy of freethinking

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Diez 2010, 186. Original: “Der Aberglaube, wenn er blos bey Meinungen stehn bliebe, würde eben so unschädlich seyn als der Unglaube. Aber da er diese Grenze überschreitet . . . er untergräbt die Gesetze der Länder, indem er die bürgerliche Ruhe vernichtet und sich zum Tirannen über Menschen aufwirft, die weiter nichts verbrochen haben, als daß sie sich zu andern Glaubensmaximen bekennen.”
\item Diez 2010, 188. Original: “Die Aufhebung aller Censur würde schon ein großer Gewinn für die Geistesfreiheit seyn.”
\item Diez 2010, 191. Original: “Ich ehre gleichwohll die Tugend redlicher Christen, ob ich gleich fühle, daß ihre Tugend, was soll ichs verschweigen! um keinen Grad höher ist, als die meine.”
\item Diez 2010, 200. Original: “Der Nutzen und Schaden der Bücher ist niemals so beträchtlich, als man sich vorstellt. Ein Buch ist immer das Correctiv vom Eindruck des andern.”
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
by referring to the small number of readers and the fact that the lower social classes do not read, despite having stated elsewhere that it is the duty of philosophers to spread enlightenment: “The number of free-thinking writings is, though, as small as the number of their readers. The apprehension of the growing apostasy is therefore always exaggerated. No freethinker has ever written for oafish citizens and farmers.”

We can here ascertain the prominent influence of the writings of La Mettrie and d’Holbach on Diez’s pre-1784 writings.

To come to our conclusions, let us observe that, by the end of the eighteenth century, the optimism of the secular, radical Enlightenment was draining from some of its most fervent proponents. Naigeon, in his *Mémoires sur la vie et les ouvrages de D. Diderot*, admits that Diderot’s philosophy is not for everybody because it is erudite and complex. Referring to the *Rêve de d’Alembert*, he writes:

The philosophy taught in the two dialogues is only suitable for a very small number of privileged beings; it demands too much study, meditation and knowledge for the fundamental principles and their full consequences to be admitted, and I do not mean only by the common man whose bad education makes him everywhere stupidly gullible and superstitious, but even by those placed in happier circumstances, who, with the means to inform themselves, have, regarding these matters, generally neither a faith any less blind than that of the people nor a more reasoned and motivated disbelief.

Diderot himself was no optimist and despaired at the slow progress being made as he wrote to Sophie Volland in 1759: “the progress of enlightenment is limited, it hardly reaches the suburbs; the people there are too stupid, too miserable, and too busy. It stops there.”

Taking the notion of the intellectual’s position in relation to the masses, we have revealed complex relationships between philosophers and a view of human beings as capable of self-determination and as benefitting from the ‘truth’ regardless of the immediate ramifications for happiness. There were those who defended the absolute value of spreading truth, but they often

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106 Naigeon 1821 (1798), 307–08. Original: “la philosophie enseignée dans les deux Dialogues, ne convient qu’à un très-petit nombre d’êtres privilégiés; elle exige trop d’études, de méditations, de connaissances, pour que les principes qui lui servent de base puissent jamais être admis dans toutes leurs conséquences, je ne dis pas seulement par le vulgaire que sa mauvaise éducation rend partout stupidement crédule et superstitieux, mais même par ceux qui, placés dans des circonstances plus heureuses, et avec plus de moyens de s’instruire, n’ont en général sur ces matières ni une foi moins aveugle que celle du peuple, ni une incrédulité plus motivée et plus réfléchie.”

107 Diderot 1956, 299. Letter to Sophie Volland, 30 October 1759. Original: “les progrès de la lumière sont limités; elle ne gagne guère les faubourgs. Le peuple y est trop bête, trop misérable et trop occupé: elle s’arrêta là.”
had to disguise their position, or write anonymously. This led to instances where these very same writers would defend themselves by disingenuously claiming that philosophical writings are not linked to changes in public opinion, when writing otherwise elsewhere. This analysis has shown us that the context of texts is crucial to understanding a thinker’s true position. La Mettrie can thus be rehabilitated from his current reputation as dismissive of the ‘masses’. The philosophes were thus carefully negotiating their own position as the intellectual elites, without necessarily despising or disdaining the people. When a writer like d’Holbach, himself part of the feudal social elite – a member of the nobility – strongly criticized the absolute power of the monarchy, it demonstrated a divisive issue in the struggle for access to ‘truth’.

Frederick’s reactionary responses to the ‘threat’ represented by secular ‘democracy’ – as evidenced by his quasi-censorship of La Mettrie, and his correspondence and his refutation of the Essai sur les préjugés – show that the elite’s contempt for the masses was able to voice itself in a reasoned and articulate way. Moreover, this explains why it was so rare to find explicit advocacy of enlightening the masses. This also helps to demonstrate the essential tension between the two forms of power: intellectual and political, which structured the period.

We have also shown that these elite-level, French-language debates between the constellation of French philosophes and the Prussian monarch engendered a shift in German discourse and influenced German ideas on the utility of enlightening or deceiving the people. In conclusion, we can revise Payne’s 1976 assessment of the philosophes as disinclined to instruct the people by taking into account the conditions which prevented clear expression of such intentions. This inclination can be recovered in the thought of the philosophes, keen to negotiate their own position in the social hierarchies of the day. It is wrong to impugn a whole generation of thinkers, at a time when contemporary power structures hindered the expression of egalitarian political views.

References


**Intellectual Networks in the Enlightenment**

The Social Role of an Enlightened German Philosopher: Christian Wolff (1679–1754) in His Correspondence with Ernst Christoph Count of Manteuffel

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The Social Role of an Enlightened German Philosopher: Christian Wolff (1679–1754) in His Correspondence with Ernst Christoph Count of Manteuffel

Hanns-Peter Neumann

Referring to Christian Wolff’s letters to the Count of Manteuffel, his maecenas, I want to show how the philosopher Wolff had to present himself (dependant on the expectations of his addressee) as a specific social or intellectual type in order to propagate reliably what he and his adherents called the ‘truth’ of his philosophical worldview. Based on my analysis of Wolff’s correspondence with Manteuffel, I will focus on the question how in Wolff’s case the social role of the philosopher was determined and had to be performed in order to establish a successful enlightened culture and science politics.

Introduction: Christian Wolff and His Correspondence with Ernst Christoph Count of Manteuffel

Christian Wolff was already a famous and successful philosopher when, in April 1738, his correspondence with the former Saxon diplomat and spy at the Habsburg Court Ernst Christoph Count of Manteuffel began. At this time, Manteuffel was still close to the Prussian Crown Prince Frederick, the future

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1 As for a broad discussion of the philosopher’s identity in Early Modern Europe, see Condren et al. 2006 (Ideas in Context, 77). By referring to the concept of persona the editors intend to analyse the intellectual work a individual had to perform in order to be considered philosophical by their contemporaries. They explicitly are not concerned with the sociological aspect of being a philosopher in Early Modern Europe. In Wolff’s case, I am much more interested in exploring the social role and social knowledge of a philosopher within a given individual framework, here Wolff’s correspondence with Manteuffel, in order to shed light on the intersection between different areas of expertise, namely, Wolff’s philosophical expertise and Manteuffel’s networking and diplomatic skills.

Frederick the Great, whom Manteuffel tried to influence to Wolff's benefit as well as in terms of the principles of Wolff's philosophy.\(^3\) Wolff himself was then still professor of logic and metaphysics at the Hessian University of Marburg where he had been employed since 1724.\(^4\) Before that, Wolff had taught mathematics and philosophy at the University of Halle. Owing to struggles between Wolff and pietistic theologians in Halle, especially Joachim Lange, who had accused Wolff of fatalism and atheism, he was forced into exile by the Prussian King Frederick William I on pain of the death penalty in 1723. It was forbidden to teach Wolffian philosophy at Prussian universities until the ban on Wolff's philosophy was lifted by the same King, Frederick William I, in 1736. In 1740, Wolff was fully rehabilitated by Frederick the Great. In December 1740, he returned triumphantly to Halle and to its famous enlightened University, the Fridericiana founded in 1694. Both, the rehabilitation of Wolff's philosophy in Prussia in the spring of 1736 and his reinstallation in Halle, were partly the results of massive efforts by so-called Wolffians, especially Manteuffel and the Berlin provost Johann Gustav Reinbeck, to try to establish a specific Wolffian enlightenment at the Prussian court.\(^5\)

Moreover, the political engagement of the Count of Manteuffel on behalf of Wolffian philosophy finally led to the most comprehensive exchange of letters within Wolff's entire correspondence as far as is known. Even Wolff's famous correspondence with Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz between 1704 and 1716 was not at all as extensive as his intense exchange of letters with the Count of Manteuffel between 1738 and 1748.\(^6\)

In fact, we know of about 130 correspondents exchanging letters with Wolff, mostly men and women of letters like the French-Italian astronomer Jacques Cassini, Voltaire, Johann Heinrich Samuel Formey or the famous Marquise du Châtelet. Since Wolff’s correspondence is still a terra incognita and thus remains to be researched, it is hard to tell what proportion of his letters have come down to us. To date, including his letters to Manteuffel, we have knowledge of about 820 letters written by Wolff, of which 284 were addressed to Manteuffel, which makes Wolff's correspondence with Manteuffel more than one-third of his entire known correspondence.\(^7\) Compared to his exchange of letters with

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\(^3\) Cf. Droysen 1910, 1–34; see also Bronisch 2010, 72–122.

\(^4\) For a short sketch of Wolff's biography, see Drechsler 1997, 111–128.

\(^5\) Cf. Hinrichs 1971, 434–441.

\(^6\) Cf. Gerhardt 1860.

\(^7\) The transcriptions of the Wolff-Manteuffel-correspondence are now open to the public via the Internet: Middell and Neumann 2013. (Signatures MS 0345, MS 0346, MS 0347). First part: Letters No. 1 to 150 (11.05.1738 to 30.12.1743). Second part: Letters No. 151 to 314 (5.01.1744 to 24.03.1747). Third part: Letters No. 315 to 488 (26.03.1747 to 5.11.1748), http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bsz:14-qucosa-106475.
other correspondents, Wolff’s correspondence with Manteuffel is not only concerned with an educated discussion of philosophical, theological and scientific topics, but also on culture politics: Manteuffel’s broad network of correspondents and his diplomatic skills served Wolff as a medium for disseminating and legitimizing the ‘truth’ of his philosophical knowledge.

Hence, in order specifically to determine the social role of the enlightened philosopher Christian Wolff, his correspondence with Manteuffel may serve as one of the most welcome primary sources and fields of research. Manteuffel was, from a political point of view, the most important Wolffian in the late 1730s and 1740s. As a former smart diplomat and politician, well educated in classical antiquity and in philosophy, he had established a network of correspondents in all the important realms of society – a network of scholars, professors, students, scientists, politicians, officials, aristocrats, European courtiers and publishers. In his relationship with Wolff, Manteuffel consequently made use of his networking skills and social expertise not only to support Wolff’s philosophy, but also to supply Wolff personally with help and information of almost every description (i.e. manuscripts, books, newspaper articles, journals, copies of letters, official support in private matters etc.). In his letters he managed to involve Wolff, who, from 1740 onwards, had been quite isolated at the University of Halle from ongoing debates, in the Republic of Letters concerning discussions about culture, science, theology, politics and, of course, philosophy of law, metaphysics and logic. In this specific context, Wolff, seen as an individual enlightened philosopher, found himself confronted with broad expectations concerning his duty toward society. His attitude was strictly measured by the moral, hermeneutical and scientific principles he himself had framed and elaborated in his philosophical work as well as by the strict moral standards to which Manteuffel subscribed.

In what follows, I want to give two examples of Christian Wolff’s ethos as it appears in his correspondence with Manteuffel. First, I refer to a project which was mainly initiated due to the social responsibility Manteuffel ascribed to Wolff: the project and concept of a popular philosophy for women (Philosophie des Dames). Second, I refer to Wolff’s lack of knowledge in how to deal with the Prussian court concerning the dedication of the second part of his Philosophia Practica Universalis to the Prussian King Frederick William I.
Philosophy for Women, or the Philosopher’s Responsibility for Social Welfare

Soon after Wolff had praised Count Manteuffel for supporting his philosophy in his first letter to the Count on May 11, 1738, he quite suddenly, in a letter to Manteuffel on May 28 of the same year, proposed to write a “philosophy for women”, simply because he had heard, as he says, that once in a while even women have the wish to philosophize.\(^8\) However, it was not by chance that Wolff brought up the plan of writing a *Philosophie des Dames*. He must have known that the Count would be enthusiastic about the idea of a popular philosophy for women. Maybe the Berlin provost and Wolffian theologian Johann Gustav Reinbeck, who had been corresponding with Wolff since at least 1736 and who was also a close friend of Manteuffel’s, had drawn Wolff’s attention to the fact that the Count was seeking to spread Wolffian philosophy among aristocratic circles in particular. As the famous example of Gabrielle Émilie Le Tonnelier de Breteuil, Marquise du Châtelet-Laumont, better known as Émilie du Châtelet, shows, aristocratic women showed a tremendous interest in contemporary science, mathematics and philosophy. Even though they did not always engage in publishing themselves as Émilie du Châtelet did, many of the *Dames* were eager for information in the broad field of the enlightened sciences, and they were no less eager to promote scientific research and experiments.\(^9\) Moreover, the famous relationship between Émilie and Voltaire was a striking example of a fruitful connection between a socially privileged and intellectually highly gifted aristocratic woman and a persecuted and famous poet and philosopher.

So, by encouraging the *Dames* to philosophize on their own it seemed very likely that a popular Wolffian philosophy for women would lead to a larger dissemination of Wolff’s ideas at the German and other European Courts. Since Manteuffel, was absolutely convinced of the truth of Wolff’s philosophy, which once was strictly persecuted, stigmatised and regarded as villainous by the theologians in Halle, he felt himself obliged to make the ‘truth’ generally accessible beyond its theological and dogmatic bounds, particularly to those who were in charge of political leadership. Since the ‘truth’ of Wolff’s

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\(^8\) Cf. Wolff to Manteuffel, May 28, 1738; University Library of Leipzig, Ms 0345, 6r: “Da ich vernehme, daß auch hin und wieder die Dames zu philosophiren Lust gewinnen, könnte ich Jhnen einen sehr großen Dienst thun, wenn ich für Sie eine Philosophie schriebe, da Sie via vere analytica in Lesung derselben die ihnen nützlichen Begriffe gleichsam aus sich selbst und von sich selbst durch den Gebrauch ihrer Kräftte heraus wickelten, so daß Sie alles für ihre eigene Gedancken hielten, die Ihnen einkämen [...].” (“Because I have heard that once in a while women have the desire to philosophize, I could be of great service to them, if I wrote a Philosophy for them. By studying it and by using their own capability, they would by themselves develop particularly those concepts, which are useful to them. So they would gain the impression, that everything they conceive would only be the result of thinking their own thoughts alone [...].”)

\(^9\) For Émilie du Châtelet, see Hagengruber 2012. As we know from Wolff’s correspondence with Manteuffel, the Marquise du Châtelet also exchanged letters with Christian Wolff. In fact, it was the Prussian Crown-Prince Frederick, who, convinced of Wolff’s philosophical method, communicated the French translations of Wolff’s *Deutsche Logik* (*German Logik*) and Wolff’s *Deutsche Metaphysik* (*German Metaphysics*) to Voltaire and Émilie du Châtelet in 1736/1737.
philosophy was also considered as constituting a specific method of thinking on one's own by following the rules of logic and geometrical demonstration (mos geometricus), its dissemination was expected to have a strong dialectical and pedagogical impact on the rational education of aristocrats and princes, an impact, which also involved a knowledge of morally correct behaviour – for the rules for morally correct behaviour could simply be founded and constituted by rational reasoning in terms of Wolffian philosophy. Because of this, one seriously had to account for the fact that, as Manteuffel and Wolff believed, the appropriate social agents of education still were – women. Thus, if women were philosophically educated, aristocratic men would be brought to learn philosophical knowledge and methodology themselves almost automatically. The cooperation of philosophical and political elites would lead to the establishment of a rationally founded social ethics and politics with a strong leaning towards social welfare and individual bonheur. These, at least, were Manteuffel's hopes and expectations: If women began to philosophize, society would soon become morally better. Since correct reasoning led to moral certainty, which itself promised to bring forth the refinement as well as the felicity of human society, the philosophical expertise of an enlightened philosopher like Wolff had by necessity to be the basis of a broad pedagogical movement beginning with and continued by the elites of society themselves, that is, aristocrats, princes, sovereigns and kings on the one side and academics and officials on the other side. Because Manteuffel thought that Wolff was one of the greatest philosophers ever, he considered it Wolff's duty and responsibility to engage fully in the philosophical education of society by writing a popular philosophy for women in the form of a casual fictional correspondence with a young aristocratic lady. The more gifted a philosopher was, the stronger was his duty toward society.

No wonder then that Manteuffel was enthusiastic about Wolff's idea of a “Philosophie pour l'usage du beau sexe”.

In his letter to Wolff on June 16, 1738, he unmistakably underlined the importance and usefulness of the Philosophie des Dames project for society. Manteuffel implored Wolff not to abandon his valuable plan. His main argument was based on idea of the central role of women in society. Nevertheless he extended his argument beyond the bounds of German society to humanity as a whole. For encouraging women to acquire knowledge of what is good and

10 Wolff to Manteuffel, May 16, 1738; University Library of Leipzig, Ms 0345, 7r.
11 Ibid.: “J’oserois même soutenir, qu’après Votre Théologie Naturelle, Vous n’aurez peut-être jamais conçu et exécuté de projet, qui soit plus réellement profitable, et; dans un sens; plus important pour la Société.”
12 Ibid.: “C’est pourquoi je Vous conjure, pour l’amour des dites contrées, et pour l’amour de tout ce que Vous cultivez avec le plus d’affection; j’entens la raison et la vérité; de ne pas abandonner un ce [si] beau dessein.”
what is true on their own, implied at the same time making truth accessible to men. Above all, it even involved teaching humankind as a whole what is good and what is true.  

Convinced of Manteuffel’s arguments and in order to realise the Philosophie des Dames project, Wolff actually began to conceive of a first fictional letter to a young aristocratic lady in November 1738 by explicitly referring to the Count’s main argument. He emphasises, that, until women begin to philosophize, humankind will not achieve its aim of a blissful human society. Moreover, it is the female elite, namely, aristocratic women, that must do the pioneering work of rational education in order to build the moral framework of a better society. Thus, the role of the philosopher, as fulfilled by Wolff by following the Count’s advice, consisted in philosophically instructing the social elites. It gave expression to the optimistic conviction that by rational thinking the leaders of society would automatically be led to establish a politics of truth and moral good aiming at the universal welfare of humankind – a kind of pragmatic social utopia which should be the practical ideal of the philosopher’s and his aristocratic disciples’ work.

Yet, the project of a Philosophie des Dames began and also ended with Wolff’s above mentioned fictional letter to a young aristocratic lady. Although the project was discussed in the correspondence between Wolff and Manteuffel up until May 1739, due to the fact that Wolff was keen to accomplish his philosophical lifework, the fictitious correspondence was never continued. Instead it was the Wolffian Jean Henri Samuel Formey, secretary of the Prussian Academy of Sciences in Berlin, who, from 1746 to 1753, published the six volumes of his La Belle Wolfienne. It is very likely, that Manteuffel himself encouraged his friend Formey to conceive of a popular representation of Wolff’s philosophy in French. It is known from letters of the Count to Formey that he was eager to bring forth French translations of Wolff’s main works in order to make them generally known. Since Formey actually translated Wolff’s philosophical works, like for instance the German Metaphysics, and made his translations part of his La Belle Wolfienne, he was quite happy to go along with Manteuffel’s intentions. However, Formey’s work was not written as a

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13 Ibid.: “En un mot, mettre les femmes en état de connoître le bon, et le vrai, c’est, je le répète, le faire connoître en même temps aux hommes; c’est instruire insensiblement tout le genre humain.”

14 See the edition of Wolff’s fictional letter in: Ostertag, 1910b, 27–32.

15 Wolff to a fictitious young aristocratic lady, November 29, 1738; University Library of Leipzig, Ms 0345, 39r; Ostertag 1910b, 27–28: “Sie sehen eine Wahrheit ein, die bisher wenige unter den Weltweisen erkannt, daß als dann erst das menschliche Geschlechte werde glückseelig werden, wenn das weibliche Geschlecht wird anfangen zu philosophiren, und erkennen, daß die Damen, welche die Geburt und besondere von der milden Natur mitgetheilte Qualitäten distinguirein, den Anfang machen müßen, als deren erlauchtes Exempel mehreren Eindruck in die Gemüther der anderen machen kan, als die gegründeten Ausdrückungen der subtilsten Weltweisen.”

16 Formey 1746–1753. For Formey’s biography, see Hayes 1994. For Formey’s correspondence network, see Häselar 2003.
fictional exchange of letters between a Wolffian philosopher and a young aristocratic lady, but as a kind of novel that set out the arguments of Wolff's philosophy in a popular manner.

**The Know-How of Dedicating, or Wolff's Lack of Pragmatic Social Intelligence**

When Wolff was about to finish the second part of his *Philosophia practica universalis*, he thought of dedicating it to the Prussian Crown Prince Frederick or, alternatively, to Frederick's father, Frederick William I, King of Prussia. As he was uncertain which alternative to choose, the King or the Crown Prince, Wolff asked Manteuffel for his advice. Owing to Wolff's request, the Count subsequently conferred with Johann Gustav Reinbeck about the case. Reinbeck was well connected with the royal family and thus had the necessary insights and information in order to provide the kind of well-grounded advice for which Wolff had asked. Both, Manteuffel and Reinbeck, came to the conclusion, that, given the political circumstances, it would be best if Wolff dedicated the final part of his *Philosophia practica universalis* to the King of Prussia and not to the Crown Prince.

Since we do not find any hints in the letters themselves, we can only guess which reasons finally led Manteuffel and Reinbeck to their conclusion. Apparently the rehabilitation of Wolffianism in Prussia in 1736 had changed the King's mind about Wolff and his philosophy, which he had himself condemned some fifteen years earlier forcing Wolff into exile on pain of the death penalty. Moreover, Wolff's ongoing success as an academic teacher of philosophy in Marburg must have impressed the Prussian King, who was now less sceptical about Wolff's philosophy than before. So it seemed to be the right moment for Wolff and the Wolffians to hope for even more support and protection from the Prussian Court, providing that Wolff addressed the King properly.

Dedicatory letters were traditionally a very delicate matter and had much to do with political intuition. They normally sought the protection, support and promotion of the works by the princes, kings and aristocrats to whom they were dedicated. So the dedicatory practice required a thorough psychological argumentation which took the personality of the addressee carefully into account. If handled with careful consideration, dedicatory letters could then be an efficient and

17 Wolff to Manteuffel, February 11, 1739; University Library of Leipzig, Ms 0345, 49r–50r.
18 Manteuffel speaks of changing times, new political constellations and the present conjuncture without specifying them in more detail; see Manteuffel's letter to Wolff, February 20, 1739; University Library of Leipzig, Ms 0345, 53r: “Le tems et les constellations aient extremement changé depuis, nous trouvons que ce qui eut pu produire alors de très bons effets, en feroit peut être de tout contraires dans cette conjonction presente.”
powerful instrument of culture politics. They could at the same time help to advance the future career of their authors. Hence, the question of to whom and how to dedicate Wolff's main ethical work was by no means negligible. Since Wolff had no insights into the Prussian Court and was not as experienced in diplomacy as Manteuffel, he found it difficult to deal with the reigning political elites as far as dedicatory practice was concerned, where his philosophical expertise could be of little help to him. So he strongly welcomed the advice Manteuffel gave him in a letter dated February 20, 1739.

In this letter the Count emphasized that, given the circumstances and under the condition that Wolff followed Manteuffel's instructions accurately, nothing more useful to the good cause of truth could be imagined than to dedicate the second part of the *Philosophia practica universalis* to the current King of Prussia. In what follows, Manteuffel outlined the structure and the content he thought the dedication should have in order to provide the desired effect on the King.

It was most important that the King was not made to feel responsible for his condemnation of Wolff and his philosophy in 1723. Instead the blame was to be assigned to those who, like Joachim Lange, had accused and were still accusing Wolff of atheism and fatalism. Moreover, Wolff had to make the King believe that the content of the *Philosophia practica universalis* was in accordance with the King's own sentiments. He should make clear that his philosophy could provide the best arguments with which to stand up against the so-called freethinkers and atheists whose philosophies were considered morally and socially dangerous. Here again it was the social responsibility of the philosopher which had to come into play in order to convince the King of the moral advantages of Wolff's philosophy with respect to social order and moral behaviour.

Apart from these specific arguments there were yet other aspects to be kept in mind, some of them matters of style, some of them concerning the King's education. So, although the dedication had to be written in Latin, Manteuffel recommended that it also be translated into German, due to the King's bad understanding of the Latin language. This was certainly the best way of making sure that the King did actually read the dedicatory letter from beginning to end.

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20 Manteuffel to Wolff, February 20, 1739; University Library of Leipzig, Ms 0345, 53r: “[…] nous avons finalement conclu que vous ne sauriez rien imaginer, qui puisse être plus utile à la bonne cause : j’entends celle de la vérité : que de dédier votre nouveau livre a S[a] M[ajesté] le Roi de Prusse; pourvuque vous veulliez bien vous y prendre de la maniere qui suit […].”

21 Ibid., 53v–54r.
Wolff took all of Manteuffel's instructions seriously into account and wrote two different versions of the dedication which he then sent to Manteuffel and Reinbeck, who had offered to do the editing work.\textsuperscript{22}

In a letter to Manteuffel on March 29, 1739, Wolff accepted the Count's and Reinbeck's emendations. On April 18th, he finally sent a copy of the \textit{Philosophia practica universalis}, including the Latin dedication and its German translation, to the King. Whilst Wolff was still in the process of composing the dedicatory letter, a remarkable event occurred which sparked an increase in Frederick William I's interest in Wolff's philosophy and shows that Manteuffel and Reinbeck had wisely interpreted circumstances at the Prussian court. On March 7th the King released a cabinet order addressed to those who wished to be trained as reformed preachers. They were told to study “philosophy and rational logic, for example that of professor Wolff, to attain to distinct and precise terms and definitions in the entire field of theology”.\textsuperscript{23} Thus, Wolffianism became a crucial part of Prussian culture politics, and Wolff's method of thinking would become a substantial part of theological education.

As a matter of fact, the Wolffians considered this rescript addressed to reformed theologians as an outstanding sign of the King’s favour for Wolff's philosophy. So they were not at all surprised that Wolff finally received a positive response to his dedication. In a letter dated May 8, 1739, Manteuffel congratulated Wolff on the approval of his dedication at the Prussian court. The mission was successfully completed, the dedication had the desired effect on the King’s mind “en faveur de vòtre philosophie”.\textsuperscript{24} Frederic William no longer regarded Wolff's philosophy as theologically dangerous. On the contrary, from now on he seemed to be convinced that Wolff's philosophical principles were compatible with the Christian faith and social welfare.

Yet, the success of Wolff's dedication had an unexpected negative side-effect. It simply consisted in the King offering Wolff the position of professor of philosophy at the Prussian University of Frankfurt on the Oder. He apparently wanted Wolff back in Prussia. This was a generous offer. But for several reasons it was unacceptable to Wolff, who preferred Halle instead of Frankfurt.

\textsuperscript{22} For the two versions of Wolff's dedicatory letter, including Manteuffel's emendations, see the University Library of Leipzig, Ms 0345, 58r–58v, 62r–63v. For the printed version see, Wolff 1739, a2r–b2v. Some of the most noticeable emendations concern the expressions 'divine Majesty' (divina Majestas) and 'Your most holy name' (Nomen Sanctissimum Tuum) used by Wolff in the first draft of his dedicatory letter. The terms 'divine' and 'most holy' were deleted by Manteuffel and Reinbeck. Comparing Manteuffel's instructions with the finally printed dedicatory letter, apparently shows that Wolff exactly followed Manteuffel's advice.

\textsuperscript{23} For the German text, see Straßberger 2010, 351.

\textsuperscript{24} Manteuffel to Wolff, May 8, 1739; University Library of Leipzig, Ms 0345, 68r.
Moreover, he could not simply leave Marburg for Frankfurt on the Oder without appearing ungrateful to his present employer Frederick I of Sweden, also Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel, whose father Charles had offered Wolff a privileged position at the University of Marburg, when Wolff had been expelled from Halle in 1723. However, Wolff couldn't possibly ignore Frederick William's generous offer. Thus, despite this quite important success for Wolffianism in Prussia, the new situation caused some remarkable and unforeseen problems for Wolff himself. How should he respond? How could he refuse Frederick William's offer without displeasing the King? On the other hand, how could he accept a recall to Halle without displeasing Frederick I of Sweden, his present employer? Unable to cope with the King's offer properly, Wolff again asked Manteuffel for advice: “Ich bitte also, Euer Excellence wollen mich mit Dero Rath erfreuen.”

And again, Manteuffel, Reinbeck and the entire circle of Wolffians in Berlin rallied to Wolff's support using their networking and diplomatic skills. This finally led, about 15 months later, to Wolff's triumphant return to the Academia Fridericana in Halle in December 1740. The story of Wolff's return to Halle is a very complex one and is still to be told. Though it began with the desired success of Wolff's dedication of the second part of the *Philosophia practica universalis* to the King of Prussia, the dedication itself was not written with the intention of suggesting that the King bring Wolff back to Prussia. However, this clearly demonstrates how influential the politics of dedicatory practice could be.

**Some Conclusions on the Social Role of the Philosopher Christian Wolff**

Manteuffel considered Wolff's philosophical expertise the theoretical foundation of the philosopher's moral responsibility for human society, which at the same time was meant to be a practical guideline for the conduct of Wolff's own life. Thus, in order to be credible Wolff was expected to meet the moral and intellectual standards he himself had set out in his theories. But this was not as easy as one might at first think. In fact, in the case of the highly ethical *Philosophie des Dames* project, theory alone did not work. Quite the contrary, in order to put his philosophy for the welfare of human society into practice, Wolff apparently needed a sounding board for his ideas, namely, Manteuffel and his idea of how a philosopher could and should be of use to society.

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25 Wolff to Manteuffel, May 13, 1739; University Library of Leipzig, Ms 0345, 70v: “Es gefällt mir Franckfurt eben nicht, und würde mir lieber gewesen seyn, wenn es Halle wäre.”
26 Ibid. “Hence, I ask Your Excellency to gladden me with Your advice.”
27 Only once during the correspondence was Manteuffel deeply sceptical about Wolff's moral integrity.
In conceiving of a popular philosophy for women, Wolff made use of almost every single argument Manteuffel had mentioned on this subject in his letters. No wonder then that Wolff considered the Philosophie des Dames project to be a task entrusted to him by Manteuffel. So we might say that, in the context of the Wolff-Manteuffel correspondence, Manteuffel played the role of the moral cosmopolitan, skilled diplomat and practical advisor provoking Wolff to fulfil his duty as a philosopher in society and, in order to do so successfully, providing him with his own vast knowledge of society.

While Wolff, with Manteuffel’s cooperation, had no problems of conceiving of morally and pedagogically valuable projects like the Philosophie des Dames, he definitely found it difficult to deal with political elites. In order to be successful with respect to the politicking that surrounded culture and science politics, he needed – apart from a readiness to argue his case and a certain ability in the art of self-promotion as well as media competence, which he certainly had – diplomatic skills, which he certainly did not. In Early Modern Times intellectual elites strongly depended on their diplomatic and political skills. If, as in Wolff’s case, they lacked this specific kind of pragmatic social intelligence, they were in dire need of mediators and advisors, like, for example, Manteuffel, who then played a crucial role in culture politics and career management not only concerning Wolff’s personal biography, but also concerning the philosophical movement of Leibniz-Wolffianism in Europe.  

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29 To cite but one example: Manteuffel used his contacts at the court of the Danish king in order to propagate Leibniz-Wolffian philosophy in Denmark.

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The Professor and the Body Politic: Pehr Kalm and the Social Imaginary in Eighteenth-Century Turku¹

Mathias Persson

This article investigates the representations of society in a number of mid-eighteenth-century dissertations supervised by Pehr Kalm (1716–1779), a disciple of Linnaeus and a well-known professor of economics in Turku (Åbo), against the background of the strong ties that tended to bind early modern literati to the ruling elites. The article consists of four thematic sections, which examine how the dissertations conceptualized the body politic, the powers that be, the populace and the scholars. All in all, Kalm and his students adhered to a fairly traditional social imaginary, although their renderings of their own caste, the men of learning, as indispensable for progress and the common good foreboded a later, expert-centric era.

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to analyse how society was represented in a number of mid-eighteenth-century dissertations presided over by Pehr Kalm (1716–1779), a Linnaean disciple and renowned professor of economics in Turku (Åbo), against the background of the political and social bonds that tied early modern scholarship to the powers that be. Kalm took a keen interest in economic matters, which tended to occupy a salient place on the agenda of eighteenth-century Swedish men of letters, not least at the Royal Academy of Turku (Kungliga Akademin i Åbo, Turun akatemia), a hotspot for utility-oriented efforts to improve society and enhance the fatherland. Several historians have accordingly

¹ Like most Swedish historians, the author of this article does not know Finnish; hence, there are some studies in that language that have not been used save for the occasional summary in English. If the inclusion of secondary literature in Finnish were to be a condition for conducting research on the era before 1809, when Finland was annexed by Russia, many topics would effectively be off-limits for the vast majority of Swedish scholars, which is hardly a reasonable scenario. One way to compensate for such deficiencies, however, is to allude to relevant texts on the subject matter, such as, for the present article, Niemelä 1998, Kinnari 2012 and Ahokas 2011.
portrayed Kalm as a hard-core utilitarian, as “the extreme advocate of the primacy of the economy” and “the king of the utilists”.²

Via members of its teaching-staff, the Royal Academy of Turku maintained contacts with other economic and patriotic institutions, such as the Royal Academy of Sciences in Stockholm, where Finnish literati like Kalm were elected fellows.³ In parity with seats of learning elsewhere in the Swedish realm during the Age of Liberty, when the Diet was in power, the Royal Academy of Turku had strong ties to pivotal government figures in the capital. After the ascent of the so-called Hat Party in 1739, the university came under the firm control of this constellation of politicians, officials, merchants and scholars, who ruled Sweden until the oppositional Cap Party deposed them in 1765.⁴ The Hats were united by a set of political and economic positions on a variety of issues. They tended to take a highly patriotic stance and generally held a negative view of commodity imports; one of their main objectives was to reduce the influx of foreign goods by promoting domestic production through customs tariffs, bounties, cultivation of foreign plants and other means.⁵

Like many of his peers, Kalm was enmeshed in both the public administration and an ensemble of social networks involving scholars as well as persons in authority, clients as well as patrons, individuals as well as institutional nodes. In Kalm’s case, one such node was the Royal Academy of Sciences, which originated as a result of the rise of the Hat Party and resolutely aligned itself with the powers that be and the new masters of the realm.⁶ In addition, Kalm was a client of several men of distinction, three of whom sympathized with the Hat regime. Sten Carl Bielke, a vice president at Turku’s court of appeal, belonged to the opposition, but Johan Browallius, a professor in Turku who went on to become the bishop there, was an influential Hat politician, as was Carl Gustaf Tessin, Sweden’s prime minister (kanslipresident) between 1746 and 1752 and the chancellor of the Royal Academy of Turku between 1745 and 1761. The famed botanist Carolus Linnaeus – who, together with Browallius, helped Kalm

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⁵ For the Hat Party, its policies and the political landscape in Sweden during the Age of Liberty, see Roberts 1986, chapter 3. Recently, the very existence of parties in eighteenth-century Sweden has been called into question by Patrik Winton, who has instead identified social networks as the foundation of political life during the Age of Liberty. See Winton 2006, 22–24, see also pp. 295–296, 304–305, and 308–309. To be sure, there was no ideology or party organization in the present-day sense; rather, people rallied around certain individuals and comparatively vague conceptions of the world. Still, it is possible to reconstruct a basic and predominant outlook which united the persons who came to power in 1738–1739 and was manifested in a wide range of actions.
⁶ For the political profile of the Royal Academy of Sciences, see Lindroth 1967, 3, 68; Hildebrand 1939, 340, 369, 473, 619, 622–623; Widmalm 1990, 57–60; Koerner 1999a, 105.
get his professorial chair in Turku and whose scientific dominion Kalm consolidated through explorations of Swedish provinces as well as a well-publicized journey to North America – likewise concurred with the Hats.⁷

Considering these affiliations and the fact that the contents of other dissertations in eighteenth-century Turku agreed with both the preferences of Sweden’s rulers and the hierarchical nature of the country’s social estates, it is safe to assume that Kalm embraced and voiced views that supported, or were at least compatible with, the tenets that held sway in the symbolic centre of the political culture and among the powers that be.⁸ Not for nothing was Kalm’s professorship devised by the powerful Hat politician Tessin, and, as a professor, Kalm did his best to execute the protectionist policies of the government by advancing the domestic production of silk.⁹ Kalm’s biographer Carl Skottsberg has hinted that he sided with the Hats, at least when it came to foreign policy.¹⁰

Even though Kalm operated in a provincial locale, his fervent utilitarian commitment and manifold bonds to erudite compatriots as well as to the powers that be made him a central figure during Sweden’s Age of Liberty, whose Zeitgeist, one might say, he embodied. Because of his centrality in those regards, Kalm, and by extension the students he tutored, provides a suitable object of study in terms of how the literati in this northern realm imagined society during the eighteenth century, a topic which has seldom been looked at in depth. Extant research has largely focused on how men of letters envisioned Sweden, as opposed to Swedish society, applying catchall phrases like ‘utilism’ (utilitarianism), ‘mercantilism’, ‘patriotism’ and ‘physico-theology’ to capture their mind set. This article takes another route to the early modern imagining of the national self and will hopefully be able to shed some new light not just on the Swedish setting, but on the surrounding world as well, since Sweden formed an integral part of a profoundly traditional but slowly modernizing Europe. To put it differently, the aim is to unearth a social imaginary, that is, “the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go

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⁷ For Kalm’s relationship with Bielke, Browallius, Linnaeus and Tessin, see Klinge et al. 1988–1991, 135–137, 240, 629, 656, 658; Kallinen 2008, 377–378; Skottsberg 1951, 56. For Bielke’s political allegiances, see Carlquist 1924. For Browallius, see Widmalm 1990, 58. For Linnaeus, see Koerner 1999a, 16–17, 104–105, 166; Roberts 1986, 140.
⁸ For the other dissertations, see Lindberg 1990, 173, 181, 194–195.
on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations”.

In the following, ‘the powers that be’ and ‘the elite’ signify the rulers of the realm and the upper strata of society – officials, noblemen, affluentburgers and clergymen – in accordance with the Swedish concept övert. Somewhat like its German equivalent Obrigkeit, övert could denote any person in authority and extend from princes all the way down to lower-level officials and parish priests. Men of letters could and did, of course, belong to the social and political elite. For instance, Browallius and Jacob Faggot, the director general of the Royal Office of Land Survey, were scholars as well as high-ranking civil servants. It is hence important to acknowledge that ‘the republic of letters’ and ‘the powers that be’ should be comprehended as analytical tools rather than as empirical entities mirroring a past reality: the categories can and do indeed overlap, and the way in which a specific individual ought to be defined depends on the questions the researcher poses. What is more, men of letters did not act as mere vessels of the elite; they also attempted to affect the conduct of the powers that be by wooing and educating them.

To contextualize Kalm and his pupils, the article comprises a couple of texts by Browallius and various dissertations supervised by Pehr Adrian Gadd, one of Kalm’s students who became a professor of chemistry at the Royal Academy of Turku as well as a fellow of the Royal Academy of Sciences. Like Kalm, Gadd was heavily invested in the utilitarian programme, and he has been styled as “one of the most purebred representatives” of Finnish “natural–historical economic theory”. Browallius’s texts were written before Kalm’s dissertations, while the works by Gadd and his pupils were produced after them. The inclusion of Browallius’s and Gadd’s writings will reveal whether the notions enunciated by Kalm and his respondents corresponded to wider currents of thought among the Swedish literati during the Age of Liberty. Needless to say, the analysis has been restricted to a selection of texts by Kalm’s students and colleagues. The texts all stem from the mid eighteenth century and wrestle with practical topics of regional or national relevance. There is nothing special about them; rather, they have been randomly picked from an extensive range of works and should for this reason be seen as a cross section of the greater corpuses within which they sit. For instance, of the 142 respondents Kalm

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11 Taylor 2004, 23.
12 Sellin 1984, 406–407; “Övert”, Norstedts stora svenska ordbok 1986, 1507. Compare Nordin 2009, 21. Three of the dissertations supervised by Kalm counted vicars as persons of rank. See Indrenius 1757, 8; Lindsteen 1754, 3; Leopold 1753, 4. The clerics were both public servants and spiritual guides, who, as one dissertation put it, were able to ‘implant’ desired knowledge in the uneducated commoners. See Indrenius 1757, 14.
tutored, only one had a more theoretical approach – all the others displayed a distinct, practical orientation consonant with the preponderance of tangible matters in those of Kalm’s dissertations that are investigated here.¹⁵

Because the article explores network-related and politically motivated standpoints in a collection of dissertations, the students and their teacher are treated as a composite unit within the dissertational system. Consequently, the issue of authorship is of no concern here; suffice it to say that the main tendencies of the texts can be taken to exhibit Kalm’s overarching influence on them and his pupils, since he was a constant and the respondents varied.¹⁶ Furthermore, economists of the Age of Liberty like Kalm still abided by an understanding of dissertations as manifestations of an adherence to established academic ideals and forms of thought rather than as testimonies to originality or harbingers of novelties, while the question of authorship remained inconsequential.¹⁷ The Turku dissertations thus entailed ever-larger circles of actors, norms and attitudes, whereas individuality did not constitute a principal facet of the dissertational process.

The article consists of four thematic sections, followed by a concluding remark. The first part outlines the dissertations’ basic perception of society and centres on the recurrent motif of regular movement, which by way of analogy had intimate links to contemporary images of living organisms, not least the human body. The second part examines the renderings of the powers that be, while the third probes the representations of the populace and the fourth charts the conceptions of the scholars, since men of learning were, in effect, given an elevated status and crucial function in society.

**Imagining Society in Eighteenth-Century Turku**

**Movement in the Body Politic**

While Kalm’s dissertations recognized the need for and the advantages of international commerce, they also expressed the patriotic trade policies of the Hat Party, which has usually been described as ‘mercantilist’ and ‘utilist’ in nature.¹⁸ Consistent with the economic–patriotic programme of

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¹⁵ For the practical orientation of Kalm’s dissertations, see Kallinen 2008, 379.
¹⁶ This take on Kalm and his pupils is inspired by Lindberg 1990, 169–170, 172–173, and Liedman 1986, 55.
¹⁸ For a recognition of the need for and advantages of international trade, see Aurenius 1753, 4; Lithander 1753, 20–21; Backman 1754, 2. It should be noted that the regime-friendly orientation of the dissertations seems to have been more tangible at the beginning of Kalm’s professorship, presumably because he felt it necessary to show his gratitude for his recent promotion. To analyse changes over time, however, is not an objective of this article.
the Hats, the dissertations encouraged exportation and discouraged importation in order to boost
the Swedish money stock. They pleaded for an unhampered inner movement of goods and for
increased or improved domestic production and exploitation of resources, not least in connection
with the manufactures, which played a key role in the utilitarian policies of the Hat Party. The respondents promulgated other economic tenets cherished by the government, chiefly the
benefits of population growth and a rigid division of labour.

For example, one of the Kalmian dissertations, a treatise on the founding of towns submitted
by Gustav Fridrich Aurenius, emphasized the significance of internal economic movement and
advocated the exportation of processed goods in order to generate a national surplus, whereas
only essential commodities and raw materials required for domestic production were to be
imported. Foreign plants should, whenever possible, be introduced in Sweden and adapted to its
climate. The main objective was to keep the money that animated and bolstered society within the
kingdom. Daniel Lithander, who defended a dissertation on the preservation of Sweden’s forests,
likewise evinced hostility towards importation and sought to promote the domestic production
of goods with the aim of counteracting the outflow of money, while he too offered a vision of
intensified inner motion. For Lithander, the manufactures were critical to saving the fatherland
from the utmost poverty, which, he argued, its foreign trade threatened to induce.

Like the Hats, several of Kalm’s students favoured sharp dividing lines between different
trades, a conception in tune with the political and social barriers of a society divided into
estates. Aurenius supported a strict division of labour between the towns and the countryside:
the peasantry should be prohibited from meddling in urban trades and vice versa, as the blurring
of boundaries led to disorder, the production of unexportable, low-quality commodities and the
ruination of the Swedish realm. Lithander argued that inland boating and rural trade with the
towns should be regulated through the issuing of privileges to a limited number of countrymen.
A similar focus marked Jonas Andreas Norrgreen’s dissertation on agrarian reform, where the

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19 For dissertations that display such characteristics, see, for instance, Indrenius 1757, 1–2, 7–8, 16; Leopold
1753, 2, 4–5, 7; Granroth 1754, 8–18; Backman 1754, 10–12; Wegelius 1755, 1–2, 6, 8; Wialenius 1760, 16–28;
Enckell 1760, 6–13.
20 For population growth, see Norrgreen 1760, 7; Backman 1754, 11; Wialenius 1760, 16–20.
21 Aurenius 1753, 4–5, 38–40; Lithander 1753, 6–9, 11–12, 43.
author showed how the swapping of field allotments (storskifte) would result in clear demarcations of properties, which could then only be changed with difficulty.\(^\text{23}\)

A conspicuous theme in Aurenius’s dissertation was the envisaging of balance and evenness. Aurenius maintained that Sweden’s foreign trade ought to be characterized by equilibrium and that its towns should be evenly dispersed. He also discussed the towns in the context of an even diffusion of goods and an even movement of money within Sweden. These and other, comparable statements in Aurenius’s work can be related to his depiction of how water effected the even distribution of blood as well as nutriments throughout the body and how it preserved the healthiness of the blood by disposing of harmful waste.\(^\text{24}\) The human body and the social world obviously reflected and harmonized with one another; by analogy, a healthy society was a society where products flowed uniformly and steadily through the body of the realm.

The image of regular movement returned in an exposition on the ideal layout of future towns. Aurenius contended that the streets should be wide enough to admit light, to help keep the urban setting clean and to allow the inhabitants to go about their respective businesses unhindered. He stressed the importance of a good drainage system to stop stagnant water from giving rise to insalubrity and the need to pave public meeting grounds to ameliorate the administration of order, so that garbage could be disposed of with greater ease. The same motif is found in the endorsement of the clearing up of rivers and the construction of canals to facilitate domestic transportation.\(^\text{25}\)

The positive stance on unimpeded movement did not imply a proto-liberal worldview, as Aurenius’s allegiance to the economic programme of the Hat Party demonstrates. Furthermore, Aurenius thought that the peasants should be forced to sell their goods at designated areas in the towns, since this would prevent the cheating which could materialize “if everyone was at liberty, to trade and negotiate in all the nooks and corners, as best he could”. A similar point was made in relation to the urban–rural division of labour: “If all industries were to be equally open to the peasant and the town dweller, everyone would be free to stick with the livelihood that pleased him, and from which he seemed to get his putative profit. What disarray such housekeeping would engender is easy to conclude.” The dissertation proceeded to enumerate the destructive

\(^{23}\) Aurenius 1753, 4–5, 12, 35–36, 39–40; Lithander 1753, 31–32; Norrgreen 1760, 9.

\(^{24}\) Aurenius 1753, 7, 10, 12, 17. For one of the other students “an even and a regulated way of life” constituted an ideal. See Colliander 1760, 4, italics in the original text.

\(^{25}\) Aurenius 1753, 19–23.
consequences of this “damaging scrambling”: the best raw materials could be corrupted, key industries would be forgotten, exportation would be scant, etc.26

Several of Kalm’s students pictured society in bodily terms, a pervasive mode of visualization which served to elicit a clear-cut distribution of rights and obligations between the estates.27 Society had for a long time been construed as a unified body, wherein these age-old corporations constituted the foremost elements and every limb had to do its allotted part for the whole to operate in a well-balanced way, something that would not come to pass without the ordering function of the state.28 In his examination of the economic usefulness of the clergy, Abraham Indrenius represented this estate as “a part of the body of the government and the realm”, while Aurenius likened the manufactures to healthy foetuses and fertile organisms that would reproduce amply if handled correctly. For Carl Fridric Leopold, who dealt with the utility of domestic floras, imports were a means for “the foreigner’ . . . to suck the juices of life from our Body politic [Rikskropp]”. Lithander equated foreign trade with a body or organism, since it could allegedly suffer from large wounds, and described a warped foreign trade as a disease, which must be adequately known in order to be cured. Even though the manufacture system launched by the Diet amounted to a remedy, Sweden would never recuperate as long as its imports were not reduced.29

Gustav Friederich Wialenius, pleading for the blessings of the manufactures, asserted that the body politic required population growth and cited a speech by the engineer Mårten Triewald, who elaborated upon the analogy of disease:

A multitude of idle poor is a plague in a Country and Realm. Beggars cannot be considered differently in a society, other than as gushing wounds and boils on a natural body, because when they are able to serve their compatriots in whatever purpose it might be, yet do not get employed, their

26 Ibid., 21, 36–37. Aurenius was not the only one of Kalm’s pupils who explicitly denounced individual liberty. Lithander presented a distinctly negative opinion of the inhabitants of North America, who believed that they were “a free people, and might do what they want with what is theirs; hence they look only to the present, and do not care about the future”. See Lithander 1753, 35. To a student of Kalm’s colleague Gadd, freedom was nothing but “choosing what is most useful”. See Holmberg 1766, 5.
28 Melkersson 1997, 211–213; Ihalainen 2009, 317–318. During the Age of Liberty, traditional, organic conceptualizations of society were complemented by mechanical ones, which allowed for more optimistic images of the future. See Ihalainen 2009, 328–336. This new imagery, however, did not figure in the investigated dissertations.
29 Indrenius 1757, 5; Aurenius 1753, 37; Leopold 1753, 5; Lithander 1753, 6–7.
indolence is a rather difficult burden, torment and tax for the Political body, which they inflict so much impediment and damage upon, as if they wanted to tie someone dead to a living body.\textsuperscript{30}

Consequently, children, old people and invalids who worked at the tobacco manufactures were “useful limbs of the Republique”.\textsuperscript{31}

As the block quote shows, neither Triewald, nor Wialenius, nor Kalm held a compassionate view of vulnerable social groups. This attitude seems to have been fairly conventional among the Swedish literati of the time; for instance, the professor of economics in Uppsala, Anders Berch, likened the poor denizens of the realm to excrement.\textsuperscript{32} According to Gadd’s student Carl Henric Armfeldt, who, like Kalm’s respondents, imagined society as a body, the children of paupers were a valuable asset for the nation if used in the right – that is useful – way, but “a wasting disease, if they are mismanaged”.\textsuperscript{33} Not surprisingly, Kalm’s dissertations overall displayed a rather patronizing approach to common people, as section 2.3 of the article will illustrate. Before that, the study addresses Kalm’s students’ images of the powers that be in order to establish how they conceived the societal order.

**The Powers that Be**

Representations of the powers that be typified the ritual and social side of the dissertations, where the highest strata of society were routinely exalted in a more or less standardized fashion.\textsuperscript{34} Nonetheless, these representations also conveyed a normative idea of the proper political and social order, which is investigated below. First, however, an analysis of what the basic configuration of society looked like in the treatises is of the essence.

Aurenius presupposed the existence of a primordial natural state, when human beings acknowledged no authority but God and concerned themselves exclusively with the tending of their souls and the bare necessities of life. Some individuals defied divine and natural laws by using violence, betrayal and cunning to acquire what others had worked hard to accomplish. The

\textsuperscript{30} Wialenius 1760, 16.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 17.
\textsuperscript{32} Liedman 1986, 164–165.
\textsuperscript{33} Armfeldt 1765, 32. Armfeldt asserted that “no tear is more dangerous in a body of the realm [Rikskropp], than the general destruction of morals” and listed a range of signs, such as self-interest and the extinction of true patriotism, which indicated that “harmful fluids have gotten the upper hand in the body of the State, its liberty, power, dominion and reputation are then at death’s door and draw their last breath”. See Armfeldt 1765, 5–6.
\textsuperscript{34} For the ritual and social aspect of the dissertations, see Lindberg 1990, 172–173.
insecurity of this situation led to the creation of ‘the highest authority’, that is, government. There was a general realization that the only way to bring about welfare and rectify the harsh oppression and multiple penuries that were reproduced along with humankind was to come together in a society.\footnote{Aurenius 1753, 2–3, compare p. 34.}

Aurenius’s infant society “could not endure, without order, order not without government, government not without the right, power and authority to direct the free actions of the entire people, towards the common good of the people; therefore the highest authority was entrusted to the one or those whom the people considered to be the most capable and powerful thereto”. As the natural state came to an end, the people surrendered their natural rights to the powers that be (“Öfwerheten”). The highest authority was obliged not just to protect the subjects, but also to enhance the riches and power of their society by effecting and upholding a framework that made the populace behave in a manner beneficial for the whole.\footnote{Ibid., 3–4.}

The natural state as defined by Aurenius had a distinctly Hobbesian flavour, epitomized as it was by unrighteousness, strife and scarcity, whereas society was taken to afford a superior form of life in comparison to this natural state with all its uncertainties. Even so, Aurenius did not conjure up Leviathan, since he determined that every obligation corresponded to a right. Aurenius’s bleak understanding of the human condition was reflected in Lithander’s concern that laws would not be observed if the forests were destroyed: “at that point the one who has a bush of wood on his properties will not be safe from robbing, theft, etc., by those who own nothing; distress teaches good and evil”.\footnote{Aurenius 1753, 39; Lithander 1753, 37.}

Aurenius and Lithander’s assessments of human nature should probably be viewed in light of the Bible rather than Hobbes; the Fall of Man was explicitly referred to in Isaac Algeen’s dissertation on the many uses of weeds, which outlined Adam’s fall from grace and claimed that “the ruined nature” of man made him inclined to all sorts of evil and led him astray. One of Gadd’s dissertations likewise discoursed on “the natural mischievousness” and “the natural anxiousness and inborn evil desires” of man, which negated public liberty, order, security and strength. Reminiscent of Kalm’s treatises, the pessimistic renderings of mankind most likely had Biblical roots; the revealed word of God and its compatibility with reason and the judicial arrangements
of the polity were brought up later on, as the dissertation announced a contrasting trust that children and youth would be able to overcome their vices.38

Insofar as Kalm and his students paid heed to constitutional issues, they visibly identified with the Age of Liberty and the prevailing order, as when Indrenius highlighted the efficacy of the clergy in counteracting the lingering fad for royal absolutism:

a vicar who knows, both on political grounds and from the economic histories of several realms, what kind of insecurity in terms of both life and property the inhabitants of the countries are suspended in, where the powers that be are left to rule absolutely, and where one no longer is the owner of what one has acquired with a lot of sweat, [more] than the governing Lord himself wishes, has no difficulty in depicting this for his listeners with vivid examples, so that they are seized with a hatred of and loathing for all absolute rule.39

The powers that be were not only indispensable in that they made peaceful human coexistence possible; they also, in line with a commonplace eighteenth-century notion, functioned as the prime mover of the economy and thus of the incessant development towards national blissfulness.40 Kalm’s students frequently portrayed members of the elite as zealous economic patriots and promoters of utility. Most often, ingratiating remarks of this sort figured in the prefaces of the dissertations, which glorified the Maecenases – a motley crew of noblemen, officials, parsons and wealthy burghers – of the respondents. This was the case in Gadd’s dissertations, too; Christopher Herkepaeus even dedicated his dissertation to crown prince Gustavus (the future Gustavus III), whose utilitarian bent was complimented in the foreword.41 One of Kalm’s respondents, Johan Colliander, in a treatise on the usefulness of storehouses declared that it was a “usual and praiseworthy custom that lovers of Erudition adorned their works with the Names of Distinguished Persons”. In Colliander’s case, one of these distinguished persons was lieutenant colonel Hans Hindrich Boije, whose patriotic–economic exertions had furthered the common good. Boije’s efforts occasioned a glorification of venerable elite figures who saw to economic improvement despite having other crucial and grand matters to which they had to attend. In connection with

38 Algeen 1757, 1–2; Armfeldt 1765, 3, 5, 11–12, 14, 54, quotes on pp. 3, 54.
39 Indrenius 1757, 15.
40 For this idea, see Legnér 2004, 186, 196–197.
41 Herkepaeus 1760, preface. For other examples, see the prefaces to Hallenberg 1757, Erling 1761, Gadd 1764.
two of Boije’s fellow officers, Colliander asked for permission to embellish his dissertation with their illustrious names so that it could “borrow the radiance, which the work in itself is wanting[,] from them”, a request resonating with the idea that the upper echelons of society imparted movement to and guided the rest of the polity.42

According to Lithander’s preface, God had ensured that all of Sweden enjoyed and was grateful for the tireless and laudable fervour which Carl Gustaf Löwenhielm, an influential Hat politician and councillor of the realm, dedicated to the prosperity of the patria. Löwenhielm was simultaneously celebrated as a superb benefactor of the sciences, in particular those involving economic utility, and of Lithander’s orphaned father, whom the high lord had aided on account of an inborn, patrician mercifulness. Lithander recounted that his father extolled Löwenhielm’s mercy, which – second to divine grace – was the reason for his wellbeing, and that the clemency of the councillor extended to the respondent, who wished that it would be a long time before Sweden and the destitute lost their precious patron.43

Kalm and his students intermittently appropriated or juxtaposed themselves to high-ranking politicians and officials who participated in the networks traversing the Royal Academy of Turku and Stockholm’s Royal Academy of Sciences. Henric Lindsteen’s dissertation on the utility of gardens began with a tribute to Johan Browallius, who was labelled a guardian of the sciences and of Lindsteen himself as well as a vital member (‘limb’) of the public. Lindsteen commemorated Browallius as a “foreman in our Society of Learning” and attributed him benign qualities that made him shine like a sun in “our sky of erudition”. This recalled Browallius’s own flattering of his betters when he stated that schools and universities embodied “the wise care of the Rulers” and that he trusted in the “most praiseworthy and mature zeal for the common good” among his “high Foremen”, which had put the pen in his hand.44 Lithander discussed and commended texts by top government officials like Löwenhielm and the prominent civil servant Ulric Rudenschöld, both of whom had allegedly given fervently patriotic orations in the Royal Academy of Sciences, while Wialenius quoted Rudenschöld’s words in the Stockholm academy at length. Leopold proclaimed that the glorious Linnaeus had infused botany with such a reputation that “the superior powers

42 Colliander 1760, preface.
43 Lithander 1753, preface.
44 Lindsteen 1754, preface; Browallius 1737, 2, 4. Lindsteen was not the only respondent who dedicated his dissertation to Browallius. See Granroth, preface. In a way, Browallius occupied an intermediate position, since he was a scholar who had become a person of rank; yet, his being a leading Hat politician and a bishop probably meant that he had more in common with the powers that be than with the republic of letters.
that be have spared no cost and encouragement to promote it”. Moreover, “numerous High Lords and literate Men have, through their writings infused with light, manifested the utility which flows to the Fatherland through its cultivation”.

At times, testimonies of the economic patriotism exhibited by the elite were incorporated into the main portion of the dissertations. Aurenius reproduced a report about the visit of a delegation of renowned Hat politicians – Tessin, Claes Ekeblad and Carl Fredrik Scheffer – to a major Swedish canal, whose locks bore their names. In addition, he maintained that the court superintendent Carl Hårleman, a notable member of the Hat Party, was immensely vigilant about the welfare of the realm. For his part, Lithander complimented the elite for its passionate tending of the nation’s forests: “Many of our literate and erudite Swedish men, yes the foremost earls of the realm, for whom Sweden’s wealth has been rather dear, have showed their unceasing ardour for the fatherland in this regard as well, since they have treaded far into the forest with their profound insight”. Lithander’s patron Löwenhielm, an exponent of “congenital patriotic zeal”, belonged to this group of clear-sighted compatriots, as did Faggot, Hårleman and Rudenschöld.

Lithander also declared that the royal couple, Adolf Fredrik and Lovisa Ulrika, and the Diet had devoted a lot of attention to caring for the forests. He went on to observe that the Estates had spared the patria severe hardship by having the foresight to set up useful manufactures and that their admirable solicitousness had, by all appearances, succeeded in making the national deficit smaller than had been recognized. It is reasonable to assume that these contentions had a political dimension; the Diet with which Lithander aligned himself was controlled by the Hat Party, whose followers were exceedingly supportive of the manufacture system, while the allusion to an uninformed view of the deficit undoubtedly related to the public debate of this matter and to criticism about it from the opposition.

Lithander was not alone in his appreciation of the royal family and the Hat regime. Colliander announced that the king watched over the welfare of the realm in the most affectionate manner, while Leopold alleged that the highest power (‘Höga Öfwerheten’) was most graceful towards

45 Lithander 1753, 2–3, 29, 35, 42; Wialenius 1760, 16–17; Leopold 1753, 2–3.
46 Aurenius 1753, 23–24, 29. The report allegedly stemmed from a couple of letters from the vicar Magnus Asmund Carlander to the Turku professor Algot Scarin and concerned the Trollhätte kanal. For Hårleman’s political loyalties, see Nordin 2003, 71.
47 Lithander 1753, 2–3.
48 Ibid., 3, 7, 12, 44.
those who laboured to uncover the valuable novelties scattered throughout the fatherland. Norrgreen rejoiced in the many joint and monumental achievements carried out by Sweden’s magnificent king, its praiseworthy Estates and the finest men in the kingdom, and singled out the royal decree on the swapping of field allotments, where “the tender heart of His Royal Majesty for the welfare and happiness of his Subjects, and the wise steps, which the Laudable Estates of the Realm have taken for Sweden’s lasting wellbeing in the future, shine on every page.” According to Norrgreen, the Swedish rulers had plotted an admirable middle course between persuasion and coercion; “The decree contains a mixture of both, which means that Politicus should hold it to be a masterpiece of its kind.”

The positive depictions of the powers that be were supplemented by a tendency to picture them as imitation-worthy exempla vis-à-vis the populace, a mode of representation consonant with how the elite was rendered elsewhere in Europe at the time. Indrenius noticed that the lack of an adequate number of manors that the people could emulate suggested that the vicars would have to generate improvement: “The peasant preferably believes his priest. But talk and persuasion alone do not suffice: he [the peasant] is so stuck in his old custom, that it is rather difficult to draw him from it. Good examples can accomplish the best utility”, above all those of the clergy.

Lindsteen argued that the peasant and the simple-minded nourished “the not entirely unwarranted thought, not to begin something novel and formerly unusual in any economic branch, before he sees the cleric or other persons of rank commence” it, thereby illuminating the populace with their ‘good example’.

The framing of elite figures as exempla was recurrent in Gadd’s dissertations as well. One of his students held that the powers that be and the sovereigns had “in many ways left an imprint on the customs of the inhabitants of the land. The people commonly ape the habits that are introduced and favoured at Court. Those of rank want to live like the King, and the lesser, like those of rank.” Nobles and officials should consequently light the way for “the subservient part of society” by displaying virtue.

On the topic of the cultivation of foreign plants, another of Gadd’s respondents represented the royal family as examples and the king’s manors, the towns, the vicarages and the houses of senior military officials as exemplary sites, while yet another treatise portrayed the

49 Colliander 1760, 5–6; Leopold 1753, 4; Norrgreen 1760, 5.
50 For this mode of representation and its foreign manifestations, see Persson 2009, chapters 4.1. and 4.3.
51 Indrenius 1757, 5–6, see also pp. 11–16.
52 Lindsteen 1754, 3, compare p. 12.
queen as a model in terms of silk farming.\textsuperscript{54} Nevertheless, not all exempla sprang from the elite, as commoners were also said to be able to inspire others.\textsuperscript{55}

Despite the fact that the elite was overall treated with reverence, Kalm's dissertations did occasionally criticize its members. Lithander felt compelled to divulge the unpleasant truth that Swedish iron declined in quality and price because the owners of the ironworks recklessly entrusted the inspection of their businesses to their servants. Indrenius pointed out that the foremost causes of Sweden's economic problems were “a harmful abundance and an inappropriate luxury”, that is, the consumption patterns of the higher social strata, and Lindsteen disapproved of the clergy for being negligent in the management of their vicarages, a defect due to rootlessness and egoism.\textsuperscript{56}

Kalm and his students evidently also sought to educate the powers that be and to push them in certain directions. Henric Wegelius, who focused on how to simplify shipping on the Kemi River, claimed that “a fairly wealthy private man” could afford to realize the propositions he advocated and that the reader would profit from doing so. The same line of argumentation was applied to the state, with the addendum that the prosperity of the people would benefit the elite: “when the subjects become rich and healthy, the powers that be never feel bad.”\textsuperscript{57}

One way to sway the powers that be was to invoke exempla from history or from contemporary society. Colliander maintained that well organized states had always erected corn storehouses, as had ‘all other nations’ of late. Wialenius made use of England and foreign sovereigns from the past and the present in his vindication of manufactures, while Lithander relayed how the most eminent of Britons made an effort to spare the forests and how distinguished members of British society estimably competed with one another when it came to planting trees. Other examples in Lithander’s text hailed from the political and judicial spheres and were probably intended to influence the Diet and the Hat Party by recording measures to preserve forests introduced by various European rulers.\textsuperscript{58}

Like Colliander and Wialenius, Lindsteen employed historical examples, in his case to prove that it was important and legitimate for monarchs to take a personal interest in the cultivation of trees and plants. As the reader looked at “the history of the most flourishing monarchies in

\textsuperscript{54} Löfman 1765, 14, 20; Herkepaeus 1760.
\textsuperscript{55} Löfman 1765, 13; Hallenberg 1757, 10, 20.
\textsuperscript{56} Lithander 1753, 19–20; Indrenius 1757, 2; Lindsteen 1754, 4.
\textsuperscript{57} Wegelius 1755, 6.
\textsuperscript{58} Colliander 1760, 4–5; Wialenius 1760, 18–20; Lithander 1753, 32–34.
Europe; it is not difficult to find that the establishing and maintenance of plantations, along with sciences, trade and handicraft, has contributed the most to their welfare”. Lindsteen asserted that garden allotments were ubiquitous abroad, even among crofters, and that many nations had brought the science of plantation to near perfection. Sweden was not one of these, since the regrettable indifference of its inhabitants towards gardening had just about put the country on a par with barbarians and savages in this regard. Leopold likewise pondered upon barbarian peoples, which had had the sense to exploit their plants, whereas the ancient Swedes “only grasped at alien [plants] and did not see what was at our feet. Wretched people!”  

Lindsteen, Leopold and Kalm were apparently trying to procure resources from the powers that be by playing on national pride and the rivalry with foreign states. In this context, the unfavourable comparison of the Swedes with savages and barbarians served to underscore the need for reform and the urgency of the situation.

Of the Kalmian dissertations, only Daniel Andreas Backman’s treatise on the value of colonies made use of a domestic historical example. Backman represented the seventeenth-century warrior King Gustavus II Adolphus as an economic exemplum, since the great prince had laboured tirelessly to strengthen the patria, for instance by allocating commerce to the most advantageous sites. Moreover, the respondent voiced the opinion that inner discord and a flawed trade were the reasons that Sweden had been asleep until awoken by Gustavus Adolphus. The latter point should be understood not just as a recommendation to the ruling elite to emulate the exemplary king, but also as a reference to the political animosities of the Age of Liberty and as an apology for the policies of the Hat Party.

The interpretation of Backman’s historical narrative as an exhortation to the elite to act is reinforced by his later reproach of the short-sightedness of Sweden, which to its own detriment had a predisposition to concern itself solely with immediate gratification and to despise long-term gains with respect to useful institutions. The dissertation described a number of ministers in Paris who had resisted a counterproductive plan to give up the precious province of Canada to English pirates in the seventeenth century as “thoughtful” and “enlightened French Gentlemen”. Their “excellent reason, mature and well-founded thoughts” could be accessed “with the greatest

59 Lindsteen 1754, 1–3, 9; Leopold 1753, 1–2.
60 Backman 1754, 5.
pleasure” in a cited text, which related “the most splendid character trait in a great and profound Minister, namely, not only to have the present before one’s eyes and work with that, which almost everyone can, but [to] put healthy plans for the future and posterity together with that”.\textsuperscript{61}

In what was probably an attempt to mitigate the tone of the dissertation and make readers in high places take his advice to heart by appealing to their vanity, Backman stated that “the wise and clever” powers that be could have arranged trade so that it would have profited both the motherland and the colony, had New Sweden been retained. Movement between the old and the new world would have been regulated by the authorities, which could easily have prevented a harmful emigration “with as much gentleness, as carefulness”.\textsuperscript{62}

As Backman’s work demonstrates, some of Kalm’s pupils furnished their betters with more obvious instructions, which were to some degree akin to criticism. Lithander mentioned that he and others delighted in the mild guardianship of the powers that be as manifested by the Finnish Land Survey Commission, but also called for more land surveyors and a prompt dividing up of the forests between the peasants. Similarly, Lindsteen contended that the houses of learning had not set aside enough time for horticultural education, that an inventory of the gardens at the residences of public officials should be created and that the upper echelons of society ought to grow gooseberries: “Why does not each and everyone, preferably persons of rank, attempt to get these, which demand so little tending, in their spice gardens?” At the end of his dissertation, Lindsteen posed a more direct challenge to the elite to lay out gardens: “If persons in authority in the country, who have the means and opportunity, and know its [the garden] usefulness, wanted to take it up, more diligently than what has hitherto come about, the country people would in time be encouraged to do it by their example, and by the profit they get.”\textsuperscript{63}

Foreign and historical exempla and advice bordering on criticism also featured in Gadd’s dissertations.\textsuperscript{64} What is more, even though these treatises adhered to the economic programme of the Hat Party and celebrated the government and the councillors of the realm, notably the Prime ministers Tessin and Ekeblad, at least one of them contained statements which can be fathomed as implicit attacks on the Hat regime as well as the Age of Liberty as such.\textsuperscript{65} After the Cap Party

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 8–10.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 11, 13–14.
\textsuperscript{63} Lithander 1753, 40; Lindsteen 1754, 3–4, 7, 12, quote on p. 12, italics in the original text.
\textsuperscript{64} For foreign and historical examples, see Armfeldt 1765, 58, 66–67; Löfman 1765, 10–11, 26; Herkepeaus 1760, 2, 8–10; Engeström 1762, 1–2; Erling 1761, 1–3. For advice resembling criticism, see Löfman 1765, 22–23; Engeström 1762, 26–27.
\textsuperscript{65} For positive representations of the Hat government, see Reinhold Bökman 1763, 5; Armfeldt 1765, preface;
had seized power in 1765, Gadd’s student Carl Gustaf Holmberg went a step further and openly denounced the trade policies of the former rulers as harmful to the common good.\(^6\)

As the analysis of the images of the elite in Kalm’s dissertations shows, the powers that be were seen as the heart and brain of the body politic, whose health and growth depended on their ability to impart movement to the rest of the organism by acting as didactic examples and by taking useful measures. The article now turns to the representations of the bulk of the social and political body, the people, which, it was argued, would have to go through an elite-directed process of rationalization for improvement to occur.

**The Ineptitude of the People**

Kalm’s students mainly perceived the populace as a malleable object for the powers that be to regulate and edify. Aurenius inscribed the subordination of the people into the very structure of the future urban environment, since buildings inhabited by persons in authority or used by the state were given precedence over private houses and should for aesthetical purposes be situated in the most pleasant parts of towns, whereas commoners were to live in less visible spaces.\(^6\)

The changes proposed by Kalm’s respondents were supposed to have substantial effects on the subjects. For instance, additional towns in the countryside would stimulate commerce and make the peasantry more attentive and industrious, while the distribution of the forests among the farms would instil a greater awareness of this valuable resource in the populace.\(^6\) In some of the treatises, the pedagogical task of the powers that be was more pronounced. Aurenius proclaimed that the higher social strata could help save the forests by instructing the people how to construct stone houses.\(^6\) Indrenius alleged that persons of rank should teach commoners how to produce wine and that vicars should show them how to build decent homes.\(^7\) Norrgreen trusted that the

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66 Holmberg 1766, 3.
67 Aurenius 1753, 32–34. The wealthy and the nobility were, however, to take economic responsibility for the urban properties entrusted to them.
68 Aurenius 1753, 17; Lithander 1753, 38–39. See also Indrenius 1757, 9.
69 Aurenius 1753, 29.
70 Indrenius 1757, 8, 14, compare p. 16.
redivision of communal woodlands among the peasants would demonstrate to them just how absurd the former organization of agriculture had been and make them economize on timber.71

The images of an impressionable populace in need of guidance from the elite were accompanied by conceptualizations of ordinary people as superstitious and as exponents of false beliefs and long-standing counterproductive habits.72 Norrgreen stressed that the actions and the authority of the powers that be along with lucid and reliable economic evidence were imperative for agrarian reform, since the common man was constrained by short-sightedness and the useless practices of the past: “But a custom, which the ignorance of the Ancestors has begotten, and the blind and undue reverence of the descendants has upheld for several ages, cannot be so easily transformed, although it is altogether harmful. Most Human beings are mostly affected by present advantages, and barely want to hear about new institutions.” Lindsteen accused the populace of ignorance and baseless ideas and blamed the neglect of horticulture in Finland on the “ingrained fancy for the usage of the father and the grandfather, from where one has not dared to depart. The dislike, I dare not say the hatred, of everything that might have the status of being new, or less common in our economy.”73

Naturally, then, commoners were also taken to be incompetent, or at least less knowledgeable. From Aurenius’s perspective, a simple peasant could not be expected to grasp the intricacies of the manufactures or have time for anything but cultivation. Furthermore, some types of grass grown for medical and industrial ends required more knowledge and effort than a peasant could muster.74 The notion of an inept populace was most clearly expressed in Lithander’s dissertation, where the general population was charged with grave imprudence and mismanagement of the forests.75 The prevalence of slash-and-burn agriculture provoked a virulent attack on the uninformed populace, which was slowly ridding Sweden of its woodlands: “Except for the superfluous building, thoughtless tar production, unnecessary burning and other careless waste of wood, the peasantry has for a long time been wasting and ruining the forest through the pernicious swiddening, without the slightest afterthought and consideration of posterity.” In many locales, ‘the perverted preference’ for swiddening gave commoners little incentive to develop arable land, while the scorched forest

71 Norrgreen 1760, 9, compare p. 11.
72 Aurenius 1753, 33; Lithander 1753, 35, 42–43; Indrenius 1757, 10.
73 Norrgreen 1760, 4; Lindsteen 1754, 3.
74 Aurenius 1753, 35, 39–40.
75 Lithander 1753, 2, compare pp. 38–39 and Wegelius 1755, p. 7.
was seldom utilized to the full extent. Indrenius likewise polemicized against the penchant for slash-and-burn agriculture, which was “so to speak inborn”, while the highly injurious conviction that the forests would never be destroyed was said to, as it were, arrive with one’s mother’s milk.\textsuperscript{76}

The representations of the people as short-sighted, noticeable in the attacks on slash-and-burn agriculture, constituted a variation on the ineptitude theme. Apropos the lack of knowledge in the populace, Indrenius declared that its “attention does not extend further than to what glitters in front of the eyes”. Norrgreen argued that the communal management of woodlands and the palpability of immediate gains meant that most peasants would be completely focused on cutting down as many trees as possible, and that bringing them a healthier outlook had no prospect of success. The people were too busy providing for themselves and had no time to ponder the future. Even if a portion of the peasants resolved to leave the forests alone out of concern for what was to come, this decision would do them no good, since their callous and less thoughtful neighbours would not follow suit.\textsuperscript{77}

Notwithstanding all the disparaging representations, some renderings of the populace had a more positive tone. While Indrenius assaulted the ignorance and unfruitful customs of common people as well as the pride they took in their own skills, which nevertheless obstructed improvement (“From this nothing but wretchedness and poverty can follow”), he also observed that they possessed knowledge unfamiliar to even the most erudite of men. Anything useful that was unknown to more cultivated individuals was to be documented and disseminated by the clergy. Leopold discussed the knowledge of the populace in neutral terms and like Indrenius advised that more well-informed figures, in Leopold’s case fellow scholars, should promulgate it. The data were to be sent either to Leopold’s professor Kalm or the Royal Academy of Sciences.\textsuperscript{78}

Moreover, although a couple of the dissertations portrayed the peasants as indolent and careless, the majority of the respondents seem to have assumed that the people were prone to work for the common good; all they needed in order to do so was accurate directives from the more elevated social estates.\textsuperscript{79} The only dissertation to present an unequivocally positive image of the common

\textsuperscript{76} Lithander 1753, 30–31, italics in the original text; Indrenius 1757, 12.
\textsuperscript{77} Indrenius 1757, 2, 5–7, quote on p. 7; Norrgreen 1760, 8–9.
\textsuperscript{78} Indrenius 1757, 9–11, 13, quote on p. 10; Leopold 1753, 3–5. For the Royal Academy of Sciences and its orientation towards utility, see also Wegelius 1755, 2; Wialenius 1760, 16, 19, 21, 23, 25.
\textsuperscript{79} For portrayals of the peasants as indolent and careless, see Lindsteen 1754, 9; Colliander 1760, 4.
man, however, was Andreas Gudseus’s treatise on meteorological methodology, which credited the peasantry with valuable knowledge that warranted respect and consideration.\(^80\)

The predominant, patronizing attitude of Kalm’s respondents towards the populace was shared by Browallius, who deemed commoners incapable of shouldering serious responsibilities and held that “few materials can be found, who are adequately skilled to lead and teach; conversely[,] there is a multitude that needs to be led, obey and follow”. Even though Browallius recognized that the order was in practice often reversed so that subordinates controlled their superiors, the overarching image of the masses was not revised, since he simultaneously professed that most people had an inclination for occupations which were of paramount importance to mankind but entailed little reason, insight or intelligence:

> Such are most of those through whom agriculture, fishing, mining, handicraft, trade, shipping and similar branches of industry are pursued; One usually finds that they believe it to be dangerous to deviate a hairsbreadth from the customs of the forefathers and what they have learned from their parents or mentors. We often wonder and get annoyed at such limited concepts and stubborn heads; but it is really for the best that they are the way they are.\(^81\)

Elsewhere, Browallius stipulated that any righteous teacher wished for the extermination of the multifarious superstitions and misbeliefs which still marked a lot of commoners, and that the vicar was ideally “a father and economist in his congregation”.\(^82\) As in Kalm’s dissertations, paternalism intermingled with a deep-seated distrust of the people, who were unable to take care of themselves and to bring about utility without supervision from their betters.

Like Kalm’s students, Gadd’s respondents displayed a somewhat more mixed view of the populace. One of Gadd’s dissertations referred to the preconceptions and adverse customs which frustrated sheep husbandry in Sweden and stated that only persons of rank were far-sighted and open-minded enough to undertake the breeding of Spanish sheep. Although the peasants were deemed capable of being educated, their hands were ultimately to be guided and forced by the state. Another treatise depicted the people as easily led, prejudiced and governed by their

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80 Gudseus 1754, 8–9.
81 Browallius 1747, 23–24.
82 Browallius 1737, 14, 17.
passions; as long as the commoners feared God and complied with their superiors, though, their vices would not prevail in Sweden. The same respondent also claimed that a suitable instruction of peasant children would reduce the resistance and sluggishness with which the improvement of the Swedish realm was met.\footnote{Engeström 1762, 2, 6–7, 25, 27–28; Armfeldt 1765, 32, 55, 69–70.}

Having thus illustrated the images of the people in eighteenth-century Turku, the article proceeds to its penultimate section, which examines how Kalm and his pupils represented scholars, that is, their own group, in relation to the rest of society.

**The Indispensability of Scholars**

When it came to the improvement of society, Kalm and his pupils endowed men of letters with a status reminiscent of the one they ascribed to the powers that be, as the dissertations cast disciplines, institutions of higher learning and the literati in a decidedly utilitarian light. This was usually a subtle affair, such as when Lithander remarked that numerous men of letters had taken a great interest in the preservation of the forests or when Colliander divulged that clever men had put together strategies to combat famine.\footnote{Lithander 1753, 38; Colliander 1760, 3. See also Algeen 1757, 4; Gudseus 1754, preface; Colliander 1760, 6; Indrenius 1757, 5, 8–9, 16, compare p 14; Leopold 1753, 2–3.} In other cases, the utility of the erudite was described in a more explicit manner. Aurenius pointed out that canals were “staked out and so fiercely defended in public writings by men of letters and sharp-witted Mathematicis” and that a number of industries could not exist or thrive without the aid, wisdom and genius of the sciences. Lithander claimed that any people ignorant of beneficial sciences dwelled in misery and poverty, while Lindsteen asserted that the sciences were one of several factors that led to national prosperity.\footnote{Aurenius 1753, 25, 35; Lithander 1753, 13; Lindsteen 1754, 2.}

Specific disciplines were likewise promoted by the respondents. Indrenius announced that many patriotic men of learning deserved acclaim and gratitude for their support of economics, a “most necessary human branch of knowledge”, which still had a long way to go and whose shortcomings contributed to Sweden’s unbalanced foreign trade.\footnote{Indrenius 1757, 1–2, see also p. 16.} Lithander assigned a central role to natural history and maintained that it would someday become mandatory for all students,
a development that would cut imports significantly. For his part, Wialenius explained how the manufactures stimulated scholarship and how botany, mathematics and mineralogy in turn had benevolent consequences for industry, whose practitioners should therefore acquire scientific training.\footnote{Lithander 1753, 44; Wialenius 1760, 26–27.}

In his dissertation on the benefits of mastering the cultivation of domestic plants, Henric Enckell found it indisputable that the sciences had their “great and manifold use; there are however many enough, who cannot accept to give this truth assent. Ignorance, and the contagious and attached poison, biases and prejudices, which rule a multitude of mortals, are the foremost sources from which such weakness wells.” Enckell contended that sciences with a less tangible utilitarian potential – mineralogy, entomology, botany – were denigrated, and for this reason he ventured to upgrade these disciplines by underlining their immense usefulness. Botanists were framed as patriots who had disclosed that Sweden’s God-given plants were intended for its inhabitants and that much of the domestic flora could be exploited by dye works, which meant that botanical findings might help reduce the outflow of gold. Enckell also mentioned that the Collegium Medicum had recently produced a list of edible plants and that thousands of Swedes would escape death by starvation if this information became widely available. Enckell’s morality, erudition and zeal for the common good were hailed in an afterword by one of his friends, who invoked the reward learning and virtue should bestow upon the author.\footnote{Enckell 1760, 2–3, 9, 13–14, 16.}

The most straightforward and elaborate account of the favourable corollaries of science was featured in Leopold’s treatise, which elucidated how

Our Botanici here in Sweden have now, through diligence and toil [.] within the past 20 to 30 years not only discovered almost more Economic and Medical utilities, than all that were previously known, but also impressed a fire and heart for Knowledge about nature in a large portion of the youth, so that people have now [.] like out of an inborn instinct [.] begun to strive after a more detailed acquaintance with plants, as well as with their economic suitability.\footnote{Leopold 1753, 3.}

If the botanists of the past had contented themselves with classification, their successors were as captivated by utility as they were by taxonomy, because “the knowledge is of little use
without the utility”. Yet, a lot of work, maybe most of it, lay ahead, as much remained shrouded in mystery.\(^90\)

Given the emphasis on the capacity of science to illuminate useful matters, it is not too far-fetched to conjecture that Leopold and Kalm’s record of the state of the art in botany involved a bid for more resources from the powers that be. This interpretation is underpinned by the fact that the next page in Leopold’s dissertation narrated how Finnish students struggled to remedy the lack of knowledge.\(^91\) A corresponding approach is found in Norrgreen’s dissertation, whose very first passage considered the accomplishments of and enduring challenges facing scholars:

Although one plainly finds, that the Economy has [], through the measures of literate and diligent Men [], within a short period risen to such a height that one had not been able to assume it Thirty years ago, and had hardly dared to wish for such a bright era Fifty [years] ago; one must however admit, that many obstacles still lie ahead, which mean that the Economy still needs constant improvements.\(^92\)

The promise of science-driven progress made in Kalm’s dissertations related not just to the allocation of resources, but to the issue of authority as well. By representing the republic of letters as essential to the advancement of the patria, Kalm and his respondents in effect placed the scholarly community and themselves alongside or even above the powers that be, who could not efficiently and properly fulfil their obligation to enhance the fatherland without input from the erudite class.

An analogous outlook on the importance of the literati was communicated by Browallius, who declared that the ingenuous and intellectually superior led and assisted the rest; it was a remarkable sign of divine grace that “one readily asks and the other readily speaks”. Science and brilliance engendered welfare and improvement, and Providence had every so often made the powerful encourage the arts and sciences. This guaranteed that there would be no dearth of geniuses, who were, as a result of God’s wisdom, rare, but also “far greater and should be held in far higher esteem” than others.\(^93\)

\(^90\) Ibid., 3. The notion that much remained to be done resurfaced later on in the dissertation. See ibid., 6.
\(^91\) Ibid., 4.
\(^92\) Norrgreen 1760, 2.
\(^93\) Browallius 1747, 10–11, 14, 24, 35, quotes on pp. 11, 24.
Not surprisingly, Browallius’s own discipline, natural history, was pictured as economically vital and remunerative. All of the estates and a variety of officials, not least clerics and judges, should hence obtain some knowledge of natural history. This was even more crucial with regard to the upper levels of public administration and the rulers, who inevitably had to familiarize themselves with Swedish nature. Like Kalm’s respondents, Browallius clearly tried to guide the powers that be in a certain direction, an enterprise which became particularly conspicuous as he delineated his vision of introducing foreign plants with the aim of limiting imports and increasing exports: “What an opportunity would not they, who rule the Realm in general and especially, Collegia and high-ranking officials, yes the Powers that be themselves, have, to improve our poor country as they wished, if they had the whole country for their eyes, as if they themselves had visited and evaluated each and every part of it?” In another context, Browallius notified his “Maecenas” that he was delighted they would be honoured for instituting *historia naturalis* in the town of Västerås and that posterity would be utterly thankful for this magnificent measure. Natural history was simultaneously portrayed as a poorly financed discipline, which together with the compliments indicates that Browallius was seeking to secure support for his field.⁹⁴

Gadd and his students to all intents and purposes shared Kalm’s and Browallius’s opinion of the grand mission and great weight of the literati with respect to human destiny. Armfeldt proposed a reinforcement of the public education system, not least through the founding of public libraries of science, and called attention to the need for skilled teachers with decent pay. He went on to portray science and erudition as the lodestars of mankind and the lights of society, and asserted that they could not suffer any compulsion. Without them, there would be no virtue, honour or happiness, only darkness. A second dissertation argued that the legislative power must grasp economics in order to arrange things for the best, while a third began with proclaiming that the most blissful states were those in possession of well-read men of letters and that scholarship had improved Swedish economy and society. The next section of the preface reiterated the standpoint that countries with a flourishing erudition were fortunate and added that the sciences required help from “Diligent, Honest Men deserving of the common good” if they were to blossom.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Browallius 1754, 3–4, 8–9, 16–21, quotes on pp. 9, 21.
⁹⁵ Armfeldt 1765, 22–24, 29, 31, 56; Timm 1765, 8–16; Bökman 1763, preface. In a fourth treatise, men of learning like Triewald, Kalm and Gadd himself were directly or indirectly identified as contributors to the common good with reference to the planting of mulberry trees. See Herkepaeus 1760, 4–6, 14, 17.
Conclusion

The society discernable in Kalm’s dissertations was an unrealized ideal as well as a reflection of the social and political realities that confronted the Turku professor and his students. For all the talk of a cosmopolitan republic of letters, the Swedish literati – like many other European men of letters at the time – generally depended on tenacious patronage structures and an expanding public administration for their subsistence. There was not much room for criticism of the prevalent order, let alone for any kind of radicalism that seriously questioned the ancien regime.

Bo Lindberg has aptly postulated that eighteenth-century Turku epitomized an antiradical, Christian enlightenment that was preponderant in Sweden as a whole and centred on science, knowledge diffusion, progress and utility.96 Lisbet Rausing (previously Koerner) and Knut Ove Eliassen have identified similar enlightenments – a “Baltic” and a “Northern” enlightenment, respectively – which allegedly encompassed the Swedish realm.97 Irrespective of how this mode of enlightenment is labelled, Kalm doubtless personified it as he went about propagating the policies of the government and his benefactors Browallius and Tessin. It is fairly obvious that the patron–client relationships and Hat-dominated networks to which Kalm belonged had a profound impact on his dissertations; so did the political climate at the Royal Academy of Turku, where both Tessin and Ekeblad served as chancellors.

Accordingly, the society imagined by Kalm’s respondents was to a significant degree an idealized version of a traditional society composed of social estates with its hierarchies, bodily analogies, reverence for higher social strata and ingrained distrust of the people. However, Kalm and his students also inserted a new element into the mix by elevating the erudite class to a level of influence formally reserved for the powers that be, the heart and brain of the body politic. As far as Kalm was concerned, men of letters apparently constituted the real source of improvement and utility, the meta-movers behind the elite that was to convey motion to the populace and engage it in the overarching, patriotic reform project. From this perspective, Kalm’s dissertations heralded a later age and society, typified first by ‘mandarins’ and bureaucracy, then by experts and technocracy.

96 Lindberg 1990, 205–206.
97 Koerner 1999b, 389; Eliassen 2009, x–xii.
The mandarin type can, in fact, be detected already in the early modern state, where an insistence on the supremacy of knowledge and its bearers accompanied its growing status and power:

if industrialization is slow and state-controlled, if the traditional social organization persists for a long time, then burgher intellectuals are more likely to concentrate attention exclusively upon the rights of the learned. They will seek to constitute a kind of nobility of the educated to supersede the ‘merely traditional’ ruling class, and they will try to establish a system of educational certificates which can testify to the bearers’ position as men of intellect. Their leaders at the universities will speak for all graduates in demanding that public affairs be put increasingly into the hands of the educated few, rather than being managed by the untrained and intellectually as well as morally backward nobles.98

Arguably, this description is wholly applicable to Kalm, the social imaginary in the dissertations he presided over and the body politic he and his students endeavoured to sustain and improve upon.

References


98 Ringer 1969, 7–8.


Engeström, M. 1762. Tankar om schäfferiernes uphjelpande i Finland. Turku.


Granroth, E. 1754. Enfaldige tanckar om café och de inhemska växter som plåga brukas i des ställe. Turku.


Lithander, D. 1753. Öförgripeliga tanckar om nödvångheten af skogarnas bettre vård och ans i Finland. Turku.


Illuminism in the Age of Minerva: Pyotr Ivanovich Melissino (1726–1797) and High-Degree Freemasonry in Catherine the Great’s Russia, 1762–1782

Robert Collis

This article draws on a rare extant manuscript of the Melissino Rite, preserved in the archives of the Prince Fredrik Masonic Centre in The Hague, as well as on other primary material, in order to examine the pivotal role played by Pyotr Ivanovich Melissino (1726-1797) in forming an Illuminist-Masonic milieu in St. Petersburg from the mid-1760s. Melissino and his high-grade Masonic Rite have hitherto been largely overlooked by scholars, yet this article aims to emphasize the formative influence he played in Russia in creating an “invisible chapter” in which select initiates could embrace currents of Illuminist thought (alchemy, theosophy and Christian Kabbalah in particular). Scholars have principally examined the development of Illuminism in the second half of the eighteenth century within the restricted space of the Chapters of high-degree Freemasonry in France (and to a lesser extent in Germany and other European countries). Little attention has been paid to Illuminism in Russia prior to rise of the Rosicrucian Circle associated with Nikolai Novikov and Johan Schwarz in Moscow in the 1780s. Thus, this article seeks to re-examine the Melissino Rite as part of a pan-European phenomenon, whilst also highlighting its importance within the sizeable aristocratic Masonic milieu in Russia.

In early 1763 a three-day street pageant was staged in Moscow in honour of the recent coronation of Catherine II (1729–1796). Entitled ‘Minerva Triumphant’, the public spectacle portrayed the Russian Empress in the guise of the Roman goddess of wisdom, whose reign was destined to usher in a return

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1 I would like to thank Jan Snoek, Reinhold Markner, Antoine Faivre, Pierre-Yves Beaurepaire and Iurii Khalturin for their invaluable help in the preparation of this article. I would also like to thank Klaus Bettag for transcribing the manuscript of the Melissino Rite preserved in the Kloss Collection of the Cultureel Maçonniek Centrum, ‘Prins Frederik’, in The Hague. I am extremely grateful to Gerald Newton for his painstaking English translation of the German-language manuscript. I also acknowledge the support of the Leverhulme Trust in financing my research between 2010 and 2012.
of the Golden Age. As Richard Wortman notes, the masquerade presented Catherine as capable of transforming the vices of her subjects through an enlightenment scenario, in which “knowledge and reason were to help” in her quest to “overcome the flaws of humanity”.

Two years later Catherine II began work on formulating her Great Instruction (Bol’shoi nakaz). Presented to the Legislative Commission in July 1767, Catherine’s Nakaz was heavily indebted to Montesquieu’s On the Spirit of the Laws (1748) and Cesare Beccaria’s On Crimes and Punishments (1764). In essence, the Instruction sought to set down her vision of Enlightened principles of governance and civil society.

Such displays of lavish symbolic pageantry and grand theoretical pronouncements in the mid-1760s made it abundantly clear that the Russian Empress was seeking to lay down Russia’s official path to enlightenment, via landmarks set out by the philosophs of the age. Yet, just as Catherine II was seeking to demarcate the parameters and direction of an official route to Enlightenment, a colonel in her Imperial army, Pyotr Ivanovich Melissino (1726–1797), was endeavouring to construct his own path by establishing an innovative rite of high-degree Freemasonry in St. Petersburg. The so-called Melissino System, which contained seven degrees, offered initiates – Russian and European noblemen – an alternative means of acquiring wisdom and learning via the gradated path of Illuminism.

According to Christine Bergé, the “complex intellectual and spiritual movement now known as ‘Illuminism’”, which emerged in the second half of the eighteenth century, formed “an integral part of modern Western esotericism in Europe”. In an era of increased secularization and the erosion of the power and authority of established church institutions, Illuminism, for some, cast a shard of light through threatening clouds that seemed to offer safe passage to a blessed realm of divine knowledge and truth. Illuminism embraced many of the esoteric currents that had flourished in the Renaissance,
such as Christian Kabbalah, alchemy, Christian theosophy and Hermetism. Significantly, from the 1760s Illuminism was largely – though not exclusively – channeled and filtered via an amorphous reservoir of initiatic societies (most notably chivalric forms of high-degree freemasonry).\textsuperscript{7}

In the last century a host of scholars have studied how Illuminist sentiment was fermented in a variety of masonic and para-masonic organizations in France and, to a lesser extent, in the German-speaking world, Sweden, Great Britain and the United States.\textsuperscript{8} Most recently, Antoine Faivre has listed numerous such initiatic societies, with the majority based in France and German-speaking areas.\textsuperscript{9} To be sure, France and German-speaking areas acted as crucibles of Illuminism in Europe in the latter third of the eighteenth century, where the theosophic ideas of Martines de Pasqually (1708/1709–1774), Louis-Claude Saint-Martin (1743–1803) and Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772) were particularly influential.

Yet, this should not overshadow the significant, innovative and early manifestation of Illuminism in St. Petersburg, as embodied and expressed in the development of the Melissino Rite. Amidst the baroque splendour of St. Petersburg, Melissino established an elaborate hybrid rite that in many ways reflected the cultural smörgåsbord of the Russian capital itself. Thus, Melissino drew on Templar forms of Freemasonry, as developed in France and Germany since the 1750s. Furthermore, the Melissino Rite embraced the whole gamut of Illuminism — Kabbalah, alchemy, Christian theosophy and Hermetism — fully in keeping with the contemporaneous emergence of such currents in France and Germany.

Indeed, I will argue below that the seventh degree of the Melissino Rite is quite possibly unsurpassed among initiatic societies of the era in its spectacular incorporation of Kabbalistic symbolism. In addition, Melissino’s masonic system adopted ecclesiastic rites, garments and

\textsuperscript{7} On the role of initiatic societies as institutions that fostered the passage of esoteric traditions into modernity, see von Stuckrad 2005, 113.

\textsuperscript{8} In relation to France, see, for example, Viatte 1928; Joly 1938; Amadou 1989; Le Forestier 1970; Bergé, 1995. On the Order of Gold- und Rosenkreuz, which initially developed in Germany, see Geffarth 2007; McIntosh 2011.

\textsuperscript{9} See Faivre 2010, 63–66. Faivre lists the Strict Observance, founded by Karl von Hund; the Order of the Élus-Coëns, created by Martines de Pasqually; the Rectified Scottish Rite, established by Jean-Baptiste Willermoz; the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer Älteren Systems; the Illuminés d’Avignon; the Ordre de l’Étoile Flamboyante, founded by Théodore-Henri de Tschoudy; the Rite of Johann Wilhelm Zinnendorf; the Clericato of Johann August Starck; the Philalèthes; the Brethren of the Cross, created by Christian Heinrich Haugwitz; the Asiatic Brethren of Austria; the Primitive Rite of the Philadelphians of François Marie Chefdéchain d’Armissan; the Egyptian Rite of Cagliostro and The Illuminated Theosophists. All, bar the last society, were based, or initially established, in either France or German-speaking areas. Faivre also notes that Rosicrucianism and the Rectified Rite of Willermoz penetrated into Russia thanks to Nikolai Ivanovich Novikov, and mentions the influential mystical works of Ivan Vladimirovich Lopukhin. For English-language treatments of various aspects of Illuminism in late eighteenth-century Europe, see Webb 1974; Garrett 1975, 97–120; Garrett 1984, 67–81; Bergé 2006, 600–606; Goodrick-Clarke 2008, 131–153; Edelstein 2010, 1–33.
material objects — associated with both the Orthodox and Catholic churches — and, what is more, advocated the active participation of clerics in initiations and ceremonies. In other words, the Melissino Rite does not simply represent the earliest expression of Illuminism within Russia; but is also of much wider significance. Namely, its lavish blend of clerical symbolism and Illuminist currents — especially Kabbalah — offers a unique vision of freemasonry that, it will be argued, influenced other leading European figures associated with the development of esoteric forms of freemasonry and para-masonry.

Melissino and the masonic system that bears his name remain woefully neglected by Russian scholars, even among experts of masonic history. In large measure this lack of attention stems from a prevailing historiography, epitomized by A. V. Semëka a century ago, whereby eighteenth-century Russian freemasonry is divided into three distinct phases: 1) an initial modish period between 1731–1762; 2) an era of so-called “moral” (nравственное) masonry in the first half of Catherine the Great’s reign (1762–1781), and a period of nine years between 1781 and 1792 characterized by the search for higher degrees and the victory of Rosicrucianism, or “quasi-scientific” masonry. Whilst not all historians have advocated such a rigid chronological division, it remains the case that most studies on the development of Illuminism in Russia — where at the time it was commonly labelled as “Martinism” after Saint-Martin — focus on the Rosicrucian circle of Johann Georg Schwarz (1751–1784) and Nikolai Ivanovich Novikov (1744–1818) in Moscow that was only established in 1782, and the mystical writings of Ivan Vladimirovich Lopukhin (1756–1816). In other words, the existence of the Melissino Rite, between the mid 1760s and 1782, undermines the convenient (and overly simplistic) perception of a “moral” (or rational) phase of freemasonry that gave way to Illuministic currents within the confines of the masonic lodge.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, one also encounters a paucity of scholarly material devoted to the Melissino Rite outside Russia. By far the most comprehensive examinations of the masonic system occur in two German publications from the 1820s. In 1823, J. K. A. Fischer, reserved considerable space to the Melissino Rite within a general article on freemasonry in Catherine II’s Russia. Drawing heavily on this work, the second volume of C. Lenning’s Encyclopädie der Freimaurerei, published in 1824, also

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10 For brief references and descriptions of the Melissino Rite, see Longinov 1867, 168, fn. 38, 304; Pypin 1916, 118–119; Vernadskii 1917, 56–57; Serkov 2001, 535–536, 965–966.
11 Semëka 1914–1915, 125.
12 For works on Rosicrucianism in eighteenth-century Russia (particularly in Moscow), see Longinov 1858; Longinov 1867; Semëka 1902, 343–400; Tarasov 1914–1915, 1–26; Barskov 1915; Telepneff 1922, 261–292; Ryu 1973, 198–232; Faggionato 2005; Kondakov 2012. The principal works of Lopukhin are The Spiritual Knight (Dukhovnyi rytsar’) and Some Characteristics of the Interior Church, both published in 1791, which reveal the influence of Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin and Karl von Eckartshausen. On Lopukhin, see Surovtsev 1901; Faivre 2006, 697–699; Berg 2008, 44–57.
13 Fischer 1823, 1–43.
devoted twenty-one pages to describing aspects of the Melissino Rite. Lenning’s overview of the fifth degree of the Melissino Rite also forms the basis of an anonymous article that appeared in the tenth volume of The Masonic Review, published in Cincinnati in 1853. These three studies effectively represent the grand sum of all masonic scholarship on the Melissino Rite, which to all intents and purposes thereafter fell into obscurity.

Prior to an in-depth analysis of the seventh degree of the Melissino System, based on a manuscript copy of the rite preserved in the Kloss Collection of the Prince Frederik Cultural Masonic Centre in The Hague, there will follow an account of Melissino’s career and respected position in St. Petersburg’s aristocratic milieu. In addition, it will be revealed that Melissino became absorbed in the quest to attain the philosophers’ stone as early as 1762. This background will help to contextualise the complex and conflicting demands of a leading official and masonic-illuminist figure in Catherinian Russia. Ultimately, by May 1782, Melissino had come to the conclusion that his pioneering espousal of a distinct form of Illuminist freemasonry could no longer be accommodated with his sense of loyalty and service to his sovereign. Hence, in this regard, the Melissino Rite can be viewed as the first casualty in the opening salvo of Catherine the Great’s campaign to tear down the foundations of Illuminism in her empire.

**Pyotr Ivanovich Melissino: Catherinian Official, Socialite, Freemason and Aspiring Alchemist**

Contemporary accounts of P. I. Melissino paint a vivid portrait of a man in possession of attributes perfectly suited to the myriad demands of life in the elite milieu of Catherine II’s Russia. The French commentator Claude François Masson, for example, extolled Melissino as “a man who may, in some measure, be considered as the Richelieu of Russia”. Masson backs up this high praise

14 Lenning 1824, 460–481.
16 An exception is a two-page entry on the Melissino Rite in the Allgemeines Handbuch der Freimaurerei. See Allgemeines Handbuch der Freimaurerei 1865, 306–307.
17 Prince Frederik Masonic Cultural Centre, The Hague, Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1. Georg Kloss provides an account of how he acquired the manuscript, which he explains was sent to him in 1837 by Friedrich Mosdorf (1757–1843) via J. K. A. Fischer in Altenburg. Kloss also notes that Mosdorf received the manuscript from Ignatius Aurelius Fessler (1756–1839). See MS 266 VII a. 1, p. 1. For alternative manuscript copies in Berlin, see Secret State Archives of Prussian Cultural Heritage, FM 5.2. R31 No. 236 (originally from the Inseparabilis Provincial Order Chapter in Rostock) and FM 5.2. A. 8 No. 628 (originally from the Archimedes zu den drei Reissbretern Lodge in Altenburg). For a description of the fourth and fifth degrees, Zwey schottische grade des russischen Systems unter Melissino. Lanskoj and Eshevskii Collection, F. 147, No. 346, Russian State Library, Moscow.
18 Masson 1802, 346.
by exclaiming his “great practice with scientific theory” in all aspects of the arts and sciences.\textsuperscript{19} Melissino is also lauded for having “cultivated literature” and for having a “decided taste for the French theatre”, as well as being fluent in numerous European languages.\textsuperscript{20} The Frenchman also commends Melissino on his “gallant and magnificent” comportment, which ensured that he was a prominent figure in Petersburg society during Catherine II’s reign. Very similar testimony of Melissino’s “many gifts” was offered by Sergei Alekseevich Tuchkov (1767–1839) in 1789, when he was then serving under Melissino during the Russo-Swedish War (1788–1790).\textsuperscript{21} Moreover, in 1777 the French chargé d’affaires in St. Petersburg, Marie-Daniel Bourée, Baron de Corberon (1748–1810), of whom we shall hear more of below, wrote in his diary that Melissino was “a very amiable man, industrious, full of taste, talented”.\textsuperscript{22}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{fig1.jpg}
\caption{Portrait of P. I. Melissino in Nikolai Mikhailovich Romanov, Russkie portrety XVIII i XIX stoletii, vol. 5, part 2 (St. Petersburg: Ekspeditsiia zagotovleniia gosudarstvennykh bumag 1909), plate 35.}
\end{figure}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{19} Masson 1802, 339.
\textsuperscript{20} Masson 1802, 339–340. Masson mentions that Melissino was fluent in Russian, German, Italian, French, Greek, Latin and English.
\textsuperscript{21} Tuchkov 1908, 26–27. The similarity between Masson’s account and that of Tuchkov is so great that it seems highly probable that one author borrowed from the other (most likely Masson from Tuchkov).
\textsuperscript{22} Corberon 1901, 295.
\end{quote}
One would be hard pushed to discover more persuasive evidence of Melissino’s prestige in Petersburg society than the testimony of the famed Giacomo Casanova (1725–1798). On arrival in St. Petersburg in December 1764, the Venetian adventurer quickly presented Melissino with a letter of introduction. Thenceforth, Casanova was invited to sup with Melissino every night of his stay in the Russian capital.\textsuperscript{23} Besides these pleasantries, Casanova also escorted Melissino to an Epiphany celebration in 1765, as well as to a military review and a banquet.\textsuperscript{24} In other words, Melissino was deemed perfectly placed to introduce Casanova to the full range of Petersburg’s cultural life: the splendour of a religious ceremony, the discipline of a military display and the air of sumptuousness and excess that attended the epitome of aristocratic associational culture: the lavish feast.

P. I. Melissino’s eminence in Petersburg society in the 1760s stemmed in large measure from the first-rate education he received over a period of fifteen years. On April 15, 1735, at the age of nine, Melissino entered the gymnasium of the Imperial Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg.\textsuperscript{25} Five years later he began his studies at the prestigious Noble Cadet Corps (\textit{Sukhoputnyi shliakhetnyi korpus}) – “the glorious cradle of many heroes and notable men of Russia”.\textsuperscript{26}

Melissino was the son of a Cephalonian physician, Ivan Afanas’evich (d. 1758), who began to serve in the Russia Empire during the reign of Peter the Great and rose to become the Vice-President of the Commerce College in the 1740s.\textsuperscript{27} According to E. R. Ol’khovskii, I. A. Melissino organised receptions at his St. Petersburg residence in the 1730s in order to provide a conducive intellectual milieu for his children.\textsuperscript{28}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{23} Casanova 2004, 2158.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Casanova 2004, 2160–2161, 2178.
\item \textsuperscript{25} \textit{Materialy dlia istorii imperatorskoi akademii nauk (1731–1735)} 1886, 851. Melissino is registered at No. 427 (as Peter Johan Ernst Melissino) in the “General List of Students of the Gymnasium” (\textit{General’nyi spisok uchenikov gimnazii}). The entry also reveals that Melissino was born in Courland.
\item \textsuperscript{26} Viskovatov 1832, 28.
\item \textsuperscript{27} In October 1742, I. A. Melissino formed part of a two-man committee commissioned to inspect the foreign literature of the library of the Imperial Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg. See \textit{Materialy dlia istorii imperatorskoi akademii nauk (1742–1743)} 1889, 388, 417, 427, 431, 695, 849, 944. In 1745, as an assessor of the State Justice College, I. A. Melissino was also the leading member of a commission charged with undertaking a revision of the library and kunstkamera of the Imperial Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg. On his inspection of the library and kunstkamera, which met with opposition from a number of professors, see \textit{Materialy dlia istorii imperatorskoi akademii nauk (1744–1745)} 1895, 420–421, 423, 558, 599, 611–613, 624; \textit{Materialy dlia istorii imperatorskoi akademii nauk (1746–1747)} 1895, 17, 19, 130, 147. On I. A. Melissino’s role as Vice-President of the Commerce College and the promotion of trade with the Levant, Greece and Italy via the Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea in 1741, see \textit{Dokumenty ob ustanovlenii priamykh russko-ital’ianskih torgovykh sviazei v seredine XVIII veka} 1972, 90–93. Melissino had an elder brother, Ivan Ivanovich Melissino (1718–1795), who enjoyed a successful career as the director of Moscow University (1757–1763), the Attorney General of the Holy Synod (1763–1768) and the Curator of Moscow University from 1771 until his death. For more on I. I. Melissino, see Kochetkova and Moiseeva 1999. Available online at: \url{http://www.pushkinskijdom.ru/Default.aspx?tabid=1021} [accessed January 3, 2013].
\item \textsuperscript{28} Ol’khovskii 2003, 105.
\end{itemize}
On graduating from the Cadet Corps in 1750, Melissino remained at the institution in the rank of Second Lieutenant (podporuchik). By 1756 Melissino had already risen to the rank of Captain. During this time Melissino played a pivotal role in the burgeoning theatre troupe that was established in 1750, by an official decree issued by Empress Elizabeth. Hence, in February 1750 he performed the role of Kiia in a performance of the tragedy Khorev, by A. P. Sumarokov (1717–1777). Thereafter, he continued to participate in and oversee various theatrical productions.

Melissino went on to enjoy an outstanding military career. Recognition of his talents culminated in 1796, when he was appointed by Emperor Paul as the first General of the Artillery. Prior to this Melissino had served with honour in various military campaigns (The Seven Years’ War, the Russo-Turkish War of 1768–1774 and the Russo-Swedish War of 1788–1790). Moreover, in 1783, Melissino was appointed the Director of the Artillery and Engineering Noble Cadet Corps.

By the late 1750s, Melissino had also begun to display a decided talent for pyrotechnics. At this time, for example, he collaborated with St. Petersburg’s chief apothecary, Johann Georg Model (1711–1775), in creating a recipe for green fire. According to Fyodor Cheleev, writing in 1824, Melissino discovered from “what nature has up to this time hidden from us […] a spirituous green fire—and composed from it a representation of palm trees”. Melissino’s pyrotechnical ingenuity did not go unobserved by Catherine II, whose coronation in Moscow in September 1762 was accompanied by a firework display that he masterminded and that included his flaming green palm trees (see Fig. 2 below).

29 Viskovatov 1832, 26; Petrovskaia and Somina 1994, 36–37.
30 Viskovatov 1832, 26; Ol’khovskii 2003, 106.
31 Viskovatov 1832, 26–28; Petrovskaia and Somina 1994, 38.
32 Voennyi entsiklopedicheskii leksikon 1844, 613–614.
33 In around 1759, Melissino also began studying pyrotechnics with Giuseppe Sarti. See Stählin 1990, 261; Werrett 2010, 165.
34 For a description of Melissino’s recipe for green fire see Cheleev 1824, 229–230. Also see Werrett 2010, 230.
35 Werrett 2010, 166. Melissino’s prodigious pyrotechnical expertise continued to be employed by the Imperial family for a variety of spectacular ceremonies until September 1796. In the final years of his life alone, for example, he devised firework displays to celebrate the peace with Sweden in 1790, as well as the marriages of grand princes Aleksandr Pavlovich and Konstantin Pavlovich in 1793 and 1796 respectively. See Opisanie feirverka po okonchaniii torzhestva na sluchai zakliuchennago mira mezhdu e.i.v Ekaterinoi Utoroiu i e.v. Gustavom Tret’im korelem shvedskim 1790; Opisanie feirverka, pri torzhestve brakosochetaniia ikh imp. Vysochestv gostudarii velikogo kniaziia Aleksandr Pavlovitche i gosudaryni velikiia kniiginii Elisavet Alekseevny: Predstavlennago v Sanktpeterburge na Tsaritsyni lugu, okniasi dia 1793 goda 1793; Opisanie feirverka, pri torzhestve brakosochetaniia ikh imp. Vysochestv gostudarii velikogo kniaziia Konstantina Pavlovitche i gosudaryni velikiia kniiginii Anny Feodorovny: Predstavlennago v Sanktpeterburge, na Never eke, fevralia dia 1796 goda 1796. The final firework display planned by Melissino took place on September 1, 1796 (the old Russian New Year). For a description, see Opisanie feirverka, dannago v Sanktpeterburge na Tsaritsinskem lugu, 1 sentiabria 1796 goda 1796.
Whilst Catherine II’s coronation provided a grand stage for Melissino to display his skills in chemistry and pyrotechnics in an official capacity, it would seem that he also used his time in the old capital to seek out an alchemical adept who was willing to divulge his knowledge of la science Hermétique. Such a scenario is revealed by Corberon, who on May 5, 1776 wrote down the following story in his private Journal that had been recited by Melissino over dinner in St. Petersburg:

14 years ago g[ener]al Melissino found in Moscow at the coronation [of Catherine II] a man who showed him much knowledge in le but hermétique. This man let Melissino watch his work and operations. Melessino was a diligent audience. After some time, Melissino had to join the army and he left his friend to continue his operation. However, after a while he received a letter from this friend telling him that he had failed, but that he would try again. I do not know after what interval Melissino, who was still in the army, went to meet his friend, who, seeing him in one piece, said: congratulate me as I will congratulate you: I succeeded and you are on the right path. Indeed, this man in front of him transmuted lead into gold with a mysterious red powder that he had in a small pot. After seeing this operation his friend gave him a phial of esprit de vin rectifié blanc, in which
he put a piece of this powder which at once made the elixir the same beautiful red that he had seen before. Melissino always carries this red powder with him, thinking that the use of it from time to time keeps him healthy and vigorous.

In September 1780, prior to leaving Russia, Corberon noted in his *Journal* that he had sought to meet Melissino's alchemical tutor. He refers to the alchemist as “du docteur Kerstniz, médecin de Moscou”, but was unsuccessful in his endeavour as the physician no longer resided in Russia. The additional information provided by Corberon strongly suggests that the alchemist in question was Dr. Johann Christian Kerstens (1713–1802). In 1760 the German physician was appointed the first professor of medicine, chemistry, natural history and physics at Moscow University; a post he held until December 1769, when he returned to Germany and took up a position at the University of Kiel.

As will be discussed below, Melissino's tale of transmutation fascinated Corberon and underpinned his own enthusiastic embrace of Illuminist freemasonry in Russia and later France. By documenting that Melissino's passion for alchemy dated back to at least 1762, Corberon also helps us to understand why this respected Russian official would choose to disregard Catherine's prescribed Enlightenment narrative by developing a high-degree rite of Illuminist freemasonry.

**The Melissino Rite and Illuminism in Russia, c. 1765–1782**

On May 5, 1782, as Grand Master of the *Loge der Verschwiegenheit* in St. Petersburg, Melissino published an open letter in German to his fellow brethren. This unprecedented action – unique in the history of Russian freemasonry – was prompted by Melissino's decision to cease lodge meetings. According to Melissino, the catalyst for closing one of Russia's oldest lodges stemmed from the proclamation on April 8, 1782 of the Ordinance of Good Order, or “Police” Code (*Ustav blagochiniia, ili politseiskii*). More specifically, Melissino cited Article 65 as the pretext for his decision, which outlined the following:

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36 Corberon, Journal MS 3059, p. 360.
37 For more on Kerstens, see von Richter 1817, 342–343.
38 Melissino 1782. In Russian the lodge was known as Lozha molchalivosti (Lodge of Discretion) and alternatively as Lozha skromnosti (Lodge of Modesty).
39 On the law code, see Pinigin 2004.
The city’s authority of order [namely, the police] by law does not recognise the validity of any unsanctioned association, fraternity or any other similar assembly (under whatever name it exists), if these [organizations] appear to have obligations, rules, provisions or by-laws, then none [of them] should be considered; if such a society, association, fraternity or any other similar assembly inflicts harm, damage or losses to the common good; or if [it] is useless, then it will be subject to elimination and prohibition.⁴⁰

This edict, issued to the Russian Senate in the name of Catherine the Great, was evidently perceived by Melissino as a test of loyalty: was his sense of duty and obedience to the sovereign more important to him than his position as one of the leading freemasons in Russia? Nearly four weeks after the announcement of the new legal ordinance, Melissino decided to publicly declare his allegiance to the monarch:

The conscientious observation of the duties towards one’s Superior and one’s fatherland leads us to focus our most accurate attention on the decrees prescribed by the highest legislative power, and to the holiest obedience of orders; yes, if it were possible, we as true subjects should even anticipate the supreme Will: at the very least the punishments announced by the Law in the case of violation, should never affect us, as a result of non-observation.⁴¹

Melissino felt duty bound by the enactment of the new Police Code to “suspend the meetings of our Lodge until we are convinced that in continuing them we shall not become transgressors of the laws set down by the Most Wise Monarch”.⁴²

Yet, the promulgation of the Police Code alone does not fully explain Melissino’s dramatic response. After all, no other masonic grandees in Russia interpreted the new legal code as necessitating the closure of other lodges. To be sure, Melissino showed prescience in his awareness of the civic dilemma posed by the new Police Code, but his decision was also based on an acute sense of disillusionment at the current state of freemasonry within Russia:

⁴⁰ See Law 15,379 in Polnoe sobranie zakonov rossiiskoi imperii 1830, 467.
⁴¹ Melissino 1782, 5.
⁴² Melissino 1782, 5–6.
As beautiful as the red dawn of Freemasonry was in this sky, so did self-interest, mistrust and presumptuous wisdom, like a thick fog, impede the full serene ascent of the sun.

These vices, mothers of Partisanship and Sectarianism, crept into the Order, gave birth to children so much like them: Enmity and Calumny, which shattered the bonds of the union, parted company with the goal [of the Order], destroyed its profit, and drew down the jeers of others upon themselves. There was talk of nothing else amongst Freemasons but of Observances and Systems, and every observance and every system had its own purpose; although, Truth can have but one form.

Melissino’s bitter pronouncements against Masonic sectarianism reveal the sentiments of a man who had devoted much of his adult life to promoting freemasonry in Russia. As he himself explains:

You know, my Brothers! how much I have endeavoured to draw the □ [Lodge of Discretion] closer to the aim of freemasonry; not labours of one day, nor of one year seemed to me to be sufficient to give the members of the □ [Lodge] the basic training of a Mason: No, for one part of my life I had pleasure in occupying myself with this increasingly attractive aim.

Melissino here expresses the pivotal role played by the associational culture of freemasonry in his life. To be sure, many aspects of the fraternal sociability offered by freemasonry blended seamlessly into the various spheres of Melissino’s life: as an officer, a connoisseur of the arts and sciences and as a consummate performer among the social milieu of the Petersburg elite. Indeed, it is important to stress that many elements of freemasonry in Russia – as practised by Melissino and many others – did not contradict, and often even promoted, the dominant Catherinian Enlightenment narrative.

It is not known when Melissino was initiated into freemasonry, but his name appears third on the list of one of the earliest documents relating to the fraternity in the country, dating from 1756.43 No lodge name is recorded, but the overwhelming majority of the brethren were officers in the Cadets Corps or cavalry and infantry regiments, suggesting a military orientation. Melissino was also the Master of the military Lodge of Mars in Jassy (in modern-day Romania), which was established during the Russo-Ottoman War of 1768–1774.44

43 Tikhonravov 1862, 51.
44 The precise date of the foundation of the Lodge of Mars is not known, but Melissino is noted as its Grand Master in a letter to the Lodge of Urania in St. Petersburg, dated December 28, 1773. See Pypin 1916, 551.
By the mid-1770s, Melissino felt entirely at ease in openly flaunting his status as Grand Master of the Lodge of Discretion (an ironic name in many respects) at lavish masonic festivities in St. Petersburg, which were attended by invited (non-masonic) guests. One such event took place in the summer of 1775 and was described by the mathematician and astronomer Johann Albrecht Euler (1734–1800):

After dinner, that is to say at 10 o’clock, we went straight to Kammenyi Ostrov, where the freemasons gave the best fête in the world. General Melissino of the artillery, who is Grand Master of the lodge was at the head. There was a grand banquet and masked ball [...] [and] a sumptuous and magnificent firework display, which lasted from 11.30 pm until 12.30 am.45

It is not hard to imagine Melissino being in his element at this society event, which provides rare evidence of masonic activity in Russia outside the confines of the lodge. After all, this festivity allowed Melissino to proudly proclaim his status as a leading freemason to Petersburg society, whilst also demonstrating his pyrotechnical wizardry and his ability to host a grand entertainment to the discerning Petersburg aristocracy.

It would seem Melissino and his fellow brethren of the Lodge of Discretion were also proud of their musical culture, judging by the publication in 1777 of a selection of lieder and a cantata.46 Moreover, not only were the freemasons keen to demonstrate their vocal and lyrical abilities, but they also wanted to pronounce their devotion to the Empress. The first song in the collection, for example, proclaims their loyalty to the monarch in its exhortation “Hail thee, Catherine! The Fatherland’s delight!”47

Songs and speeches in praise of Catherine, masquerades, society banquets and spectacular firework displays hardly contravened the legal stipulations of Article 65 of the Police Code, or fanned the flames of masonic discord. In effect this exoteric dimension of The Lodge of Discretion represented the three Craft Degrees (Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft and Master Mason). This outward face of the lodge presented the brethren as moral and virtuous pillars of Catherine’s

45 Letter from Johann Albrecht Euler to Samuel Formey, 24 July/ 5 August 1775, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Handschriften-abteilung. Also see Beaurepaire 2007, 48.
46 Freymäurerlieder zum Gebrauch der E. Loge der Verschwiegenheit in St. 1777. The collection contains 23 songs and 1 cantata.
47 Freymäurerlieder zum Gebrauch der E. Loge der Verschwiegenheit 1777, 1. In 1781, a selection of speeches delivered at the Lodge of Modesty was also published in St. Petersburg. See Beer 1781.
realm, whose refined manners and appreciation of the arts and sciences were shining examples to their peers. However, the higher degrees of the innovative Melissino Rite (The Dark Vault, Scottish Master and Knight, Philosophers’ Degree and Magnus Sacerdos Templar[ium]), which increasingly embraced an Illuminist outlook, certainly did run counter to the Enlightenment vision cherished by Catherine and the masonic ideals of many Russian freemasons.

The exact date when the high-degree Melissino System began to be practiced within the Lodge of Discretion is not known, although 1765 is cited in various sources. Furthermore, the foundation date of the lodge itself is not known for sure, although in 1836 the German freemason Christian von Nettelbladt claimed that it was established in 1750. Moreover, frustratingly little is known about the possible influence on Melissino of the freemason Baron Théodore Henri de Tschoudy (1727–1769), from Metz, who spent between 1752–1755 and 1757–1760 in St. Petersburg. In 1766, Tschoudy published *L’Étoile Flamboyante*, in which he expounded his eponymously titled masonic system that, in short, mixed esotericism (especially Hermetism and alchemy) and Templar symbolism. In this work, Tschoudy includes a speech he delivered at “la loge S. T. à Pétersbourg” in March 1760. It has recently been claimed (without substantiating evidence) that the lodge in question was *Le Silence*, or in other words the Lodge of Discretion. If so, then this lodge provided a highly productive crucible for the development of Illuminism in Russia. Whatever the case, one can conclude that the masonic milieu in St. Petersburg in the late 1750s and early 1760s proved to be fertile ground for the growth of Illuministic freemasonry – as fashioned by both Melissino and Tschoudy.

This is most strikingly shown in the seventh degree – referred to as the “First Grade of the Invisible Chapter, or Clerical Office” in the Kloss manuscript – which reveals the extent to which elect initiates of the Melissino System embraced esoteric philosophy in order to pursue their own

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48 See Lenning 1824, 460; Pypin 1916, 118.
49 Kalender für die Provinzial-Loge von Mecklenburg 1837, 73. Also see Allgemeines Handbuch der Freimaurerei 1865, 107; Serkov 2001, 965–966.
50 On Tschoudy’s career in Russia, see Rzheutskii 2010, 91–124.
51 Baron de Tschoudy 1766, 35–40.
53 One can also see clear similarities between Melissino’s Conclave and Johann August Starck’s development of his Clericat form of Templarism in around 1767, which was also saturated with alchemical symbolism. Starck was resident in St. Petersburg between 1763 and 1765, where he was employed as a teacher at the Protestant St. Petrischule. Starck always maintained that he came into contact with advocates of the clerical Templar system in St. Petersburg, but never mentioned Melissino. Whilst it may be impossible to prove any definitive link between the Melissino Rite and Starck’s Clericat, it is, nevertheless, clear that St. Petersburg acted as a fertile breeding ground for such Illuminist currents in the 1760s. For a description of the seventh degree of Starck’s Clericat, see Wöllner 1803, 213–276. For a general analysis of Starck’s rite, see Telepneff 1929, 239, 241.
path towards truth and knowledge. Christian rituals, ceremonial garb and Scriptural citations are also an intrinsic part of this highest degree, thereby constituting a complimentary system to established churches, whether Orthodox, Catholic or Protestant.

Whilst the seventh degree will be focused upon in this article, as it embodies by far the fullest and most profound expression of Illuminism (and is arguably the most innovative), a brief overview of the fourth to sixth degrees is worthwhile in order to contextualize the ascent towards the Invisible Chapter. The fourth degree of ‘The Dark Vault’ concentrates on symbols and rituals associated with the legend of Hiram Abiff. The allegorical re-enactment of the death and burial of Hiram, who had been the master mason at work on the construction of Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem, plays an intrinsic role in the ritual of the third (fellowcraft) degree of Craft freemasonry.\(^{54}\)

In the ‘Dark Vault’ degree the Hiramic legend remains pivotal.\(^{55}\) The rite is overseen by a freemason entitled “Master Gabaon”, who elucidates to candidates the significance of being selected to be a “Chosen Master”.\(^{56}\) Hence, as part of the ritual included in the fourth oath of the degree, “Master Gabaon” narrates how Solomon initially selected nine of his most trustworthy master masons to search for the slain Hiram.\(^{57}\) Moreover, “Master Gabaon” emphasizes the centrality of death for Chosen Masters in their efforts to achieve perfection.\(^{58}\)

The fifth degree of ‘Scottish Master and Knight’ is redolent of a number of contemporary chivalric masonic rites that espoused a mythical Templar genealogy, of which the most notable was the Order of Strict Observance, which was founded by Karl Gotthelf von Hund (1722–1776).\(^{59}\) The crux of the Scottish Templar legend, as demonstrated in the Melissino Rite, is that a band of Master Masons took it upon themselves to bring “the body of Hiram and the Treasure [of the Temple] to Scotland”.\(^{60}\) Thereafter this hardy band of Masonic-Templar brothers supposedly established new lodges, in which initiates were exhorted to display “similar loyalty and zeal”.\(^{61}\)

\(^{54}\) On the importance of the Hiramic legend in English and French Freemasonry, see Snoek 2003, 11–53.
\(^{55}\) See Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, ff. 1–15.
\(^{56}\) On the use of *Gabaon* as a designation of a Master Mason in some eighteenth-century French Masonic rituals, see Morris and Sereiski 2004, 186, fn. 18.
\(^{57}\) Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 10.
\(^{58}\) Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 9.
\(^{59}\) Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, ff. 16–35. On the Templar legends in high-degree freemasonry in the eighteenth century, see Mollier 2006, 849–853.
\(^{60}\) Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 29.
\(^{61}\) Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 35.
The description of the sixth ‘Philosophers’ degree’ is relatively short.\(^6\) A key aspect of this degree centres on testing an initiate “as to whether he is sufficiently instructed in the secrets of the Chamber of Wisdom”.\(^6\) If so, then the new “philosopher” is encouraged to “go forward and discover for yourself our hieroglyphs”!\(^6\) The catechism in this degree also emphasizes how the initiate has been born-again and is ready to contribute towards the goal of freemasonry to restore the Golden Age.\(^6\)

Thirty-six pages (out of 82) of the Melissino System manuscript in The Hague are devoted to describing the seventh degree and are entitled the “Proceedings of the Induction of a High Priest of the Templars, which follows the Chapter Degree and is called the First Degree of the Invisible Chapter, or Clerical Office”. These proceedings are divided, appropriately, into seven sections: (1) The Opening of the Conclave; (2) The Induction of the Candidate; (3) The Close of the Conclave; (4) The Conclave of Deliberation; (5) The Decoration of the Conclave; (6) Explanation of the First Mystical Tracing Board, by the Grand Deacon of the Chapter; and (7) Explanation of the Second Mystical Tracing Board, by the Grand Operator of the Conclave, who uncovers the magical and theosophical secrets to True Members of the Conclave.

The opening of each Conclave of the seventh degree of the Melissino Rite began with a dramatic rite that immediately illustrates the deeply theurgical nature of the Invisible Chapter. Led by an ordained priest of the Catholic, Orthodox or Protestant confessions, if present, or otherwise by the High Priest of the Conclave, the induction commenced with a rendition of the hymn “Veni, sancte spiritus”, which begins with the lines “Come, Holy Spirit, send forth the heavenly radiance of thy light”.\(^6\) This Christian liturgical song – performed at Pentecost in Catholic churches –, which is uttered to bring forth the Holy Spirit, was then followed by the enactment of an ancient Jewish religious ritual – the blowing of the shofar, or Horn of Israel. In Jewish liturgical ritual, the shofar is sounded at the onset of Rosh Hashanah, which celebrates God’s creation of Adam and Eve.

In the Melissino Ritual, the sounding of the shofar is invested with Kabbalistic significance, in the spirit of the Lurianic tradition. Hence, either an ordained priest or the High Priest of the Conclave blows the horn seven times, using a specific sequence of sounds: (1) \textit{teq’iah} flourish

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62 Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, ff. 37–46.  
63 Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 43.  
64 Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 43.  
65 Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 44.  
66 Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 47.
(1 blow); (2) shevarim flourishes; (3) teru'ah flourishes and (4) teq'iah flourish (1 blow). The High Priest then “strikes a blow with Aaron’s Rod”, which is described in the Old Testament (see Exodus 7 and Exodus 4:15–16), as possessing miraculous properties. Immediately thereafter the congregation recited Psalm 47, which begins “O clap your hands, all ye people” in Latin, after which they all clapped seven times. According to Gershom Scholem, the blowing of the shofar in Kabbalistic thought is associated with harmony between the rigid powers of judgement and the flowing powers of mercy, as well as defence against, or mastery over, the powers of the “other side”.

Following this powerful invocation of divine, creative forces, the High Priest then begins a catechism with the Grand Operator based on an exposition of the question: “What is the Conclave”? In answer, the Grand Operator replies that “it is a gathering of true pupils of the old philosophers, who in modern times have named themselves ‘Brothers of the Golden Rose Cross’, or also Clerics”. Thus, the tone rather abruptly switches from Christian and Jewish liturgical rituals – imbued with Kabbalistic significance – to a discussion on the history and contemporary standing of Rosicrucianism. Significantly, the High Priest emphasizes how initiates of the seventh degree of the Melissino Rite are “true students” of the “old philosophers”, whereas self-proclaimed “Rosicrucians” merely represent various hues of charlatanism. Indeed, while the name “Brothers of the Rose Cross” is regarded as venerable, the Grand Secretary stated that it “was abused in times past by the most villainous people, who were simple chymical provincial tricksters”. Furthermore, the Grand Secretary adds that “in recent years a certain Rosenkreuz has set himself up, who has founded a society of so-called German Rosicrucians”. This would appear to be a direct reference to the contemporary Order of the Gold- and Rosenkreuz. Whilst it is stated that “it is true that these are not tricksters”, the Grand Secretary notes that “they have as little knowledge [of alchemy]” as the ‘provincial tricksters’ in that they neither have knowledge of “the true matter nor of the true work of the Royal Art”. A third class of Rosicrucians is also mentioned, who are said to have had “some superficial theoretical concepts of wisdom, but who were still very far removed from the true purpose”. In short, an initiate is made abundantly aware of the fact that the brethren of

67 Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 47. The Director of a lodge belonging to the Order of the Gold- und Rosenkreuz also used an imitation of Aaron’s Rod during rituals. See Westlund 2007, available online at: http://rosae-crucis.net/eng/resources/ [accessed on January 10, 2013].
68 Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 48.
69 Scholem 1965, 130.
70 Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 48.
71 Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 48.
the seventh degree of the Melissino Rite are the only legitimate conveyors of the truth of the “old philosophers”.

Having established the superiority of the Melissino Rite over Rosicrucian societies, the High Priest moves onto an epistemic theory of truth as the basis of the “true secret of the Conclave”. Thus, in reply to the question of “What is truth”? it is stated that the answer is “The understanding of God and all of the natural world”. This epistemic theory is enveloped in alchemical symbolism, although “common chymistry is of no use at all”. Rather, alchemy here serves as a means of understanding God’s actions in creating the world. Hence, God is envisaged as the ultimate alchemist, who initially formed the “dark chaos which consisted of troubled water and fire”. Subsequently, “the Spirit of God hovered over the waters”, begetting “the light”, which he then divided “into the pure and impure”, with the former being used to create the sky and the latter “the volcanic matter of the globe, which through being burnt to ashes becomes the earth”.

The opening catechism then proclaims the divine powers inherent in man, who is “created in the image of God and has his origin from out of him” and “the matter from which he takes his birth God himself has purified”. Accordingly, as man “is made from the purest part of the earth [...]” and as his body is an “anatomy of the world” he is able to grasp both the “harmonic proportion of the building that is the world” and “the geometric calculation of his vessel (the vessel of the philosopher [or, in other words, alchemist])”. The High Priest concludes the catechism with the call to his fellow clerics to “Let us fashion this light of wisdom with our hands, and in following the example of the Lord of Hosts create a small world and in his Thrice Holy Name open the Conclave of Wisdom”.

The opening of the Conclave concludes with the High Priest once again striking Aaron’s Rod and then beckoning the clerics to approach him in order to receive the blessing and to kiss the Cross that hangs upon his chest. Next follows a lengthy description of the initiation ceremony of a candidate cleric. After preparing the initiate in the appropriate vestments, the candidate enters the Conclave, during which time the brethren exclaim in Latin: “Behold! A priest of the Templars who is approaching the Altar of the Lord with full humility of heart, putting off all vanities that are in this world, that he might acquire wisdom!”

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72 Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 49.
73 Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, ff. 50–51. On the alchemical vessel as a symbol of the soul, see McLean 1986, available online at http://www.levity.com/alchemy/vessel.html [accessed January 10, 2013].
The initial phase of the candidate’s induction – conducted in both Latin and Hebrew – invokes passages from the New Testament related to the Transfiguration and from both books of the Bible related to purification. Whilst receiving the long white vestment denoting the candidate’s imminent status as a cleric, for example, the Grand Deacon commands “Receive this vestment of wisdom, that thou be radiant before the Lord, and thy countenance shall be as white as snow”. This passage draws on Matthew 17:2, which describes the Transfiguration and how Christ’s “face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was as white as the light”. The initiation ritual also draws on the account of the cleansing of a leper in the Jordan (see Luke 4:27 and 2 Corinthians 5:1–14), as well as paraphrasing Psalm 51: “Thou shalt wash me, o Lord, and I shall be whitened beyond the snow.”

After being symbolically purified, the inductee is then deemed ready to receive the chrism, or in other words the gift of the Holy Spirit: “Lord my God, may thy holy blessing descend from heaven upon this oil, that our brother can be anointed with this holy chrism and can through Christ our Lord receive the grace of the Holy Spirit, together with the gift of sanctity and wisdom.” A symbolic re-enactment of the trial of Christ before Pilate ensues, with various pronouncements from Matthew (27:17, 27:21, 27:23). Moreover, when in front of the Conclave’s altar, the Preparer “put the reed of Ecce homo, known amongst us as Jamsuph, into the Candidate’s hand”. Once again, the Melissino Rite blends Christian and Kabbalistic symbolism. Thus, the reed is linked to the one given to Christ by Pilate, as well as the Red Sea (Yam Suf in Hebrew), which in The Zohar is described as “the Sea of the End” and as Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi (1745–1812) states “serves as a screen which separates the World of Emanation from the next World, the Word of Creation”.

Various insults are then heaped upon the candidate by numerous clerics: he is, for example, a blasphemer, “he hath spoken evil of the High Priest”, has “spoken unjust things against the ruler of the country”, has been “a traitor to his native country” and “hath perjured against the sacred Order”. Due to the candidate confessing to this multitude of sins, he is allowed to be ordained (after having been degraded further by being thrown onto his belly on a straw mattress).

74 Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 54. Psalm 51 reads: “wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.”
75 Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 55.
77 Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, ff. 55–56.
Having successfully endured his ritual degradation, the candidate swears the oath, after which the High Priest gives him the sign, grip and words of the degree. The latter include Harris and Aumont (as well as David and Jonathan), thereby emphasizing the continued Templar elements in the Rite. Thus, according to Templar legend, Pierre d’Aumont, the Provincial Grand Master of Auvergne, fled to Scotland in 1313 in the face of persecution in the France of Philip IV, where he was met by George Harris, the Grand Commander of the Order.  

Next, the new initiate is led by the Preparer before a table on which lies the masonic tracing board covered with a linen sheet and adorned with a red cross. The tracing board is then uncovered and the High Priest expounds upon the esoteric laws preserved by the Order since antiquity:

> We, High Priest and Knights Templar, have received, handed down to us by three pupils of Pythagoras and Zeno […] the hermetic-cabbalistic science and the secret of the divine magic. The Order and the Laws of our Sacred Conclave command that we convey our sciences to only a few Chosen Ones of our Chapter, so that secrets of such importance shall not be profaned.

Since, however, at the moment the perfect number for the Orient of Russia is incomplete, we have chosen you […] to assume a place amongst the number of Chosen Ones of our Conclave in our Invisible Chapter, and to obtain from the Very Worshipful Grand Deacon and Grand Operator all the light and all the theosophical, cabbalistic and hermetic knowledge, which you are now qualified to receive. Receive these same things with proper deference and reflect most profoundly on them, while you praise God, the All-powerful, who has hidden the greatest marvels of nature in such an insignificant object that is hidden from the greater part of humankind.

Here we have a quintessential justification for the esoteric passing down of knowledge, wholly in the spirit of Matthew 7:6, which warns against casting pearls before swine.

The induction of the candidate begins to draw to a close when the High Priest once again blows the shofar seven times (whilst all brothers fall to their knees). The ten clerics participating in the induction then call out the following ten names: (1) Shekhinah; (2) Metatron; (3) Meschiah; (4) Yinnon; (5) Zemach; (6) Menachem; (7) David; (8) Shiloh; (9) Elias and (10) Yesod. These names

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78 Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 59.
79 Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 60.
80 Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, ff. 62–63. The manuscript gives alternative spellings (Schechina, Finnon, Schiloch and Jesod) for the first, fourth, eighth and tenth names.
accord with Jewish titles of the Messiah. Seven of these names (with the exception of Shekhinah, Metatron and Yesod) are referred to by Ravi Huna. Moreover, *The Zohar* also contains passages in which the names Metatron and Shekhinah are synonymous with the Messiah, whilst Elliot Wolfson notes that the *Sefer ha-Bahir*, an early Jewish mystical text, underscores “the correlation of the masculine *Yesod* and the Messiah”. One can also read Kabbalistic significance into the pronouncement of ten names of the messiah, which suggests a link to the ten sephiroth (of which more below).

The initiation concludes with the formal investiture of the candidate, which includes a “magico-theosophical” priestly cross of the Templars, “made up from four Hebraic Daleths” and a “laurel-wreath of wisdom”. The High Priest also tied a “Priestly Crown around the Candidate’s head [and placed] upon it a wreath of laurel”.

The Conclave itself nears its close with a final seven blows of the shofar and the pounding of Aaron’s Rod, after which the High Priest addresses the Preparer as to whether “there is an exact connection between God and man”? In reply the Treasurer answers: “Indeed, for all the strengths of God are in him, and just as we have the structure of the Sephiroth on our emblem, so also do they exist in [the] man.” Asked by the High Priest to expand upon this Kabbalistic understanding, the Treasurer adds: “Hidden in the head is the EnSoph [sic], and the remaining parts of his body are formed completely according to the Cabbalistic structure.” The Treasurer is here referring to the depiction of Adam Kadmon (Primordial Man) as the sephirotic tree of life. Thus, we learn that the image of Adam Kadmon is actually the emblem of the clerics.

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81 Buber 1893, 87; W. Hincks 1823, 647.
82 Hincks 1823, 647–648; Wolfson 1995, 83.
83 Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 64.
84 Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 66.
85 On the significance of Adam Kadmon in Lurianic Kabbalah, see Scholem 1974, 137–142.
Konstantin Burmistrov states that “Russian masons were particularly fascinated by the Kabbalistic concept of the primordial man, Adam Kadmon.” He has in mind, in particular, the copious notes of Ivan P. Elagin (1725–1793), dating from the 1780s, which frequently contemplate the significance and symbolism of Adam Kadmon. Yet, whilst the Elagin notebooks are interesting, they only amount to philosophical musings. The Melissino Rite, on the other hand, actively incorporated Adam Kadmon as an emblem many years earlier, and invoked his significance in the rituals pertaining to the closing of the Conclave.

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86 Burmistrov 2010, f. 86. The Order of Gold- und Rosenkreuz also drew on the symbolism of Adam Kadmon in the fifth degree of their order. See Beyer 1925, 210; McIntosh 2011, 73.  
87 See Elagin notebooks f. 68.
The Conclave also concludes with a reaffirmation of the belief in the alchemical dynamic at work in nature and the cosmos. The High Priest asks, for example, “What arises from the human being when he dies”? The reply comes that he is reborn, “for through putrefaction worms grow from his body”. Next, in reply to the question of how “his rebirth and transfiguration are brought about”, the addressee responds that “every created being, including the Great Celestial Orbs themselves can reach no transfiguration without being burnt to dust and ashes”.

The fourth (and briefest) part of the description of the seventh degree concerns the so-called Conclave of Deliberation, which was held “whenever an extraordinary case demands the meeting of members”. On such an occasion, the Conclave was opened and closed in exactly the same manner as with the induction of a new candidate. However, the High Priest adds an astrological element when closing the meeting: “We have today completed our labours happily with the assistance of the 7 planetary rulers.”

Interestingly, the Kloss manuscript also contains a description of the how the Conclave was decorated during gatherings. First, it is significant that the manuscript stipulates that if possible ceremonial acts should always “be carried out in a church or consecrated chapel”. Inside this sacred space, a white curtain, adorned with a cross composed of four black daleths (see Fig. 4 below), was hung in front of the altar.

Fig. 4 Illustration of the Cross of Four Black Daleths, Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 69.

88 Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 67.
89 Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 68.
90 Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 68.
91 Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f.68.
On the altar was placed the Bible (open at the Book of Revelation) and Aaron’s Rod. On a small table, situated behind the altar, were placed a phial of oil, the Yam Suf and a washbasin. Crucially, the description of the decoration of the Conclave also notes that “in the middle of the sephiroth stands a small table, on which the carpets lie”\textsuperscript{92} That is to say, not only is the sephirotic image of Adam Kadmon the emblem of the Order, but the actual utilisation of space during a Conclave is also conceived of in terms of the ten sephiroth. Furthermore, it is explained that in “the Conclave members sit in the configuration of the sephiroth”. Accordingly, it is stressed that “there must be no more than 10 Conclave members in a Conclave”\textsuperscript{93}

The importance attached to this Kabbalistic symbolism is elaborated in the next section, entitled “Explanations of the First Mystical Tracing Board by the Grand Deacon of the Chapter”\textsuperscript{94} Herein, the Grand Deacon explained that the cause for the insistence on there only being 10 members of a Conclave is “a magical one”, as “this Cabbala draws its origin from the word of God”. Thus, “when men pleasing to God gather together in the number of 10, the spirit of God is in the midst of them, guides and blesses their steps”. However, the Grand Deacon continues that if “there are fewer, then the Schechina (Shekhinah) moves away and their works are never blessed”. Furthermore, the Grand Deacon explains that “where the spirit of man works, there the Metraton [sic] must be, to bless him”.\textsuperscript{95} As Andrei Orlov notes, The Zohar accords the angel Metatron (also the male aspect of the Shekhinah) the role of heavenly high priest.\textsuperscript{96} Hence, the clerics of the Melissino Rite believed that they were only able to harness the powers of this spirit in their own liturgical ceremonies by forming a theurgical sephiroth.

The Grand Deacon began his interpretation of the first mystical tracing board by stressing how his brethren were seeing before them “all the secrets of all Masonry and of the Royal Art drawn together into one”\textsuperscript{97} He then reveals the alchemical-hermetic meaning symbolised in the tracing board. First, he begins by outlining the different meanings attached to the initials J. B. M. in hierarchical degrees of the Order. Hence, in the “Symbolic Grades”, that is the first three degrees, they refer to “Jackin, Boaz and Mackbenack”, whereas in the Order of the Knights they

\textsuperscript{92} Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, ff. 69–70.
\textsuperscript{93} Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 70.
\textsuperscript{94} On the role and history of the masonic tracing board, see Dring 1916, 243–325.
\textsuperscript{95} Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 74.
\textsuperscript{97} Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 71.
mean “Jacobus Burgundicus Molaius”. However, in the Priestly Order the Grand Deacon reveals that the initials have a hermetic meaning – “ignis, maris balneum” (‘fire, sea-bath’) – as “here the shape of the M is changed in Water, for which the reversed triangle is the chymical symbol”. In other words, the initials represent the alchemical process of heating matter in a bain-marie.

The Grand Deacon then provides a remarkable alchemical reading of Creation, along with an interpretation of how the so-called Royal Art provided the ultimate means of transforming an unworked stone into a perfected ashlar. He also champions alchemy as giving man the chance to restore himself to the state of primordial health enjoyed by Adam, that is, via the goal of perfecting the elusive philosophers’ stone:

This water-bath is the matter of Creation, from which God has made the world and all the created beings. And it is this matter also of which the ancient Magi availed themselves in order to make of it their magic fire. It is the origin of all marvels of nature, the chaotic and first water [...] The unworked stone is that mineral electrum, with which we heat the perfect metals and precious stones. It contains the fiery air about which the philosophers speak. This was the fiery cloud and the fiery column of the Israelites, the Holy Fire of the High Priests, the fiery chariot of Ezekiel, and the one in which Elijah rode up to Heaven, the fire, the smoke and the mist of which St. John speaks of in the Book of Revelation.

The cubical stone is the alkaline Universal-salt, which dissolves all metals and precious stones, because this salt is the mother, the origin, and the magnet of all of them. The Master Degree speaks to us of the [sprig of] Acacia found on Hiram’s grave. This Acacia is the true matter, from which the philosophers draw their Treasures. It is the true light of the World, from which the glorious Hiram will rise under the guise of the Redeemer. It is the burning coal of which Isaiah and Ezekiel speak, and which must be prepared in accordance with the hidden system of the wise men of old and the philosophers [...]
One of our most mysterious materials is therefore the burning coal, which the Egyptian Cabbala names clearly and without fuss.

The second is that greenish foam that floats on the sea of the philosophers. One without the other can create nothing: only those of our Conclave, who have received the appropriate instruction on how to unite these two materials in accordance with our practical Cabbala have the good fortune to see this first water come into being. From it comes afterwards the grey salt called the mineral Electrum, or else the Saturnine Antimony, and from this salt comes finally the Mercurial-water which dissolves all metals, minerals, precious stones and all compositions of nature, and which keeps the days of man in complete health through to his very last goal in life.\(^{101}\)

Thus, the Grand Deacon’s alchemical interpretation does not merely describe the long-cherished goal of producing the philosophers’ stone, but also skillfully associates alchemy with references to fire linked to Old Testament prophets, as well as the masonic legend of Hiram’s murder.

After the rich alchemical interpretation proffered by the Grand Deacon, the Grand Operator sets forth an equally spectacular (and highly complex) theosophical interpretation.\(^{102}\) Four interrelated topics are addressed in this explanation of the mystical carpet: (1) a Kabbalistic reading of the number 666 in relation to Christ’s crucifixion; (2) a comparison of the urim (a divinatory stone set in the breastplate of a Jewish high priest) with Christ; (3) a catechistic discussion of the similarities between the trinity in nature and the “High Divine Trinity” and (4) an interpretation of the “great secret of the 10 sephiroth”.\(^{103}\)

The contemplation of the Kabbalistic significance of the number 666 focuses on three Greek letters: χ (chi) ξ (xi) and σ (sigma). As the Grand Operator states, these letters “are taken from the Apocalypsis and signify the number six hundred and sixty-six”. Rather than signifying the number of the beast, the Grand Operator links this number directly to Christ. Indeed, more Kabbalistic interpretation is used to reinforce this claim. Thus, it is stated that “this Cabbala goes much

\(^{101}\) Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, ff. 72–74.
\(^{102}\) This final section section is entitled “Explanation of the First Mystical Tracing Board by the Grand Operator of the Conclave, who uncovers the magical and theosophical secrets to True Members of the Conclave”. See Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 75.
\(^{103}\) Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 78.
further still: for the sign of the Chi indicates a cross, the Xi the Trinity and the Unity, the Sigma a pair of scales”. From this the Grand Operator was able to pronounce the following belief:

Whence therefore ‘Christos, Xilon, Stauros’ denotes that Jesus Christ on the Cross, when still on the Rood had within him the characteristics of the Divine Trinity, and moreover, still possessed 3 different Offices, because he was God, man and mediator, kept balance between compassion and justice. He was therefore one in person and 3 in being; this totals 3, and had 3 distinct characteristics, which makes 6, and gives the root of the cabbalistic number 666.

This Kabbalistic interpretation is reinforced still further by adding that “Christos means in Greek ‘the annointed one’; Xylon means ‘wood’ and Stauros ‘a pair of scales’”.

After this dizzying display of Kabbalistic gymnastics, the Grand Operator then confidently proclaimed to his brethren that “we shall [now] see the connection that the Saviour’s wonderful mysteries have with the hermetic”. This link rests on a comparison of the similar inherent qualities manifested in both Jesus Christ and the Jewish high priest’s urim. Thus, Christ “was of a divine and human nature”, whilst the urim similarly “was of a supercelestial, but visible and corporeal nature, and thus had the characteristics of human beings”.

The third section of the Grand Operator’s interpretation provides an intriguing account of “the trinity in nature” and how it can be “compared to the High Divine Trinity”. Thus, as with the divine Trinity, the equivalent in nature has a spirit “which in fact has the heavenly and the earthly nature around it and divides itself into three spirits, differing in substance, but one in Being”. Everything is said to exist in and through this natural trinity. Fascinatingly, the Grand Operator added that “if for a moment it should cease to be effective [...] the spheres, which the Almighty Arm upholds by this wondrous concord, would collapse [...] See: the world will perish in this way, as the gravity theory of the great Newton himself clearly teaches”. Thus, this nod to “the first principles of the new natural science” is not cited to champion the merits of empirical observation, but to advance an eschatological mindset.

104 Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 76.
105 Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 76.
106 Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, ff. 76–77.
107 Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 77.
108 Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 78.
Lastly, the Grand Operator turns to “the great secret of the 10 Sephiroth”, beginning with their meaning in Latin: (1) Chesser (keter) – Corona; (2) Thipheres (Tiferet) – Splendor; (3) Chochmack (Hokhmah) – Sapientia; (4) Nezach (Nezah) – Victoria; (5) Binach (Binah) – Prudentia; (6) Haod (Hod) – Famae; (7) Ghedulach (Gedullah) – Gratia; (8) Jesod (Yesod Olam) – Fundamentum; (9) Ghewurach (Gevurah) – Fortitudo and (10) Malchos (Malkhut) – Regnum. The Grand Operator then cites “Rabbi Zoar” (presumably a reference to The Zohar) in order to elucidate the Kabbalistic concept of Ein Sof: “God has existed from eternity onwards, and his kingdom has neither beginning nor end, but he was within himself, and before the Creation there was nothing, except God’s being, to which the prophets have given the name EnSopf (unending being).” This passage is indeed very similar to The Zohar (part ii, section “Bo”, 42b), which states: “Before He gave any shape to the world, before He produced any form, He was alone, without form and without resemblance to anything else. Who then can comprehend how He was before the Creation?”

After this explanation of the concept of Ein Sof, the Grand Operator relates the process of Creation, whereby God “made four areas of space, which the prophets named as the four different heavens”. A brief elucidation of the Kabbalistic doctrine of the four worlds then follows:

The first is named Aziloh (Azilut) and contains the three Sephiro: Chesser, Chochmack and Binach.

The second is called: Berioch (Briah), and contains a further three Sephiro, namely Ghedulach, Ghewurach and Thipheres. The third is callefourth is already amongst the Sephiro; and was given the name Asioch (Assiyah).

As Pinchas Giller explains, the highest world of Azilut is the realm of abstracted and inaccessible divinity, whilst Briah is a world of pure creation. The third world of Yezirah is a realm of formation, whilst lastly, the world of Assiyah relates to action in the phenomenal realm.

A more detailed elaboration of the worlds of Azilut, Briah and Yezirah then ensues. Thus, the first heaven of Azilut is described as the realm where “the crown, wisdom and prudence reside”, below which is “the throne of the Eternal Being”. The will of the Eternal Being is said to be communicated to the second heaven (Briah) “by means of these three Sephiro”, which “set the angels and the hosts into motion, prescribe the boundaries that can never be transgressed; and

109 Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 79.
110 Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f.79.
111 Giller 2011, 57.
form a luminous void which is filled completely with the glory of the Eternal Being”. Within this void “resides the Schechina, which is the shadow of God, and which we call a spirit proceeding from all the might together”.\(^\text{112}\)

The Grand Operator’s theosophical discussion of the second world of Briah, or pure creation, emphasizes the magical roles played by Metatron, the Urim and Thummim within the Ephod of the Jewish high priest and the thaumaturgical properties inherent in the seven planets. Indeed, the passage begins with a description of how the second heaven is the dwelling place of Metatron, the Ephod and the “7 mirrors” (planets), above which “was the whole Schemhamphoras” that “contains the 72 letters and the 12 tribes of Israel”. Moreover, the Grand Operator relates how “at the centre point of this magical Talisman was our divine Urim”, which is described as being “a red stone of a celestial radiance, upon which an equilateral triangle and 3 jods were engraved, to signify the Trinity cabbalistically”. What is more, it is explained that “God commanded the Urim and Thummim, which are Light and Perfection, to be confined within the Couchen [sic] Ephod”.\(^\text{113}\)

At this point the Grand Operator reveals the theosophical interpretation of the initials J. B. M., which relate to “Jerziroth, Berioch and Metraton”. According to the Grand Operator these letters are particularly significant, as Metatron “is the spirit of the Messiah, who holds sway over all the archangels, hosts and planetary spirits”.\(^\text{114}\) Subsequently, the orator provides the magical-alchemical qualities associated with the seven planetary spirits. Thus, Mars is defined as “the radiance” and “means our magical fire”, whereas the Moon is “the Kingdom”, or in other words “our white tinged earth which turns all metals and minerals into silver” and the Sun is “the perfect Urim and the foundation of all perfectness”.\(^\text{115}\)

Lastly, the Grand Operator reveals that the Jeziroth, or third world, is “that space where all these planetary spirits reside”. Here, it is described how these planets “have a certain influence on the treatment of the Urim”, as “our celestial Nitrum is drawn precisely from the rays of the sun and the moon, by the strength of the human magnet, which takes its origin in the fourth heaven”. The Grand Operator goes on to explain that a cleric is able by theurgy to “draw out this divine

\(^{112}\) Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, ff. 79–80.
\(^{113}\) Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 80. The word “Couchon” would seem to be an erroneous spelling of the Hebrew “Cohen”, meaning priest. One also finds the use of the notion of Shemhamphorash and the magical properties of the Urim in the ninth degree of the Gold-und Rosenkreuz. See Westlund 2007; Geffarth 2007, 188.
\(^{114}\) On the association between the Urim and Thummim and the philosophers’ stone, see Khunrath 1653, 204.
\(^{115}\) Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, ff 80–81.
matter”, or celestial Nitrum, from “our sublunary world”. The goal of the adept is nothing less than to “make from it the Electrum, which produces the Urim”. According to the Grand Operator, this process is “so abstract and peculiar” that it can only be achieved “by one of our Brethren”. Indeed, the need to be initiated into the Conclave in order to be privy to this esoteric wisdom is stressed in no uncertain terms:

All human insight and wisdom, the deepest reading knowledge of all chymical and philosophical texts, the solidest knowledge of the older and the newer Chemistry and finally the greatest expenditures and expenses are useless in order to achieve this, so long as one has not been led to it through the Sacred Door of our Order.\(^{116}\)

The Grand Operator may have believed that the brethren of his Conclave were the sole agents able to draw down the magical powers of the celestial Nitrum via theurgical rites. However, the ninth degree of the Order of the Gold- und Rosenkreuz also revolved around the alchemical and magical knowledge needed to form the Urim and Thummim. Irrespective of whether the Grand Operator was aware of the similarity of the rival rites, he ends his theosophical interpretation by beseeching his brethren to “revere [...] these items of knowledge” as they are “a gift of God” bequeathed to them alone. Tellingly, he concludes by reiterating how the brethren of the Conclave are duty-bound to honour God “for the good graces he has heaped upon us in this century of adversity”.\(^{117}\) Ending on such a note highlights the manner in which the claims of Illuministic exceptionalism proffered by various initiatic societies across Europe in the closing decades of the eighteenth century were borne out of a sense of religious, social and cultural crisis.

**Melissino and the Illuminist Milieu in St. Petersburg and Beyond**

In an age of such seeming adversity, who in the Russian Imperial capital was both attracted to and deemed worthy of ordination into the Conclave, or Invisible Chapter of the Melissino Rite? In terms of numbers, the description of the decoration of the Conclave notes that “in the whole world there are only 7 High Priests, 7 Deacons and 7 Operators”.\(^{118}\) One gleans a smattering of

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\(^{116}\) Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, ff. 81–82.
\(^{117}\) Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 82.
\(^{118}\) Kloss Collection, MS 266 VII a 1, f. 70
information regarding the Conclave from Aleksandr Borisovich Kurakin (1752–1818), one of the most prominent freemasons in Russia in the 1770s and 1780s. In February 1777, Kurakin wrote to Charles, Duke of Sudermanland (1748–1818) regarding Melissino and his Rite, in the midst of a concerted attempt to introduce the Swedish Rite of Freemasonry into Russia. In this letter, Kurakin informs the duke that “the General Melissino has the glory of being the first to introduce Masonic work here”. Besides this intriguing remark, Kurakin reveals that the so-called Invisible Chapter of the Melissino Rite was “composed of more than twenty members”. One of these clerics was evidently Kurakin himself, as he informs the Swedish duke that since he has been received into this Order he has sworn an oath not to reveal its secrets.

Fortunately Kurakin’s reticence to expose the secrets of the Invisible Chapter of the Melissino Rite was a sentiment not shared by Baron Karl von Heyking (1751–1809), a nobleman and eminent freemason from Courland. Heyking was ordained into the Conclave of the Melissino Rite in June 1777. In a rather condescending tone, Heyking narrates how his Masonic credentials were put to the test by Melissino when the pair met for the first time:

I was delighted to meet General Melissino […] I realised that he [was among those] who believed the interior aim of this Order to be the hermetic mysteries, or the philosophers’ stone. To assure myself even more I gave the appearance of grasping this system: he unbuttoned further and asked me: are you a Rosicrucian? – Yes, that is what I am – You know then the genuine hermetic explanation of the three first grades of J and B. M? – Yes, I know: ignis and beata materia!

On the one hand, both Kurakin and Heyking attest to the esteem in which Melissino was held in Petersburg society and within the wider masonic fraternity, yet on the other hand both accounts are scornful of the esoteric dimensions of his Conclave. Thus, Kurakin remarks that “it follows a very complicated system that is filled with errors”. Heyking is more specific (and acerbic) in his description of how the higher degrees “in the system of Melissino […] lead to an

\[119\] On Kurakin’s Masonic career, see, for example, Telepneff 1926, 174–196.

\[120\] Letter from Aleksandr Borisovich Kurakin to Charles, Duke of Sudermanland, 8/19 February, 1777. Russian State Military Archive (RGVA), Moscow, 1414, Opis 1, delo 5300, f. 9.


\[122\] Kurakin to Charles, Duke of Sudermanland, 8/19 February, 1777, RGVA, Moscow, 1414, Opis 1, delo 5300, f. 9.
alchemical process [that is] very obscure to me, but where all the amateurs of retorts and alembics found the true philosophical light and the key of all the secrets of nature”.\(^{123}\)

One such amateur seeker of the secrets of nature, who fully embraced the Illuminist theosophy of the Invisible Chapter, was the aforementioned Corberon. In contrast to Kurakin and Heyking, much of Corberon’s esteem for Melissino and his masonic rite rested on the latter’s self-proclaimed authority as an alchemical adept. Corberon’s Journal also reveals the pivotal role played by a manuscript – the so-called Testament de Mola[yl] – in legitimating the Melissino Rite in the Frenchman’s eyes. Melissino tantalizes Corberon by promoting himself as the custodian of this mysterious manuscript, which, as will be seen, not only drew on Templar mythology connected with Jacques de Molay, the Order’s last Grand Master, but also included the method for transmuting iron into gold, veiled in hieroglyphic symbols, which had been transmitted to Melissino when the German doctor left Moscow. First and foremost, Corberon craves to win the trust of Melissino and to gain initiation into the highest degree of his masonic rite in order to gain privileged access to the alchemical secrets contained within the testament.

The Frenchman arrived in St. Petersburg in January 1776, where he served as secretary to the French Legation until 1777 and then as chargé d’affaires until 1780. During his residence in Petersburg, Corberon made extensive entries in his Journal, which represents an unrivalled source in terms of revealing the absorption of a European nobleman and diplomat in the Illuminist milieu revolving around Melissino. Corberon first refers to Melissino on March 3, 1776, briefly noting that he had visited his lodge, which is “said to have curious knowledge”.\(^{124}\)

On May 1, 1776, Corberon records that he dined with Melissino, who during the meal first revealed to him that he was in possession of an elixir capable of restoring health and youthful vigour.\(^{125}\) By this time, Corberon had already immersed himself in an alchemical and hermetic circle in the Russian capital, which included his close friend Carl Adolph von Brühl (1742–1802), from Saxony, Chevalier Jean Duménil and a cleric named Abbé Pasquini.\(^{126}\) Four days later, Corberon once again dined with Melissino, who revealed more details about how he had come into possession of his alchemical elixir. Evidently Melissino also outlined the general structure of

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\(^{124}\) Marie-Daniel Bourrée, Baron de Corberon, Journal de Marie-Daniel Bourré, chevalier, puis baron de Corberon, de 1775 à 1793, Médiathèque Ceccano, Avignon, MS 3055, 115-6; Corberon 1901, 175.

\(^{125}\) Corberon, Un Diplomate Français, vol. 2, pp. 295, 298.

\(^{126}\) See Corberon, Journal, MS 3055, p. 296. For a brief biography of Duménil, who was governor to a Prince Trubetskoi (most probably Pyotr Sergeevich Trubetskoi (1760–1817)), see Mézin and Rjéoutski 2011, 283. On April 29, 1776, for example, Corberon wrote down a “Ricetta alchimica” by Pasquini, which had been given to him by Brühl. See Journal, MS 3055, p. 269.
his Masonic rite, as Corberon writes that it consists of seven degrees. The Frenchman provides a
cursory summary of the first six degrees, before describing how the last degree consists of twelve
initiates, who dedicate themselves to perfecting the philosophers’ stone. Moreover, Melissino
completes his recruitment drive by promising to confer the sixth degree to Corberon, and,
crucially, to allow the Frenchman to be privy to the Testament de Molay.

True to his word, on May 10, 1776 Melissino showed Corberon the Testament, during a seven-
hour meeting, which the latter described as consisting of a “discourse in German and several
hieroglyphic designs applicable to the hermetic oeuvre”. With his curiosity well and truly piqued,
Corberon proposed to redesign a faulty burner used by Melissino during his alchemical operations.
In return, Melissino agreed to allow Corberon to make a copy of the Testament.127

The Frenchman did not have to wait long before in June 1776 Melissino also officially proposed
him for initiation into the sixth degree of his rite, for the sum of 69 roubles. Moreover, Corberon
records that he was permitted to assist in a réception d’initiés on June 23, 1776 (the Feast Day of
St. John), in which two Russians – “Miateleff et Cacheloff” – were ordained into the Chapter.128
Here Corberon is referring to Pyotr Vasil’evich Miatlev (1756–1833)129 and Rodion Aleksandrovich
Koshelev (1749–1827), the latter of whom would go on to play a pivotal role in promoting
theosophical ideas to Emperor Alexander I in the early nineteenth century.130

An entry in Corberon’s Journal on October 4, 1776 once again refers directly to the Invisible
Chapter, in which, the Frenchman notes that Melissino teaches “initiates about the prima materia
and the different processes it is subjected to in order to complete l’oeuvre”, or in other words the
philosophers’ stone.131 Corberon describes to his brother his pleasure at being promised entry into
this Conclave as he will be able to discover for himself the opinion his brethren have regarding
this “beautiful dream” (belle chimère).132

The Frenchman’s wish was realised in June 1777, when he and von Brühl were initiated into
the exclusive Conclave of the Melissino Rite.133 Thereafter, Corberon continued to be preoccupied
with alchemical experiments. Indeed, one can note a flurry of alchemical activity in the weeks

127 Corberon, Journal, MS 3055, 322–323.
128 Corberon, Journal, MS 3055, 450.
129 On Miatlev’s Masonic career, see Serkov 2001, 571, 954, 966, 977.
130 On Koshelev’s influence on Emperor Alexander I, see Kondakov 2012, 429–449.
133 Corberon, Journal MS 3057, 214.
before his departure for France in the autumn of 1780. In September 1780, for example, as mentioned, Corberon sought to meet “docteur Kerstnz” in Moscow. Furthermore, Prince Fyodor Sergeevich Gagarin (1757–1794), a captain in the Izmailovskii Guards, offered to show Corberon a book, which enabled him to obtain “the true mercury without fire”. In the same month Corberon received a request from Ivan Matveevich Tolstoi (1746–1808), a major in the Preobrazhenskii Guards, to subscribe to the former’s “mytho-hermetic archive”.

In October 1780, on the very eve of his departure, Melissino presented Corberon with his “great manuscript”, or *Le Testament de Mola[y]* and six designs for lodge tracing boards. It would seem Melissino had entrusted Corberon with the authority to promote his Masonic rite in France. This is borne out by subsequent entries in Corberon’s *Journal*. In July 1781, for example, Corberon met with Cardinal de Rohan (1734–1803) in Strasbourg and lent him Melissino’s manuscript. In March 1786 Corberon also lent the Melissino manuscript to Count Angiviller (1726–1820), a leading patron of the arts and personal friend of Louis XVI. Judging by a letter written to von Brühl on July 21, 1787, Corberon remained fascinated by Melissino’s manuscript long after leaving Russia. In this letter, Corberon recounts Melissino’s tale about witnessing the transmutation of lead into gold, which he first heard in St. Petersburg eleven years earlier. It transpires Corberon had been frustrated for many years by being unable to decipher the hieroglyphic symbols in order to reveal the alchemical “grand secret”. However, as he recounts: “It is well, my friend, that Providence has allowed me to find here, without searching, a man who can unveil these emblems.” Corberon then offers von Brühl a tantalizing fragment “in the utmost secrecy”, which reveals that it is necessary to labour for nine months, but that neither metal, coal or fire is necessary.

In the 1780s Corberon became one of the foremost exponents of Illuminism in France, and could be found in the company of Cagliostro and Swedenborgians, as well as being an initiate of Franz Mesmer’s Society of Harmony. The Frenchman was far from being a mere protégé of Melissino, yet, at the same time he remained a loyal promoter of the Russian’s masonic rite throughout this decade. This is highlighted in a letter Corberon wrote to Tadeusz Grabianka

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137 *Recueil de Corberon*, MS 3060, 37–38, March 27, 1786, Médiathèque Ceccano, Avignon.
138 The passage of time may explain why in his letter to von Brühl, from 1787, he refers to Melissino witnessing the transmutation in 1772. See *Recueil de Corberon*, MS 3060, p. 64.
139 Marie-Daniel Bourrée, Baron de Corberon, *Recueil de Corberon*, Médiathèque Ceccano, Avignon MS 3060, 64–64v.
140 On Corberon’s membership in various Illuminist societies in France in the 1780s, see Faivre 1967, 259–287.
(1740–1807) on August 11, 1789, amidst the revolutionary convulsions besetting France. At this time Corberon was hoping to become an initiate of the so-called Illuminés de d'Avignon, a highly esoteric society led by Grabianka and Antoine-Joseph Pernety (1716–1796).

Significantly, Corberon provides in-depth details of his initiation into the 7th degree of the Melissino Rite, as well as the pivotal role played by the Testament. Indeed, Corberon notes that the manuscript consists of a “hieroglyphic script in 17 folio sheets, of which 14 are figures, and the rest in German”. Moreover, the Frenchman recounts the story of how Melissino witnessed the transmutation of gold and was able to secure the recipe from a German doctor in Moscow, as well as the fact that he had been permitted to make a copy. In other words, without too much subtlety Corberon is staking his claim as a worthy candidate for the Illuminés, based on his links to Melissino and his possession of a copy of the Testament de Molay. Corberon also attempts to portray a sense of loyalty by asking Grabianka whether his “gratitude towards Melissino” did not give him “the duty to write to him in order to procure your correspondence, and the advantages that belong to it”. These ‘advantages’ apparently go “well beyond that of transmutation etc”. In other words, whilst Corberon openly acknowledges his indebtedness to Melissino, he also flatters Grabianka by emphasizing how the Illuminés d’Avignon was much more than merely a society of alchemical adepts. By this time Corberon had embraced millenarianism, with alchemy assuming a lesser role in his worldview. However, throughout much of the 1780s, as is apparent, Corberon continued to extoll Melissino and his Testament among many of his illuminist peers in France.

Conclusion

A variety of terms have been coined in the past forty years – “occult underground”, “the mystical international” and “the super-enlightenment” – in order to try and encapsulate the spirit of Illuminism as it flourished in (predominantly) aristocratic initiatic societies across Europe at the close of the eighteenth century. In a sense, all of these terms could be applied to the Melissino Rite, yet each is also insufficient to grasp the complex dynamic of the masonic system as it was practiced in St. Petersburg. One could, for example, highlight the secretive nature of the Conclave

141 Recueil de Corberon, MS 3060, 95–96.
142 For a brief introductory essay on the Illuminés d’Avignon, as well as a bibliography, see Snoek 2006, 597–600.
143 Recueil de Corberon, MS 3060, 95v.
144 Recueil de Corberon, MS 3060, 96.
145 See Webb 1974, respectively.
as an anti-establishment association that concealed itself from the Enlightened glare of Catherine II's Russia. Yet, Melissino was clearly horrified – as is demonstrated by his letter to his fellow brethren in May 1782 – at the thought of his lodge being perceived as (let alone actually) working against the interests of the Russian sovereign.

The Melissino Rite also acted as a formative crucible in St. Petersburg for both Russian and European noblemen to ferment their Illuminist worldviews. Known members of the seventh degree alone included initiates from Saxony (von Brühl), France (Corberon), Courland (von Heyking) and Russia (A. B. Kurakin, Koshelev and Miatlev), many of whom went on to play leading roles in pan-European Masonic networks and in the transmission of esoteric ideas.

In many respects, it is also possible to view Melissino as a “super-enlightenment” figure, that is, someone who was at one-and-the-same-time a philosophe and an illuminé, in which it is hard to draw a line in the sand. Yet, this ignores Melissino’s evident awareness of the contradictions between his public role as a loyal servant and learned scientific authority, and his espousal of an Illuminist vision that chose a select few to seek divine wisdom and power. In the spring of 1782 Melissino felt compelled to make a concrete choice between either loyalty to the Empress and state, or to his masonic system. In an age of adversity, Melissino chose to sail with the wind, yet he left behind an Illuminist legacy and vision that was influential in Russia and, arguably, across Europe.

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Simon Vorontsov and the Ochakov Crisis of 1791

Alexander Woronzoff-Dashkoff

By his own admission, Simon Vorontsov (Woronzow or Woronzoff, 1744–1832) was ill-suited and unprepared for diplomatic service, yet for over twenty years (1784–1806) he served as Russia’s Minister to the Court of St. James’s. He is now widely considered to be one of Catherine II’s greatest and most innovative diplomats. Because of his determined and independent spirit, he averted a war between Britain and Russia during the Ochakov crisis of 1791 by adapting the methods of the so-called ‘new diplomacy’. Rather than seeking mediation and mutual understanding, he collaborated with the opposition and initiated a vigorous public opinion campaign in the press and through the publication of pamphlets and anonymous articles. He thereby supported Charles Fox, challenged William Pitt and, in the end, emerged victorious.

The streets of major European capitals do not as a rule bear the names of Russian diplomats. Yet the map of the City of Westminster, England, an inner borough of central London, includes Woronzow Road, named after Count Simon Vorontsov (Woronzow or Woronzoff, 1744–1832), Russia’s Minister to the Court of St. James’s. Although he considered himself ill-suited for service in the diplomatic corps, he held the ambassadorship for over twenty years (1784–1806) and is one of the most highly respected and influential figures in the history of eighteenth-century Anglo-Russian relations. Seemingly a man of many contradictions, he has been portrayed as “noble, proud, cultured, steadfast, patriotic, arrogant, domineering, irascible”.1 Vorontsov, by his own admission, was a hothead and his fiery temperament impeded his career both at the Court of Catherine the Great and in the military.

Born into wealth and privilege, he always considered himself to be an outsider. Early on, he was expected to direct the family’s business interests in Russia, but chose to live mostly abroad. From childhood he dreamed of military glory, but was disillusioned. To all appearances his career had come

1 Cross 1992, 709–710.
to an end when he retired early and found himself alone and forgotten, a discarded soldier living on his estate. Yet Catherine did not want this proud and inflexible enemy of her reign to be near at hand, and accordingly, sent him abroad to serve in honorific exile as her ambassador. Vorontsov confessed his insecurity and unpreparedness when he embarked on a career he knew nothing about. He characterized himself as “a former soldier, a person, against his will and very late in life, at an advanced age without any preparatory training, cast into a career completely alien to his tastes and habits. In short, a political novice serving his apprenticeship in the forty-third year of his life.”

Indeed, his undiplomatic character seemed to argue against his appointments to the missions in Venice and later London. Ironically, it was his lack of diplomacy, as well as his forceful and unbending attitude, that provides us with an early case study of the ‘new diplomacy’. This diplomacy was emphatically demonstrated during the Ochakov crisis when he supported Charles Fox and the opposition, with the Russian mission in London working overtime to sway public opinion.

In his study, *A History of Diplomacy*, Jeremy Black traces the transition after the French Revolution to a more aggressive and confrontational diplomacy. The emphasis on the creation of a sense of mutual understanding during the *ancien régime* was gradually replaced by attempts to influence policy through a reaching out to people rather than governments. As an early example, he cites Simon Vorontsov’s press campaign against the British government’s policy, when he stirred up “a popular outcry that would block ministerial schemes” to intimidate Russia during the Ochakov crisis of 1791. The diplomatic conflict, often referred to as the Ochakov crisis, was brought about by Russia’s categorical rejection of the Triple Alliance’s stipulations of April 1790. These would have ended the Second Turkish War and returned to the Turks the Danubian city and fort of Ochakov, captured in December 1788, a number of additional forts, as well as the territory between the rivers Bug and Dniester. Russia refused to come to an agreement on the basis of a *status quo ante bellum*. It was in Catherine’s interests to pursue a consistently hostile and bellicose policy towards Turkey. There was no reason for her to make peace, since the more territory she occupied the more advantageous her hand would be when it came to presenting her terms for peace in the future.

William Pitt, on the other hand, was bound by the existing commitments of a diplomatic alliance. He feared that Russian expansion in the south, the defeat of the Ottoman Empire and the fall of Constantinople to the Russians would dangerously alter the balance of power in the East. If Russia

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2 Bartenev 1870–1897, 2. Hereafter abbreviated as AKV and cited parenthetically in the text. All translations are my own.
3 Black 2010, 137.
5 Ayling 1966, 358.
became too powerful in the eastern Mediterranean, this could do great harm to British commercial interests in the area and have an adverse effect on existing trade routes. He felt that Ochakov represented the British Empire's valuable interests. The Ochakov crisis can therefore be seen as the primary event that focused Britain's attention on the 'Eastern Question', broadened its diplomatic horizon beyond Eastern Europe and raised fears of Russian expansionism. Moreover, it nearly led to a full-scale armed conflict, whilst Vorontsov’s vigorous response, encouragement of parliamentary opposition and manipulation of public opinion would establish his reputation as one of the greatest and most innovative diplomats of the eighteenth century.

In December 1790, the Anglo-Prussian alliance reiterated its demands for the restitution of all losses to Turkey, but once again Catherine refused to capitulate. In order to force Russia to make peace with the Porte, in March 1791, Pitt sent Catherine his final ultimatum, which was however to be withdrawn in less than a month. Resolved to arm the fleet for action against Russia in the Baltic and in the Black Sea, he ordered the preparation of a naval force more formidable than Nelson’s at Trafalgar. According to Vorontsov, it consisted of 36 ships of the line, of which 8 were three-deckers, 12 frigates and just as many brigs and cutters. The British Cabinet, however, was divided. From the start, Lord Grenville, the Home Secretary and soon to be Foreign Secretary, opposed the armament of the special fleet and any commitments to intervention in the region. He was joined by Lord Stafford and the Duke of Richmond, who felt that nothing could be gained from going to war over a town on the Black Sea that few had heard of.

As he witnessed the likely end of his efforts to normalize Anglo-Russian relations, Vorontsov could not believe that Pitt would engage in such an extreme policy and jeopardize Britain's lucrative trade with Russia for such an insignificant cause. After all, Pitt had avowed Britain's 'perfect neutrality', but instead of acting on this assurance, he was now preparing the fleet to fight Russia. On March 7/18 Vorontsov wrote, “In a word, I am completely convinced that with his wisdom and sense of justice the King of England would never allow such measures to be undertaken”. Four days later he reacted in utter disbelief. “How can the Ministry take such unprofitable and indefensible measures in full view of the people?” Pitt’s policy ran contrary to

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8 AKV, VIII, 19; Sokolov 2002, 12.
10 AKV, IX, 184.
11 Cunningham 1965, 212–213.
12 Here and hereafter the first date is in the ‘Old style’, used then in Russia, the second is in the ‘New’ one, used in Europe.
13 AKV, IX, 184, 186.
British interests, endangered his Ministry and had an adverse effect on his popularity. Vorontsov was deeply disappointed with the man he had once praised so highly as a shrewd and skillful politician. On several occasions Vorontsov met Pitt urging him to reconsider what he deemed to be a war that would be equally ruinous for both sides. But, as Vorontsov recounts in his autobiography, Pitt was evasive, replied with empty phrases and, despite his debating skills, could not give a good reason for his course of action.

Vorontsov then turned to the Duke of Leeds, the Foreign Secretary, only to find that he sided with Pitt and advocated a firm attitude toward Russia. Vorontsov’s reply was characteristically unequivocal and pointed,

Since, as I see it, the Ministry is blindly ready to persist — under the pretext of saving Ochakov for the Turks, which is of no consequence to England — in the continuation of an unjust war, damaging to both countries, it is my duty to bring this evil to an end. You can of course expect to carry the majority in both houses. But I have come to know this country well enough to understand that the Ministry and the Parliament itself are powerless to govern without the support of the lords and independent, propertied individuals. Therefore, I announce to you, monsieur le duc, that I will make every effort possible to inform the nation of your intentions that are so incompatible with its interests. I admire too highly the good sense of the English people not to rely on the outcry of public opinion that will compel you to abandon this unjust enterprise.

Vorontsov would make good on his promise and would continue to maintain an uncompromising attitude. He later learned that his adamant opposition was contrary to Potemkin’s views and corresponded to Catherine’s, who purportedly stated that only Vorontsov and she were of one mind.

On March 29, an extensive debate ensued in both houses, with many members condemning the cabinet outright for its lack of information and obstinate silence on a matter of such gravity. While the Ministry’s resolution passed, the strength and extent of the opposition astounded Pitt. Even William Wilberforce could not support his good friend and abstained. Vorontsov wrote that Pitt was surprised that despite carrying a majority in Parliament, the opposition to his Ministry suddenly was strengthened by a hundred votes when compared to a previous count, and he was subjected to the vigorous attacks of many speakers. He noticed that several of his friends exited the chamber in order not to vote and speak against

15 AKV, VIII, 20.
16 AKV, VIII, 22.
him. He was quite disturbed and the next day he was further disconcerted when he saw that the number of opponents had grown and despite maintaining a majority in Parliament for now, he may possibly lose it.\(^7\)

In fact, Earl Fitzwilliam had argued in the House of Lords that the underlying motivation for the resolution was unclear, since Russia’s actions did not present an obvious danger to England, even if the Empress did maintain control of Ochakov and the fort of Akkerman. Lord Porchester warned of the financial consequences, pledging to oppose the resolution in whatever form it might come before the House, and Lord Carlyle emphasized diplomatic and historical factors in the initiation of hostile actions against a natural ally. Wryly peering into the future, Lord Loughborough wondered about military objectives. After the entry of the British fleet into the Baltic, would the Prussian army then march into St. Petersburg, and after that into Moscow?\(^8\)

Debate in the House of Commons mirrored many of the concerns and arguments expressed in the upper house. Pitt opened the session by calling for the passing of the resolution, since all efforts to achieve a peaceful accord between Russia and Turkey had failed. In order to maintain a balance of power in the East and to protect vital British interests in the area, armament of the fleet was essential. Members of the House, however, were critical of Pitt’s measures. Lord Wycombe emphasized the destructive effects war would have on Great Britain. In the opinion of Mr. Coke of Norfolk, the Prime Minister had not presented arguments or documents in support of claims that would now add to the heavy tax burden of his constituents. Indeed, Mr. Lambton argued that Russia had not offended or provoked Britain in any way. “But what insult had we received from Russia? Has she attempted to fix a stain upon our honour? Had she invaded the territories of the British crown, or committed degradations upon the trade and property of its subjects? Nothing of this had she done; and yet we were going to make war upon her.”\(^9\) Edmund Burke also rose in disapproval “to make a few observations upon what he considered to be the most extraordinary event that had passed that House since he had the honour to sit in it”. Turkey, in his opinion, was irrelevant to the European balance of power and he wholly condemned the resolution.\(^20\)

The most eloquent speaker for the opposition was Charles Fox. Capable of producing stirring rhetoric, his oratorical skills and wit, as well as his expertise in political and economic matters, were on full display. Undeniably, he would have an advantage in the debates thanks to information

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17. AKV, VIII, 21.
18. Cobbett 1817, cols. 34–43. <www2.odl.ox.ac.uk/gsdl/cgi-bin/library>. References to online sources are accurate as of 24 October 2011; Sokolov 2002, 15.
20. Ibid., cols. 75–76.
supplied by Vorontsov. By way of an introduction he stated straightaway that “the present measure, if possible, exceeded his disapprobation” and that Pitt’s address reminded him of a play that had been pronounced well done, for it was “finely confused and very alarming”.\(^\text{21}\) He then criticized the Ministry at length for over-extending itself and for its intrusion into a far-away area of the world that it did not have the military resources to sustain. He argued that it would be reckless to risk war over a single, distant town of insignificant strategic importance, and pointed out that Russia had clashed with Turkey for at least twenty years without alarming the British government regarding any advantages Russia was gaining in the Black Sea. Fox made a point of it to stress that intervention without justification and without well-defined threats to British interests was ill-advised. In his concluding remarks he explained that “in the system of alliance which he had devised, he had always reckoned upon Russia. . . . If such an alliance was practicable, it would indeed secure the peace of this country, without making that power our enemy whose friendship it is our interest in the most particular manner to cultivate”.\(^\text{22}\)

The same day in a letter to his brother Aleksandr, Vorontsov expressed his great pleasure with Fox’s performance.

Mr. Fox spoke like an angel. He affirmed that the odious Armed Neutrality which has been held against Russia for so long was the work of the Court of Berlin. . . . He demonstrated the justice of the Empress’s cause in this war, the importance of our [Russia’s] ties with England, and in the end, he convinced many of Pitt’s friends to speak in support of Mr. Fox’s ideas. The Ministry carried the majority, but the galleries, for the most part consisting of the public, were opposed to the government’s measures. This affair is vastly unpopular; Mr. Pitt was obliged to say that it would not lead to war, and he did not breath a word about the Baltic.\(^\text{23}\)

Vorontsov had assured Leeds that he would alert the nation to this unjust enterprise, and he was true to his word. “I visited the leaders of the opposition”, he wrote in his autobiography, “and even more effectively, a few members of the lower house, whose independent and honest character was respected by the Ministry and the opposition and who enjoyed the universal esteem of the nation to such a degree that their votes would determine the rightness and usefulness of many issues. I explained to them the injustice of the proposed measures, the enormous expenditures

\(^{21}\) Ibid., col. 62.  
\(^{22}\) Ibid., col. 67.  
\(^{23}\) AKV, IX, 190.
they would incur, and the harm of terminating trade with Russia, which is so essential for England. They promised me their support”.24

During his confrontation with Pitt and the Ministry, Vorontsov made full use of his contacts in Parliament, among the opposition and in the press. He convinced many of his friends and newfound allies to recruit other members of Parliament and to explain to them the foolhardiness of the Ministry’s resolution. Although he had avoided Fox in the past, Vorontsov now consulted him on several occasions. Fox assured him that the war was unpopular and that Pitt would rather retreat from his position than lose power.25 By now, public meetings were being held and petitions written up in Norwich, Manchester, Yorkshire, Leeds and Wakefield, and in other cities that were sure to follow.26

Among his most ardent supporters, Vorontsov singled out three of his agents: Nathaniel Dimsdale, Mr. Jackson and John Paradise. The first, Nathaniel Dimsdale, was the son of Thomas Dimsdale, the physician who had inoculated the Empress against smallpox. Like his father, he too travelled to Russia and inoculated Catherine’s grandsons Alexander and Constantine. In 1790, he was elected to Parliament for the borough of Hertford27 Devoted to Pitt, during the Ochakov crisis he nevertheless sided with Vorontsov, influenced others to do the same and sounded the alarm concerning the loss of trade and the imposition of new taxes.28 The second, Mr. Jackson, was an English merchant who helped rouse commercial interests against Pitt’s policies. Vorontsov was deeply indebted to his wholehearted allegiance.

I cannot thank this man [Jackson] enough for taking up our interests with such zeal that it was he who goaded the indolent Russian Company to go and discuss this matter with the Duke of Leeds and Mr. Pitt. It is he who stirred up the stock exchange, who disseminated new articles in the newspaper, and every day attracted new proselytes to our cause.29

The third, Vorontsov’s friend John Paradise, a naturalized American who had married an heiress from Williamsburg, Virginia, was perhaps the most uncommon and colourful agent in Vorontsov’s eclectic circle of subordinates at the embassy. He prized him for his ‘vigorous’ writing

24 AKV, XVIII, 20–21.
25 AKV, XXXIV, 466–467.
26 AKV, IX, 192; VIII, 22.
28 AKV, XXXIV, 468.
29 AKV, XXXIV, 468.
style and his motley array of friends and acquaintances in the world of arts, letters, politics and the social swirl. Vorontsov would make full use of his talents and connections.

Not content to sit back and rely solely on the active efforts of others, from March to June, Vorontsov forcefully took his campaign directly to the people outside the walls of Parliament. The Russian Company was enlisted to participate in the campaign and to promulgate the idea that war would be ruinous to English commercial interests. In London, anti-war graffiti appeared on the walls of buildings and may have been the handiwork of the Russian Embassy. Vorontsov ordered his staff to prepare press releases emphasizing the folly of Pitt’s policies and to publish pamphlets exposing the politics of the Ministry. He and his staff worked tirelessly round the clock writing and distributing pamphlets and anonymous articles that daily appeared in over twenty newspapers.

The most interesting and persuasive materials advancing the Embassy’s views were presented in the pamphlet *Serious Enquiries into the Motives and Consequences of our present Armament against Russia*. Monsieur Joly, Vorontsov’s private secretary, composed the essay in French based on writings and resources prepared by Vorontsov, and John Paradise ably translated it into English. The pamphlet cost approximately £140–£150, a sum deposited in a secret account so as not to compromise Vorontsov.

The essay defended Russia against charges of expansionism during the Russian-Turkish war and claimed that Turkey, with the encouragement of Berlin and London, was the aggressor. Pitt’s plea for the maintenance of a balance of power in Europe was dismissed as an argument without substance. In fact, throughout the eighteenth-century, Anglo-Russian relations were characterized by a spirit of cooperation based on the belief that they were natural allies. And if misunderstandings arose, they were due to the intervention and ill will of foreign powers. In his translation, Paradise endeavoured to eliminate all suspicion that the pamphlet emanated from the Russian Legation. He made it seem, Vorontsov explained to his brother, that the pamphlet was written by an Englishman, who “does not approve of Armed Neutrality, but somehow seems to justify it all the same. Russia’s commercial relations with England are set out quite clearly; the extension of trade with Poland is proved to be chimerical. As for Prussia, she is treated

30 AKV, XXXIV, 470.
31 AKV, VIII, 22.
33 AKV, XXXIV, 470, AKV, IX, 495.
according to her deserts but without sourness.” The pamphlet was widely disseminated and on April, 10, 1792, Gouverneur Morris, Vorontsov’s friend, Founding Father, US diplomatic agent in London (1790–1791) and Minister to France (1792–1794), sent a copy to Thomas Jefferson. In an accompanying letter Morris appears to be referring to Vorontsov: “You will find enclosed a pamphlet which was published here on occasion of the late armament against Russia. It was written under the inspection of a person to whom the facts were all familiarly known.”

The extent of popular disapproval and dissent was such that by the end of March it was clear that Pitt would be required to moderate his position. The debates in Parliament continued, but, by the middle of April, the majority was persuaded that Fox was right and that Pitt had committed a major blunder. The ultimatum to Russia was withdrawn. Leeds gave up the seals of the Foreign Office in protest and was replaced by Grenville. In May, William Fawkener was dispatched to St. Petersburg to seek a peaceful solution. Vorontsov supplied him with a letter of recommendation to his brother, but Fawkener felt that he was badly received. Vorontsov also recommended Foxe’s friend, Robert Adair, to his brother, Bezborodko, and Potemkin. In fact, Grenville was convinced that Vorontsov had advised to employ Adair as Foxe’s envoy to the Empress. Adair was the author of a pamphlet opposed to Pitt’s policies, Inquiries into the Prospect of a War and into the Conduct of His Majesty’s Ministers, which Vorontsov had translated into Russian and dispatched to St. Petersburg. According to Vorontsov, Fox dictated its contents to his young friend. Catherine celebrated Adair’s arrival, and it seems likely that he conspired to undermine Fawkener’s official mission. His correspondences, in cipher, with Fox led to suspicions of his duplicity, lack of loyalty to his country and his acting as Catherine’s agent.

In an effort to intimidate Russia, Pitt prolonged the armament of the fleet until July 1791. But Vorontsov was not ready to retreat, and in his letters to his brother throughout 1791, he makes it clear that the crisis would be over only when the English fleet was ordered to disarm. By July 2/13 he could boast that “I have judged too highly the good sense and acumen of Mr. Pitt; but I believe that I have understood well the character of the English people. When imprudently and

36 Humphreys 1969, 183.
37 Vorontsov cites the title in French as Recherches sur l’approche de la guerre et sur la conduite des ministres de S. M.
38 AKV, IX, 196.
40 AKV, IX, 188, 190.
against the best interests of his party he strove to drag his nation into a politically unsupported and dangerous war, was he successful?”.41

Pitt survived the challenge and remained in office; nonetheless, it was perhaps the moment of his greatest political mortification. The Ochakov crisis marked the first serious check to Pitt’s foreign policy, for he had failed to make his case in a determined and convincing manner. Fox’s reputation was enhanced among his peers during this complex controversy. He had achieved one of his most satisfying victories, and the Ochakov crisis presented him with the opportunity to bring discredit upon the government and to humiliate Pitt.42 Catherine was greatly pleased with Fox and other triumphant members of the opposition who had lead it to victory over the Ministry. “I charge you,” she wrote Vorontsov, “to say to my old friends in England, in particular the Dukes of Portland and Devonshire and Mr. Fox that it is with great pleasure I observe them fight with force and vigour for the causes of reason and justice. My good feelings of the past for the English nation have been revived...!”43 Fox was especially flattered to learn that the Russian Empress commemorated his oratory skills by placing his bust, which Vorontsov had acquired for her from Earl Fitzwilliam, in the Cameron gallery at Tsarskoe Selo, between two of the greatest statesmen and orators of the ancient world, Demosthenes and Cicero.44

Catherine would have the upper hand in February 1792 at the Treaty of Jassy, which primarily reaffirmed Russian control of the Crimea and forced Turkey to cede Ochakov and the Black Sea coast between the Bug and the Dniester. Russia thereby gained a foothold on the Black Sea establishing itself as the dominant power in the region. Vorontsov played a central role in Russia’s diplomatic victory.45 His greatest contribution was the ability to influence public opinion and to exploit it in Russia’s favour. In so doing, he demonstrated what a representative of a foreign government could achieve by rousing the public against the domestic affairs of its country.

Catherine was delighted with her Minister’s accomplishments in London, and Zavadovskii confirmed her approval. “In a word, I will tell you that the Empress is extremely pleased with your service”.46 In her imperial rescript she showered him with compliments and rewarded him generously. He received the Order of St. Vladimir, 1st class, and a salary increase of 6,000 rubles annually.47 Yet Vorontsov firmly believed that her largess should also extend to the embassy staff:

41 Ibid., 201.
42 AKV, 1X, 190.
43 AKV, XXVIII, 116.
44 AKV, XVI, 236–237; XXVIII, 117.
45 Brikner 1887, October, 471–537, November, 1-65; Sokolov 2002, 4.
46 AKV, XII, 67.
47 AKV, XXVIII, 118–119.
Vasilii Lizakevich, Father Yakov Smirnov, his secretary Joly and John Paradise.  

Minimizing his own contribution, he wrote that it was easier for him to issue orders to his staff than it was to execute them. For five months they had worked feverishly distributing and “composing various paragraphs for newspapers and journals, composing pamphlets, and translating from English into French and from French into English”.

His staff was awarded lump sums of £600 for Lizakevich and £200 for Smirnov and Joly, substantial sums for their time. For the financially strapped Paradise, whose property in Virginia was “overrun by friendly and hostile armies” during the American Revolution, Vorontsov requested an annual pension of £150 to £200 in view of his unquestionable utility to the service of Her Imperial Majesty and because the Empress “could never have either a better pen or a more zealous man”. On July 2/13, 1791, Vorontsov informed his brother that in a month’s time he intended to forward £150 to Paradise “when all possible suspicions about his part in our pamphlet will have been forgotten”. It can be assumed that Paradise received his pension until his death in 1794, for he continued to assist Vorontsov in the surveillance of French revolutionaries. Paradise was deeply thankful to Vorontsov and in his will named him, as well as Thomas Jefferson and others, among the legatees who each received £16 to purchase mourning rings.

Vorontsov dispatched official letters of gratitude to Catherine for the favours she had bestowed on him and his subordinates. Full of high sentence and prescribed sentiments, he extolled her as the most magnanimous, indulgent, gracious, extraordinarily modest, and wisely determined monarch. In the final instance, when he wrote about her determination, his feelings were seemingly heartfelt. Vorontsov was rarely glib or insincere, and in his correspondence he was mostly tough but courteous, pointed but gracious. In a letter to Bezborodko, dated August 8/19, 1791, Vorontsov explained that “determination is the primary quality in a person; reason and knowledge are meaningless without it”, and that he was genuinely impressed by Catherine’s determination and lack of cruelty.

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49 AKV, IX, 487–488.
51 AKV, XXXIV, 470, 472.
52 AKV, IX, 200–201.
54 Ibid, 375; Historical and Genealogical Notes 1897, 58, <files.usgwarchives.net/va/schools/wmmary/notes0003.txt>.
56 AKV, XXVIII, 567–568, IX, 368–369.
57 AKV, IX, 486–487.
Years later, in his autobiographical letters to Rostopchin, Vorontsov was to express his deep, privately held feelings. Once again, as had been the case in the military, Vorontsov was not pleased and felt that Catherine had slighted him. He already wore the Order of St. Alexander Nevskii, which was superior and more prestigious than the Order of St Vladimir, and Ivan Simolin in Paris received an identical sum of money, even though he was wealthier, did not have a family, and life was cheaper in Paris.\textsuperscript{58} Despite his personal dissatisfaction, Vorontsov was justifiably celebrated and respected, although not necessarily liked, at the Russian and English Courts. Vorontsov had reached the apogee of his diplomatic career as he enjoyed the approbation due him for his actions in 1791. He had challenged Pitt and emerged victorious.

To a large extent Pitt placed the blame for his political reversal on Vorontsov, who was now his opponent, and he would make every effort to free himself of this meddlesome diplomat.\textsuperscript{59} Vorontsov was well aware of Pitt’s enmity and his intention to be rid of him.

Mr. Pitt has told several persons, and to a few it seems with the intention I find out about it, that he is very dissatisfied with me, because he is certain that I communicated a great deal of information to Mr. Fox and other members of the opposition. He spoke of me with great bitterness and concluded with these remarkably insolent words: “It was once possible to have this gentleman’s brother [Aleksandr, former ambassador to London] recalled from here, and we know exactly how to do the same to him”.\textsuperscript{60}

Gouverneur Morris, with whom Vorontsov often dined, considered Vorontsov to be “a sensible, well-informed man” but felt that he “will never stand well at this Court, because Pitt will not forgive him for foiling his attempts in the Russian armament”.\textsuperscript{61} In his report of April 1792 to George Washington, Morris described the Ministry’s reprisals against Vorontsov:

\begin{itemize}
\item every art was used to coax Count Wranzow [Woronzow] into a conduct which might subserve Mr. Pitt’s views.
\item But the firm Russian was too wise and too honest to become either creature or dupe. They then attempted to bully him as well as his Mistress [Mary Becklebek], and he treated both with contempt. The consequence of this conduct was the complete success of his sovereign; and Mr. Pitt, finding him too well fixed at his own Court to be shaken by his intrigues, has again had recourse to a complimentary and apologetical conduct.\textsuperscript{62}
\end{itemize}
Morris’s observations were to the point, since Catherine was far too pleased with Vorontsov’s management of the Ochakov crisis to have him recalled.

Despite efforts to mask his innate petulance and intransigence, Vorontsov was furious with Pitt’s conduct. The Prime Minister’s anti-Russian stance and personal attacks permanently altered Vorontsov’s opinion of him. The admiration he had once felt for Pitt as a leader and statesmen was transformed into overt disdain for a mere politician. On July 2/13, 1791, Vorontsov explained that he had “judged too favourably Mr. Pitt’s good sense and intelligence”, and a year later he wrote, “As for the conduct of Mr. Pitt, that great balancer of equilibrium in Europe, the policy he pursued for his country is the epitome of imbecility and ignorance. There is a vast difference between a weaver of elegant phrases and a great statesman”.63 No longer just an adversary, Pitt was his enemy, and Vorontsov would do everything possible to undermine his government.

He stressed, however, that he was not opposed to the people of England, “for they have shown us clearly that they support us heart and soul . . . but the Ministers, or especially the [Prime] Minister [Pitt]”.64 Only the excesses of revolutionary France would eventually lead to Vorontsov breaking with Fox and his reconciliation with Pitt.65 But by the end of 1791 the political landscape had changed in Europe and at the Russian Court. Potemkin died and was replaced by the youthful Platon Zubov, whom Vorontsov detested. His brother would ‘retire’ from the presidency of the Commerce Collegium in response to the arrest of his protégé, Aleksandr Radishchev. Vorontsov suffered isolation and loss of influence, but, ever the outsider, at the end of his career and in retirement he would travel to Russia only once for a short visit. He died in London in 1832 and was buried in St. Marylebone Parish Church.66

References


63 AKV, IX, 201, 497.
64 AKV, IX, 226–227.
65 See also Vorontsov’s biographical sketch, “Précis historique sur la conduite politique et privée de m-r Pitt, accompagné de quelques observations sur nos rapports avec quelques-unes des principales puissances de l’Europe” (AKV, XV, 453–480).
66 In 1983, to make room for a Healing and Counselling Centre in Marylebone, his remains were transferred to an unmarked grave in Brookwood Cemetery, Surrey.


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The Idea of History in Russia and Walter Scott’s Historical Narratives

Tatiana V. Artemyeva and Mikhail I. Mikeshin

History in Russia in the Enlightenment was represented not only by academic research, but by the series of literary works. They created a space of public history and satisfies the need for historical knowledge for those who could not or did not want to study serious scholarly works. They searched for cultural clichés, patterns, and metaphors to mold their historical images, schemes, and explanations. Walter Scott’s novels made an immediate impact on Russian society because it had been already prepared for such literature. In Scott’s historical novel there was a beneficial synthesis of simplicity and professionalism, out-of-body-ness of historical patterns and obviousness of moral lessons. The form was one in which history could bring about its true predestination, that is, to form the soul and the heart. Scott’s representation of the ordinary man in the background of large-scale historical events had no influence upon Russian historiography that continued to describe only events of a grand ‘state scale’, but survived in literature, which, for three centuries, developed both the philosophy of history and philosophical anthropology. Scott became for Russia one of those authors who summed up the quest of the Enlightenment and brought a special type of art history discourse into the world. Russian historians continue to point to the enduring quality of interpreting history through fiction. This results in political and moral values dominating historical discourse.

Walter Scott’s novels are well known in Russia. His reputation has its history: however, the vast bibliography about it deals mostly with his literary influence, the theoretical implications of which are only roughly outlined.

There are some explanatory models for cultural influence, the most obvious of which is ‘the theory of cultural distribution’. It maintains that cultural spaces that have come into contact with each other should become in some sense homogeneous communicating vessels. Thus a phenomenon emerging in one culture immediately penetrates into another and puts down roots in it, and the adoption of a cultural innovation is considered in terms of the impact of the active culture upon the passive one. This
model is irrelevant to spheres of literature, arts and philosophy, because it cannot answer questions of specificity. It cannot explain whether the source of Walter Scott’s popularity in Russia was an interest in British or Scottish culture (it logically follows from the contents of his novels), or was an outcome of the particular interest in French culture and its fashionable currents given that the first acquaintance with Scott and the first translations of his works were connected with the French language. “It took the resounding success of Walter Scott’s novels in France, where every new novel by ‘the author of Waverley’ was quickly translated into French and greeted with boundless enthusiasm, to make Russian society turn to his novels. It was only in the mid-1820s that Walter Scott’s novels began to be published as individual volumes in Russian. All these translations were made from Defauconpret’s French versions, and it was precisely this French Scott (either in French or translated from French) who for many years became a favourite author of Russian readers”.\(^1\) By the end of this decade all his novels had been translated into Russian and republished several times.\(^2\) Did this popularity limit itself to the genre peculiarities of Scott’s novels or were his ideas of interest?

Scott’s novels made an immediate impact on Russian society, and continued to do so, with his collected works being published well into Soviet and post-Soviet times. This interest was not, of course, evoked by an attention to Scottish history proper or to Scotland. The interest in British culture and particularly the identification of Scottish culture as ‘special’, different from English, were specific to a small group within the intellectual elite. And while Scottish historical and philosophical thought was appealing to some Russian thinkers, it permeated into the country in minute portions and often was not distinguished from ideas from England. The form of the novel was in any case attractive to the Russian reader, though it was a relatively new way to express historical consciousness. Thinkers of that time experimented quite a lot with the forms and genres of historical narratives. It is possible to say that the entire 18th century was searching for such a form, because historical consciousness had become an important constituent of ideology and probably the only kind of social epistemology, except for utopia. Learned (or pseudo-learned) and theatrical dramatic narratives prevailed before Scott. The novel was considered too ‘low’ a genre, inadequate for depicting Russia’s glorious past. Besides, the question of the relationship between the form, the style of narrative and historical authenticity was not quite settled. Nikolai M. Karamzin (1766–1826) believed that the level of artistic merit depended

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\(^1\) Altshuller 2006, 207
\(^2\) Levin 1975, 6. A list of Russian translations of W. Scott’s literary works published in Russia in the first half of the nineteenth century is attached as the Addendum. The dynamics of publications is worth mentioning: their number reaches its first maximum between 1821 and 1836 (the first publications), the next revival is between 1844 and 1858 (mostly reprints), and the last growth from 1864 on is defined mainly by special editions for youngsters.
upon the historical distance involved. He wrote about ‘three sorts of history’: contemporary to
an author, distant from him, but with witnesses still alive, and ancient, founded exclusively on
studies of documents. The eminent Russian historian formulated a curious paradox: the level
of narrative subjectivity could rise as one came closer to modernity, but not vice versa. The ban
against artful imagination could deprive the historical narrative of bright colors and fascination.
Karamzin himself complained that “instead of alive, whole images he presented only shadows”,
(Karamzin 2003, 34) all these should be sacrificed for the sake of authenticity.

It was not by chance that this problem was raised by Karamzin, himself a historian and
eminent writer, who felt a certain unity and contradiction between the historical narrative and
artistic story. The writer, well known for his gift of penetrating into the souls of his characters
understood, how great a temptation it was to conjecture a historical image. Karamzin never
ascribed to the characters of his Istoriya gosudarstva rossiiskogo (A History of the Russian State)
any actions against their nature. He nevertheless believed that historical collisions “greatly affect
the imagination and heart” and tried to depict his characters’ emotional world in order not to
spoil authenticity, but on the contrary, to actualize historical events. His characters ‘with horror’,
‘with a heavy sigh’ or ‘in joy and delight of the heart’.3

Ivan P. Elagin (1725–1793) remarked: “We see many writers who shine with learned beauties,
but their constrained learned style is a torment for the reader and a disgrace for the learned.”4
Mikhail M. Shcherbatov’s (1733–1790) Istoriya rossiiskaya ot drevneishikh vremen (A Russian
History from Ancient Times) became one of the most important sources for Karamzin, but was
never used by Russian writers who worked in the genre of the historical novel. Shcherbatov bases his
account exclusively upon political expediency, and denounces or does not recognize as necessary
other motifs of conduct, psychological affects, and the ‘fateful’ concourse of circumstances.

Karamzin unintentionally attaches importance to the language and style of his narrative.
He was a much more talented writer than Shcherbatov, and this put his historical work in the
forefront, made it equal with a work of art and an attractive source for those writers who turned
towards Russian history.

Karamzin uses his artistic skill and scholarly intuition to describe the internal world of the
participants of historical events. His history is a ‘sentimental journey’ into the past that increases
the glory of ‘the Russian traveler’:

3 Karamzin 2003, 33–35.
4 Elagin 1803, XII.
I know that the battles of our appanage civil war that thunder incessantly in the space of five centuries are unimportant for the reason; that this subject is rich nor by thoughts for a pragmatist, nor by beauties for a painter; but history is not a novel, and the world is not a garden where everything should be pleasing; history depicts the real world. We see on the Earth majestic mountains and waterfalls, blossoming meadows and valleys; but how many barren sands and sad steppes! Travelling, however, is generally dear to a human being with vivid feelings and imagination; even in deserts there are charming views.5

Karamzin’s History contrasts with Gustav G. Shpet’s opinion according to which social sciences and history do not study ‘souls’ and, therefore, ‘phenomena of the soul’.6 In any event, history became a handbook for Russian writers who turned to events of the past.

During the Enlightenment some fundamental changes in the understanding of history occurred. It turned out that it was not just a calculation and the establishment of particular facts, but a product of the creative process that required comprehension. The historian ceased to be a simple scribe: his/her role in understanding and interpreting past events dramatically changed. The historically limited, biased, mythological, annalistic medieval narrative gave place to historical writing proper. Chronicles were not treated any more as ‘reliable sources’, but turned into objects of comparative analysis and professional research. The German historians Gerhard Friedrich Mueller (1705–1783), Gottlieb Siegfried Bayer (1694–1738) and August Ludwig Schlozer (1735–1809), who worked at St Petersburg’s Academy of Sciences, promoted this new approach. The methodology of these German thinkers was matched with an ‘encyclopedic’ attitude to learning and was the result of a ‘monological’ method elaborated in the depths of speculative metaphysics and applied successively and with excellent outcomes in all spheres of knowledge. The new, ‘scientific’ worldview of the Enlightenment presupposed a preliminary ‘establishing of order’ amidst an ocean of isolated facts, and it was this that was achieved by these German historians who practiced history almost as a natural science.

Russian historians considered history to be mostly a phenomenon of ideology or even politics. At that time bulky histories were created by Vasilii N. Tatishchev (1686–1750), Mikhail V. Lomonosov (1711–1765) as well as by Mikhail M. Shcherbatov and Nikolai M. Karamzin. They combined scholarly research with ideological aims. At that time a set of basic presuppositions was also formulated. We would call them ‘historiosophical archetypes’. Their adherents assumed that any description and

5 Karamzin 2003, 33.
6 Shpet 1916.
understanding of events that had taken place in Russia should be brought into correlation with the history of Western Europe, that the history of Russia was first of all ‘the history of the state’, not ‘of the people’, that this history had a certain starting point and charismatic leaders with whom the country began a new counting of time. A serious change of the political regime and associated changes of society and of the state often arranged such a ‘beginning’. When passing this ‘reference point’, Russia lost (broke) its links with the past and began to build all its state institutions ‘from the very beginning’. Russia became ‘different’, ‘young’, ‘new’ and opened itself up to fresh doctrines and trends. Only a few Russian historians, such as Mikhail Lomonosov, did not stick to such a fixed reference point.

Historians in the Age of Enlightenment tended to disclose ‘points of historical bifurcation’ and main historical heroes, that is, to list the personages of the play under the title of ‘Russian History’. They believed that these events and heroes should be the subjects of the various arts, and later on painters and writers did indeed use them. For instance, Mikhail Lomonosov wrote special programs for historical pictures titled *Idei dlya zhivopisnykh kartin iz Rossiiskoi istorii* (Ideas for Figurative Pictures from Russian History). Historians of later times also compared collisions of the historical process to the plots of works of art. Mikhail P. Pogodin (1800–1875) assumed that the whole of Russian history consisted of “novels that could have never been created by Walter Scott’s magnificent imagination”.

Turning to the central figures of Russian history who became popular characters in various works of art, we see first of all rulers who participated in the most important twists of Russia’s destiny. Vladimir, who baptized the country, Ryurik, who made a state out of it, Peter, who turned to European culture, Catherine, who augmented his achievements, are all on the list.

The majority of memoirs, historical works and historical fiction were dedicated to tsar Peter the First. These examples demonstrated how the evidence of elder contemporaries, ready to mythologize the adorable hero, was replaced by the fantasies of those who could not remember what had happened ‘sixty years ago’. ‘Peter’s Time’ was reflected in institutionalized forms of highly specialized treatises on history and also in metaphorical and allegorical texts of art. Under the mythological pseudonyms of Perseus, Hercules, Jason, the apostle Peter, even ‘Peter the Great’, Peter I became a hero of historical paintings, odes, allegorical compositions and decorative monuments. Popular mythology, as well as state ideology, needed vivid artistic images rather than

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7 Pogodin 1846, 12.
authenticity. All these works of art formed the ambivalent image of Peter I in which the historical, the mythological and the fictitious were tightly interwoven. Thus it was possible later on to use the image widely as a hero of literary works and in the course of time almost to substitute the historical person for a fictitious character.

To compare the present with the past, to find historical examples and analogies, models became the norm for intellectual and ruling elites. Catherine the Great (1729–1796) was the author of Zapiski, kasatel’no Rossiiskoi istorii (Notes Concerning Russian History). She writes:

Let an impartial reader take the trouble to compare the epoch of Russian history with the stories of contemporaries of Russian grand dukes of every age to see clearly the pattern of every age’s mind and that humankind everywhere and through the universe has had the same passions, wishes, intentions and has often used the same ways to success.\(^8\)

While composing her bulky opus, Catherine, of course, called for the help of ‘advisers’, but the conceptual scheme was all hers. The main idea of the Notes, designed initially for her grandsons’ education, was to demonstrate the place and role of autocracy in the history of Russia. Catherine ‘threw’ the then popular conception of ‘enlightened monarchy’ down unto the past and treated every monarchy as ‘enlightened’ or as orientated to ‘enlightenment’. The empress was also the author of some dramas about the establishment of the Russian state, such as Nachalnoe upravlenie Olega, Podrazhanie Shakespiru (The Initial Ruling of Oleg, An Imitation of Shakespeare).

‘History as science’ was by no means the only form to express historical consciousness. A.L. Schloezer marked out four types of historians: the historian-collector (Geschichtssammler), historian-researcher (Geschichtsforscher), historian-compiler (Geschichtsschreiber) and historian-artist (Geschichtsmaler).\(^9\) All these types were present in the Russian Enlightenment. However, in the last type one more subdivision could be singled out. Authors from this group might be called ‘fabricators of history’. Their hypothetical constructions could be supported by intuition or ‘pure reasoning’. They compensated for the lack of information by using historical analogies or just by their imagination, but they satisfied the need for historical knowledge for those who could not or did not want to study serious scholarly works and created a space of public history.

\(^8\) Ekaterina 1901, 5.
\(^9\) Rubinshtein 1941, 159.
F.A. Emin (about 1735–1770) was one of the brightest ‘history writers’ and the author of ‘political novels’. From 1767 till 1769 Emin published three volumes under the title Rossiiskaya istoriya... (A Russian History...).\(^{10}\) Reasoning about the aims and tasks of any history Emin remarked that it could not be just a list of facts or a description of political events. The main task of historical writing as well as a work of art is ‘a direct instruction regarding what one must follow and what one must avoid’\(^{11}\). ‘The historical philosopher’ can use both a professional and an artistic discourse. Emin confesses that he put into lips of his historical subjects words they could have said instead of those they did say. He saturated his history with monologues and so made it theatrical, like a play.

The temptation to force people of another epoch to speak in a modern language was caused by the desire to make their internal world understandable. N. Karamzin in his ‘pre-walter-scottian’ story Natal’ya, boyarskaya doch’, (Natal’ya, a Boyar’s Daughter 1792) remarked that ‘old-fashioned lovers’ spoke in a quite different way, but he used modern speech to make them comprehensible.

“The most beautiful made-up style of speaking disfigures history dedicated not to the writer’s fame, not to the readers’ delight and not even to moralizing wisdom, but only to the truth, which makes itself the source of delight and goodness”\(^{12}\), he wrote.

V.A. Zhukovsky saw a harmonious synthesis of the literary style and the national character in Scott’s novels. Enchanted by the poetic qualities of Scott’s historical discourse, Zhukovsky intended to recast Ivanhoe into a rhymed poem.\(^{13}\) In his note of 1816 under the title Kak obrazovat’ original’nyi kharakter russkoi poezii (How to Form the Original Character of Russian Poetry) he writes: “The originality of our poetry is in history. It is necessary in it to guess the spirit of every epoch and to express the spirit in modern language not taken from any of the neighbors by form and to take much from annals. Karamzin’s history is a great improvement of prose. The same way should be taken by poetry”.\(^{14}\)

Scott’s works had of course been written in English (that is why he is persistently called ‘an English writer’ in Russia), but the Russian poet, who mused upon the historical poetics of the Russian language, read Scott in French. One should not see here a paradox, rather one should

\(^{10}\) In full: Rossiiskaya istoriya zhizni vsekh drevnikh ot samogo nachala gosudarei vse velikiya i vechnoi dostoiniya pamyati IMPERATORA PETRA VELIKAGO deistviya, ego naslednits i naslednikov emu posledovanie i opisanie v Severe ZLATAGO VEKA vo vremya tsarstvovaniya EKATERINY VELIKOI v sebe zaklyuchayushchaya (A Russian History of the Lives of All Ancient Sovereigns from the Very Beginning, All Great and Worthy of the Eternal Memory Emperor Peter the Great’s Deeds, His Heiresses and Successors Who Followed Him That Includes a Description of the Golden Age in the North during the Reign of Catherine the Great).

\(^{11}\) Emin 1767, V.

\(^{12}\) Karamzin 2003, 34.

\(^{13}\) Zhukovsky 2004, 517.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., 522.
turn to that deep level common to all mankind that allows one to overcome the variety of words of natural languages. Zhukovsky remarks:

In Walter Scott’s historical novel there is more truth than in history; the same can be said about Shakespeare’s historical dramas. These two giants offer their hands to each other. What if a Shakespeare turned up for Russian history and through his genius in a worthy manner revived and embodied all that is held back by our scant chronicles! What a lively picture would open before our eyes. Ancient Russian history is too alien to us, and it is difficult to guess and vividly imagine this ancient division: poetic fiction will be too visible. ... But one should be a great creator to erect a well-proportioned building from the crushed stone of chronicles.\(^{15}\)

The movement from Shakespeare to Scott follows the logic of the development of Russian historical literature and meets the all-European tradition of collating these names. Reflection over these two great British writers who found their inspiration in history was a characteristic feature not only of high literature but also of historical discourse. Such associations and comparisons with popular European authors are typical of the system of intellectual self-identification of Russian thinkers. N.A. Dobrolyubov wrote about the habit of enrolling talented authors in ‘Russian Pindars, Molières and Voltaires’.\(^{16}\) He saw that this habit was widely spread, though quite futile. “To fabricate a leaflet about Homer’s epic aroused improved in Dead Souls, to proclaim Lermontov to be Byron, to esteem Ostrovsky higher than Shakespeare, all this is not new in Russian literature. Even more than that: now, probably, nobody remembers who in this country used to write historical novels better than Walter Scott.”\(^{17}\) These words are mainly about the artistic level, but a permanent return to the same names while talking about national identity has not happened by chance. The desire to understand one’s own history, to find whether it has direction and meaning, why a glorious past does not lead to a bright future, and even if it does, then why the present is so mean, make one search for a solution in the past.

The movement from Shakespeare to Scott marks the historical change of genres. The classicism (violated by Shakespeare of course) of dramatic historiosophy turned into the romantic desire to conceive the emotional state of human beings, to see history as an activity of passions, to understand them as the real causes of actions. This desire well suited the genre of the novel

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\(^{15}\) Zhukovsky 2004, 297.

\(^{16}\) Dobrolyubov 1963, 190.

\(^{17}\) Dobrolyubov 1962, 168.
with its plot lines and digressions. How should history be told, in a ‘scientific’ or a literary way? Is it possible that artistic harmony, which leans towards aesthetic unity, could help to fill the marginal spaces that inevitably emerge in the variegated fabric of historical discourse? The writer can see in the intermittent flow of ordinary events some main ones that change the image of an epoch. As history is created by people, so the writer is the best person to grasp the logic of human relations. According to Ivan Elagin (1725–1793), the author of *Opyt povestovovaniya o Rossii* (An Attempt at a Narration about Russia), any description of historical figures can also bear marks of personal appreciations and passions: often a writer endows historical individuals with his own views ‘especially when he wants to cover a lack of direct information by his speculations’.¹⁸

Thinkers of the Enlightenment saw in the discourses of literature a method of seeing beyond the inadequate empirical record. They used this method as far as possible until the intensifying specialization of knowledge pulled history, literature and philosophy apart. In this sense D.M. Urnov’s assertion that Scott’s impact made historians ‘estheticize’ their works seems incorrect. He writes: ‘Even historical scholarship was influenced by ‘the Scottish bard’. Historical works, in the likeness of Walter-Scottian novels, were made, as was said at that time, picturesque. Following the novelist, historians were trying to describe past events with the lively plenitude that we see in a good literature type or character. This plenitude, a kind of three-dimensionality and self-sufficiency of character, is the very sign of artistry’ (Urnov). Rather it was vice versa, it was precisely the artistic representation of history, specific to Russian historiography of the Enlightenment, which resulted in the enthusiasm for Walter Scott and in the organic reception of his prose. It seemed that in Scott’s historical novel there was a beneficial synthesis of simplicity and professionalism, out-of-body-ness of historical patterns and obviousness of moral lessons. The form was one in which history could bring about its true predestination, that is, to form the soul and the heart, because ‘no other science like this can educate us in the science of the human heart, in the science that is the most essential and most captivating’.¹⁹

Thus we can state that, even before Scott, Russian intellectuals searched for ways to find convincing and ‘useful’ accounts of history, so Scott’s seeds fell on fertile ground. The educated public in Russia was ready to accept Scott’s artistic achievements and actively developed and sought out narrative forms adequate to its mentality in Europe. There was no ‘ferroconcrete’

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¹⁸ Elagin 1803, 250.
¹⁹ Yanovsky 1803, 855.
official type of historical narrative. The public was educated and developed enough not to allow this kind of over-simplifying. Catherine, Shcherbatov and Karamzin were searching for adequate narrative and ideological forms of history. And in this sense Scott arrived at just the right time.

Scott became fashionable in Russia first of all because he had become fashionable in Europe and especially in France. At the beginning of the 19th century the Russian educated public was not at all numerous and formed part of an all-European cultural space, since the public for the most part read French and German to get acquainted with European novelties, rather than waiting for translations. The nobility, the highest and most educated social group, was the first to absorb Scott’s novels in Russia. Scott’s novels, already translated into Russian, very quickly penetrated into lower social strata, but it is evident that the attitude to the writer was formed mostly within the nobility. Dolinin remarks that a special role in this was played by the ladies of high society (Dolinin 1988, 130). It is possible that they saw Scott as a ‘bard of nobles’: “The Scots aristocracy, those fading flowers of the forest, became bearers of nationhood, their role in fact and legend reinforced by the literary wizardry of Sir Walter Scott.”

Scott ‘restored’ an appearance of olden times on the basis of modern emotions and ideas. He was fashionable due to these emotions and ideas. Scott could be fashionable also because of his references to documents and witnesses that looked very ‘scholarly’.

Russia failed to observe Scott’s connection with the Scottish eighteenth-century philosophy and historiography in which he was educated. It is worth remarking, though, that even in the West this connection was directly mentioned only in the twentieth century (Forbes 1953; Brown 1979). Nevertheless, in Russia ‘key words’ from Adam Smith’s Theory of Moral Sentiments were used from the very beginning to describe Scott’s style: ‘Walter Scott remained the only one of his kind; and this solitude is due to his impartiality ... Who of his imitators have this firmness, this impartiality, this all-embracing sympathy?’ (Syn Otechestva 1834, 546–547. Our italics.— T.A., M.M.). A modern Russian researcher of Scott’s works speaks with the same words, while observing ‘the illusion of absolute impartiality that amazed contemporaries and close descendants’:

many contemporaries were struck by his [Scott’s] image of the Author of Waverley, an unruffled dispassionate restorer and registrar of historical events who so skillfully conceals his opinions and

feelings that his presence in the novel becomes imperceptible, indiscernible ... he seems as if he is not implicated in anything ... this 'calm equanimity', accented impassivity of the 'disappearing' author were recognized to be the basic properties of the Walter-Scottian discourse ... a painter without fear and prejudices ... comments like these could be found on the pages of almost every European magazine (Dolinin 1988, 181–183, 190).

G. Lukacs identifies Scott's new kind of central character for a historical romance. It was the choice of not a passionate and committed hero, but of a middling sort of mediocre, prosaic 'hero' as the central figure that fluctuated between the clashing extremes of a society in crisis (Lukacs 1962, 34; Gareth Jones 2004, 191).

Scott uses in his novels various impartial spectators, as Adam Smith would call them. He makes the following 'experiment'. The author 'drives' into a certain historical milieu a 'biorobot', that is an 'imbedded observer'. The biorobot's characteristics are such that they allow him to go through all the events and hostile episodes and to describe the incidents and situations he gets in. He exchanges information with the Author in his internal language (which of course derives from the Author's language and notions). He transmits his impressions in this language thus interpreting them 'in the modern way'. The Author himself, playing, of course, the role of 'God', scrutinizes the historical milieu and interprets it in his, that is, in a modern language. The Author portrays (actually, creates) historical settings from studied documents and the 'cultural heroes' of that time.

It is well-known that David Hume many times declared that, writing his history of England, he saw that his main task was to overcome party prejudices and biases. He talked about independence, not objectivity: "I thought that I was the only historian that had at once neglected present power, interest, and authority, and the cry of popular prejudices" (Hume 1778, xxx). History, according to Hume, is a special experience of two spectators, a historian and his reader, and the ideal spectator is at the same time impartial and sympathetic, rational and sentimental (Hilson 1978, 209). The first virtue of any historian is to be truthful and impartial.

Hume does not identify the constancy of human nature with the invariability of historical events: his constancy is not substantial, but methodological. An essential contribution to history is made precisely when the historian discovers the consequences of irregular changes that impact
upon human history. The historian explains when he shows that the irregular is regular. No people, Hume admits, for example, in his *History*, has endured such an abrupt and total change in its manners as the English nation in the seventeenth century. Moreover, the analysis of characters, principles and motives of the acts of historical figures of that time shows that the novelty in history originates from individual human activities. The constancy of human nature for Hume is a methodological principle that makes history possible, it makes the consistency and credibility of what the historian is saying possible. It is impossible to understand the past without sympathy and constancy.

On the basis of these two principles, Hume thinks it is possible to add his imagination to construct a historical narrative, to interpret the links between and motives of events, to put into the heads of historical figures thoughts and intentions, providing they are not in conflict with ‘physical and moral necessity’. Besides, in these products of the imagination there is a pragmatic element: they make the story interesting and tie together isolated facts. Sympathy and conjecture are, for Hume, the only ways to comprehend historical data. General, common experience gives the standard, or criterion. The Humean slogan ‘turn to common experience’ directs the historian to apply his or her imagination to the collected data.

The most eminent Russian pre-revolutionary historian V. Klyuchevsky (1841–1911) gives a description of N. Karamzin’s style that closely resembles distinctive features of Scott’s style:

Karamzin looks at historical phenomena like a spectator looks at a theatrical scene. He follows the speeches and deeds of the play’s personages, the development of dramatic intrigue, its entanglement and denouement. For him every character poses, every fact tends to play a dramatic scene. ... Karamzin’s heroes act in an empty space, with no decorations, no historical ground under their feet, no popular surroundings around them. They are rather aerial shadows, than living historical persons. ... They are people of various chronological periods, but of the same historical age. They speak and do what the author makes them speak and do ... Karamzin’s characters are surrounded by a specific moral atmosphere: it consists of abstract notions of duty, honor, good, evil, passion, vice, virtue. The speeches and deeds of Karamzin’s characters are inspired by these notions and measured by them ... Karamzin’s view of history was built not upon historical regularity, but with moral and psychological aesthetics. He was interested in the human being with personal qualities
and accidents, rather than in society with its structure and disposition; he observed in the past ... manifestations of moral strength and beauty in individual images or mass movements.\textsuperscript{21}

Early critics identified impassivity with impartiality, with objectivity in the estimation of historical deeds and persons.\textsuperscript{22} “In the thirties and forties ... this special position of an author came to be considered as a drawback, as evidence of the writer-aristocrat’s arrogant indifference to the internal world of human being. ... they began to blame Walter Scott for being insensible, unwilling and unable to penetrate through the external shell of events.”\textsuperscript{23} A. Herzen (1812–1870), an emotional and quite superficial writer (though very influential for Russian social thought) writes:

there is another disadvantage with Walter Scott: he is an aristocrat, and a common shortcoming of aristocratic tales is a certain apathy. He sometimes sounds like a secretary of a criminal court who, with the most unruffled calm, reports about the most ruffled incidents; everywhere in his novel you see a lord-Tory with an aristocratic smile grandly recounting. His business is to portray; and just like he, describing nature, does not get deep into plant physiology and geological studies, he treats a human being: his psychology is weak, and all his attention is concentrated upon ... the surface of the soul.\textsuperscript{24}

Another influential critic V. Belinsky (1811–1848) talks in terms Scott’s ‘cold impersonality’.\textsuperscript{25}

Those who have studied the history of Scott’s novels in Russia remark that quite soon Scott became a ‘romantic’, ‘fairytale’ author for teenagers and family reading\textsuperscript{26}. The noble elite and its imitators pushed the well-established patterns and interpretations ‘down’ into the younger generation to bring it up, at the same time failing to mention that the nobility moved even closer to its extinction.

During the Soviet period many editions of Scott’s novels were issued, including multi-volume collections. They could be found in almost every family of the intelligentsia, for example, in the house of academician Sergei Korolev, the famous chief designer of Soviet spaceships. The most

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{21} Klyuchevsky 1990, 488–490.
  \item \textsuperscript{22} Dolinin 1988, 185.
  \item \textsuperscript{23} Dolinin 1988, 183.
  \item \textsuperscript{24} Herzen 1954–1965, I, 68–69.
  \item \textsuperscript{25} Belinsky 1976–1982, III, 311.
  \item \textsuperscript{26} It can be inferred from the Addendum. See also Dolinin 1988, 150.
\end{itemize}
popular and favourite Russian comic actor and clown at the end of the twentieth century Yury Nikulin went in his youth to the Soviet-Finnish war taking some books with him, among them *Ivanhoe*.

Dolinin (unfortunately, in passing) remarks that ‘the walter-scottian conception of the human being had a much more deep and fruitful impact upon the development of historical thought than upon the literature process’.\(^{27}\) Emile Haumant also declares this.\(^{28}\)

Scott’s novels were favoured reading of many eminent Russian nineteenth-century historians. For example, S.M. Solov’ev (1820–1879), the author of *Publichnye chteniya o Petre Velikom* (Public Lectures about Peter the Great) and *Istoriya Rossii s drevneishikh vremen* (A History of Russia from Ancient Times), mentioned Scott’s novels in his Zapiski (Memoirs).\(^{29}\) The childish and youthful passion for Scott’s novels was changed in university years by a reading of Hume, Robertson and Gibbon.

Leading Russian historians could not help mentioning Scott’s well-known interpretations in their works on history. For example, T.N. Granovsky (1813–1855) in his lectures of 1849–1850 on the history of the Middle Ages remarked about one of his heroes: “As a matter of fact, in historical writings and in works of art this character is represented in the wrong way, for example, in Walter Scott’s novels.”\(^{30}\) At the same time, Granovsky, of course, was well acquainted with the British historical school, including the “great works of Hume and Gibbon”.\(^{31}\) It is worth mentioning that the audience of these lectures consisted of “people from high society, the cream of Moscow’s noble public”.\(^{32}\) This public admired his account of history, “which public opinion and the university tradition marked as ‘artistic’”\(^{33}\).

In the nineteenth century the influence upon historians of Hegel’s philosophy of history was considerable, but this was not at all in conflict with the romantic Scott: rather, it regulated historians’ views and directed their attention to the struggle of contradictory principles and to historic crises. Russian historians perfectly combined ‘Scottianism’ and ‘Hegelianism’:

> external forms of every humankind’s life, of every age are just incarnations of the general thought that forms the conditions of this life; and if not acquainted with these external occurrences, we

\(^{27}\) Dolinin 1988, 194.  
\(^{28}\) Haumant 1913, 362.  
\(^{29}\) Solov’ev 1983, 231.  
\(^{30}\) Granovsky 1986, 21.  
\(^{31}\) Granovsky 1986, 234.  
\(^{32}\) Dmitriev 1986, 324.  
\(^{33}\) Dmitriev 1986, 327.
could never be able to conceive their creative prototype. Walter Scott, undoubtedly the greatest historical genius of the new times, understood completely this truth. ... in his novels there is more true History than in the historical works of the majority of the writers-philosophers who depicted the same epoch.\textsuperscript{34}

Thus one of the reputed Russian professors of history of the 1830s M.I. Lunin reads Scott as a ‘Hegelianist’, for whom the writer's method is important as a way to describe ‘exteriors’. Lunin interprets Scott’s objectivity precisely in this sense, ‘putting under’ it the ‘prototype’ which, of course, cannot be found in Scott’s novels.

The understanding and narration of history after Karamzin’s works, the ‘triumphant passing’ of Scott through the educated classes of Russia,\textsuperscript{35} and Pushkin’s prose should be sorted with literature and literature’s narrative.

Scott became for Russia one of those authors – of whom A. Pushkin was the undisputed leader, who actively borrowed Scott’s aesthetic devices – who summed up the quest of the Enlightenment and brought into the world a special type of artistic historical discourse. As V. Klyuchevsky wrote:

Pushkin was a historian where he did not mean to be one and where a real historian often failed to be one. \textit{The Captain’s Daughter} was written in between times, while working with \textit{Pugachevshchina}, but it has more history than \textit{A History of the Pugachev Riot}, which looks like a long explicatory comment on the novel. ... Thus we find in Pushkin’s works a quite coherent chronicle of our society in individuals for more than 100 years ... Pushkin is not an author of memoirs and not a historian, but for the historian it is a real godsend when he finds an artist between himself and a memoir writer.\textsuperscript{36}

Moreover, from Klyuchevsky’s point of view, the poet, in turn, personified a historical summit: “Pushkin’s poetry was prepared by the consecutive efforts of two epochs, those of Peter I and Catherine II. The entire century of our history worked to make Russian life capable of manifesting the Russian artistic genius in such a way.”\textsuperscript{37} Klyuchevsky even searches for ancestors of such a well-known character as Eugene Onegin: “Of course, such a person can only have historical and

\textsuperscript{34} Lunin 1836, 14–16.
\textsuperscript{35} For an excellent and detailed description of the process, see Altshuller 1996.
\textsuperscript{36} Klyuchevsky 1990, 394, 399.
\textsuperscript{37} Klyuchevsky 1990, 403.
genetic ancestors, not genealogical ones.”

Klyuchevskii ‘inserted’ Onegin into Russian history and outlined a long line of possible ‘ancestors’ for him since the seventeenth century, that is, a line of historical types ‘congenial’ to Onegin: “His ancestors were people from the nobility, which was a leader in secular education and a body of control. They were extraordinary people who found themselves cast into a false position by excessively fast changes in education.”

The subsequent interpretation of ‘great Russian writers’ as authoritative historians rests upon the implicit idea that they portray, in their works of art, events very close to ‘what happened in reality’. That is what their ‘artistic genius’ is about from the point of view of ‘realism’. Participants in the battle of Borodino reproached Leo Tolstoy for inaccuracies in his reproduction of real events. Now that is not important for us, because we believe that Tolstoy ingeniously conveys the ‘spirit’ of that time.

The official ideology of the Soviet era also used literature and artistic imagination (together with the doctrine of realism) to support a certain conception of history. Culture and education — and thus the understanding of human problems — in the Soviet Union was at such a level that artistic discourse was easily recognized as history, and even more ‘true’ than the official version. Well-educated strata of society interpret Russian history of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries according to Pushkin; of the nineteenth century according to Tolstoy, Lermontov and Dostoevsky; of the twentieth century according to A. Solzhenitsyn, V. Shalamov, A. Akhmatova, et al. The stories and plays ‘about history’ of M. Shatrov, V. Pikul’ and E. Radzinsky are extremely popular.

Russian historians continue to point to the enduring significance or role of the interpretation of history through fiction. This results in a domination of historical discourse by political and moral values:

Society had already at that time [at the end of the nineteenth century] chosen other heroes, produced or assimilated certain stereotypes in the interpretation of history and historic figures. People that belonged to the cultural epoch of Leo Tolstoy looked at all Russian history, and not just at history, through the eyes of the author of War and Peace ... The latest times have changed but a little.

38 Klyuchevsky 1990, 413.
40 The influence of Scott’s techniques on Tolstoy is worth studying (Altshuler 2006, 225–231), though, as Gareth Jones remarks, in this field we still have an ‘absence of investigations’ (Gareth Jones 2004, 185).
41 Gryunberg 2001, 309.
Now after more than twenty years since the collapse of Soviet power, historic figures of the past who were eager for revolutionary, violent acts, are valued, explicitly or implicitly, as ‘positive’, ‘progressive’, ‘heroic’, and ‘highly moral’ in history. 

Scott’s main achievement (his representation of the ordinary man set amidst the background of large-scale historical events) had no influence upon Russian historiography, which continued (and continues now) to describe only events in terms of their ‘state scale’. However, that achievement survived in literature for three centuries, developing both a philosophy of history and a philosophical anthropology.

In this way a special view of history has been established in Russia. History is often considered here as a reality that is best conceived and conveyed by the narrative of artistic fiction, a view held by both officials and dissidents, and one which made Russian historiography particularly open to the influence of Sir Walter Scott. ‘Writers of history’ did not just create their histories, they formed the public history, and not for all the people of Russia, but mainly for the noble elite. They searched for cultural clichés, patterns, and metaphors to mold their historical images, schemes, and explanations. Even before Scott, Russian intellectuals searched for ways to find convincing and ‘useful’ accounts of history, so Scott, ‘a bard of nobles’, arrived at just the right time. The whole of Russian history seemed consisted of novels that at first could be compared and then surpassed Walter Scott’s magnificent imagination. To compare the present with the past, to find historical examples and analogies became the norm for intellectual and ruling elites.

References


Urnov D.M. “Sam Val’ter Skott”, ili “Volshebnyi vymysel”. In: http://reading-room.narod.ru/lib/scott/about/about.html


Addendum

A list of Russian translations of W. Scott’s literary works published in Russia in the first half of the nineteenth century

1821
Беглец. Сочинение баронета Вальтера Скотта. Перевод с французского. В трех частях. Москва: В Университетской типографии, 1821. [Fugitive]

1823
Деяния древняго рыцарства, представленныя втрогательных повествованиях, заимствованных из истории средних веков. Перевод с немецкаго. С 5 картинами. М.: В типографии Августа Семена, 1823. [The Ancient Knights’ Deeds]

Кенильворт. Историч. роман сира Вальтера Скотта. С присовокуплением предуведомительного замечания о Кенильвортском замке и жизнеописания графа Лейчестера. Пер. с франц. Т. 1–4. М.: Тип. А. Семена, 1823. [Kenilworth].

Матильда Рокби. Поэма в 6-ти кн. Соч. Валтера Скотта. Пер. с англ. [прозой]. Ч. 1–2. М.: Тип. А. Семена, при Имп. мед.-хир. акад., 1823. [Rokeby].

Поема последнего барда. Соч. Валтера Скотта. Изд. М. Каченовский. М.: Иждевением Имп. Моск. ун-та комиссionedера А.С. Ширяева, 1823. [The Lay of the Last Minstrel].

1824
Густав Вальдгейм или Преступник по неволе. Истинное произведение, взятое из записок одного молодаго гусара. Соч. Валтера Скотта. Перевел с французскаго А. П...в. М.: В типографии А. Похорского, 1824. [Gustav Waldheim]

Выслужившийся офицер, или Война Монтроза. Историч. роман. Соч. Валтера Скотта, авт. Шотландских пуритан, Роб Роя, Эдинбургской темницы и проч. Пер. с франц. Ч. 1–4. М.: Тип. П. Кузнецова, 1824. [The Legend of Montrose].


1825
Аббат или Некоторая черты жизни Марии Стутар, королевы шотландской. Соч. сира Валтера Скотта; в 4-х ч. Пер. с английского. Ч. 1–4. СПб.: Тип. Имп. театров, 1825. [The Abbot].

Невеста Трирмена или Долина святаго Иоанна. Поэма в 3-х песнях Валтера Скотта. Пер. [прозой] с франц. П. К. М.: Тип. Имп. Моск. театра, 1825. [The Bridal of Triermain].

Эдинбургская темница, из собрания новых сказок моего хозяина, изданных Джедедием Клейнботам, пономарем и учителем Гандер-Клюфского прихода. Соч. Сира Валтера Скотта. Пер. с франц. А...а З... Ч. 1–4. М.: Тип С. Селивановского, 1825. [The Heart of Midlothian].


1826
Ивангое, или Возвращение из Крестовых походов. [Роман]. Соч. Валтера Скотта. Ч. 1-4. СПб.: Тип. А. Смирдина, 1826. [Ivanhoe].
1827


Кентен Дюрвард, или Шотландец при дворе Людовика XI. Ист. роман сира Вальтера Скотта. Пер. А.И. Писарева. Ч. 1–4. М.: Тип. Имп. Москов. театра, 1826–1827. [Quentin Durward].

Письма о Франции в 1815 году, сира Валтера Скотта, под именем Павла. С фр. пер. М.П...в. Т. 1–2. М.: Тип. Решетникова, 1827. [Letters about France in 1815].

Письма Павла к своему семейству. Соch. сир-Валтера Скотта; Пер. с фр. Г... П...в. Ч. 1–3. М.: Тип. Имп. Москов. театра, 1827. [Paul's Letters to His Family].


Горная шотландка. [Повесть, взятая из рукописи лади Бетюн Бальоль]. Соch. Вальтера Скотта. М.:


Елена Дуглас, или Дева озера Лок-Катринского. Пер. с фр. Ч. 1–2. Соch. Валтера Скотта. М.: Унив. тип., 1828. [The Lady of the Lake].

Галидон-Гилль. Драм. картина из шотланд. истории. Соch. Вальтера Скотта. С фр. Д. ... Е. ... М.: Тип. Решетникова, 1828. [Halidon Hill].


1829


Предания о Монтрозе и его спутниках. Пятая повесть моего хозяина. С англ. Ч. 1–2. Соch. Валтера Скотта. М.: Тип. Н. Степанова при Имп. театре, 1829. [The Legend of Montrose].


1830
Певериль. Ист. роман сира Валтера Скотта. Пер. с фр. Ч. 1–5. М.: Тип. Н. Степанова, при Имп. театре, 1830. [Peveril of the Peak].


Канонгетские летописи. Пер. с фр. Соch. сира Валтера Скотта. Пер. с франц. М.: Вольная тип. Пономарева, 1830. [Chronicles of the Canongate].


1831


1833
Опасный замок. Последнее соch. сира Вальтер-Скотта. Пер. с англ. С. де Шаплет. Ч. 1–2. СПб., 1833. [Castle Dangerous].


1836

1845
Квентин Дорвард. [Роман]. С послед. прим. и прибавл. авт. Пер. с англ. Под ред. А.А. Краевского. СПб.: М.Д. Ольхин и К.И. Жернаков, 1845. [Quentin Durward].

Антикварий. С послед. примеч. и приб. авт. Пер. с англ., под ред. А.А. Краевского. СПб.: М.Д. Ольхин и К.И. Жернаков, 1845. [The Antiquary].

Айвенго. Роман. С послед. примеч. и приб. авт. Пер. с англ. под ред. А.А. Краевского. СПб.: М.Д. Ольхин и К.И. Жернаков, 1845. [Ivanhoe].

1846
О Гольдсмите и его творениях. [Вальтер Скотт]. СПб.: Тип. Штаба Отд. корпуса внутр. стражи, 1846. [On Goldsmith].

Гей-Меннринг, или Астролог. С послед. примеч. и приб. авт. Пер. с англ., под ред. А.А. Краевского. СПб.: М.Д. Ольхин и К.И. Жернаков, 1846. [Guy Mannering].

1847
1848
Вудсток. Роман Вальтер-Скотта. Ч. 1-я и 2-я. СПб.: Тип. К. Крайя, 1848. [Woodstock].

1851
Легенда о Монтрозе. Историч. роман Вальтера Скотта. Пер. с англ. Ч. 1-2. М.: Тип. В. Кирилова, 1851. [A Legend of Montrose].

1854
Генрих. Повесть, взятая из соч. знаменитого Вальтер Скотта. М., 1854. [Heinrich].

1856
Мартын Вальдек. Эпизод из романа Вальтера Скотта Антикварий. Пер. с англ. СПб.: Тип. Имп. Акад. наук, 1856. [The Antiquary (an episode)].

1857
Замок Кенильворт, или Королева Елизавета. Роман Вальтер-Скотта. Пер. с англ. Ч. 1-4. М., Тип. В. Готье, 1854–1857. [Kenilworth].

1865
Квентин Дорвард. Соч. Вальтер Скотта. М.: А.И. Мамонтов, 1865. [Quentin Durward].

1866
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1867
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