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Cracks in the mirror

Changing conceptions of political virtue in mirrors for princes in Scandinavia from the Middle Ages to c.1700

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Abstract
This chapter provides a loose framework for the book as a whole, studying Scandinavian mirrors for princes from the Middle Ages to the seventeenth century. This includes a relatively small number of texts, enabling a focus on long-term developments. Despite strong continuities and a living tradition, a number of important changes are observed. Most important among them is a slow shift from ends to means. Where the earliest texts consider politics as the means of achieving virtue, the later texts regard virtue as a means for preserving the state or even the personal interest of the ruler.

Keywords: mirrors for princes, political virtue, reason of state, history of concepts

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate changing conceptions of virtue in mirrors for princes originating in the Scandinavian countries from the Middle Ages until c.1700. In this period, a Christian monarchy was firmly established as the only realistic political alternative in Scandinavia, as it was in much of Europe. However, although the institution remained, the society around it experienced many and profound changes. In intellectual terms the period covers the introduction of scholastic Aristotelianism, a Lutheran reformation, as well as scientific, military, and judicial revolutions, not to mention the influence of Roman law, canon law, and later, secular natural law. All of these major intellectual movements and developments are likely to have influenced the mirror for princes literature in one way or another. In other words, studying these texts not only gives us an insight into

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long-term developments in virtue ethics, it also provides us with a veritable kaleidoscope of ideas prevalent in premodern Scandinavia.

There are several good arguments for choosing the Scandinavian countries for this study. First, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark were strongly connected socially, politically, and culturally during the centuries in question. In the Middle Ages, the three kingdoms shared strong dynastic ties. During the Reformation they were politically and culturally reconstructed by means of a similar strain of Lutheranism. In the early modern period, Denmark-Norway and Sweden both participated in the Thirty Years War, while also competing fiercely for dominion over the Baltic and Öresund. Politically, the countries experienced similar developments, albeit with differing time tables.¹

My particular interest in the mirrors for princes is the history of virtue ethics and its application to politics and political education. Consequently, when discussing each text, I will try to answer these two questions: Which virtue (or other quality) was considered to be the most important for a ruler? Keeping in line with the overarching purpose of the present volume, I will also focus on how this virtue was acquired. Thus, I will analyse these texts from the point of view of virtue ethics and political education. Mirrors for princes are by definition ideally suited to such an investigation.

The history of mirrors for princes

In a recent overview, Linda T. Darling has noted that very few studies of the genre of mirrors for princes extend over more than a couple of centuries and more than one country. On the other hand, the number of individual studies is huge.² There are a few studies that are wider in scope, but those

¹ The literature on the political history of the Scandinavian countries is much too voluminous to summarize, and I will only mention a few works that have influenced my analysis: Charpentier Ljungqvist, *Kungamakten och lagen*; Gustafsson, *Gamla riken, nya stater*; Lockhart, *Denmark 1573–1660*; Upton, *Charles XI and Swedish Absolutism*. All translations in this chapter are my own.

² Darling, ‘Mirrors for Princes’, p. 225. There are a number of collections of such individual studies, e.g. de Benedictis and Pisapia (eds.), *Specula Principum*; Lachaud and Scordia, *Le Prince au miroir*. Of particular relevance to this study is Bejczy and Nederman, *Princely Virtues in the Middle Ages*. Among many individual studies on Scandinavian texts I would stress Bagge, *Political Thought of the King’s Mirror*, and Olden-Jørgensen, ‘Johann Damgaards Alithia (1597)’; Olden-Jørgensen has also briefly compared the education of Christian IV of Denmark and Gustav Adolf of Sweden in ‘Herremand I kongeklaeder’. Tania Preste has recently studied virtues in Swedish mirrors (only partly the same texts as those used here, however), with a special focus on heroic virtue; Preste, ‘King’s Virtues’.

that do exist are by now very old and occupied in part with questions that seem less relevant to present-day research.3

We can also turn to studies of political thought in a broader sense. These are more abundant, and some points are relevant for the purposes of this study. In his classic study, *The King’s Two Bodies*, Ernst Kantorowicz argued that the development of ideas of kingship in Western Europe can be divided into several different periods, each characterized by particular images and conceptions of ideal kingship. In the Carolingian period, kingship was ‘theocentric’, and the king was modelled on God the Father; in the following period, up until roughly the investiture struggle, kingship was ‘Christocentric’, the king being conceived as an imitator of Christ on earth. In the High Middle Ages, kingship became ‘law-centred’, as the religious images and ideology were increasingly reserved for church, bishops, and popes, and finally, this ultimately developed into a ‘polity-centred’ conception of politics. Nevertheless, Kantorowicz argues that all fundamental political concepts traced their origins to theology, as did e.g. the concept of the ‘body politic’.4

Michel Foucault coined the term ‘governmentality’ on the basis of the changes he observed in the development from mirrors for princes to handbooks on the ‘art of ruling’ in the sixteenth century. Governance became immanent in relation to those governed, whereas Machiavelli’s prince had clearly been transcendent, an external force in relation to the people he ruled. The art of governing became more ambitious and all-pervasive. It was an ‘economic’ mode of governance, encompassing the subjects in relation to their surroundings: climate, natural resources, habits, mores, and ways of thinking. Attempts to establish a certain form of knowledge of the population for use as a ‘tactique du gouvernemen’ can be observed as early as the late sixteenth century.5 Developing Foucault’s argument, Michel Senellart is one of few to study mirrors for princes (alongside similar material) over a long period. His main contribution to the debate is to distinguish the rise of two forms of ‘raison d’État’ – one using power and war as means (‘absolutism’) and the other regulating interests and passions (which Senellart, like Foucault, calls ‘economy’). While Machiavelli described

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3 Anton, *Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos*, is an in-depth study of the early medieval material; Kleineke, *Englische Fürstenspiegel*, is still very useful as a long-term study; Berges, *Die Fürstenspiegel*, is an important survey of the high medieval material, although somewhat dated by now.
politics as a constant state of war, in which necessity rules, Giovanni Botero
considered knowledge the all-important means of (peaceful) power, but
also made *raison d'État* a general principle of politics not only reserved for
extraordinary situations.6

In another long-term study of political ideas, Maurizio Viroli has argued
that, around the year 1600, the meaning of the word ‘politics’ shifted. Instead
of signifying something like ‘the art of governing (a kingdom, or a people)
well’, it began to mean ‘the corrupt means of preserving one’s state’.7 In
terms of virtue ethics, this transformation meant that *prudentia* lost the
intimate connection to *justitia* that it had once had.8 The decisive shift
occurred, just as Foucault argued, not so much with Machiavelli, but with
his (alleged) opponents, thinkers such as Botero and Scipione Ammirato.
For them, a law might be broken if this served the public interest or common
good, as interpreted and represented exclusively by the sovereign prince.9

What is a mirror for princes?

As several scholars have pointed out, calling the mirrors for princes a genre in
the strict sense is not accurate.10 In my view, the most reasonable definition
is twofold: first I will consider texts mirrors for princes from the point of
view of their purpose; ‘die politische und etische Bildung der Herrscher’
(‘the political and moral education of the ruler’).11 Second, the form, on the
other hand, is highly variable, and mirrors may take the form of treatises,
dialogues, drama, novels, or formal speeches.12 I will therefore use a wide
definition, including a spectrum of different types of text.13 It should also
be stressed that while mirrors were not historically considered a genre, there
was a keen awareness of a tradition and sense of continuity between these

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8 Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State*, pp. 4, 9, 27.
10 Darling, ‘Mirrors for Princes’, 226-27; Stone, ‘Kings are Different’, p. 73.
11 Siegl-Mocavini, *John Barclays Argenis*, pp. 20-23; ‘manuels destinés à l'instruction morale du
Fürstenspiegel*, pp. 21-22.
12 One could very well argue that works of history should be included here, and indeed many
episodes of such works are similar to mirrors for princes. However, historical works also served
other purposes, and would require an elaborate discussion of historiographical developments
for which there would be no room in this study. Consequently, I have excluded them.
texts. As early as the first half of the seventeenth century, catalogues of such works were compiled,14 and an antiquarian interest is clearly discernible, not least in Scandinavia.15

Medieval and especially early modern mirrors for princes took a number of classical texts as models: the most important of these was perhaps Seneca’s *De clementia*. Seneca combined earlier Greek views on the divine nature of the ruler with Roman concepts of justice in a way that came to have a lasting influence on subsequent works. Seneca also used the mirror metaphor in a characteristic way. In the very first sentence of *De clementia*, he claims that he wants the work to ‘function as a kind of mirror, and hold forth you to yourself’.16 Seneca aims at controlling a ruler (Nero) who could not be controlled by law. He tries to do so by advocating self-control, that is, moral virtue. The harsh justice of the emperor needed tempering by a fitting clemency, and the two virtues, though seemingly contradictory, both reflected aspects of his majesty. He also stressed the humanity of the ruler, viewing him as subjected to a higher notion of justice rather than a personification or embodiment of it, and thus partly broke with the Hellenistic tradition of divine kingship.17

The other major influence on the mirrors for princes tradition was the Bible, in particular its so-called wisdom literature. Together with Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, Erasmus recommended the Wisdom of Solomon as the very first text to be read by the young prince whom he addressed in his *Institutio principis Christiani* (The education of a Christian prince).18 The metaphor of the armour of righteousness (Wisdom 5:17-20), which was later used by Paul (Ephesians 6:10-20), came to serve as a concrete literary model in medieval and early modern mirrors. Isaiah 11:2, describing the gifts of the holy spirit, were also central to the mirror tradition and, in particular, to the development of a synthesis between Christian ethics and classical virtue ethics.19

15 The 1634 edition of the *Styrilsé Konunga och Höfdinga*, as well as the 1768 edition of the *Konungs skuggsjà*, both analysed below, are examples of this, as is the *Gubernacula imperii togati*.
18 Erasmus Roterodamus, *Institutio*, p. 74.
The mirrors for princes of the Carolingian period coincide with the birth of powerful ideas of Christian kingship that would dominate political thought in the Middle Ages and early modern period. Accordingly, Carolingian mirrors are deeply imbued with Christian virtues such as piety, temperance, and humility, often drawing on the Old Testament, but little from the classical forerunners. It has been argued that mirrors of this period often present a set of monastic virtues for kings. The tripartite division of the virtues of the king, regarding his rule over himself, his family, and his people, was also important in this period, and became a staple ingredient in subsequent texts.

**Origins: the royal saint and rex justus**

There are many reasons to consider Old Norse culture as an extension, albeit peripheral, of the Carolingian and early medieval world. This accords well with the starting point for an historical exploration of mirrors for princes literature in Scandinavia. When such texts start to appear, it is clear that they are already part of a European intellectual tradition, in which these northern texts sometimes appear rather old-fashioned and traditional.

An important early constituent of the conception of the ideal king during the conversion period is the image of the royal saint. The most important Scandinavian saint is St. Olav, King Olav II of Norway (d. c.1030), whose relics were venerated by pilgrims travelling from all over the Nordic countries to visit his tomb in Trondheim. In Sweden, St. Erik (d. 1160) played a similar role as ‘national’ saint. The Danish King Knud (d. 1086) only came to be venerated later and never on a scale comparable to Olav or Erik; instead, Duke Knud Lavard was a more important saint in Denmark in the High Middle Ages. The saints’ lives portray the kings in a highly formalized manner, stressing piety and justice, approaching a monastic ideal, but also adhering to the principle of distributive justice. There is an element of innate virtue.

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20 A primary example of this is the *Via regia* of Smaragdus, see Anton, *Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos*, pp. 176-79, 355; Stone, ‘Kings are Different’, p. 84.

21 Stone, ‘Kings are Different’, pp. 76-79; Péneau, ‘Um styrlsi konunga ok hōfþinga’, p. 198. It should be added that the Carolingian and early medieval ideal was not monolithic. In particular, the relationship between ruler and church was the subject of continued renegotiation; Anton, *Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos*, pp. 423-24.


In the *St. Olav's Passion* (*Passio Olavi*), St. Olav is ‘by nature benign [...] and highly inclined towards that which is right by a certain nobility of mind’. In the life of St. Erik, the King is claimed to have been elected ‘because of his innate clemency’. More importantly, however, King Olav lived in ‘perfect observance’ of the Christian religion. Similarly, we read that during Easter, Erik ‘mortified his flesh with a cilice [shirt of hair], which he also wore at the time of his martyrdom, like a cuirass of righteousness’. Furthermore, Olav was ‘careful, so that the nobler and mightier did not oppress the humbler by violent means, he promulgated many wise and circumspect religious and secular laws, and in doing so he gave everyone their due according to their station’.

This image of early Christian kingship had little to do with the real life of these kings, who were probably little more than glorified pirates or leaders of marauding war-bands. However, the creation of Christian monarchies was an innovation in itself, and with it came the ideal figure of the *rex justus* (the ‘just king’) – the Christian king characterized primarily by the virtues of piety and justice. Perhaps even more important than these virtues was the function of the king in the order of creation: the king being a vicar or an image of God on earth, and thus an embodiment of divine justice. From

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24 ‘natura benignus [...] et ad honesta queque sequenda quadam mentis ingenuitate promptissimus’, *Der heilige Wikingerkönig*, p. 17. I have relied on the Recensio I variant of the text for the purposes of this study, which should be sufficiently representative.

25 ‘propter innatam sibi clementiam’, *Erik den Helige*, p. xi. Knut is repeatedly described as possessing a sharp ingenium, e.g. ‘Passio sancti Kanvti’, pp. 541-42. An older tradition of research has stressed the importance of noble blood in a ‘Germanic’ pagan tradition, e.g. Anton, *Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos*, pp. 93-96. See also below, note 34.


Knut is described as a ‘vir religiosus’, ‘Passio sancti Kanvti’, p. 541.


28 ‘prouidens, ne nobiliores quique et potentiores per potenciam humiliores opprimerent, leges duiinas et humanas multa plenas sapientia et mira compositas discretion e Scrip is et promulgavit, in quibus suum cuique conditione ius assignavit’, *Der heilige Wikingerkönig*, pp. 22-23; ‘equa lance in libra iusticie vnicuique ius suum distribuit ac diuisit’, *Erik den Helige*, p. xi. Knut was ‘tocius veritatis et iusticie sine persone recepencion executor’, and aided the poor, widows, and orphans, supported churches and monks, and so on; ‘Passio sancti Kanvti’, pp. 541, 545.

the time of the earliest available texts, the ideal of the rex justus was ‘well entrenched’, as Bagge has put it, in Scandinavia. In his view it was a shared ideal common to both adherents of the king and the church.30

**Speculum regale or Konungs skuggsjá**

Written in Norway in the middle of the thirteenth century, the *Speculum regale or Konungs skuggsjá* (henceforth *The King’s Mirror*) is different from most continental works of a similar date, as Bagge has pointed out.31 There may be faint traces of pre-Christian morality, as when the text points out that the memory and reputation of a man lives on after his death. However, the author soon adds that one must also think of the eternal life, and on the whole the element of a potential non-Christian influence is insignificant.32

*The King’s Mirror* aims at upholding a social hierarchy and marking out differences between the king and aristocracy, on the one hand, and the people on the other, but nobility does not derive from an ancient lineage, at least not exclusively. God has created men unequal in order to test their abilities to responsibly manage the gifts they have been given.33 Most importantly, in *The King’s Mirror*, nobility derives, in Bagge’s view, from the position one owes to the king, upon whom everything in the political world depends.34

The central aim of *The King’s Mirror* is to argue for a strong monarchy. To achieve this, religious and secular arguments are used. The disastrous effects of a divided kingdom are described at length.35 The text also claims that the king ‘owns’ the kingdom and its people, and this is meant in a much stronger sense than in other contemporary works. Ownership was of course connected to heredity, which in turn could be seen as a partly religious argument: inheriting the throne could be considered God’s election.36

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30 Bagge, *Political Thought of the King’s Mirror*, pp. 110, 112.
31 Bagge, *Political Thought of the King’s Mirror*, p. 18. Possessing only limited knowledge of Old Norse I have consulted the old Danish translation in *Kongs-skugg-sio*, and, in particular, the interpretations of Bagge, *Political Thought of the King’s Mirror*.
34 Bagge, *Political Thought of the King’s Mirror*, pp. 174-86; *Kongs-skugg-sio*, pp. 274, 495. Bagge in general argues against Berges, *Die Fürstenspiegel*, pp. 8, 10-12, 15-17, 21-22, 48, 163-66, 182-83, who puts great emphasis on the importance of noble blood and interprets the King’s mirror as advocating an early version of reason of state.
36 Bagge regards this as symptomatic of a broader societal process away from private justice towards public, royal justice, which, again, was a central part of the state-formation process. Bagge, *Political Thought of the King’s Mirror*, pp. 30-37, 40.
general, the religious arguments are more prominent in *The King’s Mirror*: divine kingship is the key concept. The king is God’s image on earth, and he exercises his office (‘sysla’, ‘embaetti’), in God’s stead. The king shares his name with God and he must liken his judgments to God’s.37 Indeed, the king is portrayed very much as a judge. The rule of a good king – and we may definitely call him a *rex justus* – aims at upholding peace, liberty, and justice.38

*The King’s Mirror* uses few secular historical examples and references to classical literature. However, examples are drawn from the Old Testament, further reinforcing the image of the king as judge. The Bible also provides contrasting images of both the ideal ruler and the evil tyrant, and this traditional opposition is very important in the work. Saul is David’s negative mirror image, while Adonijah is Solomon’s.39

The main virtues required of the ideal king in thirteenth-century Norway are naturally connected to the king’s function as judge. First among these is wisdom, which means understanding good arguments and understanding justice and law.40 A master virtue, wisdom (often called ‘mannvit’, although this is not consistent) is described as branching out like a tree into other, lower, moral virtues: ‘siðgoede’ (good manners), ‘haeverska’ (modesty or courtesy), ‘sannsýni’ (justice), ‘hóf’ (temperance, humility). Wisdom in turn is derived from piety (or grace). Furthermore, wisdom seems to include religious contemplation as a higher form, although this is not perhaps central to the political context of the mirror. Most importantly, wisdom concerns righteous judgment. Bagge points out that ‘[w]isdom receives a moral aspect and almost merges with another main virtue, justice.’41 The office of the king seems indistinguishable from that of a judge: it is his duty to ‘judge

38 *Kongs-skugg-sio*, pp. 508-16; Bagge, *Political Thought of the King’s Mirror*, pp. 23-24, 38-39, 46-48, 52, 55, 57, 61, 70-85, 97-100, 196-208, 210-13. Interestingly, it does not seem to have been actual practice that the king should judge legal cases in person in Norway in this period, although this was the case in Sweden; Bagge, *Political Thought of the King’s Mirror*, p. 74; for Sweden, where judging legal cases was perhaps the most important function of the ruler, see Nordberg, *I kung Magnus tid*, pp. 126-36, 144. In Denmark the king was expressly denied the right to do this from the thirteenth century on; Charpentier Ljungqvist, *Kungamakten och lagen*, pp. 44-46, 149.
41 Bagge, *Political Thought of the King’s Mirror*, pp. 86-94, 104-6, quote at p. 94; *Kongs-skugg-sio*, pp. 601, 609-10.
on men’s affairs and needs’ (‘daemma um mál manna ok naudsyniar’).\textsuperscript{42} When he is not considering the needs of his people, a king should seek God’s wisdom, as found in the Wisdom of Solomon or Book of Sirach.\textsuperscript{43}

The fourteenth century saw the creation of two important works of political thought in Scandinavia, both originating in Sweden.\textsuperscript{44} The fourteenth century was a period of relative stability and a measure of state-building in Sweden. In contrast, the fifteenth century was a turbulent period characterized by conflict and a weak central government. Much of what I have to say about the Middle Ages will be founded on these fourteenth-century texts. On the other hand, \textit{Konungastyrelsen} and the \textit{Revelations} of St. Bridget are such rich texts that an analysis of them will at least bring many interesting answers.

\textit{Om Konnunga styrilse och höfdinga}

A free (and shortened) Swedish fourteenth-century adaptation of Giles of Rome’s \textit{De regimine principum} has come down to us in a published version of the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{45} The work, entitled \textit{Om Konnunga styrilse och höfdinga} (The rulership of kings and princes; henceforth \textit{Konungastyrelsen}),

\textsuperscript{42} \textit{Kongs-skugg-sio}, pp. 624, 637.
\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Kongs-skugg-sio}, pp. 624, 635. This seems representative of an older conception of wisdom, consistent with the Carolingian period; Berges, \textit{Die Fürstenspiegel}, p. 67.
\textsuperscript{44} Magnus Eriksson was king of both Sweden and Norway between 1319 and 1343 (he ruled Sweden until 1363). He reigned under different circumstances in the two countries – the Norwegian monarchy was hereditary while the Swedish was elective. For a time, Magnus also ruled over parts of what is now (and was then) Denmark. Furthermore, the marriage between Magnus’s son Haakon and Danish princess Margarete subsequently led to the union between the three countries known as Kalmarunionen, from which Sweden seceded only in 1523, while Denmark and Norway remained united until the early nineteenth century. The Swedish land law which bears Magnus Eriksson’s name is also a product of this period, and the constitutional law (‘Konungabalken’) contained within it shares some common views with \textit{Konungastyrelsen}. The similarities include the form: \textit{Konungastyrelsen} is divided into ‘balkar’ and ‘flockar’, just like medieval Swedish laws. Péneau considers this in the context of a surge of vernacular writing in Sweden in the period, such as the paraphrase of the Pentateuch and the \textit{Chronicle of Duke Erik Magnusson} (\textit{Erikskrönikan}); Péneau, ‘Um styrilsi konunga ok höfþinga’, pp. 193, 209. Péneau also points out that there are instances when the writer does not hesitate to distance himself from his models and chooses rather to adhere to the contemporary Swedish laws, even though the main thrust of the mirror’s argument is quite at odds with the laws, in that it replaces \textit{legal} limitations on the king with \textit{moral} (and, perhaps, \textit{divine}) limitations; Péneau, ‘Um styrilsi konunga ok höfþinga’, pp. 211-14.
\textsuperscript{45} The MS has since then been lost, but a few pages of a fifteenth-century copy were rediscovered in the nineteenth century. The text has been dated c. 1340; Péneau, ‘Um styrilsi konunga ok höfþinga’, pp. 191-92, and Drar, \textit{Konungens herravälde}, pp. 70-72.
is in many ways a curious text. It is simultaneously an important early example of the transference of an Aristotelian political and ethical vocabulary into the Swedish language and an effort to come to terms with contemporary political issues using concepts and forms which were particular to medieval Scandinavia.

Just like in the *The King’s Mirror*, the king is described as God’s instrument or servant (‘gudz sysloman’). Hence, it is appropriate that the wise king take God as an example, again very much like in the Norwegian text: ‘And thus a wise king shall know and take as his example how God orders and rules this world.’\(^{46}\) Indeed, it has been suggested that the use of the term ‘sysla’, denoting the king’s office, may be a direct influence from the Norwegian language.\(^ {47}\) While politics is considered from a temporal standpoint in *Konungastyrelsen*, it is still a part of a Christian moral world order. A king who does not fear God, who is greedy and unrighteous, is often deprived of his power as a consequence of ‘a just judgement of God’.\(^ {48}\)

However, *Konungastyrelsen* also presents something new. A very positive view of politics and of man in society strikes the reader from the outset. Following Aristotle, the text argues not only that man is a social animal, but that man is clement (‘milder’) by nature. Human beings live together because this provides common benefits: ‘that everyone may have use of and support from the others’. The end of human society is consequently the common good, peace, justice, and concord. These can hardly be separated, as ‘peace and liberty’ (‘frid ok frälse’) are intimately linked with the ‘common good’.\(^ {49}\)

*Konungastyrelsen* seems also to separate worldly affairs from the spiritual. In principle, the spiritual form of life occupies a higher position in the hierarchical world order, but the text as such does not much concern itself with the spiritual side of things. Moreover, crucially, the secular life can be a good one: ‘a purely worldly life’ is described as a life that should be lived ‘with virtue and manliness and temperance’.\(^ {50}\)

46 ‘Ok tij skal witur kunungr huxa ok taka til äpte döme huru Gudh skipa ok styre thessa wäruld’, *Om Konnunga styrilse*, pp. 63-64, similarly p. 14. Romans 13, which is used here, had been an important basis for political argument in Western Christendom since the early church; Anton, *Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos*, p. 56. Please note that I quote the text from Bureus’s 1634 edition throughout; references to Schefferus’s later Latin edition below only regard Schefferus’s commentary.


49 ‘At hwar hawi aff androm gagn ok hugnad’, ‘almoghans gaghn’. Phrases like ‘fridh ok frälse, ok til godha sämio inbyrdes’ are used repeatedly, *Om Konnunga styrilse*, pp. 4, 5, 6, 8, 56; expressions such as ‘almogans tharue’ and ‘almoghans gaghn’ are also used throughout, e.g. pp. 7-8, 9, 31-32, 65.

hope, and love are mentioned, but only briefly. It is also stated that one should live a pure and godly life, perhaps indicating celibacy as the ultimate ideal. However, this is never central to the work. The four cardinal virtues are the main concern. Virtue (‘Dyghd’) is defined as ‘good and fair order in the man’s thought, will and manners, by which the man may live well and honestly’.

The virtues correspond to these aspects of the governance of man’s soul and behaviour: prudence to the intellect (‘hugh’), justice to the will, temperance to outward demeanour (‘åthävor’) and restraint of bodily desires.

The cardinal virtues are also connected with one another, so that ‘none of them may be without the others’.

In Konungastyrelsen, practical wisdom or prudence is considered the master virtue, and this seems to be particularly important in a king: ‘Wise prudence in his actions is the first and highest virtue a king should have, and it is the virtue which advises all others, and governs towards that which is good.’ This quote also indicates that prudence is intimately linked with justice. Among other things, the good king is also a judge, and as such he must be ‘wise’ (‘viter’), the writer explains. This is perhaps the best way to imagine prudence as the master virtue in Konungastyrelsen: it is connected to justice because it is that capacity for good judgement which a king exercises when personally adjudicating a legal case. ‘Forhuxan’ (prudence) is the virtue ‘which can perceive and distinguish what is good or ill’, and involves weighing everything one does, to determine which alternative is the best.

Although this often involves distinguishing between right and wrong, it can also mean deciding on matters of expediency, self-preservation, and utility, e.g. ‘wise prudence is to beware of betrayal and all injury’.

The concept of justice is clearly defined in accordance with the distributive principle of Aristotle and Roman law: ‘Let each have his own, and everyone that which he is rightly due.’ What is to be distributed is not only (or even primarily) material goods, but also the honour awarded the

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51 ‘godh ok faghr skipilse i manzens hugh ok wilia ok hans åthäue, huilka ledh mannen må wäl ok redhlika liwa’, Om Konnunga styrilse, pp. 17-18.
52 Om Konnunga styrilse, p. 18.
53 ‘ängin thera må utan andra wara’, Om Konnunga styrilse, p. 18, similarly again at p. 19.
55 Om Konnunga styrilse, pp. 57, 60.
56 ‘som kan skudha ok skilia huat sum är got ällr it’, Om Konnunga styrilse, pp. 18-19, 21.
57 ‘witir Forhuxan är varna sik för förrådhiismaok allom wådha’, Om Konnunga styrilse, pp. 19, 21-22. One issue which is given much consideration is whom to share your secrets with, pp. 16-17, 22, 37-38, 71.
pious and virtuous, as well as punishment of evil-doers.\textsuperscript{58} The king’s justice protects the innocent and defenceless, and keeps the peace in relation to enemies both without and within; in short, it preserves ‘peace and liberty’ (‘frid och frälse’).\textsuperscript{59}

The king and his counsellors should ‘act and advise, in order that land and people may have a fair law’. If some law is turned to the disadvantage of the commoners (‘allmogen’) the king and counsellors should see to it that it is changed to their ‘gain and benefit’ (‘gaghn ok hughnadh’).\textsuperscript{60} The law is dead if there is no living man to administer it, and therefore the king is called a living law.\textsuperscript{61} Drar has stressed the importance of the insistence on the legislative activity of the ideal ruler in \textit{Konungastyrelsen}, legislation being a means to achieve virtue, which was the end of secular society according to this scholastic/Aristotelian view.\textsuperscript{62} The corresponding ideas in Giles of Rome are discussed by Tjällén elsewhere in this volume. To be sure, this justice is founded upon a love of God that is perfected through good works and love of one’s neighbour.\textsuperscript{63} However, in \textit{Konungastyrelsen}, virtue is to a great extent presented as an end in itself, and it is certainly the end of secular political life. What relation this virtue had to the supernatural end of man is unclear, as it often was in the high Middle Ages – the academic philosophers being divided and less than clear on this issue themselves.\textsuperscript{64}

The virtues of clemency and generosity are also dependent on justice, as they pertain to the king distributing gifts, grace, and favour. Seizing the property of his subjects without legal cause is a vice (‘odyghd’) and unbecoming of a king.\textsuperscript{65} It is dishonest not to give alms to the poor, but it is a ‘great honour’ (‘dighr hedhr’) for the king to keep a large retinue and court, provide them with fine clothes and food, and so on.\textsuperscript{66} ‘Mildlekr’ can be understood as both clemency and generosity regarding money and goods, and without it the king will never receive ‘the full love or respect of his subjects’.\textsuperscript{67}

\textsuperscript{58} ‘Lat huarium hua sit eghit, ok huarioum thz hånom bör til rätta’, \textit{Om Konnunga styrlse}, p. 31; ‘thön dyghd, ther stadhugh är i manzins wilia, til at lata huariom thet hans är’, \textit{Om Konnunga styrlse}, p. 19.

\textsuperscript{59} \textit{Om Konnunga styrlse}, p. 49.

\textsuperscript{60} ‘achta ok rådha, at lanzkap ok almoghe haui rätwis lagh [...]’, \textit{Om Konnunga styrlse}, p. 75.

\textsuperscript{61} \textit{Om Konnunga styrlse}, p. 68.

\textsuperscript{62} Drar, \textit{Konungens herravälde}, pp. 72-73, 76, 80, 83-93; Berges, \textit{Die Fürstenspiegel}, pp. 70-71.

\textsuperscript{63} \textit{Om Konnunga styrlse}, pp. 25-26, 30.

\textsuperscript{64} Bejczy, ‘Concept of Political Virtue’, pp. 19-23; Berges, \textit{Die Fürstenspiegel}, p. 52.

\textsuperscript{65} \textit{Om Konnunga styrlse}, pp. 23, 25, 74.

\textsuperscript{66} \textit{Om Konnunga styrlse}, pp. 40-44, 46.

\textsuperscript{67} ‘fullan kärlek ella godha fräghd, af sinom unidånom’, \textit{Om Konnunga styrlse}, pp. 34-35.
Konungastyrelsen has a few things to say about how a young prince may acquire the virtues described above. Aristotle likened a child’s soul to a blank wax tablet, prepared for writing.\(^68\) This influential metaphor was used in a concrete sense by Aristotle and in the subsequent tradition, and amounted to a physiological explanation of the workings of the human soul.\(^69\) In general, this view entails a strong emphasis on education, as the young are conceived as highly impressionable and formable.\(^70\)

However, this does not mean that the innate capacities of the young prince are unimportant. On the contrary, ‘as Aristotle says: the nobler the man is of his natural disposition, the quicker and better will he be held and ordered to virtuous things’.\(^71\) The statement that it is ‘very honourable and greatly needed’ (‘mykin hedhr ok tarf’) that the king is himself able to read also gives us reason to suspect that standards of education were not always very high, even among kings and princes, in medieval Scandinavia. The general view of Konungastyrelsen is that kings are exceptional, and this means that innate characteristics seem as important as education. In fact, it is even claimed that kings and noblemen are like gods, and that they should behave accordingly. In one particular passage, we read that they possess more ‘virtue and intelligence and goodness’ (‘dyghd ok snille ok godhlek’) than other men, and therefore are a ‘mirror and example’ (‘speghil ok äptedöme’) for everyone else. Of course, a large part of their virtue comes from neither nature or nurture. This level of virtue ‘no one is given perfectly, but only by the grace of God’.\(^72\)

The discussion of hereditary monarchy shows that Konungastyrelsen does view virtue as resulting in large part from innate capacities. From the early Carolingian mirrors for princes onward, the king’s office was often understood in accordance with the etymology of the Latin word rex, from regere, which was equated with recte facere. A ruler who did not rule justly was not worthy of the name. This etymology is presented in Konungastyrelsen as well, but so is an alternative, Swedish etymology, that leads in a different direction. Here,

\(^68\) ‘widh taflo släta then skipat ok bod är til at skriuas â’, Om Konnunga styrilse, p. 52.
\(^69\) Draaisma, Metaphors of Memory, pp. 25-27.
\(^70\) Drar, Konungens herravälde, p. 91.
\(^71\) ‘Ok suå som sigh Aristoteles: Thes ädhlare menniskian är af sin naturlik skipilse, Thes skyntare ok thes holdr wil hon sik halda ok skipa til dyghdelik ting’, Om Konnunga styrilse, p. 51. The view that men were unequal by nature in this way seems to have been widely accepted at the time; Berges, Die Fürstenspiegel, pp. 60-61.
\(^72\) ‘thet får âängin fulkomelika, utan enkanelika af gudz nådholm’, Om Konnunga styrilse, p. 39. This view of exceptionality, characteristic of Giles of Rome, is an expression of the concept of heroic virtue; see Tjällén, ‘Aristotle’s Heroic Virtue and Medieval Theories of Monarchy’.
'konung' is considered to be derived from 'kyn', 'breeding, inheritance', and thus the stress is on the inherited capacities out of which virtue is formed.\textsuperscript{73} Thus we read that a king should be of 'good ancestry, and therefore a king should be after inheritance and lineage, as from his father and parents, so that he is bred for good counsel, and this is conducive to pious actions'.\textsuperscript{74} Drar has pointed out that \textit{Konungastyrelsen} presented a revolutionary view of society, in which above all the power to make new laws was an important part of the king's duties, as he strove to achieve the ends of human society, which, in line with Aristotelian and Thomist thinking, was a life of virtue. However, she also shows how this new, ambitious, and optimistic vision of politics incorporated the older ideal of the Gregorian reform movement. If the early medieval king was primarily conceived as a judge who administered justice, and a custodian of an inherited, unchanging law, his virtues were still relevant, although the new king also became a lawgiver.\textsuperscript{75} This is perhaps all the more easily achieved in \textit{Konungastyrelsen}, as it argues for a variant of 'the unity of the virtues'. Thus, the prudence with which the king should legislate cannot exist without justice, and therefore the new and improved medieval king was still a \textit{rex justus}. However, \textit{Konungastyrelsen} shows an unprecedented stress on the cardinal virtues and consequently on politics as an activity valued in itself. This is not, in my view, the case with the \textit{Revelations} of St. Bridget.

\textit{Revelations} of St. Bridget

Both the modern editor and the original fourteenth-century compiler, Alfonso Pecha, of the \textit{Liber celestis imperatoris ad reges} (The book of the celestial emperor to kings; c.1376-77),\textsuperscript{76} as Book 8 of the \textit{Revelations} of St.

\textsuperscript{73} This observation is well made in Péneau, ‘Um styrilsi konunga ok höfþinga’, p. 205, although she considers it in the context of a discussion of elective vs. hereditary monarchy.

\textsuperscript{74} ‘godho kyni komin, ok thy skal kunungår wara äpte byrd ok arf, som äpte fadher ok föräldre sina, Then kyn är til godha rådha, ok är tht rönter til from gärninga’, \textit{Om Konnunga styrilse}, quote at pp. 5-6; similarly at pp. 14, 18, 39. The same word ('kyni') is used in \textit{Kongs-skugg-sío}, p. 274, when discussing the noble men of the king's retinue.

\textsuperscript{75} Drar, \textit{Konungen herravälde}, pp. 72-93. In discussing the medieval Scandinavian laws, Charpentier Ljungqvist argues that the laws were constantly added to, although older laws were not abolished to the same degree. This led to inconsistencies in some cases; Charpentier Ljungqvist, \textit{Kungamakten och lagen}, p. 72. I believe that something similar can be said of the mirrors: the tradition was never abolished, even though it was superseded by more recent intellectual developments.

\textsuperscript{76} Aili, ‘Introduction’, p. 21. The work was compiled by Bridget’s confessor Alfonso Pecha. The first printed edition appeared at Lübeck in 1492. Pecha seems to have considered the \textit{Liber ad reges} both as a separate work and a part of the \textit{Revelations} as a whole, Aili, ‘Introduction’, p. 19.
Bridget is called, consider the work to be a ‘mirror of kings’.\textsuperscript{77} It is also clear that it was Pecha’s compilation and revision that made the \textit{Liber ad reges} into such a mirror, although the contents are undoubtedly Bridget’s.\textsuperscript{78}

The \textit{Liber ad reges} is quite different from \textit{Konungastyrelsen}’s worldly and rather idealized discussions of a human society governed by virtue, reason, justice, peace, and concord. Instead, Alfonso’s prologue to Bridget’s work sets a scene of sublime religious terror and majesty against an apocalyptic backdrop. In a surprisingly authoritative voice the kings, princes, and emperors of this world are called to humble themselves and receive this book ‘from the hand of God’ and to follow its doctrines in both heart and actions.\textsuperscript{79} The princes of this world should bow their heads before God and humbly receive a new crown from ‘the bride of Christ’.\textsuperscript{80} Blessed are those who read and heed the words of the prophecy: ‘For the time is short.’\textsuperscript{81} Alfonso ends the prologue with an appropriately thundering warning that there is no distinction of rank with the Lord, and that his vengeance will strike those who do not fear him, in this world or the next.\textsuperscript{82}

According to the \textit{Liber ad reges}, all ‘dominium’ on earth is God’s creation, but that does not mean that it is natural: instead, the reason for the institution of worldly power is the fall.\textsuperscript{83} The importance of the fall colours the conception of man as political being. We encounter evil counsellors, described as wolves, foxes, and vipers; flatterers are scorpions.\textsuperscript{84} In short, the world is full of ‘ferocious and unbridled animals, that is, men without law, without charity, without a sense of God, prepared to do all manner of evil deeds’.\textsuperscript{85}

The text also builds on a theoretical hierarchy where spiritual power is clearly superior to worldly power, and this view permeates the work as a whole.\textsuperscript{86} More importantly, perhaps, the text takes the form of advice from Christ (through Bridget) to a certain king of Sweden, who must be taken to refer to Magnus Eriksson. However, the advice is rather unlike what is found in most other mirrors for princes – it is made abundantly clear that the king

\textsuperscript{78} Aili, ‘Introduction’, p. 44; Gilkaer, \textit{Political Ideas of St. Birgitta}, p. 79; for an extended discussion of the respective roles of Birgitta and Pecha I refer the reader to Gilkaer’s work.
\textsuperscript{79} Pecha, ‘Epistola’, 8, p. 79.
\textsuperscript{80} Pecha, ‘Epistola’, 8.9-10, p. 80.
\textsuperscript{81} Pecha, ‘Epistola’, 8.8, p. 80.
\textsuperscript{82} Pecha, ‘Epistola’, 8.15-21, p. 81.
\textsuperscript{83} Birgitta, \textit{Revelaciones: Book VIII}, p. 86 (1.22); similarly at pp. 90 (3.1-3) and 157 (36.1).
\textsuperscript{84} Birgitta, \textit{Revelaciones: Book VIII}, p. 92 (4.15), pp. 111-12 (17.1-5).
\textsuperscript{85} ‘animalibus ferocissimis et indomitis, id est viris sine lege, sine caritate, sine sensu Dei ad omnia mala preparatis’, Birgitta, \textit{Revelaciones: Book VIII}, p. 113 (18.11).
\textsuperscript{86} Birgitta, \textit{Revelaciones: Book VIII}, pp. 86-87 (1.26-34).
is very much negligent of his duties and prone to all manner of vice. In short, it is clear that this particular king has not been heeding good advice, and he is warned of the judgment and punishments to come.

The second chapter presents ten pieces of advice for the king. He should employ good counsellors, who are God-fearing and compassionate; he should support monasteries and crusades, he should pray and hear mass, meditate on the wounds of Christ, and perform other religious practices; he should listen to the ‘complaints of the subjects of the whole kingdom’.87 He should also weigh his giving of gifts carefully, as both ‘prodigality’ and excessive parsimony (‘nimia tenacitas’) are reprehensible in a ruler. The stress is on the equitable distribution of gifts, giving everyone their due.88 He should not transgress the law of God, not without great caution introduce new legislation, and in general always act in accordance with the law of God and the laws of the kingdom; he should always shun ‘cupiditas’ and love a true ‘humilitas’.89 In other words, the good king is the familiar medieval ideal of a rex justus striving to uphold God’s peace. Nevertheless, earthly politics also has a more pronounced other-worldly purpose: the king’s actions must aim ‘ad celestia’, and he must love God more than earthly things.90 To be sure, this is partly a question of him acting as a protector and benefactor of the church in this world, but it is also a question of his conduct as a good Christian, and ultimately, of his personal salvation. This gives the Revelations a particular emphasis on virtues of a rather more monastic or, at least, spiritual kind, above all humility. A short glimpse of Birgitta’s views on the education of a ruler underlines this: a king should have saints’ lives read to him, to give him comfort in his duties and bring him closer to God.91

The image of the just ruler is reinforced by a passage on Christian chivalry and crusading. A Christian soldier should, like St. George, protect the church and the defenceless and do battle with the enemies of the faith. The traditional metaphor of the armour of faith is repeated. The five fingers of the soldier’s gauntlet represent five aspects of the virtue of justice. The ‘perfection of the virtues’ of a Christian soldier grows out of religious observance, like the branches of a tree. His feet are the foundations, which is ‘a good

87 ‘querimonia subditorum communitatis regni’, Birgitta, Revelaciones: Book VIII, p. 89 (2.18). ‘Communitas regni’ may perhaps be a more narrow term, meaning the aristocrats of the Council of the Realm (of which Birgitta’s husband had been a member).
88 Birgitta, Revelaciones: Book VIII, p. 89 (2.22).
89 Birgitta, Revelaciones: Book VIII, p. 89 (2.26), p. 94 (6.3-6).
90 Birgitta, Revelaciones: Book VIII, p. 91 (4.1); ‘Nam honor regis est diuinam super omnia diligere [...]’, p. 92 (4.18), similarly pp. 94-95 (ch. 7).
91 Birgitta, Revelaciones: Book VIII, p. 93 (5.2).
will, mediated by God’s grace’. The Swedish king is advised not to trust his virtue, but to put his faith in God, like David when fighting Goliath.

Bridget also gives us a rare insight into views on the virtues of a queen, although this cannot be interpreted as referring to a queen regnant. In fact, she is no doubt referring to King Magnus’s queen, Blanche of Namur, towards whom she bears a grudge. Bridget holds that a good queen should be humble and modest, but also prudent in providing advice to her king. However, this queen, who is ‘seeking advice from me [i.e. Christ] through you [i.e. Bridget]’, has ‘infusiones et suggestiones’ from both a good and an evil spirit, who ‘struggle against one another in the heart of the queen’. The evil spirit argues for seeking worldly honour and riches, and tries to dissuade the queen from trying to imitate the lives of the saints and to persuade her to be content with a mere outer observance of religion. This false message is the opposite of true Christian humility, although it must be stressed that Bridget’s humility is very aristocratic and self-conscious: ‘Because it is fitting for martyrs that they have luxuries, but do not use them, that they are held in honour, but despise that honour, that they are greatly esteemed among men, but hold themselves in the least esteem.’

The Advice on a Godly Life of the Abbess Ingeborg

In a work written in Swedish dating to the middle of the fifteenth century, Ingeborg Gertsdotter (Gerhardsdotter), the aristocratic abbess of Vadstena, gives advice to her relative Christian I, King of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. This Advice on a Godly Life gives valuable insights into late medieval spiritual practices, especially the role of royal confessors. However, these practices also have some bearing on political matters, as has recently been

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93 Birgitta, Revelaciones: Book VIII, pp. 171-73 (ch. 44).
94 Birgitta, Revelaciones: Book VIII, p. 100 (12.5-6).
95 ‘in corde regine […] certabant inter se’, Birgitta, Revelaciones: Book VIII, pp. 100-1 (12.8-introd. ch. 13). An angel and a devil fight for the king’s soul again at p. 185 (48.57-64), and the theme returns later in the same chapter as well.
97 ‘Quia martirii genus est delicias habere et deliciis non uti, in honore esse et homorem contempture, magnum esse apud homines et minima sentire de seipso’, Birgitta, Revelaciones: Book VIII, p. 109 (15.24).
98 Gertsdotter, ‘Fjorton råd’. Ingeborg was the daughter of Gerhard, count of Holstein and duke of Slesvig.
pointed out by Biörn Tjällén.99 In general terms, a form of *imitatio Christi* is proposed for the king, or at least a life of constant recognition of and sense of indebtedness to the sacrifice of the saviour. The fact that a nun considers it appropriate to provide a king with ‘loving advice and healthy teachings’ is, just as in the case of Bridget, in itself an interesting fact.100

First and foremost, Abess Ingeborg clearly prescribes a religious life for the king: ‘First, seek the kingdom of God and of heaven’.101 He should meditate on ‘how God has adorned you with his own likeness and many virtues’.102 In a meditation on the wounds of Christ, mention is made of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, grace, and ‘every virtue’, and ‘every grace and seeds of virtue’.103 The idea of man as an image of God, and God as a model for man, is central. Nevertheless, it is repeatedly stressed that it is God who has decorated the king with virtues, and that he ought to be grateful. In emphasizing virtues as gifts, it becomes apparent that a ruler’s position, and his virtues, depend to a great extent on his inheritance, in terms of natural gifts as well as material ones:

O lord God, how manifold are your gifts of nature which you have bestowed upon me in creating me, more so than you have granted many thousand others, with great dignity on behalf of my parents. Contemplate there the benefices that you know to have from God, both from your parents and on your own account, such as dignity, a healthy constitution and bodily beauty, of the soul, inner and outer sense, quick and powerful perception and understanding, obedience and service of many people, etc.104

Coupled with this is a strong sense of sinfulness, and a call for humility. In particular, the king must beware of mortal sins, which he must confess.105 In

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99 Tjällén, ‘Kungens biktfader’.
prescribing prayers to God for assistance, Ingeborg uses expressions such as ‘me, who always sins’. In her interest in sins to avoid, Ingeborg expresses general Christian views, applicable to people in all walks of life: one must suppress ungodly thoughts, excessive desire for food, bodily pleasures, and above all the seven deadly sins. The Abbess had no qualms about lecturing a king on how to lead the life of a good Christian – he is merely a mortal man and another fellow Christian. However, there are certain points where the addressee’s status does become important, such as when discussing greed. It is taken for granted that a measure of generosity towards the poor was deemed appropriate for a man of his standing when he is reminded to ask himself if he has been ‘unmerciful towards the poor and needy’. In a concluding admonition to the king to put his faith in God, the virgin, and the saints to aid him in ruling fairly and successfully, a number of prominent royal saints are mentioned: St. Erik, St. Olaf, and the two Danish saints named Knud (duke and king).

Kristin Drar, drawing on both Konungastyrelsen and the Revelations, has argued that in Sweden the conception of a king’s legitimate rule as consisting of the protection of justice, peace and liberty was consistent through the whole of the Middle Ages. In her view, the more optimistic Thomist-Aristotelian view of society as natural and virtue as the end of political life only reinforced this. Thus she regards all the texts she analyses as fundamentally adhering to one and the same ideal of rulership, namely the ‘canon-law’, or ‘Gregorian’ ideal. My analysis of royal virtues in the medieval texts has more clearly highlighted the differences. Above all, there seems to be a division between ‘law-centred’ and ‘Christ-centred’ images of kingship. The former gives everyone his due after the model of Roman or natural law, but also uses law as a means for inculcating virtue in the king’s subjects. The latter leads a life in imitation of Christ, and does not value politics in itself very highly. The former corresponds to the virtues of justice and prudence, the latter to piety and faith. The two may perhaps be united under the common title rex justus, but only because ‘justus’ can

109 Drar, Konungens herravälde, pp. 57, 66-68, 76-77, 79, 85-87, 92, 99, 103, 106, 115-18, 125, 130-31, 133, 135-36, 141, 145-46. Interestingly, Drar claims that the Gregorian ideal was weakened towards the end of the Middle Ages, and perceives a tendency towards ‘Machiavellism’ in one of the late medieval chronicles, although she does not elaborate on this; pp. 145-46.
refer to the ruler and judge who rules justly and judges prudently, as well as the Christian believer who is deemed righteous in the eyes of the Lord on judgement day.

Reformation and humanism

And if there is no one whom you can defeat, you should do battle with yourself. For that is the most glorious of all battles, and truly worthy of an undefeated prince, if he daily strives to come out better than himself.\textsuperscript{110}

Just like the medieval period, the eventful sixteenth century cannot be said to be characterized by any one single consistent, well-defined ideal of kingship. Instead, it is reasonable to speak analytically of two distinct strands of development, even though these will in practice often be found together. On the one hand, there is a strictly Lutheran view of kingship and royal virtues. On the other, there is the view shaped by Erasmus, which both perpetuates the image of the traditional \textit{rex justus} and shapes a long-lived early modern ideal of a Renaissance prince educated in the classics, the prince who was created, not born. The \textit{Institutio principis Christiani} by Erasmus was translated (or paraphrased) into Danish and Swedish a few years after the original publication. The \textit{Institutio} was required reading for many famous monarchs of the period, such as Erik XIV, Christian IV, and even Charles XII (b. 1682), although by the latter’s time, Erasmus was complemented by the use of other texts of a markedly different character.\textsuperscript{111} Nonetheless, it seems safe to say that the Lutheran Reformation was more important than the Renaissance in the Scandinavian countries in the sixteenth century.\textsuperscript{112} Furthermore, this already complex picture has at least one further aspect: it is in this period that we first encounter the traces of the Machiavellian prince, whose only concern is to gain and then preserve his state. At first his role is merged with that of the traditional tyrant. He was the negative mirror image of the God-fearing Lutheran king.

\textsuperscript{110} ‘Et si nemo fuerit, quem vincas, ipse certato tecum. Q[ando]quidem istud est certamen omnium pulcherrimum, & vere invicto principe dignum[m], si cotidie nitatur seipso melior evadere’, Erasmus Roterodamus, \textit{Institutio}, p. 42.

\textsuperscript{111} Singer, \textit{Die Fürstenspiegel}; Olden-Jørgensen, ‘Hvad er et fyrstespejl?’, p. 15; Lockhart, \textit{Denmark 1533-1660}, p. 131; Hellerstedt, ‘\textit{Praeses} and \textit{Praeceptor}’.

\textsuperscript{112} During the following century things began to change, although by then the term Renaissance may be less appropriate for other reasons. See, for instance, Kajanto, \textit{Humanism in a Christian Society}, I, p. 12.
It is only in the mid-seventeenth century that the preservation of power is transformed into a legitimate goal in its own right in the Scandinavian mirrors for princes. One image above all others seems to encapsulate all these aspects: the battle within the prince’s soul.

Although a reformulation of political thought may have been a means to an end for the Lutheran reformers, political issues were still always central to Luther and his followers. The reformer Olaus Petri presented the new political order in a sermon at the coronation of Gustav Eriksson (Vasa), king of Sweden, in Uppsala in 1528. The coronation sermon puts forth a number of central ideas of the Reformation: that the political order and the ethics of the prince must conform to God’s will, knowledge of which can only be gathered directly from the Bible;113 that secular government is only necessary on account of the fall;114 that God will provide the prince with the supernatural gifts (‘en underligen gåffwa’)115 needed to govern well; and that he must not trust in his own resources, but only in the Lord.116 There are also important views which are more universal and less distinctively Lutheran. Just like Erasmus, Olaus repeats with striking frequency that government must be directed towards ‘thz meniga betzsta’ (‘the common good’, and similar expressions).117 He also makes clear that the prince should ‘judge fairly’ over rich and poor alike, and that justice means the distribution of punishments and rewards.118 Olaus draws on proto-nationalism, arguing that the Bible enjoins us not to elect a man who is a stranger in our land as king and holding forth saints Olav and Erik as models for the modern ruler.119 However, secular government is also defined in a rather reductionistic way, being concentrated mainly on peace and order in temporal affairs (‘fredh och roligheet til lekamenen’).120

The coronation sermon briefly outlines the ruler’s duties and virtues in theory, while two more ambitious works of the late sixteenth century, both addressed to the young prince Christian (later Christian IV of Denmark), provide richer representations of the same ideas, and spell out their implications.

115 Petri, *En Christelighen formaning*, p. 239.
120 Petri, *En Christelighen formaning*, p. 233. This view was characteristic of Luther’s early political writings, but not of the period as a whole. Many of Luther’s contemporaries, even among the reformers, gave the secular authorities much greater scope in dealing with spiritual matters; Estes, *Peace, Order and the Glory of God*, pp. 5-17, 21-29, 37-52.
Kong Salomons Hylding

Celebrating the acclamation (hyldning) of Christian, newly elected successor to the Danish throne, at Viborg in 1584, a stage play with a biblical theme was performed before the royal court and privy council. The playwright, schoolteacher, and minister, Hieronymus Justus (Justesen Ranch), participated himself, playing the role of the fool. The text, an entertaining and well-composed piece of literature, was printed a couple of years later.¹²¹

The plot of Kong Salomons Hylding takes places in Israel in the last years of the reign of King David. The introduction to the play explains how the historical events should be interpreted. The history of Israel has come down to us ‘so that the kingdom of Israel could be a perpetual mirror for all government in the whole world [...] And so that the world may know how the Lord himself both crowns and deposes rulers, and that kings rule by him.’¹²² In particular the stories are ‘such, that the virtues of rulers, which indeed are the work of the holy spirit, can be put before the eyes of all, in every state’.¹²³ David and Solomon have no equals among princes, and biblical history shows the workings of God’s providence, where the heathen writers only see blind chance, Justus argues.¹²⁴

At the centre of Kong Salomons Hylding are the two sons of King David, Solomon and Adonia (Adonijah). The sharp contrast between the two princes gives rise to the following question: why is Solomon a good man and Adonia evil, and why does David prefer the former to accede to the throne – what makes him a good prince? The answer is hinted at at the outset: when David saw how well Nathan educated Solomon, he thought that this must be the work of the Holy Spirit, and he gave him the name Jedidia, ‘beloved of the Lord’ as a sign ‘that he has [received] all this from God’.¹²⁵ Though both David and Solomon are paragons of virtue,¹²⁶ the play centres on God’s grace: only through it is virtue achieved. Correspondingly, vice and sin, far from being veiled, are presented for all to ‘see in a mirror’, as the consequences of ‘God taking his hand away’.¹²⁷

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¹²¹ Iustus, K: Salomons Hylding.
¹²⁴ Iustus, K: Salomons Hylding, pp. 7-8.
¹²⁶ For example, King David is described as ‘refterdig, forscigtig, vijss, taalmodig, modig oc Gudfryctig’, Iustus, K: Salomons Hylding, p. 10.
¹²⁷ ‘see sig i speyl’, ‘[att] Gud tager haanden bort’, Iustus, K: Salomons Hylding, p. 11. The mirror metaphor is used several times throughout the work.
To some extent the play leaves the reader uncertain whether virtues have any value at all. This is underlined in the contrasting portrayals of the two princes: Solomon is a good student, obedient and diligent, but he is only a child, and, as the evil counsellor Abiathar points out, being king is no child’s play. Adonia is both strong and wise, while Solomon is weak. Nathan, the wise tutor of Solomon, simply comments that God gives honour to whom he wishes.128 Crucially, the drama is being decided within Adonia’s soul: in Act 2, scene 1, the evil prince deliberates with himself: ‘he is in great torment, flesh and blood against the spirit, honour and virtue against treason and vice’. Of course, the latter prevails.129 Adonia knows that the lust for power runs counter to justice, but he gives in to it: ‘I will be pious another time/ Now I may look around/ Test, how far I can go:/ We are playing for the crown of Israel.’130 In fact, here we see the tyrant portrayed in a believable fashion, and his thoughts are remarkably similar to those of Machiavelli, whose ideas must have been familiar to the author. Adonia adds: ‘When I am king, who will dare say:/ He gained the kingdom by lies and betrayal?’, supported in the margin by a quote by Seneca: ‘A successful and fortunate crime is called virtue.’131 Joab advises that King David be murdered, and in the margins we read a quote from Lucan: ‘He who wishes to be pious, should leave the court.’ It is time to think of ‘the good and profit of the kingdom’, Joab continues,132

Compared to this, good (Christian) rule is a simple thing: the greatest honour of a kingdom lies in a ‘pure’ form of God’s worship, a well-ordered church, and ‘good order’ (‘god politij’) in worldly matters; all of which undoubtedly refers to the Reformation of church and state.133 Solomon is described as ‘wise and prudent,/ In speech honest,/ In action honourable’.134 Nathan and the priest Zadock discuss David’s children, and conclude that

128  Iustus, K: Salomons Hylding, pp. 41-44; Joab praises Adonia again, p. 77.
130  ‘En anden tid vil ieg bliffue from/ Nu maa ieg noget see mig om/ Forsøge, huor langt ieg, hen kunde kan:/ Israels Krune wi spiller om’, Iustus, K: Salomons Hylding, pp. 49-50; in the margin is the quotation from Euripides that Caesar is reported to have used: ‘Si violandum est jus, regnandi causa violandum est. Aliis rebus pietatem colas’. The lines of Adonia are a loose paraphrase of these.
132  ‘Exeat aula, qui volet esse pius’, ‘Rigens nytt’ oc gaffn’, Iustus, K: Salomons Hylding, pp. 64, 75.
there is more than one teacher (‘Tuctmester’) of children: ‘Good Nathan,/ Evil Satan,/ You, blood of Adam/ are resisting’.135

The deciding factor is that Adonia and his rebellious followers trust in themselves: their fortune (‘løckken’), and their fortitude (‘Min lycke oc mandom’).136 On the other hand, when King David hears how things really stand, he at first considers ‘the counsel of men’ (‘Menniskelige raad’), but soon abandons them to put his faith in God. He reads the Psalter and prays.137 Benaia admonishes the king: he has been much too lenient with his son, and David admits his guilt: ‘All mighty lords may here see in a mirror,/ That even the kings of this world may err’.138 The culminating scene when King Solomon is anointed clearly states what is the most important message of the play: kings rule through the grace of God. Without it they are nothing.139 Adonia, who finally repents and returns to his father in sack and ash, becomes a final lesson: ‘For fortune turns her wheel with me’. Solomon is indeed wise and prudent, although he is also ‘young and frail’ (‘vng oc klene’). However, ultimately ‘no wisdom will avail you’ if you oppose the Lord.140

**Alithia**

*Alithia* is a short, unpublished manuscript written by Johann Damgaard in 1597. There is little information about the author, but he seems to have been an educated man. The title page claims that the young king (then 20 years of age) read the work and discussed it at length with the author.141 The text calls itself a ‘king’s mirror, but not a great one’, and claims that from it, it can be learned ‘how to lead a royal government’.142 The title of the work, *Alithia* (wisdom) refers to religious wisdom: the title is explained simply as ‘God is truth’ (‘Gud er Sandhed’).143 More specifically, this means biblical wisdom, as the text is a clear statement of a Lutheran view of kingship. It

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141 Damgaard, *Alithia*, p. 27.
143 Damgaard, *Alithia*, p. 45.
also draws on the wider Christian tradition, however. *Alithia* essentially describes the ruler’s soul as a battleground where good and evil clash. 144

The most conspicuous feature of this work is the constant use of opposites. At the very beginning is a letter from the devil of unbelief, Belial, to his ‘huntress’, Incrédulitas. The devil and his servants are out to draw the king’s heart away from ‘all royal virtues’, and if they succeed in turning the head, the body will follow. The hunted king is likened to a unicorn, whose horn, ‘in which all his strength lies’, is the Word of God. 145 The work as a whole sets faith against incredulity, fortitude against despair, humility against pride, love against fear, king against tyrant, and Christ against Belial, as Paul does in 2 Corinthians 6:14-16. At the centre of the war between good and evil stands the primary Lutheran virtue: ‘God’s Magnanimity and Fortitude, *frimodighed* and God’s strength [my italics]’. 146 The truly untranslatable word ‘frimodighed’ (Swedish: ‘frimodighet’, from the German ‘Freimütigkeit’) corresponds to the sense of security, confidence, and complete trust in God which the believer will experience in faith, through grace. In a word, *frimodighed* is the sum of all Lutheran virtues. 147

In *Alithia*, the king’s virtue is described as a palm tree, but the tree is planted in the soil of God’s ‘true doctrine’ (‘reene laere’), and it is that which will bear the fruit of royal virtues. 148 Thus faith and God’s grace are both necessary and sufficient for virtue; human cooperation is irrelevant. Nonetheless, particular Christian virtues are described. The ideal king is humble, and as God’s instrument he should also act in imitation of Christ, remove his royal crown and replace it with a crown of thorns. He must know himself as the ‘great sinner’ he is, and he must be aware that it is the office that is venerated, and not the man. 149 In imitation of Christ, he must also be prepared to sacrifice his own life for the welfare of his subjects, a demand also made by Erasmus. 150

144 As the modern editor Olden-Jørgensen points out, this is a variation on the *Psychomachia* of Prudentius; the image of the soul of the prince as a battleground for God and the Devil was also used by Luther. Damgaard, *Alithia*, pp. 28-29. Similarly, Erasmus considers the evil prince an image or representation of an evil demon, as the good prince is the image of God; Erasmus Roterodamus, *Institutio*, p. 29.
146 ‘Magnanimitas och Fortitudo Dei, Frimodighed och Gudz Størcke’, Damgaard, *Alithia*, p. 57, similarly, ‘Misstrøstighed’ vs. ‘Frimodighed’, p. 65; the king’s noble advisers must also be guided by the Holy Spirit, p. 66.
The king is several times likened to a doctor, or even a medicine, whose purpose is to care for the health of the body.\textsuperscript{151} As ‘an experienced physician’ the king should cure and bandage those limbs which can be helped, but those which cannot ‘he will cut off and throw away’ to prevent them infecting the whole body.\textsuperscript{152} However, the king does not want any member of his body to be injured, and only a poor head would not want to help the members of its body. In similar fashion, the king is like a medicine, a ‘Preservativa’ or ‘Conserva’ which cures the diseases of the body rather than mutilates it.\textsuperscript{153}

\textit{Een kort Vnderwijsning}

Johan Skytte was a commoner (son of a burgomaster) who in the early decades of the seventeenth century rose to become a leading statesman and counsellor to Charles IX and his famous son Gustavus Adolphus (Gustav II Adolf). It is hardly surprising then that he was also appointed preceptor to the crown prince Gustav in 1602. In this capacity, he published a short mirror for the young prince entitled \textit{Een kort Vnderwijsning} (A brief instruction) in 1604. Later on, it was Skytte who first showed Gustav the manuscript of \textit{Konungastyrelsen}, which was then in Skytte’s possession. Having read it, he recommended to Johannes Bureus that he edit and publish the text. Skytte even expressed his wish that \textit{Konungastyrelsen} be used in Swedish schools, replacing classical authors.\textsuperscript{154}

\textit{Een kort Vnderwijsning} is significant in that it is a representative of the Renaissance humanist strain in mirrors for princes in Scandinavia. However, because it is such a late text, it is not a typical example of humanism, and gives important insights into other developments as well. Philosophically, Skytte was a follower of Petrus Ramus, and politically he was one of the first to introduce Lipsius in Sweden. However, on a more general level, Skytte was a strong believer in the importance and potential of education, and not least in rhetoric, and in that sense, he is a representative of late Renaissance humanism.

Skytte argues that ‘both the welfare and the ruin’ of the young lord himself depends on his ‘upbringing and discipline’. Just like an artisan, musician, dancer, or ball player, a ruler must exercise his skill to reach proficiency

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{151} Damgaard, \textit{Alithia}, p. 76.
  \item \textsuperscript{152} ‘enn forfarenn Laege’, ‘hugger hand aff och kaster bort’, Damgaard, \textit{Alithia}, p. 86.
  \item \textsuperscript{153} Damgaard, \textit{Alithia}, pp. 96, 99-100. The use of medical metaphors is generally similar to that used in Erasmus Roterodamus, \textit{Institutio}, e.g. pp. 100-1, 108.
  \item \textsuperscript{154} Skytte, \textit{Een kort Vnderwijsning}, p. 1; \textit{Om Konnunga styrlse}, ded. Bureus was also involved in the prince’s education.
\end{itemize}
and success. As practically all mirrors do, *Een kort Vnderwijsning* describes the prince as an example to his subjects. This pertains to his education, and the learning that comes from it, as well: if we know that our physician is skilled, we will gladly do what he says. Correspondingly, a ruler who lacks learning will earn the contempt of his subjects.\(^\text{155}\)

Religion is the ‘true source’ from which all other virtues flow, according to Skytte. Leading a kingdom is an office of divine origin, and no government is upheld without the ‘power and graceful ordination’ of God. The prince’s personal piety also inspires confidence in his subjects.\(^\text{156}\) When the prince beholds God’s righteousness, he will see to it that his own life conforms to the same righteousness. This amounts to nothing less than the traditional ideal of Roman law, to give each and every man his due.\(^\text{157}\) Importantly, fear of God and constant contemplation of his Word will render him ‘constant and frijmodigh in all danger [my italics]’.\(^\text{158}\) As expressed by Skytte, this ideal of ‘frimodighet’ is to some extent compatible with the constancy advocated by Lipsius, with which Skytte was without doubt acquainted. However, if it can be considered a form of Neostoicism, it is a thoroughly Lutheran version of it.\(^\text{159}\)

Skytte proves to be the most extreme proponent of the idea that virtue can indeed be taught through formal schooling. Grammar, for instance, is quite surprisingly described as nearly analogous to divine grace and as ‘that, through which all other glorious virtues are revealed and communicated to man’.\(^\text{160}\) Skytte’s view cannot be reduced to the view that language is the means through which we access revelation. Skytte also warmly recommends the study of rhetoric, not least because it is politically useful: ‘eloquence twists and turns man’s heart wherever she wishes’, he states, in words that were to be echoed by Gustav himself in his famous farewell speech on embarking for Germany in 1630.\(^\text{161}\) In his passion for rhetoric, Skytte admits

\(^{155}\) ‘Wälfärd/ så och Fördärff’, ‘Uptuchtan och Disciplin’, Skytte, *Een kort Vnderwijsning*, pp. 3-7. The arguments are very similar to the first part of Erasmus’s *Institutio*.


\(^{159}\) Prominent German Lutheran theologian David Chytraeus in fact used Lipsius’s *De constantia* for the purposes of teaching theology. Lipsius of course held that soldiers should be ‘fati sui securi’; Oestreich, *Neostoicism*, pp. 33, 52; for Lipsius and Sweden (Skytte in particular), see Lindberg, *Stoicism och stat*, esp. pp. 194-205.

\(^{160}\) ‘then, igenom hwilkens Hielp alle andre härlige Dygder warda Menniskiomen uppenbarade och tillkänna gifne’, Skytte, *Een kort Vnderwijsning*, p. 15.

to having been led somewhat astray by its power himself: ‘The loveliness of rhetoric and foreign tongues have, my Lord, seduced me to speak so copiously on the sweet and wonderful virtues of Rhetorica […]’. 162

Skytte’s educational ideal was truly universal, and not narrowly focused on the studia humanitatis. Dialectic, arithmetic, and geometry are crucial, as a king must be able to understand the flow of taxes, tolls, and excises, the strength of his army, and so on. They are also more directly pertinent to the arts of war, as the prince needs to learn ‘how we should position a few thousand men expeditiously, so that they form either a quadrangle, a triangle, a circle, a cuneus, or some other geometric figure’. Classical authors, such as Frontinus, Aelianus, and Vegetius have demonstrated the importance of mathematics to war, ‘which authors’ great books we will in time […] study and analyse, whether it is true what they have written on military matters, or not’. 163 Again, this is significant in relation to Neostoicism, so closely related to the military revolution in the Netherlands, from where it was imported by Gustav Adolf. Skytte’s text was in all likelihood influenced by Lipsius’s works (the De militia romana was published in 1595). 164

Skytte’s most central concern, however, is politics. He may well have gathered inspiration from Konungastyrelsen when describing the ruler’s duty as being to ‘almoga sin freda och frälsa’ (‘defend and save his people’), but the subtle shift from noun to verb form transforms ‘frid och frälse’, from its medieval meaning of ‘justice and liberty’ to be defended into a more pessimistic, and significantly reduced, idea of ‘defence and security’. 165 To underline this, he also formulates a prince’s office as being the care of the realm for the sake of the people’s ‘welfare’ (‘Wälfärd’). 166

162 ‘Wältalighetens och fremmande Tungomålhs Liuflighet, Nådige Herre, hafwer bedragit migh, at tala så widhlöfftigt om Rhetoricae sköne och vnderlige Dygder […]’, Skytte, Een kort Vnderwijsning, p. 22. Still, Skytte goes on to require that the king’s counsellors be good orators and masters of the Latin language; p. 39.


164 Donagan, War in England, pp. 18, 269-70; Wolke, Krigets idéer, pp. 78-86; Parker, Military Revolution, pp. 18-23. Oestreich gives the Swedish Articles of War of 1621 as an example, Neostoicism, pp. 76-78, 86, as does Lindberg, Stoicism och stat, 198-202, although the latter is more cautious regarding the influence of Lipsius. Skytte later on adds that he does not wish to say much about the practical side of military training, as he is not a soldier himself, Skytte, Een kort Vnderwijsning, pp. 44-47.

165 Skytte, Een kort Vnderwijsning, p. 33.

166 Skytte, Een kort Vnderwijsning, pp. 33-34.
With Skytte we also encounter those pieces of advice that belong to the shadier sides of politics and which were so negatively portrayed in *Kong Salomons Hylding*. Such advice is addressed to the ruler himself as well as to his counsellors. The latter should be God-fearing men, but they must also be able to ‘be silent’ and be ‘secretive, although not so secretive, that they wish to contemplate all their Lords’ most secret and hidden affairs, which Cornelius Tacitus claims is impossible and vain’.\(^{167}\) The ruler must also take similar care, for ‘a good, pious, and skilled prince is often bought, sold, and betrayed by those counsellors, which Lipsius calls cubiculares consiliarios’\(^{168}\). Politics, in Skytte’s view, teaches the prince to know the common man (‘gemene man’) which also means that he must learn to ‘beware of him’. For the common man is not to be trusted, and is ‘inclined to change’. Politics also teaches the causes of the fall of princes and kingdoms. In particular, princes must beware of treacherous and proud courtiers, who commonly stay at court, that is, in the same places where worms and beetles crawl.\(^{169}\)

In Skytte’s view, political virtues can be learned in two ways: either through long and arduous personal experience, or by the easier way of reading the learned writings of politici. The study of jurisprudence, and in particular, history, perfects the academic side of the prince’s education. ‘If you do not know the causes of the beginnings, growth, and ruin of all mighty kingdoms, go to history.’ History is in no way exclusively a collection of exemplars of virtue: in history one may in fact study ‘the vices and stains of all pious princes’.\(^{170}\) Historians such as Thucydides, Livy, and Cominaeus all provide advice which is directly applicable to contemporary politics. When the state coffers are empty, one may go to Roman history and observe how extraordinary taxation was introduced, starting with the riches of the most prominent citizens. If the prince wishes to know what end the ruler who does not hear the advice of others will meet, he need only go to Cominaeus (Philippe de Commynes), as his father (Charles IX) so often did.\(^{171}\) As a proponent of the study of history with a view towards political utility, Skytte

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is indeed a harbinger of a new century, as this method of learning politics is characteristic of the following period.

In comparing the education of Christian IV and Gustavus Adolphus, Sebastian Olden-Jørgensen has argued that the former’s was very much old-fashioned. Christian’s Latin exercises (as well as e.g. Alithia) contain an ideal of kingship which in Olden-Jørgensen’s words can be termed ‘Erasmus light’, and the young prince genuinely seems to have taken this ideal to heart. In terms of education, Gustav belonged to an entirely different generation in Olden-Jørgensen’s view. The virtues are now valued as much in terms of ‘legitimacy’ and ‘propaganda’ as they were in terms of any intrinsic value. In other words, they serve as an instrument for another purpose. I generally agree with this view, but would like to add that the development becomes much clearer when we come towards the middle and end of the seventeenth century. If the sixteenth century was the period of ‘Erasmus lite’, then surely the seventeenth was the time of ‘Machiavelli lite’.

**Hortus Regius**

Between 1643 and 1647 the Swedish diplomat Schering Rosenhane worked at the drawn-out negotiations for peace at Münster in Westphalia. Rosenhane became acquainted with Diego Saavedra Fajardo, a Spanish nobleman on the opposite side of the negotiating table. The two men shared an interest in political thought, and Rosenhane received a copy of the *Idea principis Christiano-Politici* (The idea of a Christian prince), which Saavedra had published in 1640. This work, and perhaps the personal contact with Saavedra, inspired Rosenhane to create an original work adapted to Swedish circumstances. The result was *Hortus Regius* (Royal garden), which like *Idea* is a work of political emblems and a mirror for princes. More precisely, it is dedicated to Queen Christina, to whom it was presented as a luxurious manuscript. It was, however, never published. *Hortus Regius* differs from *Idea* in form. While the latter is composed of 100 essays, each one based on an emblem, the former is made up of emblems accompanied by a selection of quotations, chosen around the theme given by the emblem.

In a dedication, the young queen’s virtues are praised as being ‘beyond her sex’; this implies the view, which was common at the time, that women

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174 Jan Waszink has said that Lipsius ‘should be considered a moderate Machiavellian or a moderate anti-Machiavellian’. This reflects this very common position well. Waszink, ‘Introduction’, p. 102.
are able to achieve virtue, even to the degree that they may be on a par with men, but that this happens infrequently, and only extraordinarily, as their bodily constitution was normally considered to counteract this.\textsuperscript{175} Otherwise, there is little to distinguish the text from other mirrors of the period; it does not seem to have been adapted to a female reader, a fact which is in line with what we know of the queen’s education: she was educated to be a ‘king’, in a wholly masculine fashion.\textsuperscript{176}

The quotations accompanying the first emblem stress the same things as the image: that political power is a divine institution, that the ruler must consider the common good, and that virtue and a distinguished lineage go hand in hand. The work goes on to state that religion is the foundation of a stable society, and that love and peaceful methods of governance are more effective than violence. A quote from Plutarch exemplifies this: ‘A prince ought not only to know and be able to govern justly, but also humanely. For he is a bad sheperd who hates his sheep, and who is hateful to his cattle.’\textsuperscript{177} However, little by little, clemency gives way to other concerns. On the traditional theme of justice as a balance between cruelty and excessive clemency, Cicero is quoted, claiming that ‘one should pay attention, not to the utility of the one who punishes someone, but to the utility of the state’. Rosenhane also draws on Tacitus, who says ‘one should not be afraid of a little offence for the common good’, and this is followed by the theme of pious fraud: ‘To deceive according to the customs of the age, is the highest form of prudence’ (Pliny); ‘They are simpletons, who bear their soul in their faces, and are never fit for the public theatre’ (Lipsius). Although it is clearly pointed out that deceit (\textit{dolus}) must be used in a good cause, it is just as clear that such a deceit is quite legitimate.\textsuperscript{178}

\textit{Gubernacula}

Andreas Norcopensis (later Nordenhielm) was a professor of Latin eloquence at Uppsala University when, in 1686, he was appointed preceptor of the young

\textsuperscript{176} Åslund, \textit{Att fostra en kung}.
\textsuperscript{177} ‘Oportet virum Principum non recté tantum imperare scire et posse; Sed etiam humaniter. Turpe enim pastorem oves odisse et pecoribus suis infensum esse’, Rosenhane, \textit{Hortus Regius}, p. 6.
Crown prince of Sweden, Charles (XII).\textsuperscript{179} The introduction of absolutism by the latter’s father (Charles XI) is usually dated to 1680, although this was in fact a gradual process. From Norcopensis’s time at Uppsala, many dissertations of a political nature have been preserved in printed form.\textsuperscript{180} One of them, \textit{Gubernacula imperii togati} (The rudder of political power), is in effect a mirror for princes. On the theoretical level, the basis is modern natural law, i.e. Grotius and most significantly, Hobbes. More importantly for the present purpose, it is a work of practical politics, and Tacitism and reason of state are prominent. Johannes Schefferus, a German who worked at Uppsala for three decades, and a representative of a form of Tacitism associated with his home town of Strassburg, is an important influence. Among other things, Schefferus published an edition with a Latin translation of \textit{Konungastyrelsen}. This edition contains notes with political commentary on the text: for instance, Schefferus criticizes the original author and Aristotle for their views on generosity, drawing on Machiavelli’s \textit{Prince}.\textsuperscript{181}

Imitating Lipsius’s \textit{Politica}, the \textit{Gubernacula} is a ‘cento’ work. This means that the \textit{Gubernacula}, not unlike the \textit{Hortus Regius}, is made up of quotations, with short linking passages between them.\textsuperscript{182} It does not mean that the \textit{Gubernacula} does not have a position of its own on the issues. On the contrary, as the sources are often quite contradictory, the work does make a clear stand in relation to them. For instance, the \textit{Gubernacula} uses many quotes from \textit{Konungastyrelsen}, but is politically much closer to modern writers such as Lipsius or Bodin.

In an introduction, the \textit{Gubernacula} establishes the main purposes of politics. The main aim is security. It is the duty of rulers to preserve society from external and internal enemies. Quoting Saavedra, it states that the ‘kingdom where arms are held in high regard preserves wealth: where lances nourish olives and wines: where Ceres utilizes the helmet of Bellona, so that she may more safely bear her fruits!’\textsuperscript{183} Thus the purpose of war is peace, and the dissertation limits itself to the peaceful side of politics, leaving war aside. Peace must be upheld by the means of religion and justice. In light of

\textsuperscript{179} A more extensive analysis of Norcopensis can be found in Hellerstedt, ‘\textit{Praeses} and \textit{Praeceptor}’.
\textsuperscript{180} Whether they were written by the professor or the student is difficult to tell with certainty.
the tradition, this means that there is a shift in the relation between ends and means. Justice and religion are not ends in themselves (politically speaking), but means to peace and security. The *Gubernacula* sets out to discuss religion and justice ‘as far as they concern the strengthening and maintenance of prosperity and concord among the citizens’.\(^{184}\)

The theme of the dissertation is gathered from a quote from the Roman historian Florus: ‘And then he reduced the wild people, so that the empire [*imperium*] it had gained through force and injury would be governed with religion and justice.’\(^{185}\) This refers to the reign of Numa Pompilius, legendary second king of Rome. Plutarch presents him as a pious fraud: Numa claimed that his laws had divine inspiration, in order for them to be respected. Significantly, a similar story is used by Machiavelli as part of his argument for the political usefulness of religion in the *Discorsi*.\(^{186}\) This leads us to ask the following: if justice and religion are the theme, why not simply present us with an image of a glorious *rex justus* with all his royal virtues? The answer is that times had changed. ‘Force and injury’ were now at the heart of political philosophy, and the *rex justus* had in part become obsolete.

The virtue reflecting the relation between ends and means is prudence. The position taken by the political master virtue, *prudentia principis* (the ‘practical wisdom of the prince’), to which the first third of the dissertation is devoted, has shifted. The virtue as such is defined in a way very similar to the way it always had been, but the ends and means to which it related had changed. The metaphor of the body is extensively used. As before, prudence is the overseer and commander of the whole; *Konungastyrelsen* is quoted, saying that a people whose king lacks prudence (‘ther änkte kan förehuxa’) is like a blind man.\(^{187}\) This art of governing citizens (‘ars,qvâ civem regant’) is less common, even in the most excellent of men, than the arts of war. A version of the Lutheran idea of the king’s supernatural abilities through the power of grace is clearly at play behind these statements, but it takes on a new guise. Some assume that a prince need not be prudent himself, as long as he has good counsel, we read. This is wrong, the dissertation claims,

\(^{184}\) ‘Religionem & justitiam, qvatenus ad civium concordiam ac salutem confirmandam & conservandum spectent, pro ingenii mei captu, rudi penicillo adumbrare cogitavi’, Norcopensis, *Gubernacula*, praef.

\(^{185}\) ‘Eo denique ferocem populum redegit, ut, qvod vi et injuria occupaverat imperium, religionem atque justitiam gubernaret’, Florus, *Epitome* 1.2.4. Modern editions (e.g. Loeb) do not use the same chapter divisions, but the text is the same.

\(^{186}\) Plutarch, *Numa* 8; Machiavelli, *Discorsi* 1.11.

\(^{187}\) Norcopensis, *Gubernacula*, p. 2. Note Lipsius, *Politica* 3.1, where the prince who lacks prudence is likened to the Cyclops, who is blind after losing his only eye.
referring to Machiavelli, who in the *Prince* (ch. 23) claimed that a prince who is not himself wise cannot receive good advice.\(^\text{188}\)

Prudence is further described as the one and only virtue of the ruler, as it discerns everything as it really is, and knows how to give everything its rightful weight.\(^\text{189}\) In this passage, the text refers to both *Konungastyrelsen* and Lipsius’s *Politica* (3.1), although it seems to adhere more closely to the latter, as prudence comes to overshadow justice. Critically, *prudentia principis* is defined as that virtue of the soul through which the prince knows how to decide on what should be done and what should be avoided, ‘according to what his own, as well as the state’s, need dictates’.\(^\text{190}\) Thus, instead of presenting the ruler’s personal interest and the needs of the state as incompatible opposites, as Erasmus does (to name but one example), the interest of the ruler and the interests of the state are here considered to be one and the same.\(^\text{191}\)

In elaborating on the content of political prudence, the *Gubernacula* also argues that success is generally gained through the understanding of underlying causes and anticipation of future events (*prudentia* being related to *providentia*).\(^\text{192}\) Therefore, this political prudence can be learned, primarily through the study of history. The utility of history in this regard is not a question of history being a mirror of exemplary lives and a spur to virtue (although this is also mentioned). The crucial usefulness of history is more morally neutral: one observes past events, gains an understanding of causes and effects, and forms the capacity to come to the right decision from the experience of dead men. In this way, one can gain the experience of many lifetimes, and avoid mistakes which would be very costly if they were made in real life.\(^\text{193}\) The foundation for this view is a humanist conception of human nature as fundamentally the same at all times. A quote from Machiavelli’s *Discorsi* is used to make the point: ‘because human nature is one and the same in every period, it must be that man always has the same passions and affections’.\(^\text{194}\)

This may at first seem like a repetition of the traditional view that history is *magistra vitae* (life’s teacher), a standard point of view in mirrors and

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\(^\text{188}\) Norcopensis, *Gubernacula*, p. 2. The position is also supported with reference to Saavedra.

\(^\text{189}\) Norcopensis, *Gubernacula*, p. 3.


similar literature since antiquity. However, there is an important difference if compared to earlier authors. Erasmus concedes that history may indeed be a source of *prudentia* for the prince, but he puts much emphasis on warning of the dangers of reading history the wrong way. The Greek writers were heathens, and they present the reader with a poor example of a ruler. The Romans (Livy and Sallust) are somewhat better, but even they ‘do not approve of all that they describe, and what they approve of is hardly anything to be approved of for a Christian prince’. The great heroes of antiquity, such as Achilles, Cyrus, or Caesar were in fact ‘great and furious robbers’ and not exemplars of Christian virtue. Erasmus does defend the reading of classical historians, but only to extract from them morally good examples.\(^{195}\) In Norcopensis, classical history is, first of all, held in much higher regard. Secondly, since the aim is to understand how politics works, examples of vice and tyranny serve an educational purpose just as well as examples of Christian virtue and piety; in fact, there is much of the former, and little of the latter, to be found in the favourite author of the day, Tacitus.

After having established the content of the central virtue of prudence, *Gubernacula* goes on to treat religion and justice as examples of areas where prudence is applied. Religion is considered from a political perspective. It ensures that relations between citizens will be strong and harmonious, and success will follow in a state where the people are pious. In short, religion is ‘vinculum & firmamentum Reipublicae’ (the bond and foundation of the state). Numa Pompilius is once again brought up as an example (among a host of others). However, among the ancient heathens, it is added, religion was used as a mere instrument of domination. This only reinforces the point: if there was such power in their hollow superstition, what must not the true religion be capable of? The prince himself should be an example to others through personal piety – as Seneca, Pliny, Lipsius, and others remarked, the ruler, who lives in the public eye, cannot hide or disguise himself.\(^{196}\) ‘I know a certain Machiavellus’, the writer goes on, ‘who recommends to his prince a simulated piety and an outer show’. Some have agreed, because the unruly mass of the people may sometimes be held back by superstition.\(^{197}\) However, such fraud does not last long. The prince’s majesty will be blemished

\(^{195}\) ‘non omnia probant quae narrant, & quaedam probant, haud quaquam probanda principi Christiano’, Erasmus Roterodamus, *Institutio*, pp. 75-77.

\(^{196}\) Norcopensis, *Gubernacula*, pp. 10-15; the quote (at p. 13) is from Lipsius, *Monita et exempla* i.2. *Gubernacula*, p. 36, also mentions Lycurgus, who ‘simulavit’ that he had received the counsel of Apollo when writing his laws.

and he will suffer the contempt of the multitude.\footnote{Norcopensis, \textit{Gubernacula}, p. 16.} In this instance then, Norcopensis does not side with Machiavelli.

Justice is treated at greater length than religion. Although \textit{Konungastyrelsen} is quoted saying that justice is the virtue which holds society together, the discussion also aims at explaining how states are formed, grow, flourish, and die, as classical writers (notably Plato and Polybius) would describe the virtue of an entire state using analogies with the human soul or body. A circular view of history and politics is prominent. Virtue does not last – as virtue brings peace, peace fosters idleness, idleness luxury, and luxury leads to ruin.\footnote{Norcopensis, \textit{Gubernacula}, p. 23.}

The \textit{Gubernacula} is occupied with the question of the preservation of power and virtue. In the treatment of newly subjected peoples, clemency is advocated, although not in excess, ‘but so that for the purpose of confirming and upholding power, strictness is maintained’.\footnote{‘sed ut imperii confirmandi & stabiliendi causâ adhibeatur severitas’, Norcopensis, \textit{Gubernacula}, p. 25.} A balance must be struck: a ‘tempered fear’ keeps the unruly in check, and thus levity does not diminish authority, neither does strictness diminish love. One must hold back or slacken the reins, all according to the type of rule (‘pro qualitate imperii’).\footnote{‘temeratus [...] timor’, Norcopensis, \textit{Gubernacula}, pp. 25-26. This idea is formulated combining quotations from Seneca and Tacitus, referencing Grotius and the commentaries to Tacitus by Forstner, Gruter, and Ammirato, a method characteristic of this work.} However, the prince must also know the quality of his subjects. Just as in other texts from Norcopensis’s time at Uppsala, the ruler’s ability is dependent on his temperament,\footnote{See Hellerstedt, ‘\textit{Praeses and Praeceptor’}.} and the prince must know the \textit{ingenia} (the ‘characters’) of his subjects, as different nations share different temperaments according to a region’s climate. More importantly, not all subjects within a kingdom are suitable for all offices in the state administration. It is the prince’s duty to see to it that these offices are distributed in an equitable fashion. What remarkable series of virtue and vice, sublime arts, and ingenious shrewdness is there not in this wisdom, the text exclaims, using the words of Barclay’s \textit{Icon Animorum}. The temperaments of individuals and nations are, however, not fixed and unchanging: disciplined study can compensate well enough for lack of talent, and a nation’s temperament changes over time, very much in the cyclical mode referred to above.\footnote{Norcopensis, \textit{Gubernacula}, pp. 27-29, 58-59; the text here draws on a number of classical and modern authors, among whom are Tholozanus, Gruter, Machiavelli, Bodin, and Plutarch, although Barclay is perhaps the most important source, whose \textit{Icon} is quoted several times.}
Likewise, individual *ingenia* are also subject to emendation, if not perfection. Above all, that man is considered best who excels in virtue, not the one who is born into ‘claritas’ (splendor, distinction), for ‘the one and only nobility is virtue’. In this part of the text we meet something very like a classical conception of virtue: honour spurs virtue, virtue is its own reward, we only achieve it through long and laborious struggle, true glory comes only after death, and so on. However, this is directed towards subjects, not rulers. In fact, it is also warned that the honour bestowed upon a man by the prince may entail hate and envy from those not so fortunate.\(^\text{204}\)

In accordance with prevailing political theories, the ruler is considered *legibus absolutus* (lit. ‘not bound by the laws’).\(^\text{205}\) However, the ideal ruler will, from love of virtue, live as if he were accountable for transgressing the laws, as was the central theme of Seneca’s *De clementia*.\(^\text{206}\) As long as the king is a living law (*viva lex*), he will also teach his subjects to do right by doing so himself. The ruler’s exercise of the virtue of justice otherwise mainly concerns his distributing punishments and rewards. Punishments must sometimes be harsh: a wound that cannot be treated must be cut, burned, or amputated, so that it does not contaminate the healthy parts of the body. The purpose is public utility, but this also means that too many harsh punishments are as bad for the prince as frequent funerals are for the reputation of a physician.\(^\text{207}\) The metaphor of amputation was indeed a favourite topic of the early modern period: the *Hortus Regius* includes a matter-of-fact depiction of it as a detail in a larger emblem depicting the crew of a ship jettisoning the cargo to escape an impending storm. In the foreground, a young man sits, his arm outstretched. He holds forth his finger, and just above it hangs a saw. The emblem is accompanied by quotes similar to those used by the *Gubernacula*.\(^\text{208}\)

may also be added that the following discussion of legislation is connected to the temperaments of the subjects, as the legislator must know the conditions in his country, but also because laws shape the *ingenia* of the people. *Gubernacula*, pp. 30-36.\(^\text{204}\) Norcopensis, *Gubernacula*, pp. 57-58. The quote is from Juvenal’s eighth satire, the theme of which is ‘Stemmata quid faciunt?’

\(^{205}\) Norcopensis, *Gubernacula*, p. 36. Reference is made to (among others) Hobbes, *De Cive* 6.13-14. Hobbes was generally criticized at Swedish universities at this time, although details of his thought could be referred to with approval; Lindberg, *Naturrätten i Uppsala*, pp. 92-94.

\(^{206}\) Norcopensis, *Gubernacula*, p. 36; cf. Adam, *Clementia Principis*.

\(^{207}\) Norcopensis, *Gubernacula*, pp. 46, 37-38, 47. The dissertation goes quite far in considering public utility the sole purpose of punishments, while justice or retribution was commonly still regarded as important at this time; Lindberg, *Naturrätten i Uppsala*, pp. 177-78.

\(^{208}\) Notably one from Varro, ‘Digitum praescindi oportet ne ob eam rem gangraena ad brachium perveniat’, Rosenhane, *Hortus Regius*, p. 18.
When discussing rewards, the focus shifts to the encouragement of virtues in the citizens. Because virtue is sought for its own sake, not for the honour it gives, it is essentially its own reward. However, it is a question of equity for the ruler that good deeds are rewarded. Again, this helps shape the *ingenia* of coming generations, as the quest for honour habituates them towards virtue. Moreover, while a truly virtuous man does not desire honour for himself, he may desire honour for his country, family, or friends. Maybe he only desires that virtue itself be honoured, the dissertation adds, referring to Ammirat. However, more importantly, there are in fact few who are virtuous where there is no reward. If the prince’s grace cultivates and waters great *ingenia* with rewards, they will grow, flourish, and abound.\(^{209}\)

A Danish text from around the same time can reinforce the impression of a distinct development towards a ruler guided by reason of state. Although very different, it provides a glimpse of the inner workings of a seventeenth-century absolute monarchy. The *Maxims* of Christian V of Denmark were written as a ‘political testament’ to serve his heirs as a guide in ruling the country.\(^{210}\) As such, it is certainly much closer to political practice and less philosophical than all the texts we have encountered until now. In addition, it should be added that documents such as these had an entirely different kind of authority. Christian’s *Maxims* were intended as clarifications and additions to the fundamental law of the kingdom (*Kongeloven*). As the expression of the will of the monarch, they had a status similar to a law, but they were also intended to be secret, only to be read by his heirs and closest advisers.\(^{211}\)

Although there are elements of a traditional image of royal government, as when it is said that justice must be administered without regard to person, be they rich or poor (§ 3-4), this text is generally concerned with practical things as well as more modern ideas. The virtues are mentioned, but only in passing, as ‘[t]rue fear of God and other royal Christian virtues’.\(^{212}\) The

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\(^{209}\) Norcopensis, *Gubernacula*, pp. 48-50. There is a long discussion of the exact nature of rewards and how they are best distributed, pp. 51-56.

\(^{210}\) In 1698, Christian added to this in another text (*Remarques*), which goes even further in its animosity against the old aristocracy. For the sake of brevity, I have chosen not to analyse it here. On the texts and the tradition of political testaments in general, see Olden-Jørgensen, ‘Christian V’s og Frederik IV’s politiske testamenter’.

\(^{211}\) It is clear from the introduction to the *Maxims* that the heirs are to ‘reflect on them and follow them as best as is possible’. Frederik IV, who composed a similar set of *Regierungsregeln* in 1723 did expressly wish them to be considered as a fundamental law by his successor. Olden-Jørgensen, ‘Christian V’s og Frederik IV’s politiske testamenter’, p. 332.

purpose behind the maxims is to uphold an absolutism which is clearly perceived to be under threat. Absolutism is a ‘costly and priceless heirloom’ to be transferred from king to king and must be preserved against ‘all evil machinations’ of the old aristocracy.\(^{213}\) The need for secrecy is underlined, as ‘the secret is the soul of the affairs of state’\(^{214}\).

The thread binding this document together is *interest*, a notion which is connected to the idea of the kingdom as the personal property of the monarch.\(^{215}\) The maxims themselves are to serve the interest not so much of the kingdom, but of the heirs and the royal house. There are several warnings to beware of officers or civil servants who, primarily because of their noble lineage, follow their own interests. Marriage alliances should not be entered into unless with such a house as serves the interest of the heirs.\(^{216}\) In fact, even the education of the heirs should serve ‘the interest of the royal hereditary government’ besides providing ‘all princely virtues’.\(^{217}\) As in the case of Norcopensis, the traditional virtues have become a means of preserving absolutism, that is, virtue has become a means of preserving power.

**Conclusion**

The analysis of this selection of texts illustrates both the strong long-term continuities and a number of important changes. As an image of ideal royal virtues, the *rex justus*, whose duty it was to serve divine justice on earth and defend the poor and the helpless, and whose personal piety ought to be close to that of a man of the cloister, was still ‘well entrenched’ in Scandinavia in the year 1700. After all, the motto of King Christian V (d. 1699) was *pietate et justitia* and the primary virtues treated by Norcopensis, the teacher of Charles XII (d. 1718) were exactly the same: piety and justice.

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\(^{213}\) ‘et kostbar og uskattelig klenod’, ‘alle onde machinationer’, ‘Welmeente Erindringer oc Maximer’, introd. As Olden-Jørgensen points out, Danish absolutism was believed to be threatened almost from the day it was introduced. The threat had also been made public in recent years, through works such as Rosenkrantz’s *Apologia nobilitatis Danicae* (1681); Olden-Jørgensen, ‘Christian V’s og Frederik IV:s politiske testamenter’, pp. 319-20.


\(^{215}\) ‘Welmeente Erindringer oc Maximer’, § 12; Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric*, pp. 427-29, has observed the sudden emergence of ‘interest’ in political texts in the 1630s.


along with wisdom, the master virtue, which had also been central in the early medieval mirrors. The fact that developments were almost always presented as additions to, or subtle nuances within, the existing tradition, makes changes appear less significant than they perhaps were.

Nevertheless, the early texts should not be underestimated. It is clear from both *Konungastyrelsen* and *Konungs skuggsjå* that an abstract concept of the common good, or public utility – ‘almogans tharue’ or ‘lands naudsyniar’ – was crucially important from the outset. However, it seems clear that this common good was defined to a great extent as the realization of God’s justice in this world, whereas early modern texts would perhaps be more inclined to define this as the more modest goal of ‘security’ or ‘public welfare’. If these concepts had any direct connection to a development of a conception of a ‘state’, it certainly developed very slowly.218

Some important differences between texts actually cut across the centuries, instead of pointing to a development. The implications of the fall and original sin for political life in ‘Augustinian’ versus ‘Thomist-Aristotelian’ views were fundamentally different. Were political governments natural or only a necessary evil? These two positions both had defenders, as much in the seventeenth century as in the fourteenth.

*Pietas* was a central virtue for a Christian king throughout the whole period. None of the texts discussed here question the idea that a ruler can only develop the necessary virtues of government through the grace of God. However, at least three important changes occurred. First, with Aristotelianism (i.e. in *Konungastyrelsen*) the king is no longer held to a monastic ideal, although such an ideal was important right up till the end of the Middle Ages. Royal saints were important exemplars of virtue, and continued to be so even after the Reformation to some extent. Second, with the Lutheran Reformation, piety took on a characteristic form, which is best summed up with the concept of ‘frimodighet’. This obviously had roots in the Bible and the Christian tradition, but also became characteristic of the Scandinavian countries from this time on. Third, in the seventeenth century, beginning perhaps with Johan Skytte, an instrumental view of the ruler’s piety, as well as religion in general, came to the fore. This must not be viewed as a trend towards general secularization. Rather, it says something about the change in the relationship between politics and religion, for which the Reformation may have been an essential precondition, but that is fundamentally a part of the creation of the ‘fiscal-military states’ of the seventeenth century.

218 For instance, Bagge, *Political Thought of the King’s Mirror*, pp. 192-94.
Viroli demonstrated a significant break with tradition around 1600, when political prudence was disassociated from justice. In Scandinavia, this change can most clearly be perceived in the late humanist ideas found in the *Gubernacula* of Norcopensis, although he undoubtedly was heir to the tradition of the ‘oberrheinischer Tacitismus’ of the preceding generation. To some extent, these views were foreshadowed already in Johan Skytte’s mirror written for Gustavus Adolphus. Political prudence as a technical skill in the service of reason of state, learned through the study of history, is characteristic of this tradition. This also tied in with humanist educational ideas, found already in the sixteenth century, which broke with the traditional emphasis on noble lineage for the capacities of a prince.

The most important shift that has been observed is the displacement of virtue (most importantly justice) as an end in itself. In a Christian context, virtue was always liable to be regarded as of merely instrumental value, as salvation would be the end of a Christian life. To some extent the two could be considered to be identical, or at least compatible, i.e. one might be a good citizen and a good Christian as well. *Konungastyrelsen* comes close to such a view. The Lutheran Reformation did not defend such a position. Still, paradoxically, it laid great emphasis on good order and the common good in political matters, even though the intrinsic value of politics as such was rather limited.

However, in view of the questions raised in this chapter, the great change occurred when the state, the common good, and, by the end of the seventeenth century, even the private interest of the ruler, became the end of politics, to which the virtue of rulers and subjects alike functioned as a means or instrument. This is most clearly seen in those texts of the absolutist period of Swedish and Danish history, but this connection is incidental. It was a more general shift in political thought, originating in the debate among the ‘anti-Machiavellian’ writers, who were in fact themselves the vehicles by which Machiavelli profoundly changed tradition.²¹⁹ The same relationship between ends and means is, for example, to be found in the *Hortus Regius*, which politically represents a ‘mixed’ monarchy that included a prominent aristocratic element. Were one to extend this study into the eighteenth century, one would undoubtedly find similar views in the midst of the Swedish ‘Age of Liberty’, where the two concepts, ‘utility’ and ‘virtue’, were both exceedingly frequent in political discourse.

²¹⁹ See e.g. Stolleis, *Staat und Staatsräson*, pp. 12, 23, 28, 30-33, 40-61.
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