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How to Succeed as a Favour Seeker: Two Foreign Epicists' Quest for Patronage in Seventeenth-century Sweden

Abstract

The article examines the patronage of two neo-Latin poets from the early seventeenth century: the Bohemian humanist Venceslaus Clemens (1589–1637) and the Dutch writer and physician Johannes Narssius (1580–1637), both of whom produced long epics to celebrate the intervention of the Swedish king Gustavus II Adolphus in the Thirty Years' War (1618–48). These two authors are suitable for a comparative analysis, because they both acted as favour seekers in a foreign country and they approached the same dedicatees. Although both writers were skilful epicists and their networks overlapped, Clemens was unsuccessful in securing funding from his honorandi, while Narssius received both remuneration and a career. By uncovering the two poets' ultimate goals and their strategies to seek favour, I will argue that the system of patronage in which they operated was more complex than an unexperienced writer might have expected and that one of the poets featured here was not fast enough to grasp this system's intricate mechanisms.[1]

Keywords

Early modern patronage, Neo-Latin epic poetry, the Aeneid, Humanist networks, Early modern letter-writing

Introduction

The Thirty Years' War (1618–48) is often called the first total war. It began after the newly crowned king of Bohemia Ferdinand, from 1619 the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II, had started imposing Catholicism upon all the territories under his jurisdiction. The implementation of Ferdinand's policies created enormous religious and political tensions all over Europe, which caused serious disturbances to every stratum of society, not least to intellectuals. Many men of letters, including poets, were forced into exile or endured other vicissitudes of war – *e.g.*, the death of family members, plague, and des-

1. This article is a spin-off product of my project *Latin Poetry in the Service of the Swedish State-Building Programme, c. 1550–1650*, which will result in a separate monograph. I am very grateful to the Swedish Research Council for sponsoring this work. Special thanks to the anonymous referees, whose comments helped to improve my contribution.

titution. While their situation was precarious, it lent them an opportunity to approach foreign patrons and to explore new networks. Moreover, the constrained circumstances did not stop poets from embarking on rather ambitious projects such as putting together long epics in Latin dactylic hexameter.[2] Thus, at least four neo-Latin epicists celebrated the intervention of Gustavus II Adolphus of Sweden in the military conflict with the Habsburgs. These four poets were foreigners from Protestant minorities in their respective countries and all of them had their own agenda to pursue. Two of them were French Huguenots: Antoine Garissoles (1587–1651) and Evurte Jollivet (1601–62). The third poet was the Czech-Bohemian refugee Venceslaus Clemens (1589–1637), while the fourth one was the Dutch Remonstrant activist Johannes Narssius (1580–1637).[3]

The driving force behind the compositions of the French poets was the writers' wish to bring attention to the desperate state of their Protestant communities and eventually get support, in some form, from Lutheran Sweden. This is especially noticeable in the 1649 *Adolphid* of Antoine Garissoles: the poet repeatedly refers to the distress of the Huguenots in his native France, while emphasizing the historical ties between the two countries (Guthrie 182–83).

The two other writers, viz. the Bohemian Clemens and the Dutchman Narssius, were also motivated by their religious cause, without a doubt. Nevertheless, their other poetical pieces and extensive correspondence with contemporary politicians and scholars also indicate a clear interest in monetary reward for their services as poets. They are therefore typical examples of early modern writers who tried to make a living by composing poetry for wealthy and well-connected patrons. There are many similarities in the lives of these two poets. Both of them were foreigners seeking the favour of the Swedish king and the Swedish nobility. They were members of the entourage of one of the most powerful people in Sweden, viz. Lord High Chancellor Axel Oxenstierna (1583–1654).[4] Both released their epics in 1632. Both died in 1637. Moreover, they wrote poetry for and about each other. It is the more surprising to discover that the outcome of their respective poetic endeavours would be dramatically different: Narssius gained both money and a career; while Clemens failed to receive the profit that he was hoping for and had to chase new patrons in England, where he eventually died in absolute poverty. The study seeks to explore the causes of this outcome.

2. On the tremendous popularity of this genre during the early modern period, see Gwynne's "Epic;" Schaffenrath; Kallendorf. Italy and France stand out here in particular: we have hundreds of neo-Latin epics produced in these two regions of Europe. For lists and summaries of the most important of these poems, see Ludwig Braun's volumes.

3. A short introduction to the epics of these four writers will be found in Helander's "Neolatinistik i Sverige och i världen" 105.

4. As Lord High Chancellor of Sweden for more than four decades (1612–54), Oxenstierna played an important role as the leader of his country's foreign policy during the Thirty Years' War and after it. Moreover, he is credited with having transformed Sweden's state apparatus into one of the most efficient governmental systems in the world. For a comprehensive study of Oxenstierna's achievement, see Wetterberg. See also Roberts, *passim*.

Who gains what: The dynamics of early modern patronage

The first three important monographs to deal with the literary patronage in early modern Sweden were Bo Bennich-Björkman's *Författaren i ämbetet* (1970), Jan Drees's *Die soziale Funktion der Gelegenheitsdichtung* (1986), and Magnus von Platens *Ykresskalder – fanns dom?* (1985). In his study from 1970, Bennich-Björkman argues that early modern authors used occasional poetry to qualify themselves for other jobs. He acknowledges poets who actually received remuneration for their works, but explains that even these hired poets used their positions as a springboard for obtaining proper offices in the service of the state. von Platen, and indirectly also Drees, disagree with that thesis to contend that many a poet in early modern Sweden acted as a professional writer and composed his pieces to earn money. Both von Platen and Drees demonstrate how this worked in practice by looking closely at the case of Lasse Lucidor (1638–74), who produced impressive quantities of verse on commission. In addition, von Plan offers a concrete example of an early ban on writing poetry as a form of begging.[5] The different views on the desires of paid poets suggests that the reality might have been somewhere in the middle. What is more, the patronage system appears to have been evolving due to the changing conditions brought about by seventeenth-century society in a country like Sweden. During this era, writers leveraged their literary talents not only to sustain themselves but also to position themselves as versatile individuals capable of serving in various roles. This made them suitable for employment both with the state and with wealthy patrons. Therefore, these authors could be regarded as long-term assets as opposed to assets valuable only at one particular time. The services offered by them may be denoted as exemplifying what economists label as capital assets – a term employed by Pierre Bourdieu to describe the various forms of resources possessed by individuals, including their social and cultural capital (Bourdieu).

All the various ways to understand the mechanisms of early modern patronage agree on one thing: this system implied that the patronal relationships were reciprocal, as both parties were supposed to profit. Thus, a prince who had superstars like Bernini and Rubens working for him obtained magnificence and an aura of sophistication, while the artist received a handsome reward and new commissions. The same holds true for writers: by hiring the services of fa-

5. von Platen, *Yrkesskalder – fanns dom?* 48–49. A similar attack on dedications that preceded academic works was issued in Sweden in 1633. Such dedications could take the form of poetic pieces as well. Sjökvist, "Mot studenternas missbruk."

mous humanists like Erasmus, the patron was able to fashion himself as a learned man himself, while the writer would gain financial stability and an opportunity to build a career.[6] The definition of literary patronage offered in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of British Literature* (s.v. "Patronage") is spot on: "Patronage was never noblesse oblige, but rather a political and economic agreement mutually beneficial to the patron and the client."

However, it is obvious that there always was a social hierarchy in patron-client relationships and that the artist/writer often was dependent on the benefactor's economic resources (cf. Griffin 19–22). This dimension of *mecenatismo* was already present in ancient Greece and Rome, but the employer's wealth as the defining factor of the interplay of patrons and producers of art becomes even more profound in the proto-capitalistic societies of the early modern era: people with resources to invest start viewing everything through the prism of profit.[7] One of the disadvantages for artists and writers living in such societies was that their sponsor had to think strategically, which in turn created many limitations for those who produced art on commission.[8] Contracts signed between the patron and the artist/writer as well as letters, in which they established their relationship testify to this.[9] Thus, the analysis of Narssius's case offered below includes an examination of the letter of appointment given to the poet by the Swedish king. At the same time, it became less of a taboo subject to compose literary work for money. If for Horace it was a shameful thing to write poetry exclusively for monetary reward, it was not for an early modern poet.[10] Illustrative is Dryden's complaint about his wage: "encourag'd only with fair Words, by King Charles II, my little Sallary ill paid, and no prospect of a future Subsistance, I was then Discourag'd (…)" (Griffin 19–20). As we will see, neo-Latin poets had the same perception of their work: they celebrated their patrons in the expectation of receiving economic compensation.

The patronage of neo-Latin poets: premises and practices

While the social history of the patronage of vernacular writers has been studied for decades, the exploration of the patronage of neo-Latin poets has not been studied with the same consistency.[11] It is the more intriguing to see the most current research's findings. For example, it seems to have been a frequent practice for neo-Latin poets

6. The literature on early modern patronage of artists is extensive. In the field of early modern poetry, until recently most of the work has focused on the patronage in early modern England. See, for example, the monographs by Griffin, Brennan, and McCabe. See also the volumes by Wilkins & Wilkins and Lytle & Orgel, both of which explore individual cases and offer general reflections on patronage in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The situation in Sweden is studied in Bennich-Björkman, Drees, and von Platen, *Yrkesskalder – fanns dom?* and *Klient och Patron*.

7. The work on the system of patronage in Greece and Rome is massive. Two of the most important of these studies are Peter White's *Promised Verse: Poets in the Society of Augustan Rome* (1993), and Ruurd R. Nauta's *Poetry for Patrons: Literary Communication in the Age of Domitian* (2002). See also Lowell Bowditch's examination of Horace's view of gifts and remuneration. The critique of the early modern and modern labour market goes back to Karl Marx, who called the product of such labour alienation.

8. More on the downsides of this strategic investment by commissioners in Molyneux.

9. Baxandall, chap. 1; Gilbert. For examples of the most famous documents such as the appointments of Brunelleschi and Michelangelo, consult Chambers. See also McLean, who investigates how scholars in fifteenth-century Florence used the art of letter-writing to seek patronage. By exploring the rhetoric of these letters, McLean unveils the rules of interaction that were valid in that particular society in Renaissance Italy and elucidates what favour seekers believed was expected of them.

10. In his *Epistle to Augustus*, Horace condemns a poet who writes for cash. For a thorough discussion of this poem by the Augustan poet, see Bowditch 34–38.

11. For one of the first analyses of the conditions of neo-Latin poets in Sweden, see Johannesson. Two of the most recent monographs on early modern patronage of Latin writers are De Beer's *The Poetics of Patronage* and Gwynne's *Poets and Princes*, both of which contain excellent introductions. See also De Beer's "Patronage."

to recycle their own poems to approach new *honorandi*. Here the Latin language offered an obvious advantage to compare to the vernacular, as the poet could easily reuse his old verses to produce poems for a new dedicatee in a different country.[12] The Italian poet Johannes Michael Nagonius (*c.* 1450 – *c.* 1510) was one such 'literary economist:' he readapted his own pieces to celebrate some of the most famous rulers of his age, including the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I, Henry VII of England, Vladislav II of Bohemia and Hungary, and Louis XII of France.[13]

12. This and other techniques employed by neo-Latin writers to compose poems efficiently are described in Gwynne and Schirg. The editors of the volume call the phenomenon "the economics of poetry."

13. On Nagonius's reuse of his own verse, see Schirg and Gwynne 46–58.

Another illuminating case is the Irish neo-Latin poet Dermot O'Meara (*floruit* in the first half of the seventeenth century). In his epic *Ormonius* (1615), the Irishman commemorates the military career of Sir Thomas Butler, Tenth Earl of Ormond (1531–1614). During the composition of the poem, the writer faced an interesting problem: his patron fell unwell. Naturally, O'Meara was afraid of not completing his work in time. When fighting against the clock, he was forced to wrap up the poem's narrative in a rather hurried way and to add a new dedicatory letter to the Earl's heir (Sidwell).

To understand the dynamics of the patronage of Clemens and Narssius, we have to understand these two poets' wishes and their benefactors' needs. As we will see from the correspondence of Clemens and Narssius, they both were open about the fact that they expected to be remunerated for their verses. In addition, the authors' other writings, such as the paratexts preceding their epics and the poems issued prior to or after the publication of the epics, reveal what the poets thought was required of them.

Venceslaus Clemens: The wandering poet

Venceslaus Clemens (Czech: Václav Klement Žebrácký) was born in 1589 in Žebrák, a village about fifty kilometres southwest of Prague.[14] In many of his poems, he presents himself as 'Venceslaus Clemens a Lybeo-Monte.' The epithet 'of the Mountain of Liba' was borrowed by Clemens from his fellow poet Joannes Czernovicius (Jan Černovicky), who was another Bohemian humanist in exile. In a poem, Czernovicius explains that he had received this title from the emperor (in all probability the Holy Roman Emperor Mathias) and that he wanted to share it with his friend who was seeking his fortune in Sweden (Ryba 90–91).

14. More about Clemens's life in Nosco; Ryba; Hejnic and Martínek; Poole. For transcriptions of many of Clemens's letters, see Ryba; Poole.

Clemens received a Master's degree from the Utraquist Univer-

sity in Prague in 1614 after defending a dissertation with the title "Whether the written law or unwritten equity must be followed by the political magistrate in deciding cases?"[15] Later, he would produce a treatise on music and poetry.[16] Before and after obtaining his Master's degree, Clemens worked as a teacher at various schools in the Prague area and as a tutor to children from noble Czech families. He began to publish poetry during his university years. His first published piece in verse seems to have been an occasional poem in Czech: it was a lamentation on the death of the children of his patron Otto Stoss von Kaunitz. Among his earliest poems in Latin, we find verses about Prague (1616) and an epyllion about Bohemia (1619) composed for Elector Palatine of the Rhine Frederick V, who was a Protestant and reigned as King of Bohemia in 1619–20.[17] Frederick was dethroned and exiled after the disastrous defeat at the White Mountain (Bílá hora) in 1620. People like Clemens were also forced to flee and free-lance as poets or teachers. The Bohemian humanist's itinerant life brought him to Dresden, Leipzig, Regensburg, Nuremberg, the Harz, Erfurt, Weimar, Elbing, Danzig, Leiden, and eventually London. Clemens was a wandering poet *par excellence*.[18] A great number of his poems belong the the *laus urbis* genre: *Some encomiastic anagrams and epigrams on Breslau* (1626),[19] *Gdansk or Danzig* (1630),[20] and *The six books about Royal Trinobantias or London* (1636).[21] Like above-mentioned Nagonius, Clemens recycled his own verses. For instance, sections from the Danzig poem would appear in his poem about London (Ryba 87–89). As previous research has shown, repurposed verses and other texts such as paratexts in dissertations and collections of poetry, including re-dedications to new addressees, were usually an indication of the poet's financial constraints and sometimes even extreme poverty (Sjökvist, "Mot studenternas missbruk" 524, "Dedicatory Practices," von Platen 23). It is clear that Clemens was desperate to secure stability and that every new place was seen as a new opportunity to find a patron. The Czech refugee's strenuous conditions are mentioned both in his poetry and in his letters. Thus, in 1627 we find him approaching Gustavus II Adolphus of Sweden with a 140-line poem, which already with its title expresses a request: *A little book of supplication for the most Serene and Undefeated Ruler and Lord, Lord Gustavus Adolphus […]*.[22] At that time, the Swedish king was waging war against Poland: besides fighting for territories in Livonia and Estonia, the two nations were competing for dominance in Danzig, which was one of the most important ports in the Baltic. Clemens's verses seem to have been

15. "Magistratui politico an lex scripta, an aequitas non scripta sequenda?"

16. Pacala offers an intriguing study of this little work.

17. A list of Clemens's writings is compiled in Hejnic & Martinek 371–82.

18. The itinerant poet was an old phenomenon and constituted an important part of the cultural life of ancient, medieval and early modern societies. For example, poets in ancient Greece travelled to attend competitions or to make a living as public performers. See Hunter and Rutherford and essays in Cameron. For medieval authors, consult Waddell.

19. *Anagrammata et epigrammata encomiastica aliquot in Vratislaviam.*

20. *Gedanum sive Dantisticum.*

21. *Trinobantiados Augustae sive Londini libri VI.* Trinobantia for London originates from the name of the Trinobantes, which was a Celtic tribe. Tacitus mentions this people in *Ann.* 14, 31.

22. *Libellus Supplex ad Serenissimum et Invictissimum Monarcham ac Dn. Dn. Gustavum Adolphum […].*

handed over to Gustavus Adolphus in the Swedish camp in Danzig, as the *libellus* is followed by the words: "Presented in the camp at the mouth of the Vistula river […] on 6 July 1627, by Venceslaus Clemens."[23] This is how the piece opens:

> Laus Virtusque Virum, Arctoi Lux inclyta Mundi,
> Delicium Populi, Regum jubar, et decus ævi,
> Bellorum Domini gestor; quo sospite nunquam
> Res Sueonum victas, aut vinci posse fatebor:[24]
> En ego Dive tuas supplex provolvor ad aras,
> Et Majestati demisse assurgo sacratæ,
> Hactenus externo, patriis a sedibus exul,
> Orbe vagus; nusquam hospitio, nusquam Lare certo.[25]
>
> (Glory and Virtue of Men, renowned Light of the Northern Sphere,
> Delight of the People, splendour of Kings and ornament of our age,
> Manager of the Lord's wars, for while you live I will never grant that
> The Swedish state was beaten or ever can be.
> Behold, Divine ruler, I kneel as a suppliant at your altar,
> And I arise humbly before Your Sacred Majesty,
> Until now exiled from my homeland and wandering the world abroad,
> With no lodging and no sure hearth).

The phrase *delicium populi* has a resemblance of the words used by Suetonius to describe the emperor Titus: "amor ac deliciae generis humani" ("the delight and darling of mankind") (Suet. *Tit*. 1, 1). In addition, there is a clear allusion to the opening of Horace's ode 1, 1: "Maecenas atavis edite regibus, / o et praesidium et dulce decus meum." ("Maecenas, descended from royal lineage, my protection, my fame and my joy").[26] It is the first book of the Roman poet's four-book collection of *Carmina* and functions as a dedication to his benefactor and friend Gaius Maecenas. The reader who recognizes this allusion will also remember the closing of Horace's ode, where the poet expresses his hope to be counted among the best lyric poets and last but not least to gain Maecenas's recognition.

The remainder of Clemens's opening describes the Czech humanist's life in exile, while the rest of the poem consists of a praise of the Swedish king and the poet's promise to sing of Gustavus's war ex-

23. "Præsent[atus] in castris ad Caput Vistulæ […] 6 Jul[ii] A[nno] 1627 a V[enceslao] Clem[ente]."

24. Cf. Verg., *Aen*. 8, 470–71: "maxime Teucrorum ductor, quo sospite numquam / res equidem Troiae victas aut regna fatebor."

25. The poem is included in Clemens's *Miscellaneorum et adoptivorum libri quatuor* issued in 1632 in the same volume as his epic *Gustavis*. The poem is discussed in Ryba 83.

26. Translation by Niall Rudd for the Loeb Classical Library.

ploits in new verses. What Clemens is trying to do is to sell the idea of hiring him. What is more, Clemens seems to break against the contemporary principle of decorum: mentioning your financial situation could be mentioned in a work dedicated to a commoner, but had to be avoided in homages to nobility and royals.[27]

Six months later, viz. in January 1628, we see the Bohemian writer courting the Swedish Lord High Chancellor Axel Oxenstierna, Gustavus's right-hand man. Entitled *Elegy of supplication* and composed of ninety distiches,[28] Clemens's poem for the chancellor was written for the same ends as the verses for Gustavus. Even the flattering epithet of the dedicatee is similar to the epithet used for the Swedish king in the previous piece:

> Arctoi Lux alta Poli, quo sospite nunquam
> Patria securæ nescia Pacis erit;
> [...]
> Sed quid ago? Te magne Heros, generose Dynasta,
> Deveneror supplex, aspice quæso Virum,
> Aspice quæso Virum, quem sors indigna gravavit,
> Qui jam consuescit fortiter esse miser.[29]
>
> (High-born Light of the Northern Clime, as long as you breathe
> the Fatherland shall never be ignorant of enduring Peace.
> [...]
> But what am I doing? I kneel as suppliant before You,
> Oh great Hero and magnanimous Ruler,
> Behold this Man, I implore you,
> Behold the Man, I beseech you, whom an unjust fortune has weighed down,
> Who is now accustomed to bearing misery with fortitude).

The poem paid off: Clemens became part of Oxenstierna's entourage in Elbing and his children's tutor. Clemens's stay in Prussia would be prolific: there the Czech wrote a great deal of panegyrics for his new Swedish benefactors as well as poetic *nugae* for and about his new friends. Many of these verses would be printed in his four-book collection, *Miscellaneorum et adoptivorum libri quatuor* that accompanied his opus magnum *Gustavis*. Among these pieces from the Elbing period, we find threnodies on the death of some of the members of Axel Oxenstierna's family. One of the most moving poems is Clemens's piece about the premature death of his patron's son Gus-

27. The Swedish literary scholar Stina Hansson was able to show that dedications printed in seventeenth-century Swedish translations followed such a pattern. The same axiom would easily apply to other sorts of dedicatory texts in printed items from that time. Hansson 69.

28. *Elegia Supplex ad Axelium Oxenstirnium, etc. Dominum S[uum] Gratiosum*.

29. Cf. Ov. *Trist*. 5, 11, 4: "qui iam consuevi fortiter esse miser." Like the verses for Gustavus, the poem must have been handed over to the dedicatee by the author himself, as it is followed by the words "Præsent[ata] Elbingæ Boruss[iae]. Calendis Ian[uarii] A. 1628."

taf.[30] A part of this poem on Oxenstierna's loss would be included in the epic *Gustavis*.[31]

In September 1631, the Bohemian refugee joined the chancellor's son Johan (Axelson) Oxenstierna on his study tour to Leiden. The poet enrolled at the Dutch university as well. It was also in Leiden that he published his *Gustavidos libri IX*.[32] As the title indicates, it was a celebration of Gustavus Adolphus's German campaign against the Emperor's army. Many of Clemens's writings penned in Elbing show that he had composed a greater part of the epic before leaving for the Dutch Provinces. For example, Clemens's 1631 poem about Gustavus's siege of Frankfurt an der Oder in the spring of that year contains a dedication to Oxenstierna, where it is suggested that he had already distributed his *Gustavid* among other scholars: "Nay! […] the scent of my *Gustavis* has now reached the learned men."[33] Among other proofs of Clemens having more or less finished the epic in Elbing, is his poem for Daniel Heinsius. He wrote it in September 1631, *i.e.* the month in which he arrived in Leiden, to ask the Dutch scholar to provide feedback about his epic: "To the unequalled man Lord Daniel Heinsius, Knight, to whom the author would like to offer his *Gustavis* for judgment."[34]

The *Gustavis* appeared in print in April 1632. Issued in Leiden with the privilege of the royal Majesty of Sweden,[35] it is preceded by an *epistola nuncupatoria* to Axel Oxenstierna, which delineates how the Protestant forces of the Swedish king were fighting the Catholic army of the Emperor. The poem itself is an impressive work: written in the tradition of Latin ancient epics, it consists of nine books of about 6,800 lines of dactylic hexameter.[36] In the *epistola* to his patron, the author asserts that princes have always wanted to be commemorated by poets and that poets are important for the maintenance of great heroes' fame. The case of Augustus and Virgil is a good example:

> Augusto Virgilius in deliciis fuit. Aliis alii. Horum enim calamis Numina illa, natura quidem morti destinata, redduntur immortalia, facta eorum heroica obliterari nequeunt.
>
> (Virgil was Augustus's darling. For other [princes], it was other [poets]. For it is through their pen that these great gods, who are indeed destined by nature to die, are made immortal, while their heroic deeds cannot be forgotten.)[37]

Moreover, Clemens makes a point of the fact that the name Gustavus contains the same letters as the name of Augustus (Gustafsson

30. *De immaturo obitu Gustavi Oxenstirnii Axelij Fil[ii] Primogeniti*, in *Miscellaneorum et adoptivorum libri quatuor* 33–36.

31. These lines appear in *Gustavis*, book five. Ryba 335.

32. Unabridged title: *Gustavidos libri IX, quibus Gustavi II vere Magni et Augusti, Suecor[um] Gothor[um] Vandalor[um] etc. Regis Serenissimi, Victoriarum heroicarum, rerumque per Germaniam gestarum series carmine heroico narratur*.

33. "Imo […] odor *Gustavidos* meae iam ad eruditos usque pervenit." Ryba 214.

34. *Ad Incomparabilem Virum D[ominum] Danielem Heinsium Equitem quum illi suam* Gustavida censendam offerret, in *Miscellaneorum et adoptivorum libri quatuor* 57–59.

35. The title page contains the following words: "Cum Privilegio Sacræ Regiæ Majestatis Sueciæ."

36. Good summaries of the poem are offered in Helander's "The *Gustavis* of Venceslaus Clemens;" Ryba 333–39. Verhaart presents an excerpt, with translation, of a representative passage from Clemens's epic.

37. The motif of writers bestowing eternal glory on heroes goes back to antiquity and continues to be important in literature from the era under examination. One of the most famous passages treating this idea is Cicero's discussion of Homer's role in preserving the fame of Achilles in his *Pro Archia poeta*. See Helander's *Neo-Latin Literature*, 478–82.

217, see also Helander's *Neo-Latin Literature*, 384). When reading the neo-Latin epic itself, we realize that it has all the elements that we associate with Virgil's masterpiece: allegories, gods intervening in the events, and long speeches by the protagonists, not to mention the plot. Thus, early in the poem we meet with personified Religio complaining to God about her expulsion from the German lands and asking him to assist the Protestants in their wish to become free from the Catholic yoke. The prototype is easy to recognize: the scene is modelled on the famous scene in the *Aeneid*, where Venus addresses Jupiter with a similar request to help Aeneas to reach his destination. Clemens's Religio is assured that the salvation will be provided by a certain hero. This hero is, of course, Gustavus Adolphus! Later, Religio visits the Swedish king to tell him the history of the Protestant Reformation and thus motivates him to protect his co-religionists on the continent. The account of his participation in the war starts in book four to culminate in book nine, where the poet celebrates Gustavus's victory in the battle of Breitenfeld in September 1631 and announces that Frederick of Pfalz will soon return to his country. These parts of the epic, too, are replete with allegories, metonyms, and emblematic phrases.

The epic's theme is explained in book 1, 35–40:

> Tu quem Bellorum moles operosa fatigat,
> Arma canenda gerens,[38] vastus quibus intremit orbis,
> Rex veterum decus Heroum, nova gloria secli;
> Cujus magnaminæ dederat pia Patria dextræ
> Sponte sub Ausoniis quod noluit alma Ligistis
> Relligio, Pietasque pati, […].
>
> (You, whom the great burden of wars is wearing out,
> are conducting military campaigns worthy to be sung
> and at whose sight the vast world trembles.
> O King, the glory of ancient Heroes, the new pride of our age,
> to whose bold right hand your pious country has given willingly
> what dear Religion and Piety did not want to tolerate under the suppression of the Italian League).

38. Cf. Stat., *Silv*. 4, 4, 70–71: "propriis tu pulcher in armis / ipse canenda geres parvoque exempla parabis."

The neo-poet is going to unfold the tale of Gustavus's mission to fight the *Ausonii Ligistae*, *i.e.* the Catholic League. Throughout the poem, the pope is portrayed as the Antichrist,[39] while the long preface to the epic contains a reproach of the Habsburgs for supporting the Jes-

39 On the attacks of Protestant writers on the Catholic Church and their use of the topos of Antichristus, see Helander's *Neo-Latin Literature*, 324–25.

uit order, which is compared to the frightful Hydra, "hydra terribilis". In book five, we learn that the Jesuits are the offspring of the fury Tisiphone: at a council held by the infernal forces the monster suggests that her progeny ought to be used against the Evangelical church, which undeservedly has gained too much ground. This passage relies on the famous scene in Claudian's *In Rufinum*.[40]

Before sending the poem off to the printing house, Clemens was sure to obtain congratulatory poems from a number of Dutch humanists. The above-mentioned poem for Heinsius was part of Clemens's strategy to show off his social capital. The liminary texts, which are in Latin and Greek, are by eight famous scholars from Leiden: in addition to Heinsius's piece, we have commendations from the theologians Johannes Polyander, Andreas Rivetus, Antonius Walaeus, Antonius Thysius and Reinerus Vogelsangius, the renowned poet Petrus Schriverus, and Fridericus Zamelius, the mayor of Elbing. The latter person had been the poet's best friend since his time in Elbing. Clemens had also tried to secure an epigram from Constantijn Huygens and other prominent humanists, but for various reasons they were not able to deliver their congratulations.[41]

Only half a year after the release of the epic, on 6/16 November 1632, Gustavus Adolphus was killed in the battle of Lützen. Despite this, the victory was Sweden's. In 1633, Clemens issued a 2,600-line epyllion entitled *Excessus Augusti ad Deos*, which was a eulogy praising Gustavus and offering a summary of his military career. The dedication from February 1633 is again to Oxenstierna. Certainly understanding that the death of the 'Northern Lion' would make his chances of securing funding from Sweden worse, the writer had embarked sometime in 1632 or 1633 on his *Lechias* to celebrate the accession to the throne of Vladislav IV of Poland.[42]

Johannes Narssius: three professions in one person

Johannes Narssius (Johan van Naarsen) was born in Dordrecht in 1580. He pursued his university studies at the University of Leiden.[43] On May 5 of 1604, he acted as a respondent of theological theses on ministry.[44] Professor Jacobus Arminius was the *praeses*. Just two months earlier, Arminius presided over a dissertation that offered a revised view of predestination (hence the name of the remonstrant movement). Arminius's opinion led to a conflict with other profes-

40. On Clemens's dependence on Claudian, see Helander's "The *Gustavis* of Venceslaus Clemens." See also Helander' "Neolatinistik i Sverige och i världen" 105–06.

41. Consult for example Clemens's letter to Ludvig Camerarius, the Swedish ambassador to The Hague. Ryba 222–24. See also Poole 165.

42. The Czech poet would work on this new epic for at least three years, but never published it. For a modern edition with introduction, see Starnawski.

43. The biography is based on the entry in *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek*; Woortmann; Bennich-Björkman; Gustafsson. The most valuable primary source is Narssius's correspondence with Axel Oxenstierna preserved in the National Archives in Stockholm, *Oxenstiernska samlingen*. Ser. B. *Narssius-Niem*. E 664.

44. This and other disputations defended by Narssius are discussed in Woortmann 23–24.

sors in Leiden, who did not accept his criticism of the Calvinist doctrine.[45] The fact that Narssius chose to defend new theses by Arminius shows that he shared the high-profile theologian's views. In 1605, Narssius was appointed minister of the Reformed Church of Grave. Ten years later, he took up a similar position in Zalt-Bommel, where he joined the circle around the Remonstrant activist Henricus Leo. When the Remonstrants' demand to revise the Calvinist articles of faith was condemned at the Synod of Dort in 1618–19, Narssius left for Rotterdam, but continued to assist the Remonstrant movement by spreading their writings abroad. He was arrested in 1622, but managed to escape to France. When in this new country, he acquired a new profession: he became a physician.

45. For an overview of Arminius's teachings and legacy, see Den Boer; van Leeuwen.

In 1623, Narssius moved to Sweden. It has been suggested that Narssius arrived there as one of the Dutch workers who were invited to the newly founded city of Gothenburg.[46] His profession as a doctor must have been a great asset. Moreover, Narssius was a skilful poet. His first collection of poems was released in the autumn of 1623. Entitled *Svecica*, it opens with a greeting to "the gentle reader," which is followed by a poetic address to the Dutch merchant Leonard van Sorgen. The dedicatee was a regular Swedish correspondent in Hamburg and a close relative of Narssius. The poem is a description of Narssius's travel to Sweden, his *iter Svecicum*.[47] We learn that it was van Sorgen's idea that Narssius go to Sweden and that Narssius left for Sweden from Danzig. As the Swedes had a representation there, it can be assumed that he left Danzig with the Swedish fleet. In his greeting to van Sorgen, the Dutch poet does not shy away from self-advertisement relating to his professions:

46. Gustafsson 127. See also Jakobsson, who studies the employment strategies of the Dutch labour migrants in early modern Sweden.

47. *Ad Amplissimum Virum D[ominum] Leonardum Curium seu van Sorgen Mercatorem non e minimis et serenissimi Regis Suecorum negotiis apud Hamburgenses Præfectum, Dominum et cognatum suum faventissimum Joannis Narssii Epistola Elegiaca de Itinere Svecico*.

> […] Artis alumnum
> Me Medicæ Batava prædico gente satum.
> Et simul exiguum, Phœbo suadente, poëma,
> Suppliciter offert officiosa manus.
>
> (I call myself a child of the Batavian soil and a pupil of the medical discipline.
> And the same time, on the exhortation of Phoebus,
> My serviceable and humble hand offers its little poem).

A few lines later, Narssius proudly announces that Axel Oxenstierna is his *fautor* and that he has the protection of Jan Rutgers and James Robertson. We understand that Narssius had an impressive network in his new country: Rutgers worked as a Swedish representative in

the Dutch Republic, while Robertson was physician-in-ordinary to the Swedish king. The other poems in the *Svecica* collection include encomia for Gustavus Adolphus, Axel Oxenstierna, Jan Rutgers, Sigismund III of Poland and Sigismund's son Vladislav.

In Narssius's second collection, *Poëmata Septentrionalia* (1624), we find not only typical eulogies for patrons, but also poems such as a panegyric to the city of Gothenburg and an epigram on the Dutch conquest of a part of Brazil. The next important piece by Narssius appeared in 1625: it was his *The conquest of Riga by the most august prince Gustavus Adolphus*.[48] It is an epic about the Swedish siege of Riga in 1621, a poem on which Narssius had worked for a long time. In a letter from 4 January 1625, he explained that he wanted his composition to conform to his benefactors' demands and wishes (Gustafsson 128).

48. *Riga devicta ab augustissimo principe Gustavo Adolpho*.

In 1627, Narssius released his *The liberation of Meva in Pomerania from the Polish siege and other poems on Swedish-Prussian and Swedish-Russian affairs*.[49] As the title reveals, the poems dealt with Gustavus's military successes in Prussia and Russia. (Meva is modern Gniew in Poland.) Clearly, Narssius was working on commission, which is confirmed by his correspondence with Oxenstierna. In a letter from June 1625, we read that his traveling costs were covered by Gustavus Adolphus.[50] We also see how Narssius kept asking for an official stipend, which wish was eventually granted.[51] In December 1625, Gustavus II Adolphus issued a letter of authorization for Narssius as Sweden's official historiographer:

49. *Meva Pomerelliæ obsidione Polonorum liberata … aliaque poëmata Suedo-Borussica, Moschovitica, miscellanea*.

50. Narssius's letter from 15 June 1625 in *Oxenstiernska samlingen* in Riksarkivet, Stockholm.

51. In a letter from 14/24 September 1625, he reminds Oxenstierna to arrange "stipendium aliquod," which according to their earlier conversation had been assigned for him by the king. Similar reminders will be found in Narssius's letters from 7/17 October, 29 November, and 29/19 December 1624. *Oxenstiernska samlingen*, Riksarkivet, Stockholm. Gustafsson 129.

> Nos Gustavus Adolphus, Rex,
> Omnibus et singulis hasce nostras visuris et lecturis notum facimus, Nos Egregium et Doctum Jöannem Narssium Medicinæ Doctorem vocasse et constituisse prout harum nostrarum vigore eundem constituimus, ut res nostras et Regni nostri historias Carmine fideliter conscribat, antiquas historias et monumenta vetera diligenter congerat, evolvat, inquiratque. Inprimis volumus, ne prænominatus Doctor historias nostras Poëtarum figmentis involvat, vel Ethnicos iocos suis Carminibus, ceu veras historias continentibus, intertexat; sed serio agens ita hisce conscribendis studeat, quo sint utiles et iucundæ legenti, nobis Regnoque nostro, nec non illius Incolis ornamento, et tandem iucunde ad posteritatem transmitti queant. Pro quo servitio sive labore suo prænominato Doctori Narssio annuatim promittimus Sexcentos thal[eros]. Sueticos, quos singulis annis duobus in

> terminis, quamdiu in nostro servitio est a Quæstore nostro accipiet. Initium vero huius suæ Constitutionis erit primus dies præteriti Mensis Maij huius Anni præsentis. In maiorem fidem, Dabatur.
>
> (We, Gustavus Adoplphus, the King, announce to each and every one who is going to see and read this letter, that we have decided to invite the distinguished and learned Johannes Narssius, Doctor of Medicine, and appoint him by means of this letter in order for him to faithfully describe our deeds and the history of our kingdom in a poem. That he will put together, unveil and diligently examine ancient stories and old writings. First of all, we wish that the above-named Doctor should not wrap our history in the fiction of poets or interweave his poems with pagan jokes together with true stories. But he should perform in a serious manner and when describing these things see to it that they may be useful and pleasant to the reader, and indeed serve as a distinction for us, for our Kingdom and for its inhabitants, and finally that they can be passed on to posterity in a pleasing form. For these services or work, we promise to the above-mentioned Doctor Narssius six hundred Swedish *daler* annually, which money he will receive from our Treasurer each year on two occasions, as long as he remains in our service. The start of this appointment is the first day of the previous month of May of this present year. Provided for further assurance).[52]

It is noteworthy that the king sees narrative poetry with encomiastic and/or didactic messages as a genre of history, which was the contemporary view of heroic epics.[53] We should also mention that less than a decade earlier the Swedes tried to hire the renowned poet Daniel Heinsius as *historiographus regni*, but the plan was never realized. We can therefore assume that the recruitment of Narssius met the needs that Heinsius was supposed to fill (Bennich-Björkman 207–09). Narssius's wage of 600 Swedish *riksdaler* was a hefty sum of money, considering the fact that a professor at the faculty of Philosophy at Uppsala received 400 *riksdaler* (Bennich-Björkman 244, n. 1). Moreover, in 1627 Narssius's wage was raised by 200 *daler*:

> Såsom vi hafva tagit i vår tjenst Johannem Narcium, Medicinæ doctorem, för vårt rikes historiæ scribent, hvilken han ordentligen uti Latinske verser sammansätta skall och

52. Riksregistraturet 366, *S. Reg. M:tis Constitutio pro D. Joanne Narssio Medico et Poeta.*

53. For example, one of the first epics written after the classical period and exhibiting this understanding of epic poetry was the *Alexandreis* by Walter of Châtillon (*c.* 1135 – *c.* 1189): telling about the life of Alexander the Great, it ignored the fiction of the Alexander Romances to rely on the facts provided in the *Vita Alexandri* by Curtius Rufus (1st century CE). Gwynne's "Epic," 201–02. More on epic as 'historical poetry' in Schaffenrath.

> utgå låta, så på det han sådant med dess större flit förrätta skall, hafve vi unt och efterlåtit honom till årlig lön 800 Daler, hvilka honom af vår Räntekammare levereras skole, räknandes från d. 1 Maj förgångne år 1626.[54]
>
> (As we have taken into our service Johannes Narssius, Doctor of Medicine, as our Kingdom's writer of history, which he shall carefully compose in Latin verses and publish, so that he shall accomplish such things with greater diligence, we have indulged and granted him an annual wage of 800 *daler*, which will be delivered to him by our Treasure Chamber, counting from the first of May of the last year 1626).

54. The king's letter from 4 April 1627 is transcribed in Kullberg 104, n. 3.

Like Clemens, the Dutchman was an industrious writer. Interestingly, several of Narssius's poems treat Sweden's relationship with other countries. For example, his *Svecica* contains a poem about Danzig's celebration of how Sigismund III of Poland entered the city in July of 1623.[55] Why would Narssius eulogize the Polish king during a time when Sweden was waging war against Poland? Narssius's preface introducing the collection provides us with the explanation: "I hope that with the will of God the two Nations and the two Kings, who are highly esteemed beyond any other person, will also be more closely united in their hearts."[56] Narssius acts as the ambassador of peace! He does this again in his collection *Poëmata Septentrionalia*, where he delivers a poem on the recently signed peace treaty between Sweden and Denmark. Entitled *The Peace signed between the most serene Nordic kings in the year of 1624*,[57] the piece rejoices at the restoration of the old order and extols the olive branch that silences the sound of the military horn:

55. *Ad serenissimum regem Sigismundum Tertium Gedanum feliciter ingredientem I Iulii 1623. Amplissimi Senatus Gedanensis Oratio Gratulatoria*.

56. "[S]pero cum bono Deo, utramque Gentem et Reges imprimis laudatissimos arctius quoque animis conjungendos."

57. *Pax confirmata inter serenissimos reges septentrionales anno 1624*.

> Consilio veteris firmat fundamina Pacis,
> Et raucum Litui sistit Oliva sonum.
>
> (He [the All-Mighty] strengthens the foundations of the old Peace through an astute plan and the Olive branch stops the raucous sound of the Horn).

The United Provinces would play a major role as a peace negotiator in the Swedish-Polish wars in the 1620s. As recent scholarship has demonstrated, culture in general and poetry in particular were important ingredients in early modern diplomatic practices.[58] It is remarkable that Narssius himself would include the peace negotiators from the Dutch 1627–28 mission in his drama 1627 *Gustavus Saucius*

58. Interdisciplinary analyses of this phenomenon are offered in Sowerby and Craigwood.

(*The wounded Gustavus*).[59] The play treats the ongoing Swedish-Polish war and how Gustavus was wounded in two battles, first in May 1627 and then in the battle of Dirschau in the summer of 1627.[60] The Dutch diplomats make their appearance in an apostrophe uttered by the Swedish general Johan Banér:

> Pacis optatae diu
> Frustra sequestri venerint Bickerius,
> Honardus atque Bellimontus, Batava
> A gente missi.
>
> (Bicker, Honert and van Beaumont,
> The mediators of a long desired peace,
> Sent by the Batavian people,
> Will have come in vain).[61]

These three men were Rochus van den Honert (1572–1638), member of the High Council of Holland, Zeeland and West-Frisia, Andries Bicker (1586–1652), the mayor of Amsterdam, and Simon van Beaumont (1574–1654), the Pensionary of Middelburg and Deputy of Zeeland. We can assume that the great networker Narssius knew at least one of them. Furthermore, his Remonstrant background might have been useful in the context of the United Provinces' attempt to mediate peace between Lutheran Sweden and Catholic Poland, as the Remonstrant views were in many respects closer to Catholicism than to Calvinism and Lutheranism.[62]

Also Narssius moved from place to place, but unlike Clemens, who was constantly searching for new patrons, he moved because of his assignments. Thus, we find him working for Oxenstierna in Stockholm, Elbing, and Hamburg. As Oxenstierna's correspondence shows, the chancellor's family did not miss the chance to employ Narssius as their medical practitioner. In August 1626, the chancellor's brother Gabriel Gustafson Oxenstierna asks Axel to forgive Narssius's late arrival from Stockholm. Gabriel needed Narssius the physician, as his wife was ill. We also learn that he was pleased with Narssius's services:

> … effter Dr Narsius nu förreser öffuer till H. K. M:tt till Preussen, och jagh inthe tvifflar, dett min k[iäre] b[roder] der och nu näst Gudz hielp ähr stadder, så haffuer jagh inthe kunnatt underlathe min k[iäre] b[roder] medh denna min sckriffuelse att besökia, broderligen begärandes, dett, effter

59. The play was issued twice. Here we use the second edition released in 1628.

60. For an analysis of the tragedy, see Sarasti-Wilenius. My analysis concerns only four particular lines and relies heavily on Hulsenboom, who discusses poems and plays produced during the Dutch diplomatic missions to Poland in 1627–28 and 1635. Hulsenboom argues, and very convincingly so, that Dutch envoys used poetry as diplomatic gifts or as a means of voicing their political standpoints.

61. The translation is from Hulsenboom 79.

62. Cossee; Woortman 18. Cf. Hulsenboom's observation regarding the case of Joost van den Vondel who in one of his poems celebrated the 1635 truce signed between Poland-Lithuania and Sweden. van den Vondel was a Remonstrant and that might be the reason why his verses are so appreciative of the Polish king Vladislav IV. Hulsenboom 99.

> jagh honom nu en tijdh långh för min hustrus siuklige legenheet skull uppehollet haffuer, och han sin största flijtt giort, så att jagh, näst Gudz hielp, hereffter dett besta förmoda vill, att min k[iäre] b[roder] hans dröjsmål ville till dett besta lathe entskylla och hans person sigh och ville lathe vara befalat.[63]

63. For transcription, see Sondén 97.

> (Since Doctor Narssius is now traveling to His Royal Majesty in Prussia and I have no doubt that my dear brother is also there now, with God's help, I could not help myself but to attend to my dear brother with this letter, brotherly asking, that after having kept him [*i.e.* Narssius] for a long time because of my wife's sickly condition – and he has been very diligent – I want thereafter, with God's help, to hope that my dear brother will hopefully excuse his late arrival and will let him [*i.e.* Narssius] be recommended).

As mentioned above, Narssius's profession as a physician must have been his most valuable career asset. In fact, this is how Narssius always presents himself on the title pages of his collections: "Johannes Narssius Dordraco-Batavus Medicinae Doctor."[64]

64. For example, the title page of his first collection of poetry reads as follows: *Ioannis Narssii Dordraco-Batavi Med[icinae] Doct[oris] Svecica addenda apologetico et prodromo poematico nuper editis.*

Narssius's literary activities would reach their apogee with his epic, which was entitled *Gustavidos sive de bello Sueco-Austriaco libri tres* (*The Gustavid or the three books about the Swedish-Austrian war*) and printed the same year as Clemens's *Gustavis*. The first three books comprising almost 2,000 lines appeared sometime before August of 1632, as the third book does not treat the events that took place that month. In 1634, Narssius released his fourth and last book: *Gustavidos sive de bello Sueco-Austriaco liber quartus*.[65] The opening of Narssius' first book announces of the poet's ambitious undertaking:

65. Unabridged title: *Gustavidos sive de bello Sueco-Austriaco liber quartus, continens occupatam Thuringiam, Franconiam et loca quædam finitima.*

> Austriacas fractas acies Papaliaque arma
> Gustavi virtute cano, virtute redemtas,
> Quae dudum pressae victrice Tyrannide, gentes.
>
> (I sing of how Gustavus's courage broke the Austrian lines and the Papal weapons, how the people who were suppressed until now by a victorious Tyranny were rescued).

Early in the epic, the reader meets with a description of the devastation caused to Germany by Ferdinand's troops to learn how this prompts the estates of the Swedish realm to make a joint decision to intervene. We then follow the Swedish king's descent on the shores

of Pomerania, his building of alliances with German princes and subsequently his successes on the battlefield. We are always horrified by the ferocity and cruelty of the imperial army. One such scene is of the sack of Magdeburg by Count of Tilly, a massacre that took the lives of at least 20,000 of the city's citizens. These verses are reminiscent of Vergil's passages on the destruction of Troy in the *Aeneid*. The resemblance occurs on several levels, not least on the level of direct borrowings. Thus, *Gustavis* 1, 471: "Horror ubique animis, et plurima mortis imago" ("horror filling hearts is everywhere, and many a form of death") is a rephrasing of *Aen*. 2, 368–69: "[…] crudelis ubique/ luctus, ubique pavor et plurima mortis imago" ("everywhere is cruel grief, everywhere panic, and full many of a shape of death").[66]

When comparing the two *Gustavides,* the reader will discover that Narssius's poem is more military in content and that its descriptions of battle scenes are at times more elaborate, while Clemens's epic devotes more time to themes such as divine intervention and allegories of various kinds.[67] We know that both Clemens and Narssius requested access to recent reports from the battlefields and both seem to have received these accounts.[68] Nevertheless, Narssius had a better chance of obtaining all sorts of information directly from the Swedish officials: while Clemens was putting the finishing touches to his poem in Leiden, the Dutch poet could easily approach these men in Hamburg and Elbing. In addition, Clemens's choice of motifs can be explained as due to his religious argument, as the Leitmotif of his *Gustavis* is the need to fight the Catholic Church, not least the Jesuits. Narssius, too, sees the conflict as a struggle between confessions, but this theme is much more predominant in the Bohemian writer's poem, not to mention Clemens's recurrent references to the martyrdom of his beloved Bohemia.

What is more, being a member of the Swedish representation in Elbing, Narssius knew Clemens, as we learn from the Czech writer's *Miscellanea et adoptiva* collection. The poems gathered there were written between 1625 and 1631 and include poetic addresses to the Bohemian refugee's friends and pieces by his fellow poets. Present also are verses by and about Narssius, and what they signal is that Clemens and Narssius were competitors in the field of poetry writing. For instance, the following line by Clemens about their relationship can be interpreted in this way: "Invidulis pridem me despectabat ocellis." ("Previously he looked down upon me with eyes full of envy.")[69] In fact, it was Clemens who had all the reasons to be jealous: Narssius was then working on his epic as an officially employed

66. Translation by H. Rushton Fairclough revised by G. P. Goold for the Loeb Classical Library.

67. There are no longer studies of Narssius's epic, but some of his verses are quoted in Helander's *Neo-Latin Literature* as illustrations of the language of Protestant literature from the time of the Thirty Years' War, which primarily regards his use of terminology from the field of early modern warfare.

68. In a letter from 15 November 1631, Clemens thanks Ludvig Camerarius for supplying him with material about the siege of Magdeburg. The letter is transcribed in Ryba 216–17. Several letters by Narssius from his first years in the service of the Swedish state contain requests of the same type. For example, the Dutch poet asked for details regarding the taking of Riga in 1621. He needed this information for his epyllion *Riga devicta* that he eventually released in 1625. Gustafsson 128.

69. Cf. Ryba 339–40, who also quotes this line in his discussion of the two poets' literary rivalry. Further, Ryba suggests that some verses by Narssius in his *Miscellanea* collection are aimed at Clemens, but it is difficult to assert this will absolute certainty.

historiographer, while Clemens was trying to make a living as a teacher to Oxenstierna's children.

Post poëmata

In a letter to Ludvig Camerarius from 1633, Clemens writes that he is planning to move to England and that he needs the ambassador's recommendations to use in the new country:

> Patiatur, quaeso, Dominus cumulo beneficiorum mihi exhibitorum id ipsum singulare favoris in me superaddi argumentum, ut me literis suis alicui Magnatum Britannicorum, […], diligenter et de meliore nota commendare dignetur […]. (Ryba 341–42)
>
> (May my Lord grant me, I beseech, adding to the sum of the favours bestowed on me this particular help in my favour, that he will deem worthy to recommend me diligently and with a rather kind mention in a letter to one of the English Magnates).

The poet also complains that the printing of the epic had costed him "centum Imperiales," *i.e*. "one hundred imperials," an amount of money that was excessively high for a wretched man like him, "ingens profecto hominis calamitosi detrimentum" ("indeed, a great damage for an unfortunate man").

An unusually long letter from 12 March 1634 from Clemens to Oxenstierna reveals that the poet's situation had not improved. Clemens reminds the chancellor that he has not received his salary for three years. The poet is also worried that his *Gustavis* and *Excessus Augusti* have not been delivered to the patron, but he makes it clear that he wants to be reimbursed for the printing costs, as he hardly can afford to buy bread. Moreover, he wonders what other favour seekers have done to deserve their handsome salaries:

> Doleo autem quam maxime, facile etenim credo nequicquam ex opusculis meis Tuae celsitudini publice destinatis ad manus tuas pervenisse. Forsan neque ipsius *Gustavidos* opus! Multo minus, quae de *Excessu Augusti nostri ad Deos* publice meo sumptu dederam. Ego vero sperabam pro tot laboribus et lucubrationibus aliquid fructuum ad sustentandum vitae

> hujus miserae subsidium in me redundaturum, ut et debitoribus meis satisfacerem ac operas Typographicas persolverem. At sperabam tantum. Quid dicam, Illustrissime Domine? Ad extrema deveni. Deest mihi, deest profecto Panis quotidianus. Jejunii vix iam sustineo supplicium. Ad Te manus supplices toties orando, obsecrando, obtestando levavi, at nunc audio querelas meas non devenisse, quo dirigebantur. In Te uno post Deum spes mihi posita fuit. Tibi, Domine, tuisque hanc vitam, studia, calamum devovi. Multa hactenus scripsi ad causae publicae statum defendendum, apud posteros provehendum, nescio an etiam plura (sit venia modeste glorianti) quam omnes alii, qui amplissimis erant ornati salariis, beneficiis, donationibus. (Ryba 346–47)
>
> (I am deeply distressed, since I can easily believe that none of my minor works that were published and meant for Your Highness has reached Your hands. Probably not even the *Gustavis* work itself! Not to mention the work which, entitled *De Excessu Augusti nostri ad Deos*, I published at my own expense. In fact, I cherished hope that, in return for my work and toil, some rewards would be bestowed on me to support this miserable life so that I would be able to please my debtors and to pay for the printing of my works. But I only cherished hope. What shall I say, most Illustrious Lord? I have reached the most dire hardship. Indeed, I lack, yes I lack daily bread. I now barely endure the plight of starvation. How many times have I stretched my begging hands towards You while asking, beseeching and appealing, to learn now that my complaints have not reached their addressee. My hope was in You alone after God. To You and Your family, my Lord, I have dedicated my life, my work, and my pen. I have hitherto written much to defend the state of the public cause, to advance it among future generations, and perhaps even more (forgive the one who is boasting modestly) than all the others, who are awarded with very high salaries, benefactions, and gifts).

As William Poole notices, Clemens's letters are at times passive aggressive (Poole 165). This is not surprising: even before, Clemens seems to have been worried that his work would go unnoticed and therefore without rewards, especially after the death of the Swedish king. We perceive this anxiousness in his letter to Constantijn Huy-

gens, penned sometime at the end of 1632, *i.e.* some weeks after the battle of Lützen. The letter's date is indicated in the following way: "Penned at the end of the year 1632 which is remarkable because of the deaths of three European Kings."[70] The *tres Reges* are Gustavus Adolphus (d. 6 November 1632), Sigismund III Vasa (d. 30 April 1632), and the former Elector Palatine of the Rhine Frederick (d. 29 November 1632). Now, when they are gone, Clemens wants to be recommended to "our most Christian Prince who is ever victorious," which words must refer to Frederick Henry, Prince of Orange, who like his brother Maurice was a talented military strategist. The poet is promoting himself with his epic and uses the same expressions as he would use in his letters to other people:

70. "Dab[am] sub occasum Anni 1632 trium Europaeorum occasu Regum notabilis." Digital Collection of Leiden University Library.

> Harum exemplar Victoriarum ad te Vir Amplissime mitto, et majorem in modum oro, obsecro, obtestor, ut apud Triumphatorem nostrum Principem Christianiss[imum] quem pagina loquitur nostra, me autorem gratia, favore, ac patrocinio, ejusdem summopere indigum, de meliore nota commendes, qui rivulus quispiam aut guttula ex fonte beneficentiae clementiss[imi] Victoris in me derivetur.
>
> (I am sending you a copy of these Victories, most honourable Man, and I ask, I beseech, I strongly urge that you would be so kind as to recommend me to our most Christian Prince, ever victorious, of whom my letter speaks,[71] as the author, who is highly in need of his kindness, favour, and patronage, so that a stream or a drop from the fountain of the most kind Victor may flow to me).

71. Clemens praises the military *virtus* of the prince, "stupenda virtus Invictissimi Principis Auriaci," thirteen lines earlier.

Victoriae is the word in the subtitle of the Czech poet's epic, "victoriarum heroicarum […] series" ("a series of heroic victories").

During that year, Clemens approached several other influential men, among them Gerardus Joannes Vossius and Johannes Polyander. In a letter to Vossius from July 1632, he begs the Dutch scholar to help him cover the costs of one of his poems (Poole 165). As a matter of fact, Polyander had a recommendation arranged for the poet already as early as April of 1632. In his letter to the Ministers of the Churches of Great Britain, Polyander explains that he knows that they can provide protection for Bohemian refugees and asks them to think especially of a group of exiled ministers, students and teachers. Clemens is mentioned as one of the refugees residing in Leiden. We also learn that he was very poor:

> Intellexi ex Domino Rutingio vestri quondam Symmystae filio apud vos esse exulum ob nomen Christi ex Bohemia eiectorum fautores et patronos, qui ex Christiana εὐδοκία καὶ συμπαθεία (sic) ipsis succurrere desiderant. In horum censu sunt miseri pastores D. Johannes Litomil et D. Daniel Weterus Pastores apud nos degentes, et D. Venceslaus Clemens qui fuit Rector Scholae Pragensis cuius egestas nobis quoque est probe cognita.[72]
>
> (I have heard from Lord Rutingius who is the son of your former assistant clergyman that there are among you people who are protectors and patrons of refugees expelled from Bohemia because of the name of Christ, who wish to assist these people owing to Christian kindness and compassion (sic). Among these are the wretched ministers Mr Johannes Litomil and Mr Daniel Weterus, which ministers are staying with us, and Mr Venceslaus Clemens who used to be Rector of the School in Prague and whose extreme poverty is also well known to us).

72. Polyander's letter is transcribed in Hessels 1554, no 2166. Another recommendation, from 1633, was from Vossius. More about it in Ryba 344.

Before leaving for England, Clemens produced a 1,850-line poem on the origin and traditions of the Order of the Garter: *The Garteriad or the two books about the Golden Garter* (Leiden, 1634).[73] The poet's plan was to arrive in England in time for the procession held on St George's Day and to present the poem to Charles I. Unfortunately, Clemens did not make it in time and would later explain that his *Garterias* "had little success" ("Garterias mea parum fortunatos experitur successus").[74]

73. *Garterias sive Aureae Periscelidis libri duo.*

74. Poole 166 and 177, n. 23.

When in England, Clemens used Vossius's testimonials to seek new *Maecenates.* The potential benefactors he met did not provide any support, though. The Bohemian poet's attempts to get introduced to other influential Englishmen seem to have left Vossius annoyed. William Poole has argued that Clemens's blunt manner of communicating his wishes could have been one of the reasons for his failure as a favour seeker (Poole 167). The only Englishman who maintained contact with the Czech refugee throughout his stay in England was the royal librarian Patrick Young. Their correspondence bears additional witness to Clemens's miserable state (Poole 170).

The Bohemian writer's last major project was his 6,200-line *Trinobantias*. Printed in 1636 and dedicated to Charles I, it is a praise of the city of London. As noted above, parts of it are borrowings from Clemens's poem about Danzig. Again, the work did not bring the de-

sired result. The poet died in absolute poverty in 1637. His will is a distressing read:

> Quod attinet res meas, pecuniis careo, vestimenta, libros, et lucubrationes meas, Magnis Moecenatibus dedicatas (pro quibus præmium nisi periodus vitæ meæ fatalis incidisset, industria et sedulitate dignum promissum magnificè habebam, et jam jam spicilegium præstolabar) de illis ita dispono: quoniam singulari amore propensa erga me Ecclesia Belgica quæ est Londini, mihi in summa necessitate 7 libras et 10. solidos mutuo dederat, tum etiam hospiti meo pro camera, ex rebus meis, solutioni jubeo satisfiat. Quæ reliqua manebunt, Conterraneis meis Bohemis, Bartholomæo Mikysko et Casparo Hlawacio, quia dum sanus et æger eram, promptè mihi inserviebant, ea omnia et singula spontè ac voluntariè lego, mando, relinquo. Hæc est liberi animi mei summa et postrema voluntas. Factum in Musæo meo, præsente hospite meo Iohanne Rogers qui hoc scripsit 7. Maij Anno Domini nostri 1637.
>
> (As for my belongings: I am destitute of money. Clothes, books, and my writings, dedicated to great Maecenases (for which I had good hope to receive, had I not now been in a moribund state, a reward, corresponding to my strenuous efforts, which had been solemnly promised to me, and a gleaning [of which] I was already expecting); concerning these I dispose thus: for the singular love shown to me by the London Dutch Church, which had lent me in my greatest necessity the sum of £7 10s, and then also to my host for my chamber, I bid that they be repaid from my belongings. As for those things that remain, those things all and individually, I willingly and voluntarily bequeath, commit and leave to my Bohemian countrymen Bartholomaeus Mikysko and Caspar Hlawacius, because they served me well while I was in health and in sickness. This is the last and final will of my free soul. Made in my study, in the presence of my host John Rogers, who wrote this, 7 May 1637).[75]

What happened to Narssius after the completion of his epic? We know that the Dutchman left his position as Sweden's historiographer sometime in 1631. He mentions his resignation in a letter to Oxenstierna from 11/21 July 1633. Lars Gustafsson speculated that the

75. The text of the will and its translation, here slightly altered, are from Poole 174 and 182. Two minor misprints in the Latin text have been corrected.

Swedish employment might have been hampering for Narssius in potential business opportunities (Gustafsson 130). In the same letter from 1633, the poet wishes to be compensated for his *Gustavis* together with some other poems and for his travel expenses. He was also delighted to hear from Johan Banér that the king is said to have enjoyed the first part of the epic:

> Quodsi etiam pro inchoato Opere Gustavidos, (quod clementer gratum habuisse S[acri] R[egis] M[ajes]t[ate]m ex Illustrissimo Domino Generali Bannerio intellexi) aliisque scriptis post resignatum stipendium editis, atque etiam in subsidium itineris Germanici, extraordinario aliquo honorario me dignabitur, id in lucro ponam […].[76]
>
> (But if some sort of additional honorarium is granted me for the work of *Gustavis* that is begun (which I learned from Most Ilustrious Lord Banér was benevolently received by his Sacred Royal Majesty) and other writings printed after the resignation from my stipend, as well as any help to pay for my travel to Germany, then I will count it as the profit).

76. *Oxenstiernska samlingen* in Riksarkivet, Stockholm.

So, Narssius wrote the fourth *liber* of his *Gustavis* after quitting his appointment with Sweden. It is noteworthy that the last book does not contain any dedications. Its only paratext is a short address to the reader, where Narssius explains that he wants to finish the poem in order to celebrate those who deserve commemoration. He might have received some kind of remuneration before the release of this concluding part of the epic, as he had brought up his financial strain in a letter to the chancellor from November 1633:

> Non difficile est Exc[ellentiae] Vestrae judicare, quam grave fuerit mihi (qui toto jam biennio, et quod excurrit, stipendio carui) septendecim mensibus in hisce locis commorari meis inpensis praesertim cum paucula duntaxat ex rebus meis, quas oppignorare possim, hic habeam, plerisque Hamburgi relictis, spe expeditionis celerioris.[77]
>
> (It is not difficult for Your Excellency to judge how strenuous it has been for me (who have already lacked a stipend for more than two years) to spend seventeen months in these places at my own expense, especially since I have here only a few of my possessions that I can pawn, as I have left most of

77. Also this letter is preserved in Riksarkivet, Stockholm.

them in Hamburg, in the hope that the travel will not last long.)

After finishing the *Gustavis*, Narssius took up a new job: he was recruited as extraordinary councillor and physician of the Dutch East India Company. He died in 1637 in Java. The exact day of his death is not known.

Conclusion

To make a conclusion, we will need to return to the question of our poets' wishes and their patrons' expectations. As the extensive correspondence of the two writers shows, both wrote poetry for remuneration. Neither of them is hiding this fact. Both are eager to remind their benefactors of their old promises to pay, and neither one fails to bring up the new printing and travel costs he had incurred.

Narssius was active not only as a poet, but also as a physician and as a quasi-diplomat. Those additional skills were clearly appreciated by his Swedish employer and it is telling that Narssius's appointment with the Dutch East India Company was in these two capacities, and not as an encomiast.

Clemens, who was part of Oxenstierna's household, seems to have been hired primarily as a tutor. This suggests that he would be able to count on lodging and food, but perhaps not salary. Moreover, Oxenstierna's children would not need Clemens forever: when the Bohemian teacher had joined Johan Oxenstierna on his study tour to Leiden, the young nobleman had turned nineteen. Furthermore, it is important to remember that by the time of Clemens's arrival in Elbing, Narssius was already employed as Sweden's official historiographer.

It is also instructive to study the network these two poets relied on. Narssius was introduced to Swedish men in power through people who were already working for the Swedish state. Individuals like Leonard van Sorgen, Jan Rutgers and James Roberston were hired for their unique expertise. van Sorgen, who sent young Narssius to Sweden, was the Swedish correspondent in Hamburg. He was also the person who helped Sweden establish postal services on the continent (Linnarsson 62–68). The Scot Robertson was a highly appreciated doctor at the Swedish court and a successful businessperson, who had a monopoly of the supply of all the medicines within the royal palace (Forsstrand). As to Clemens's network, it consisted of

humanist scholars and theologians from the Netherlands. We know that Sweden had tried to recruit one of the most renowned of them, viz. Daniel Heinsius. That job went to Narssius.

Was it bad timing for Clemens to seek the Swedes' favour when Narssius had already installed himself as their *historiographus regni*? I do not think that timing was Clemens's main problem. What he failed to understand – in my opinion – was the changing conditions of his contemporary society. The system of exchange relationships was then undergoing a transformation: investing in people was now supposed to bring profit. For that reason, lavish paratexts and constant pleading for help did not suffice to promote a candidate on the labour market, as he had to offer his sponsor something very substantial, something his foreign patron would benefit from both at home and internationally. The favour seeker had to be a capital asset.

Many other contemporary cases corroborate this argument. For example, Johannes Raicus (Jan Rajek) (*c.* 1580–1632), also a Czech Protestant in exile, made a stellar career in Sweden.[78] His first important appointment was as rector of the cathedral school in Königsberg. In addition to his humanist training, including the proficiency in the art of poetry, he, like Narssius, was a licensed physician. It was in this capacity that he was invited to serve the Oxenstierna family. It was also an Oxenstierna, the University Chancellor Gustaf Oxenstierna, who proposed Raicus for a new chair in medicine at Uppsala. Already after two years as Professor Ordinarius (1627–29), the Czech was made the university's rector. One year later, he became head of the newly founded Swedish academy in Dorpat. What conclusion should we draw from this? Raicus possessed a useful knowledge and the Swedes did not hesitate to offer him their patronage.

78. The summary of Raicus's employment history is based on Nosco 915–18; Lindroth 387–88.

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