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## Taming the Prophets : Astrology, Orthodoxy and the Word of God in Early Modern Sweden

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MARTIN KJELLGREN

# TAMING THE PROPHETS



Astrology, Orthodoxy and the Word of God in Early Modern Sweden



**MARTIN KJELLGREN** (b. 1972) is an associate of the Swedish National Graduate School of History, hosted by the Department of History at Lund University. He lectures in History and Cultural Studies at Malmö University. *Taming the Prophets* is his doctoral thesis.

COVER ILLUSTRATION:

*Quae supra nos, nihil ad nos.* Emblem with the chained Prometheus from Andrea Alciati, *Emblemata*, Lyon 1550.

# Taming the Prophets

Astrology, Orthodoxy and the Word of God in Early Modern Sweden



Quæ supra nos, nihil ad nos.



Caucasia æternum pendens in rupe Prometheus  
 Diripitur sacri præpetis ungue iecur.  
 Et nollet fecisse hominem: figulosque perosus  
 Accensam rapto damnat ab igne facem.  
 Roduntur uarijs prudentum pectora curis,  
 Qui cœli affe etant scire, deumque uices.

# Taming the Prophets

Astrology, Orthodoxy and  
the Word of God in Early Modern Sweden

Martin Kjellgren



SEKEL

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# Acknowledgements

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up ... A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

Ecclesiastes 3:1–3, 8.

During my doctoral studies, the times have been shifting. There have been times of extreme weariness. There have been times when I have buried myself in my lecturing duties, just to get away from the thesis for a while. Then again, there have been times of sheerest joy – hours and hours spent over dusty books in libraries or in my study. Now, when I'm finally finished, it is time for me to give thanks to all those who have helped and supported me through these years.

From the beginning, my main supervisor Dick Harrison has put me under wholesome stress, urging me to get on with the work. He has patiently done his part of the tedious paper work, filled in the right forms and written introductory letters and certificates. In between he has guaranteed me full academic freedom, for which I am grateful. My co-supervisor Mats Greiff once uttered that he, being an expert in class issues in the industrial age, in history of sport and of modern popular culture, rarely has learned so much from supervising a doctoral student. I regret to be of a different opinion. Mats will probably never turn me into an orthodox Marxist, but through the years he has pointed out crucial perspectives I would never have discovered without his help. And, I have to admit, Engels' book on the German Peasant's War *was* a good evening read. Yet among my supervisors, Håkan Håkansson should have the greatest share of honour. Through his erudition he has corrected my misconceptions and guided me into the intellectual world of the Renaissance, and he has done far more for this thesis than could be expected. To the very end he has encouraged me and dampened my anxieties over the text.

Hjalmar Fors, my boon companion since my very first day at the academy has read and commented the introductory chapter, helping me to make it a lot better than it originally was. Terhi Kiiskinen kindly read and commented an early version of my chapter on Sigfridus Forsius. I am also deeply indebted to Kjell Lekeby, who has shared his extensive excerpts and Swedish translations of various sources related to Forsius. These documents have been invaluable points of reference for my own research and for my struggle with the Latin phrases.

During my work, Historical Studies and the seminar at Malmö University has been my primary research milieu. Thanks for good comradeship and discussions – Thomas Småberg for keeping the medievalist colours high, and for encouraging the noble art of post seminars among your colleagues; Stefan Nyzell for discussions on everything between the cultural history of riots, film, literature and parenthood; Carolina Jonsson Malm for your energy and intelligence; Matilda Svensson for your sharp-witted tongue, disguised by your gentle, Ölandish idiom; Vanja Losic for your kindness and hospitality – and to the rest of you for making everyday cares a lot more interesting.

Through a scholarship from the National Graduate School of History I was able to spend three terms in 2005–2006 as visiting student at the Department of History and Philosophy of Science, Cambridge University. Apart from providing inspiring environments and unmatched libraries, Cambridge was a place of many seminars and discussions. Thanks to my sponsor Lauren Kassell for reading and commenting my first empirical drafts. During my time at HPS, the Latin Therapy Group also became part of my weekly routine. A great deal of thanks thus goes to Debbie, Nick, Anke, Liz, Patrick and all others, not only for the intellectual exercise and for the slightly odd Latin texts we translated, but also for tea and biscuits galore.

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Despite all comradeship and all fun involved, writing a thesis is lonely work. I cannot emphasize enough how much my friends and family has meant to me during these years. My parents, Per and Catharina Kjellgren have encouraged and supported me from the very beginning. My sister Hanna Stafhammar Kjellgren has patiently listened to the complaints of her little brother. With her own thesis well behind her, she has pointed out all the perils and traps that I as a PhD student was bound to fall into sooner or

later – which I also did. But it is consoling to learn that you are not alone in your misery. Others have been there before.

Finally, my wife Lisa Kjellgren has lived with my thesis and my dead clergymen and astrologers ever since we first met that April evening in Uppsala. Her patience has been admirable, her wits and humour a constant source of joy and happiness, and her love a God-sent gift. In later years, my daughter Elsa has also taught me that there are things in life more important than my thesis, like reading Moomin books, playing football in the garden, swimming in the lake and watching Shaun the Sheep on the telly. To her I dedicate this book by paraphrasing the Preacher of Ecclesiastes 12:12:

“My daughter, be admonished: of writing books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh.”

Sjöröd, Hästveda, at daybreak 13 July 2011.

## Editorial Notes

Unless stated otherwise, all translations are mine. Longer quotations, and quotations significant for the argument, are provided in original in the footnotes.

The names of historical persons are given in the form they are generally known. For instance I will use vernacular English for Cyprian Leowitz, but the Latinized Benedictus Olai instead of the Swedish Bengt Olofsson. For the names of Swedish monarchs and consorts I have kept the Swedish standard spelling, with the exceptions of Gustavus Adolphus and Christina, due to their international renown. Most Swedish individuals mentioned in the sources are placed after their forename in the index, apart from those (for instance Sigfridus Aronus *Forsius*) whose last names (in most cases indicating their place of birth) are traditionally accepted as their surnames.

Names of cities within the Swedish realm in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are given according to contemporary Swedish practice: thus I write Helsingfors instead of Helsinki, Reval instead of Tallinn, Dorpat instead of Tartu etc. Names of Swedish cities that were Danish before 1658, like Malmö, are named in Swedish.





# At the End of Time

And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring [...] And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

Luke 21:25, 28<sup>1</sup>

To anyone able to interpret the signs, ancient prophecies seemed to be standing on the brink of fulfilment. In November 1587 a strange fish, marked with obscure characters and figures had been caught in the sea off the Norwegian coast. Miraculous visions of armed hosts, fighting in the skies were seen by thousands of people while blood fell as rain from the heavens. Monstrous births occurred among beasts and men, and eclipses and sundogs appeared as harbingers of coming calamities. Burning comets lit the night sky, and in their wake followed religious disruption, war, famine and pestilence, as the horsemen of the Apocalypse rode through the world, scourging an unrepentant humanity.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Unless stated otherwise, all Bible quotes are from KJV, standard text of 1769.

<sup>2</sup> The sixteenth- and seventeenth-century literary corpus on portents is vast and well-nigh impossible to survey. Most of the material was printed and spread in form of broadsheets and pamphlets, but there were also collections in so-called wonder-books. For a distinct example, see Conrad Lycosthenes, *Prodigiorum ac ostentorum chronicon*, Basel 1557; cf. Rudolf Schenda, "Die deutschen Prodigiensammlungen des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts", *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens* vol. IV, Frankfurt am Main 1963, esp. the bibliography pp. 699–710; for contemporary notes on the fish of 1587, see "Anteckningar af kyrkoherden Nicolaus Andreae från åren 1561–1592", printed in *Historiska handlingar* vol. 20, Kungl. Samfundet för utgivande af handskrifter rörande Skandinaviens historia, Stockholm 1905 p. 222; for a discussion on eschatological and apocalyptic worldviews of Europe during the Reformation, see Andrew Cunningham & Ole Peter Grell, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: Religion, War, Famine and Death in Reformation Europe*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2000, esp. pp. 11–16; for a discussion on apocalypticism in a Lutheran

As news of portents and prodigies were reported from the pulpits and discussed in squares and taverns, virtually everyone could anticipate their ominous significance. Broadsheets and pamphlets brought horrifying tales from far and near, and since many of them were illustrated with suggestive pictures, they made sure that even the illiterate would get the point. The end of the world approached, and people would either turn or burn.



Fig. 1. Christ as judge of the world, encompassed by scenes from his earthly life and portents of his Second Advent. Woodcut on the frontispiece of Conrad Lycosthenes, *Prodigiorum ac ostentorum chronicon*, Basel 1557.

Yet although beliefs in portents and presages were shared by high and low, learned and unlearned, it was still a task for doctors and scholars to enter the mysteries of the Creation to reveal their innermost, eschatological meaning. Not only wonder signs should be heeded. Everything in nature, however insignificant, had a divine purpose and was inserted in a great casual chain, running from the celestial spheres to the depths of the world. As expressed by the Finnish priest, astrologer and natural philosopher Sigfridus Aronus Forsius (d. 1624), God had “thus created this World through his almighty

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context, see Robin Bruce Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis: Apocalypticism in the Wake of the Lutheran Reformation*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California 1988 pp. 5–8. For a standard work on eschatological and apocalyptic conceptions during the Swedish Reformation, see Henrik Sandblad, *De eskatologiska föreställningarna i Sverige under reformation och motreformation*, Lychnosbiblioteket, Uppsala 1942.

word, so that in all her parts a marvellous Harmony and correspondence is clearly seen, and no part seems to be created in vain”.<sup>3</sup>

Through his Word, God had ordered the world and laid down his wisdom in the elements as an intelligible text, and as a hidden treasure to be attained by the wise and pious scholar. Consequently, Forsius emphasized that “they are worthy of praise, who with Empedocles and Democritus studiously ransack the closest causes in Nature”. But among the natural philosophers, it was only the astrologer who like “Thales and Anaxagoras” strived to reveal “the beginning, the origin and the first cause, by which all things are actuated like the wheel of a Potter (as Aristotle, the studious Examiner of nature speaks) by its master”.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, unlike any other philosophical art or practice, astrological studies revealed a method for understanding the mysteries of the Creation – from the highest ethereal spheres, down to the elementary world, and from the beginning of the world to the end of time. There was no verdict concerning the tribulations of the final age, deduced from studies of nature or from scrupulous readings of world history and the Scriptures, which could not be sufficiently confirmed by astronomical calculations, interpreted through the wisdom of astrologers of old.

\*

Forsius was by no means alone in his ambition to reveal the mysteries of the Last Days by studying the stars. Throughout the age of the Reformation, pamphleteers and authors of profound astrological tracts had stirred up grave eschatological expectations in the Christian world. An unusual series of conjunctions in the watery signs of Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces in 1524 had instigated an agitated debate about the possibility of a second Flood.<sup>5</sup> In the latter part of the sixteenth century, renowned astrologers, natural philosophers and theologians had declared that 1588 would be, if not the year of

3 Sigfridus Aronus Forsius, *Then stora Prognostica Til thet Åår Christi M. DC. XIX. Medh flijt vthräknat och judiceret aff naturlige orsaker/ och the gamble Astrologers förfarenheet*, printed by Ignatius Meurer, Stockholm 1618 sig. A2r: “... mädan then alzmächtige hela werldennes Skapare och Herre/ thenna Werlden igenom sitt alzmächtige ord så skapat hafwer/ at vthi alle hennes deler en vnderligh Harmonia och öfwerenskom-melse klarliga synes/ oc ingen deel synes förgäfwes skapat wara”.

4 Forsius, *Then stora Prognostica ... M. DC. XIX.* sig. A2v: “Och ändoch at ock the äre prijs wärde/ som medh Empedocle och Democrito fljigt ranska the närmeste orsaker i Naturen/ och aff them döma om Effecterne/ Doch äre the mäst til berömande/ som mz Thalete oc Anaxagora/ gå til begynnelsen/ vrsprånget och then första orsaak/ aff hwilken alle ting drifwas lijka som en Pottomakares hiwl (som Aristoteles naturens fljigt Ranasakare talar) aff sin mästare”.

5 Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis* p. 143.



the judgement, then at least a 'year of wonder' with eschatological significance. The astrological motivation for this forecast was somewhat obscure, but some authors referred to a conjunction between the malevolent planets of Saturn and Mars that would occur that year. In the 1560s the Bohemian scholar Cyprian Leowitz (1524–1574) revised an old theory on how the regular, 'great conjunctions' between the upper planets Jupiter and Saturn correlated to the cyclical changes of time and history. According to Leowitz, such a conjunction in Pisces in 1583 would mark the transition from the watery to the fiery signs of the Zodiac, an extremely rare and ominous event that undoubtedly indicated the imminence of the judgement day.<sup>6</sup> In the excited atmosphere of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Europe, the influence of Leowitz' work was immense, and he soon got uncounted epigones and followers. In pamphlets and prognostications, grim messages were spread, calling all Christian people to penitence and repentance as the world now faced its greatest changes and its final end.<sup>7</sup>

Yet despite the urgent need of divine guidance through the afflictions and persecutions of the last days, expressed in learned tracts, broadsheets and sermons, there were no heydays for sages and prophets. In his *Great Prognostication* for the year 1619, published in Stockholm where he practised his trade, Forsius was dismayed to see how the fruits of his life-long endeavours were trampled in the dust by ignorant and envious people.

Forsius was not surprised to learn that his pious warnings of God's vengeance and the imminence of the final judgement were not heeded. On the contrary, he knew only too well that "the world (alas, in this last evil time) take up Epicurean manners of life, and despise wholesome admonition".<sup>8</sup> Yet he was gravely concerned that the astrological art was no longer respected. Some years previously he had admitted that astrology, like all "high bookish arts", would always have its "haters and malefactors".<sup>9</sup> But as he had now "practiced *Astronomia* with great mental effort through one

6 Cyprian Leowitz, *De coniunctionibus magnis insignioribus superiorum planetarum*, printed by Emanuel Salczer, Lauingen 1564 sig. N2v–N3v

7 C. Scott Dixon, "Popular Astrology and Lutheran Propaganda in Reformation Germany", *History* 84 (275) 1999 pp. 403–405; Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis* pp. 157–168.

8 Forsius, *Then stora Prognostica ... M. DC. XIX* sig. D3r: "Och när werlden (såsom ty wärre/ i thenne sijdsta onda tijden) slår sigh alt til Epicurisk lefwerne/ och förachtar helsosamma förmaningar".

9 Sigfridus Aronus Forsius, *Prognosticon Astrologicum Eller Stiernornas bethydande j al-labanda tilkommande hendelser j Lufien/ och nedhre på Jordenne/ På the fyra Åarsens tijdher/ Till thet Åår effter Frelsermannens Jesu Chrjstj nåderijka Födhelse. M DC X.*, printed by Anund Olofsson, Stockholm 1609 sig. A2r: "Altså går och medh höghe bökerlighe konster/ at the och j lika måtto hafwa sine hatare och missgynnare."

and twenty years” he had become more aware “that people in this place are getting nauseated by the art, so that it has become a habitual guest, and just like an old, long remaining, rotten fish”.<sup>10</sup>

Obviously there were critical voices in contemporary debate. In December 1611 a dissertation with 54 theses against “the uncertain and vain forecasts of the astrologers” had been defended in Uppsala under the presidency of the professor of astronomy, Martinus Olavi Stenius (1574–1644).<sup>11</sup> Fierce judgements, delivered by prominent theologians and prelates could also be heard from the pulpits. In a 1615 ‘Homily of penitence’, Johannes Rudbeckius (1581–1646), royal chaplain and former professor of Hebrew, had stated “how highly and clearly forbidden in the word of God it is to consult Soothsayers, Augurs and Stargazers”.<sup>12</sup> Two years later, in his monumental work *Ethica Christiana*, the Bishop of Strängnäs and former professor of astronomy Laurentius Paulinus Gothus (1565–1646), condemned astrological divination for being a pagan, forbidden and superstitious craft. According to Paulinus, unscrupulous stargazers “bawl much about coming Changes, in Religious Affairs, Policies and Governments” and made conjectures about “War and Strife, Pestilence and other Diseases, Fortune and Bad Fortune”. Hereby they would “deceive the many Simple and Unwise to turn from God and induce them to hold on to the Created things, and through them look for help and relief.”<sup>13</sup>

10 Forsius, *Then stora Prognostica ... M. DC. XIX*, sig. A3v–A4r: “... mädan iagh nu i itt och tiughu år/ medh stoore huffuudbräck i *Astronomia* practicerat/ och en tidh ringa befording ther til funnit haffuer/ at man på thenna ort begynner wämjas wedh konsten/ at hon är worden *hospes quotidianus*, och lijka som en gammal länge liggjande ruttin fisk”. This proverbial expression concerning guests and fish was apparently commonplace in Forsius’ days; cf. John Lyly, *Euphues and his England* (1580): “as we say in Athens, fishe and gestes in three dayes are stale”, *The complete works of John Lyly*, vol. II, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1902 pp. 81, 507.

11 Martinus Olavi Stenius, *Disputatio de incertitudine et vanitate praedictionum astrologicarum*, printed by Andreas Gutterwitz’ widow, Stockholm 1611; for an annotated Swedish translation of this dissertation, see Martinus Olavi Stenius, *Disputation om de astrologiska förutsägelseernas osäkerhet och fäsfånglighet; introduktion och översättning från latinet av Kjell Lekeby* Pleiaderna, Stockholm 1993.

12 Johannes Rudbeckius, *Boot och Bättrings Predikan/ Vthaff Daniel Prophetens thet 9. Capitel. Hallen vthi Narffuen i Estland/ then 14 Julij Anno 1615*, printed by Peder Eriksson Wald, Västerås 1635 sig. C2v: “hurw högd ock klart är förbudhit i Gudz ord/ befrågna sigh hoos Spämän/ Teknetydhare och Stiernekikare”.

13 Laurentius Paulinus Gothus, *Ethica Christiana pars prima, de ratione bene vivendi. Thet är: Cathechismi förste deel, om Gudz lagh, Eller christeligit leffuernes rettesnöre*, printed by Christoffer Reusner, Stockholm 1617 p. 75: “Til then Affgudeske Hopen höra och thessa effterföljande/ N. I. Stiernekikare/ Tecknetydare/ Daghawäliare/ etc. Som vthaff Stiernornes Lopp och Aspecter/ mycket Gespa om tilstundande Förändringar/

From Forsius' perspective, these censures of authoritative scholars and clergymen against his craft would have been bad enough. But it did not stop at words. In May 1619 King Gustavus Adolphus (r. 1611–1632) appointed the archbishop and the diocese chapter of Uppsala to examine Forsius for his dealings with certain “superstitious practices, which are founded neither in the Holy Scriptures, nor in the worldly Philosophy, and which diametrically oppose his clerical Office”.<sup>14</sup> According to the verdict of the inquisition, astrological forecasts were rejected for being contradictory, not only to the Scriptures and the opinions of the Church Fathers, but also to “Sensible Philosophy” and the very foundations of “Society and laws”. As a consequence, it was argued that astrology had also been “rejected by recent orthodox Theologians”.<sup>15</sup>

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Through the inquisition of Forsius, the clerical and scholarly establishment had formulated an explicit, orthodox doctrine against astrology with the consent of the worldly authorities. Yet despite the harsh and unrelenting attitude revealed in the sources, the rejection was hardly as absolute as it may appear.

In the academies, astrological notions were still well integrated in the curriculum of the philosophical and medical faculties. Moreover, most Swedish and Finnish scholars of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries had been studying in Germany, where there was a steady flow of popular astrological print, and a frequent use of astrological calculations

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vthi Religions Saker/ Politier och Regementer/ etc. Göra Gisningar om Krijgh och Öhrligh/ Pestilenz och andra Siukdomar/ Lycko och Olycko ... ther medh the monge Enfaldige och Oförståndige bedraga ifrå Gudh och komma them til at halla sigh in til Creaturen/ och hos them sökia Hielp och Vndsetning.<sup>7</sup>

- 14 Letter from Gustavus Adolphus to Petrus Kenicius, Stockholm 8 May 1619, RA, RR vol. 132, fol. 143v–144r; “Derföre sende wij beite Sigfridum eder tilhanda, committerandes och hemställande ... dedh han sigh in chiromanticis och andre superstitiosiske handlingar, Hwilke hwarken i den helge schrift, eller den werldzlige Philosophia någon grundh hafwe, och hans Embetedh i diametro repugnere”; cf. K.G. Leinberg, *Handlingar rörande finska kyrkan och prästerskapet, första samlingen*, Jyväskylä 1892 pp. 422–423.
- 15 The original document is lost, but there are several copies of the verdict from late seventeenth century; cf. UUB E 144; UUB N 40; UUB Palmisk. 336; a printed version may be found in Anders Anton von Stiernman, *Bibliotheca Suiogothica* Tom. VI, Stockholm 1731. Here I follow the transcript, “Upsala Capitels Dom öfver D. Sigfrido Arono Forsio” printed in F.W. Pipping, *Historiska bidrag till Finlands calendografi*. Första stycket 1858 cit. pp. 136–137; “...bruka sådana oloffliga *predictionibus* och *Prognosticationibus* ... thetta är emot Guds ord, *Patrum et Orthodoxae antiquitatis iudicia, Conciliorum et legum statuta*, warder ock af *recentioribus orthodoxis Theologis* ogillat, sträfvar och emot *Saniozem Philosophiam*”.

in apocalyptic tracts and broadsheets. There were also some prominent clergymen and scholars of Forsius' generation who had not always been strangers to the benefits of astrology. Thus Petrus Gisaeus Solimontanus (d. 1640), who would become headmaster of the cathedral school in Växjö, dean and a member of the diocese chapter, had once "fairly endeavoured" in the starry arts. In 1602 he published an almanac and prognostication for the coming year, complete with an apology of the "magnificent and fine art" of astrology.<sup>16</sup>

However, no clergyman or scholar illustrates the intellectual ambivalence towards astrology better than Laurentius Paulinus Gothus – the very paragon of orthodox criticism of the stargazers. During his academic travels in Germany, Paulinus had devoted himself to the subject of the starry arts, and in the 1590s he wrote two prognostications to prove it. In one of them, published when he was professor of astronomy in Uppsala, he maintained that since God had settled the courses of the celestial bodies and determined their natural properties and influence, they were also signs of divine wisdom and providence. As would later be emphasized by Forsius, Paulinus stressed that planetary conjunctions should be regarded as tokens of "particular changes, both in Spiritual and Worldly things, and of the last age and final end of the world". Also like Forsius, Paulinus had emphatically defended astrology from people who out of "imprudence and foolishness" would "repudiate and vilify" the art.<sup>17</sup>

There is an obvious inconsistency between the statements in the prognostication for 1598 and in the *Ethica* of 1617 cited above. Since Paulinus' authoritative position as an academic and prelate during this period cannot be doubted, this inconsistency indicates a shift in the clerical view on astrology in general. In his *Great Prognostication* for 1618, Forsius claimed that "the noble Art, that even mighty Kings, Princes and Lords in days of old

<sup>16</sup> Petrus Gisaeus Solimontanus, *Almanach och Practica uppå thet Åhr/ efter vår Herres och Frelsaes Jesu Christi nådhefulle födhelse M. DC. III. – Practica astrologica. På thet åhr efter vår Frelsaes och Återlösaes Jesu Christj födhelse M. D.C. III.*, printed by Andreas Gutterwitz, Stockholm [1602] fol. 7r: "... thenna herligha och sköna konsten ...", fol. 8r: "Och efter iagh migh ibland andre Studier, vthi thesse konster någhorlunda befljitat hafwer ..." On Petrus Gisaeus, see Gotthard Virdestam, *Växjö stifts herdaminne. D. 2*, Smålandspostens boktryckeri, Växjö 1927 p. 325.

<sup>17</sup> Laurentius Paulinus Gothus, [Almanac for 1598] – *Prognosticon astrologicum, Eller Een liten Gisning aff Stiernornes lop och egenskap/ Om the Förändringar/ som sigh vthi then Elementariske Cretzen tildragha kunnel på thet åhr effter Christi byrdh/ M. D. XCIIIX*, printed by Andreas Gutterwitz, Stockholm 1598, cit. sig. A4v–A5r: "synnerlighe förändringar/ bådhe vthi Andelighe och Werldzlige saker/ och om then sidste werldennes ålder och ytterste ända", sig. A6r: "somptt aff oförstånd och dårachtigheet förkasta och bakdanta".



have practiced with great pleasure”, now had to suffer defamation through “a party of theologians, and be condemned by the aforesaid, yet among them some have formerly benefited, and have had abundant maintenance from it”.<sup>18</sup>

Obviously Paulinus had the astrological competence to fit Forsius’ description. But among contemporary writers it was also assumed that Paulinus had been offered his first episcopate after having presented an interpretation “on Astronomical basis” of an ominous comet passage to King Karl IX (r. 1599–1611).<sup>19</sup> As Forsius’ prognostication was published shortly after the *Ethica*, it is therefore not a too far-fetched guess that his bitter words were actually aimed against Paulinus in person. Or, as put by the Swedish historian Nils Ahnlund, “The former professor of astronomy, Paulinus, could not be singled out in a more explicit way”.<sup>20</sup>

In contrast to Paulinus, who seems to have adjusted to a new intellectual and dogmatic situation and “abandoned the astrological belief of his youth”,<sup>21</sup> Forsius would suffer persecution for his persistent devotion to his trade. Previously he had been a *mathematicus* held in high esteem, and an authorized author of almanacs and prognostications. Due to his astrological skills he could comprehend God’s purpose of the celestial dance, and consequently he had provided arguments for the need of repentance and penitence in face of the last trials of the world. Now, through the inquisition of 1619, he had become a dissident.

18 Sigfridus Aronus Forsius, *Then stora Prognostica til thet Åår Christi M. DC. XVIII. Medh fljtt vthräknat och judiceret aff naturlige orsaker/ och the gamble Astrologers förfarenheet*, printed by Ignatius Meurer, Stockholm sig. A2v “...haffuer iagh tilförenne i mine vthgångne företaal/ medh många wizsord bewijst Stiernoras wärckand i Naturen/ så at ock en olärd aff förfarenheten måtte migh ther til jaord gifwa. Men oanseedt at thetta nw så är/ icke thes mindre måtte then ädle Konsten/ som ock mächtighe Konungar/ Förster och Herrer medh stoor lust fordom öfwat/ förfordrat och propagerat hafwa/ aff en part Theologis lijdhä förtaal/ och aff then fördömd warda/ ther doch aff them en part henne tilförenne profiterat/ och feett vnderhåld ther aff hafft hafwa ...”

19 Cit. Johannes Magni Westhius, *Memoria Parentalis Reverendissimi in Christo Patris ac domini dn. Laurentii Paulini Gothi*, printed in Nyköping 1647 sig. C2v: “ex fundamentis Astronomicis”.

20 Nils Ahnlund, “Gustav Adolf, lejonprofetian och astrologin”, *Historisk tidskrift* (HT) 1939, p. 41: “Tydligare kunde icke förre astronomie professorn Paulinus utpekas.” The dating of the two works is imprecise, yet a complimentary poem in the *Ethica* is dated 4 July, while Forsius’ prognostication was dated 5 October 1617; L. Paulinus Gothus, *Ethica Christiana pars prima* sig. C3v; Forsius, *Then stora Prognostica ... M. DC. XVIII* sig. A3v.

21 Cit. Sten Lindroth, *Svensk lärdomshistoria II: Stormaktstiden*, Norstedts, Stockholm 1975 p. 175.

# Introduction: Between Nestor and Prometheus

... the angels fell because of an appetite for power;  
and men fell because of an appetite for knowledge ...<sup>1</sup>

Francis Bacon, *Novum organum* (1620)

As the archbishop and the diocese chapter of Uppsala pronounced their anathema on astrology in May 1619, they had strived to incorporate their verdict into a catholic or universal canon, presumably unaltered since the times of the Church Fathers. What they designated as *astrologia iudiciaria* – ‘judicial astrology’ – had in their view always been, and would always remain an illicit and superstitious practice, inconsistent with fundamental Christian dogma.

Yet despite the invocations of a continuous orthodox tradition, it appears as if the verdict indicated a shift in the intellectual debate. At the turn of the seventeenth century, astrology had been studied and practised by scholars who were irreproachable, even by orthodox standards. However, judging from the inconsistencies in the authorship of Laurentius Paulinus Gothus, and the reports of hardening attitudes in the works of Sigfridus Aronus Forsius, the scope of irreproachable ways to deal with astrological knowledge appears to have narrowed drastically within a time span of twenty years.

In the following study, I will analyse statements and censures on starry divination, such as they appeared in the intellectual debate of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Sweden. Still this book is not primarily about astrology. Rather, it is a book about the ordering and authorization of knowledge: with the issue of the ethical and epistemological limits of astrology as my main example, the purpose of the study is to examine how, why, and in what contexts the demarcations between allowable and illicit

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1 Cit. Francis Bacon, *The New Organon*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2000 p. 13; cf. idem., *Novum organum*, London 1620 sig. A6v; “Ex appetitu enim Potentiae Angeli lapsi sunt; ex appetitu Scientiae, homines”.

knowledge would be displaced within an orthodox, Lutheran discourse.<sup>2</sup>

To be sure, astrology was not the only area of human learning to be struck by the scourge of Lutheran clergymen in the early seventeenth century. The debate over astrology overlapped with other controversies concerning the relationship between theology, philosophy and ethics, as well as contemporary discourse on eschatology, prophecy, superstition, and sorcery. Yet still the issue of astrology is chosen as a prism, as it seems to present a clear example of how the boundaries between the categories of allowable and illicit knowledge were being redefined under explicit claims of maintaining an orthodox standard of learning and intellectual pursuit.

There are three main issues dealt with in this book. In order to provide an adequate background for the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century debate, the first task will be to examine the role and function of astrology in Swedish culture and society in the wake of the Reformation. Secondly I will examine how different approaches towards astrology should be interpreted in relation to the contexts in which they appear. Finally, while trying to answer the question of why astrology seemed to be so explicitly anathematized by the clerical establishment in the first decades of the seventeenth century, I will also examine how this shift in the orthodox discourse should be understood in the context of cultural, social and political changes in the early modern world.

Formulated like this, the scope of the study could easily become immense. In the following however, I will limit the inquiry to two case studies. In the first, I will analyse the different approaches towards astrology in the works of Paulinus, while I in the second will focus on Forsius' continuous defence of the astrological art, and the reactions against his authorship among scholars, clergymen, and clerical and worldly authorities. Chronologically the study covers a period from the early 1590s, when Paulinus had his first astrological prognostication printed, and the mid-1620s, where Forsius' death in 1624 marks the definite end.

Partly, I have chosen this narrow input out of necessity, as the Swedish sources on the subject are scarce. With the exception of a few other scholars and clergymen, such as Martinus Olavi Stenius and Johannes Rudbeckius mentioned above, Petrus Jonae Angermannus (1559–1630) whom I will attend to later and a few occasional almanac writers, Forsius and Paulinus are virtually the only authors discussing the problematic character of astrology in a Swedish context. Moreover, they are the only authors whose shifting

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2 In the following, the term 'discourse' is understood in a broad sense, construed as the patterns – rhetorical as well as thematic – of discussion, conversation and exchange of ideas within a given social context.

approaches on the issue can be followed during a longer period of time.

Yet within these limits, it is also my ambition to perform an in-depth inquiry, where the seemingly insignificant issue of astrology, discussed by a handful of Swedish and Finnish clergymen and scholars, will be analyzed with focus on the rhetoric and communicative function of the sources. Through this approach I will include the long rhetoric tradition of the Latin world in the analysis. Rhetorical principles had changed very little since Antiquity, and its terminology and methods were intrinsic in the intellectual culture of the early modern world. When studying the intellectual landscape of the Renaissance, rhetorical analysis may thus provide a key of interpretation that allows us to penetrate the sources from a perspective that converges with the original outlook of the texts we are studying.<sup>3</sup> Although we cannot analyse the statements in the sources as reflections of the private thoughts of the authors – of which we can know virtually nothing – issues of genre, purposes and reception of the texts will still help us to set the different statements on astrology in their proper context. In other words, it will be presumed that statements on astrology may differ, not only due to the inclination of the authors, but also due to whether they occur in learned treatises, in dedications to a named addressee, or in sermons directed to a socially mixed congregation.

As for the contextualization of the analysis, micro- and macro-historical perspectives will be combined on three distinct levels. First, biographical methods will be used in order to present Paulinus and Forsius with special regard to their social and intellectual background, their education and their respective careers. Secondly, by analysing their social networks and connections, focus will gradually shift to the learned world, or the socially and culturally defined 'republic of letters' into which both authors claimed admission, and where their renown as learned and honest men highly depended on their social relations, liaisons and commitments.<sup>4</sup> Thirdly, their

3 For a useful discussion on Renaissance rhetoric, see Kurt Johannesson, *The Renaissance of the Goths in Sixteenth-Century Sweden: Johannes and Olaus Magnus as Politicians and Historians*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1991 pp. 36–42.

4 Although the notion of the republic of letters had medieval roots, it was not formalized until the end of the seventeenth century. Here the use of the concept is motivated by the social limits, drawn between learned and unlearned during the Renaissance; see Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe* vol. 1, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1979 p. 137 n. 287; Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca 1994 pp. 15–16; cf. the theoretical discussions in Hjalmar Fors, *Mutual Favours: The Social and Scientific Practice of Eighteenth-Century Swedish Chemistry*, Dept. of History of Ideas and Learning, Uppsala 2003 pp. 6–12. For the notion of knowledge as socially

statements on astrology will be analysed in the perspective of the social arenas where the debate took place: the secluded academies, where scholarly arguments were provided; the pulpits, where prelates and clergymen fulfilled their duties as preachers and preceptors of the congregation; and the public space, where astrological literature was spread, read and discussed.<sup>5</sup>

Hereby the issue of astrology in the orthodox, Lutheran discourse will be placed within a field of strife between socially conditioned interests. Related to general changes of the body politic of the early modern world, the concept of orthodoxy will be used to analyse the displacement of the boundaries between allowable and illicit knowledge. Special regard will be taken to religious and political conflicts between various social groups and corporations, and between worldly and clerical authorities, both with competing claims of control over faith and learning, over the institutions of education, and over the book market and other channels of information.

## Orthodoxy, Orthodoxies and Confessionalization

As has been suggested in a recent anthology, “the concept of orthodoxy ... invites us to look at how knowledge was ordered and authorized from the perspective of those involved, while simultaneously providing a cogent analytical perspective from the outside.”<sup>6</sup> In the current study the concept will be used, primarily to avoid modern demarcations between categories such as ‘religion’, ‘politics’ and ‘science’ when approaching the problem of the ethical and epistemological boundaries of worldly learning at the turn of the seventeenth century.

In the following, the concept of orthodoxy is conceived, not just as the vindication of certain religious dogma as being true and ‘pure’, but as a

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conditioned and the significance of social networks in the literate world of early modern Europe, see Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-century England*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1994, esp. pp. 3–15, 67–68, 75–77.

- 5 For useful discussions on biography as method, and as a historiographic genre, see Henrik Rosengren, “*Judarnas Wagner*”: *Moses Pergament och den kulturella identifikationens dilemma omkring 1920–1950*, Sekel, Lund 2007 pp. 33–45; Kjell Johnsson, “Frihet eller determinism. Principiella problem i den idéhistoriska biografins genre”, in Ronny Ambjörnsson, Per Ringby & Sune Åkerman (eds.), *Att skriva människan: Essäer om biografin som livshistoria och vetenskaplig genre*, Carlsson, Stockholm 1997 pp. 87–101; for discussions on the human being and the individual as an object for historical studies, see also Eva Österberg, “Tro, tillit och profit: Människan och historikerna”, in idem, *Folk förr: Historiska essäer*, Atlantis, Stockholm 1995 pp. 7–33.
- 6 Cit. Randolph C. Head & Daniel Christensen, “Introduction” in idem. (eds.), *Orthodoxies and Heterodoxies in Early Modern German Culture: Order and Creativity 1500–1750*, Studies in Central European histories, Brill, Leiden 2007 p. 4.

claim of representing the authoritative interpretation of issues subjected to doctrinal controversy. Simply speaking, 'orthodoxy' is what appears when religious and epistemological authority of any kind is being challenged. Although assertions of concordance with a pure and unaltered canon are commonplace in virtually any orthodox discourse, the dogmatic corpus will nevertheless be dialectical and changeable by necessity. At any given point an orthodox statement – irrespective of the confessional context in which it is uttered – is defined by the heterodox tenets or practices it excludes, whether they concern Papal primacy, the transubstantiation of the elements in the Eucharist or, as in the current study, the heterodox and illicit character of astrology.<sup>7</sup>

However, in Europe during the Reformation, the orthodox claim stretched far beyond the religious issues. As Christianity defined not only the dominating religion, but the whole culture, the questions of true faith and confession would concern virtually all aspects of human life and the very conception of reality.<sup>8</sup> The confessional issues would also become crucial, as the breakdown of the supremacy of the Roman Church had caused a general crisis of authority with overwhelming social and political consequences. As the old church communion was splintered and transformed into new confessional entities, new competing 'orthodoxies' appeared, both in between and within the confessional boundaries that crystallized in the latter part of the sixteenth century. The Lutheran movement was no exception: pressed between the papacy on the one hand, and Calvinists, mystics and radicals on the other, the followers of Martin Luther were divided into competing factions, mutually anathematizing each other.<sup>9</sup>

7 Head & Christensen pp. 3–6.

8 For a useful discussion and definition of the concept of culture as "the semiotic dimension of human social practice in general", see William Sewall, "The Concept(s) of Culture", Victoria E. Bonnell & Lynn Hunt (eds.), *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture*, University of California Press, Berkeley Cal. 1999 p. 48. Thus culture is understood as a semiotic field or network, consisting of symbols, codes and practices and other conveyors of meaning, wherewith the world – including the social interaction and the economical and political relations between individuals and groups of people or institutions – is understood and interpreted in any given context; cf. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, Basic Books, New York 1973 p. 5. For a discussion on the complex of problems concerning 'religion' as overall culture, rather than as personal faith in early modern Europe, see Hanne Sanders "En introduktion", in idem (ed.), *Mellem Gud og Djaevlen: religiøse og magiske verdensbilleder i Norden 1500–1800*, København 2001; Göran Malmstedt, *Bondetro och kyrkoro: religiös mentalitet i stormaktstidens Sverige*, Nordic Academic Press, Lund 2002 p. 24.

9 Head & Christensen pp. 2–3.

The orthodox claim should in this perspective primarily be regarded as a means of positioning within the discursive strife, where the dogmatic emphasis would alter from one situation to another. Between the late sixteenth century, when disintegration and theological controversies ravaged the Evangelical world, and the outbreak of the 'Thirty Years' War some fifty years later, the challenges to of the Lutheran movement would change, as would the orthodox discourse.

Consequently, the orthodox claim cannot be reduced to an instrument of confessional coercion. Whether an 'orthodox' statement should be regarded as 'radical' or 'conservative' depends on the context in which it was uttered, and whether it was aimed for mobilization of the faithful, or for the consolidation of an already gained position. For instance, the so-called Gnesiolutherans (i.e. 'the genuine Lutherans') are often regarded as the quintessence 'orthodox' faction of the Lutheran movement in Germany. Yet in perspective of the dogmatic controversies of the late sixteenth-century, in which they were positioned against virtually all other Evangelical factions, they appear as a subversive force, promoting a radical, "Jacobin type of Lutheranism".<sup>10</sup>

Still orthodoxy cannot be separated from the related conceptions of social discipline and confessionalization. The orthodox claim concerned the crucial issue of salvation of the people, and it was raised with no lesser ambition than to force a standardization of faith, culture and intellectual life within society. Yet as the reform movements were generally established as territorial communions in interaction with worldly authorities, it was only when the church had become a more or less incorporated cog in the grand apparatus of the expansive state that these ambitions of confessionalization could be realized.<sup>11</sup>

10 Cit. T.M. Parker, "Protestantism and Confessional Strife" in R.B. Wernham (ed.) *The new Cambridge Modern History*. 3, *The Counter-Reformation and Price Revolution, 1559–1610*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1968 pp. 78–79; cf. Robert Kolb, "Dynamics of Party Conflict in the Saxon Late Reformation: Gnesio-Lutherans vs. Philippists", *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 49, no. 3, On Demand Supplement 1977 p. D1289.

11 As discussed by Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, confessionalization may be discussed in terms of an aspect of social disciplining in the age of the Reformation; yet while confessionalization may be seen as an explicit ambition, aimed at adjusting the subjects unto a system of norms with coherent behavioural patterns, values, views and loyalties, social disciplining should rather be understood as the more or less unintentional, cultural adaptation to new social, economical and political structures in the early modern world; Po-chia Hsia, *Social discipline in the Reformation: Central Europe, 1550–1750*, Routledge, London/New York 1992 p. 2. For a critical discussion of the conception of disciplining in early modern Europe, see Robert van Krieken, "Social Discipline and

In extension, this means that the concept of orthodoxy will be linked to the rise of the so-called 'power' or 'absolute' state in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – a perspective that may prove rewarding when discussing the issue of astrology in the intellectual debate of early seventeenth-century Sweden. In other parts of Europe, criticism and censorship against the astrologers had also been instigated by clergymen and religious reformers, rooting out heresy and pagan practices among the people. But through the joint ambition of Church and State to maintain control over the dissemination of knowledge in printed media and other channels, the need to restrain astrological expressions would also become an issue for the worldly authorities. For instance, in England at the turn of the seventeenth century, censorship had virtually purged almanacs and prognostications of political features and prophetic claims. As a royal decree from 1603 had stated that "All conjurers and framers of almanacs, prophecies exceeding the limits of allowable astrology shall be punished severely in their persons", scholars tended to become more reluctant to exhibit their astrological interests publicly. At the beginning of the 1640s – as was noticed by contemporary authors – the harsh attitude maintained by church and state had caused a situation where English educational institutions had been virtually purged of astrology.<sup>12</sup>

In the following however, the view of early modern state formation as a 'revolution from above', initiated by autocratic princes in order to secure the accumulation of resources and to strengthen military power will be somewhat revised. Instead the conception of the early modern state will be related to a process where the body politic as such was successively transformed through the competitive interaction between corporations, factions and individuals, striving to expand their influence and dominion over the realm and its institutions. New claims of authority and attempts to achieve and maintain hierarchical order appeared in virtually all public arenas – in the military, in trade and industry, in the scholarly world and

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State Formation: Weber and Oestreich on the Historical Sociology of Subjectivity", *Amsterdams Sociologisch Tijdschrift* 17 1990 pp. 3–28; see also Gerhard Oestreich, "Strukturprobleme des europäischen Absolutismus" in idem, *Geist und Gestalt des frühmodernen Staates: ausgewählte Aufsätze*, Duncker & Humblot, Berlin 1969 pp. 179–197; for an important definition and discussion of the concept of confessionalization, see Wolfgang Reinhard, "Zwang zur Konfessionalisierung? Prolegomena zu einer Theorie des konfessionellen Zeitalters", *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 10 1983 pp. 257–277.

- <sup>12</sup> Cit. Patrick Curry, *Prophecy and Power: Astrology in Early Modern England*, Polity Press, Cambridge 1989 p. 20; Bernard Capp, *Astrology and the Popular Press: English Almanacs 1500–1800*, Faber and Faber, London/Boston 1979 pp. 29, 67; C.H. Josten, (ed), *Elias Ashmole*, vol. I, Oxford 1966, p. 21.



in the church. Consequently, the state is conceived, not as an organization, but as a complicated social network, stretching from the courts and royal chancelleries to the remotest settlements in the realm. Aristocrats, officers, merchants, industrial entrepreneurs, prelates, professors and pastors would all participate in the constitution of the early modern state, as they strived to achieve various, often incompatible political goals.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, when I relate the orthodox discourse on astrology to issues of confessionalization and the formation of the early modern state, it is still the discursive strife that will be emphasized, and not primarily the vertical movement of confessional coercion. When the orthodox claim of safeguarding true faith and the right Christian conduct appears in intellectual discussions on astrology at the turn of the seventeenth century, it will in other words be conceived as a method of positioning in the debate – both in relation to the remaining clergy, and to other corporations, groups and actors, striving to obtain and maintain their influence, over the intellectual field as well as in society as a whole.

## Theories of Decline

In those rare cases when the controversies on astrology in the sixteenth- and seventeenth centuries have drawn the attention of Swedish scholars, they have generally been related to a broader historical narrative. In works of Henrik Sandblad and Sten Lindroth, the notion of the ‘decline’ or even ‘dissolution’ of astrology in the seventeenth century was discussed primarily as a side-effect of the ambition to strike down every possible kind of heterodoxy, which threatened the authority of the orthodox clergy after the final triumph of Lutheranism in Sweden.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> The varied, often contradictory theories of early modern state formation represent a vast problem in historical research; for a study written with the ambition of combining economic development with political coercion and resource exploitation, forwarded by escalating military needs, see Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States AD 990–1992*, Blackwell, Oxford/Cambridge Mass. 2001; for an older, empirical study, discussing similar issues from a Swedish and Scandinavian perspective, see Michael Roberts “The Military Revolution” in idem, *Essays in Swedish History*, Minneapolis 1967 pp. 195–225; for discussions on early modern state formation, with critical perspectives on the ‘power state’ as an unilateral project, initiated by monarchs with absolutistic ambitions or by the aristocratic classes, see the essays in Leon Jespersen (ed.), *A Revolution from Above? The Power State of 16th and 17th Century Scandinavia*, Odense University Press, Odense 2000. For a somewhat different approach, focusing on the early modern state, not as an organization, but as a “coordinated and territorially bounded network of agents exercising political power”, see Michael J. Braddick, *State Formation in Early Modern England c. 1550–1700*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2000, cit. p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> Sandblad, *De eskatologiska föreställningarna* pp. 252–253, 258–259; Sten Lindroth, *Pa-*

However, as a logical consequence of the Renaissance, the Reformation and the rise of Lutheran Orthodoxy are in this perspective also conceived as stages in a successive process of rationalization, secularization and – in the terms of Max Weber – of the disenchantment of the Western world.<sup>15</sup> Somewhat incisively, the orthodox theologians are thus seen as unaware promoters of a new worldview and of methods of natural philosophy. Through their resistance against the authority of the Roman church, and through their rejection of astrology and magic, they are regarded as figures preceding the disciplined reason of experimental science and the dawning Enlightenment in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Within a narrative of this kind, astrology is virtually bound to decline, being generally regarded as an irrational, 'superstitious' art, based on 'magical' notions, essentially separated from modern rationality and 'real science'. Once rejected by the clergy, astrology would also lose its scientific credibility at the turn of the eighteenth century. As "The universe of the magician and the alchemist began to feel hopelessly obsolete in enlightened circles" and "nature had to be explored and controlled with the help of other principles", Lindroth argued that a similar fate befell astrology. As the Copernican world system triumphed over the Ptolemaic universe, mechanical philosophy replaced Aristotelian and Neoplatonic physics: "in the now prevalent mechanistic world view, there was no longer room for astral fatalism."<sup>16</sup>

Weber's theory is convincing with its elegant logical structure and its adaptation to a distinct and comprehensible narrative of social and cultural development. His concept of disenchantment has been reused and refined in works of uncountable scholars. In an influential study from the early

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*racelsismen i Sverige till 1600-talets mitt*, Lychnosbiblioteket, Uppsala 1943 pp. 413–423; Lindroth, *Svensk lärdomshistoria II* pp. 146–152.

15 Weber presupposed a cumulative, long-term development of human knowledge, running in a time span from the earliest times to the rise of modernity. An original, 'magical' conception of the world was thus successively replaced by the dogma of organized religion, which in turn was challenged by intellectual scepticism, rationalism and scientific methods in inquiry and thought; see Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904–1905), Routledge, London & NY 2001 pp. 61–62, 71; cf. idem., "The Social Psychology of the World Religions" & "Religious Rejections of the World and their Directions", both in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, Routledge, London 1991, pp. 277–283, 350–351; Robert W. Scribner, "The Reformation, Popular Magic, and the 'Disenchantment of the World'", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, XXIII:3 1993 p. 475.

16 Lindroth, *Svensk lärdomshistoria II* cit pp. 175, 178: "...i den mekanistiska världsbild som nu härskade fanns ingen vår längre för den astrala ödestron ... Magikerns och alkemistens universum började kännas hopplöst föråldrat i upplysta kretsar, naturen måste utforskas och behärras med hjälp av andra principer."

1970s for instance, Keith Thomas portrayed the Protestant Reformation in England as a movement devoted to extracting magical conceptions from religion. But when the religious ceremonies had been purged from various forms of 'superstition', the reformers turned their efforts to social life in general. With reference to Weber, Thomas distinguished this tendency as a prerequisite for the growth of modern society. It was "the abandonment of magic which made possible the upsurge of technology, not the other way round".<sup>17</sup> As for the issue of the demise of astrology at the turn of the eighteenth century, Thomas stressed that "The clergy and the satirists chased it into its grave", whereas "the scientists were unrepresented at the funeral."<sup>18</sup>

Even in quite recent studies and surveys it has been suggested that the Reformation as such, combining a general questioning of traditional authorities and a humanist ambition to go *ad fontes*, actually created uncertainty "over the most reliable sources of authority", thus unleashing "intense debates over epistemology and method that characterized many fields of human endeavour". Despite the ambition to define what was right, good and true – not only in religious issues, but also in virtually all fields of knowledge – the divergent confessional entities and rival 'orthodoxies' in the sixteenth- and seventeenth centuries bore with them the seed of their own destruction.<sup>19</sup>

## Critical Perspectives

Despite this and other attempts to modernize Weber's thesis, it remains clear that the very conception of the disenchantment of the Western worldview is laden with grave methodological problems.

In mid-1970s Hildred Geertz delivered an anthropological criticism of Thomas, questioning the application of notions of 'magic', 'religion' and 'rationality' as being transhistorical and static. She also criticized the implicit conception of the modern mind as being more developed and qualitatively secluded from the pre-modern mind.<sup>20</sup>

17 Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London 1971 pp. 636–668; cit. p. 657.

18 Thomas p. 352.

19 Head & Christensen (eds.), cit. p. 4.

20 Hildred Geertz, "An Antropology of Religion and Magic", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* VI:1, MIT Press, Cambridge Mass. 1975; Geertz' criticism was principally important, but it was not until the late 1980s and early 1990s that it would be further discussed; see Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, *Magic, science, religion, and the scope of rationality*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1990; Richard Kieckhefer, "The Specific Rationality of Medieval Magic", *The American Historical Review* vol 99, no.

As was later suggested by Robert Scribner, the whole conception of the disenchantment of the world may also be regarded as part of a Post-Enlightenment paradigm. The notion of the Reformation as the first step in a general tendency towards rationalization and secularization first occurred among intellectuals of the eighteenth century, who regarded the reformers as their natural and logical predecessors in the struggle against clerical hegemony and for rationalism and Enlightenment. This notion was maintained in the nineteenth-century liberal tradition and projected into twentieth-century social theory.<sup>21</sup> However, as demonstrated by Scribner, the desacralization of religious ceremonies that actually occurred in many Protestant regions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, did not follow modern standards of rationalism and scientific thinking. Despite the Lutheran and Reformist criticism of 'magical' and 'superstitious' notions and practices, it was not the question of a magical-religious conception of the world that was opposed by a pre-secularized Protestantism. The tendencies and ambitions to reform and suppress undesired magical conceptions and 'superstitious' sacramentality, were just as frequent in post-Tridentine Catholicism as among Protestants in general. The whole conception of Protestantism as responsible for the disenchantment of the world thus reflected the cultural and social reality of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, rather than that of the sixteenth and seventeenth. As expressed by Scribner: "the puzzle of how a massive witchcraze could apparently arise in a period said to usher in the dawn of 'modern rationality' [...] rests on a false dilemma."<sup>22</sup>

In a similar turn, historians of science have in the latter decades criticised the narrative of the Scientific Revolution as a decisive break with the old intellectual order, as it is a historical narrative read backwards. Historical achievements are observed and estimated out of supposedly universal notions of 'rationality' and 'objectivity'. The past gets its meaning primarily by explaining the development of modern science by pointing out those tendencies that in the eyes of posterity seem to herald the modern result.<sup>23</sup> A

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3 1994 pp. 813–836.

21 Scribner, "The Reformation, Popular Magic" pp. 492–494.

22 Scribner, "The Reformation, Popular Magic", cit. pp. 491–492; what is identified by Scribner is a tendency in Lutheran discourse to desacralise nature in exchange for a moralised worldview: rarely regarded as holy in itself or as a conveyor of God's grace, nature was rather seen as an agent of God's Providence, and as a means of collective punishment of the unrepentant humanity; Robert W. Scribner, "Reformation and Desacralisation: from Sacramental World to Moralised Universe", in R. Po-Chia Hsia & Robert W. Scribner (eds), *Problems in the Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Europe*, Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden 1997, pp. 75–92.

23 The critical research, discussing the manifold problems of the conception of the

classical example is the triumph of mechanistic philosophy and atomism in late seventeenth century. Yet, as G. Macdonald Ross writes, it is “a hangover from Victorian prejudice to see theories as especially virtuous simply because they happen to be couched in materialist, atomistic terms.”<sup>24</sup> In recent years it has been emphasized that the basic presumptions of natural philosophy in Western Europe, even towards the end of the eighteenth century, were essentially metaphysical. Despite the focus on motion and matter, Mechanical physics had to be supported by spiritual principles concerning the casual connections of nature.<sup>25</sup> In the beginning of the eighteenth century, natural philosophy was still dedicated to the study and the contemplation of God’s Creation. The origins as well as the ends of science were religious, since “every system of natural philosophy”, as expressed by John A. Schuster, “purported to describe and explain the entire universe and the relation of that universe to God, however conceived.”<sup>26</sup> According to Andrew Cunningham, this is exactly the point where traditional natural philosophy is distinguished from any kind of modern conception of science, as it was “... only when men stopped looking for God in Nature that they stopped doing

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‘scientific revolution’ is vast and only a few texts should be mentioned here. A short historiographical discussion can be found in David C. Lindberg, “Conceptions of the Scientific Revolution from Bacon to Butterfield: A preliminary sketch”, in David C. Lindberg & Robert S. Westman (eds.), *Reappraisals of the Scientific Revolution*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1990 pp. 1–20. Crucial perspectives, problemizing the boundaries between early modern ‘magic’ and ‘science’ have been presented by Charles Webster, *From Paracelsus to Newton: Magic and the Making of Modern Science*, Cambridge 1982; cf. Andrew Cunningham & Perry Williams, “Decentring the ‘big picture’: *The Origins of Modern Science* and the modern origins of Science”, *The British Journal for the History of Science*, 1993 pp. 410–412; Steven J. Harris, “Introduction: Thinking Locally, Acting Globally”, *Configurations. Special Issue: The Scientific Revolution as Narrative* vol. 6 no. 2 1998 pp. 132–134; Adrian Wilson & T.G. Ashplant, “Whig History and Present-centred History”, *The Historical Journal* vol. 31,1, Cambridge 1988, pp. 2–5; see also the discussion in Rolf Lindborg, “Nicolaus Copernicus, grundaren av den klassiska fysiken?”, *Lychnos* 1985 pp. 44–46; and idem, “Positivism eller humanism? Rupert Halls kritik av Herbert Butterfields idéer om en ‘Whig-tolkning’ av historien”, *Lychnos* 1990 pp. 282–283, 287–288.

- 24 G. MacDonald Ross, “Occultism and Philosophy in the Seventeenth Century”, in Alan John Holland (ed.), *Philosophy, its history and historiography*, D. Reidel Pub. Co., Dordrecht, Boston 1985 p. 103.
- 25 Cunningham & Williams pp. 413–414; Ross pp. 98–100; Simon Schaffer, “Occultism and Reason”, in Holland (ed.), pp. 117–118.
- 26 John A. Schuster, “The Scientific Revolution” in R.C. Olby et al. (eds.), *Companion to the History of Modern Science*, Routledge, London 1990, p. 224, cited in Andrew Cunningham, “The Identity of Natural Philosophy. A Response to Edward Grant”, *Early Science and Medicine*, vol. 5, no. 3 2000, p. 259 n. 2.

Natural Philosophy. The God-less activity they started to do was Science.”<sup>27</sup>

In the same way it becomes clear that the ‘new science’ did not rise as an opponent to the ‘occult sciences’ by internal logic. Originally the label of ‘occultism’ signified nothing but sciences “dealing with invisible or non-manifest forces”,<sup>28</sup> and from a late seventeenth-century perspective, the sciences of the future could just as well have included astrology, vitalist physics, Hermetic medicine and alchemy. Instead the rigid demarcation between ‘occultism’ and the established, ‘orthodox’ science occurred as a consequence of the rhetoric used in contemporary philosophical dispute. In context, the label of ‘occultism’ earned its pejorative connotations because it was used to contrast the standpoints of ‘orthodox’ scientists.<sup>29</sup>

Consequently, we may conclude that there is no clear paradigmatic or epistemological difference between the religious reformers and the magicians, between orthodox theologians and astrologers, or between the ‘new scientists’ and the occultists of late seventeenth century. The analyses of the decline or ‘death’ of astrology in accordance with this tradition are based on eighteenth-century notions of the contradictory relationship between ‘rationality’ and ‘superstition’, filtered through two centuries of development in social and historical theory.<sup>30</sup>

Central aspects of the problem are also provided in Patrick Curry’s study on astrology in early modern England – a study that implicitly demonstra-

27 Cit. Andrew Cunningham, “Getting the Game Right: Some Plain Words on the Identity and Invention of Science”, *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* vol 19 n 3 1988 p. 384; for a fairly recent discussion and application of these critical themes in a Scandinavian context, see Morten Fink-Jensen, *Fornuftten under troens lydlighed: naturfilosofi, medicin og teologi i Danmark 1536–1636*, Museum Tusculanum, København 2004, see esp. pp. 16–37. This does not imply however, that no boundaries existed between religion and philosophy, only that these boundaries varied from one context to another, and that there existed no essential distinction between a religious or a philosophical interpretation of the world. For a discussion on the ‘cultural distance’ between science and religion, and how it was rhetorically constituted in the vocabulary of late seventeenth-century natural philosophy, see Thomas F. Gieryn, “Distancing Science from Religion in Seventeenth-Century England”, *Isis* vol. 79 no. 4 1988 pp. 591–593.

28 Cit. Håkan Håkansson, *Seeing the word: John Dee and Renaissance Occultism*, Minervaserien, Lund 2001 p. 35.

29 Ross pp. 108–109; Schaffer, “Occultism and Reason” pp. 135–138; cf. Curry, *Prophecy and Power* p. 45.

30 For a discussion on the conceptual shift of the term ‘superstition’, turning from signifying religious to epistemological errors in the seventeenth century, see Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, NY 1978 pp. 241–242; and Curry, *Prophecy and Power* p. 47 for the notion of the late seventeenth-century usage of the term as being “an allpurpose pejorative: at once political, religious and epistemological”.

tes that the main questions concerning the decline of astrology have been misleading. With terminology taken from E.P. Thompson and Antonio Gramsci, Curry maintains that astrology in England became the victim of a clash between 'patrician' and 'plebeian' classes, unleashed in the turmoil of civil war and revolution during the seventeenth century.<sup>31</sup> Curry thus identifies a complicated process where the dominating social group happened to achieve a cultural transformation of the intellectual landscape. One central reason, quite specific for the English context, was that several renowned astrologers had actively participated in the political struggle during the revolution and the Commonwealth. Many prognostications were written within the scope of more or less radical propaganda. Consequently astrology became associated with plebeian partisanship among the patrician classes and the intellectual elites after the Restoration.

Thus rejected and branded as non-knowledge, the label of astrology became a pejorative term and lost its social credibility. When natural philosophers such as Isaac Newton (1642–1727) and Edmund Halley (1656–1742) separated conceptions of the influence of comets from the scope of classical astrological theory, this was not primarily a result of scientific progress. As foremost noticed and discussed by Simon Schaffer, essential astrological ideas were actually transformed into something that has been interpreted by posterity as 'science'. Later falsified science perhaps, but since the key ideas were embraced by the great Newton, they could not automatically be crossed out as 'superstition'.<sup>32</sup>

Rather than a process of decline – and Curry particularly rejects the use of the metaphor of a 'death' of astrology – late seventeenth century thus witnessed the emergence of a new, pejorative conception of astrology. In this regard, the problem of the decline of astrology appears to be solved and the case closed.

Despite generally convincing results, there are some intrinsic problems in Curry's analysis. It is quite likely for instance, that Curry has exaggerated the change of class structure in late seventeenth-century England as being a decisive element in the transformation of astrology at large. Censures and

31 Curry, *Prophecy and Power* pp. 153–156, 163; with reference to Thompson, Curry defines 'patricians' as the dominating elements among the gentry and the rising middle classes, a group that – as a parallel to their increasing economical, political and cultural influence – regarded themselves as the respectable, better folk. Consequently 'plebeians' signifies the working masses – peasants, workers and craftsmen; cf. E P Thompson, "Patrician Society, Plebeian Culture", *Journal of Social History* 7:1974 pp. 382–405.

32 Curry, *Prophecy and Power* pp. 138–158; Simon Schaffer, "Newton's Comets and the Transformation of Astrology" in Patrick Curry (ed.) *Astrology, Science and Society: Historical Essays*, The Boydell Press, Woodbridge, Suffolk 1987 pp. 234–237.

criticism of astrology were already there, in-built in the learned discourse, and tendencies of hardening attitudes may be found elsewhere, long before the period in focus of Curry's study. In comparison with other parts of Europe, the halcyon days of astrology in England in mid-seventeenth century will appear as a unique phenomenon – a backlash effect, and an immediate consequence of the collapse of central government and censorship in the wake of revolution and civil war.

A prime objective of Curry's study is to criticise the traditional view of the 'decline' of astrology as a consequence of the rise of modernity and rationalism. Thus he is more or less forced to present his results as a historical narrative read backwards. Although the approach is new, the mid-seventeenth century discussion on astrology is still analyzed, primarily as to explain the long-term development from the 1640s to the beginning of the nineteenth century.

In order to take the criticism of the 'modernist' view of the decline of astrology further, I will therefore argue the necessity of contrasting the long-term perspective, and to penetrate the sources without focusing on what will come out of the processes we are studying. When it comes to the displacement of the orthodox discourse on astrology in Sweden at the turn of the seventeenth century, related to the limits set between legitimate and illicit knowledge, this means that important aspects of the problem will have to be searched for, not in the future, but in the past. In other words we will have to search for the intellectual and cultural roots of early modern astrology, in order to identify the contemporary significance of astrology, as well as the elements that made it a problematic practice.

## The Legacy of Astrology

Virtually all civilizations, using astronomical chronologies or calendars, have fostered notions of the inherent significance of the celestial bodies and their correspondence to earthly events. Thus astrology in the European tradition originated as a method of divination among Babylonian and Chaldean priests in dynastic Mesopotamia. It did not differ much from other techniques, used by the augurs to interpret the will of the gods by studying the patterns of nature.

Unlike the appearance of comets, sundogs and other prodigies of the sky, the movements of the planets were possible to calculate and foresee. This kind of divination was in other words closely associated with chronology and mathematical sciences from the beginning. Yet it was only when natural philosophers began to discuss physical causality when pondering



the sublunary changes heralded by the celestial bodies, that they had invented the classical, interpretative art of *astrologia*.<sup>33</sup>

From the fifth century BCE onwards, notions of the influence of the planets and methods to calculate their courses had been firmly incorporated in Greek and Hellenistic philosophy, a development that may appear as a trend towards a more 'scientific' approach in divinatory practice. But when studying the development of western astrology, it must be taken into consideration that all kinds of divination, during classical Antiquity as well as in dynastic Mesopotamia, were inseparable from a fundamentally religious worldview. However, in Greek and Roman divination, the religious element was often reduced to a principle of the divine as a part of a regular and reiterative universe, where the conception of time was essentially circular. From this perspective, the boundaries between divination and natural philosophy hardly existed – at the very least they were constantly blurred. Knowledge of the physical world also conveyed knowledge of the metaphysical and of the divine.<sup>34</sup>

According to Aristotelian theories, codified in the geocentric cosmology of Ptolemy (d. c. 170 CE), all change can be described in terms of motion, emanating from the first cause or the 'unmoved mover' at the top of the universal hierarchy. This motion is transferred through the ethereal, celestial spheres, down to the sublunary world in the centre of universe, where it will cause corruption and generation among the elements. Adopted and further developed by Muslim scholars, these theories found their way into a Christian context during the Middle Ages. Scholastics like Albertus Magnus (c. 1193–1280), Roger Bacon (c. 1214–1294) and Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225–1274) identified the unmoved mover with God, which meant that the celestial influences could be regarded as instruments of God's providence.<sup>35</sup> The scholars' views on astrological practice varied, but the theoretical and scientific basis of astrology was nevertheless included in medieval Christian philosophy.

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33 David Pingree, "Astrology", *Dictionary of the History of Ideas* vol. I, NY 1973 p. 118; S.J. Tester *A History of Western Astrology*, The Boydell Press, Woodbridge 1987 pp. 11–20; Laura Ackerman Smoller, *History, Prophecy and the Stars: The Christian Astrology of Pierre D'Ailly 1350–1420*, Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ 1994 pp. 15–16; cf. Wolfgang Hübner, "Religion und Wissenschaft in der antiken Astrologie", Jean-François Bergier (ed.) *Zwischen Wahn, Glaube und Wissenschaft: Magie, Astrologie, Alchemie und Wissenschaftsgeschichte*, Verlag der Fachvereine, Zürich 1988, esp. pp. 24–27.

34 Tambiah pp. 9–11.

35 John D. North, "Celestial Influence – the Major Premiss of Astrology", in Paola Zambelli (ed.) *'Astrologi hallucinati': Stars and the End of the World in Luther's Time*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin 1986 pp. 45–82; cf. G.E.R. Lloyd, *Greek Science after Aristotle*, Chatto & Windus, London 1973 pp. 113–135.

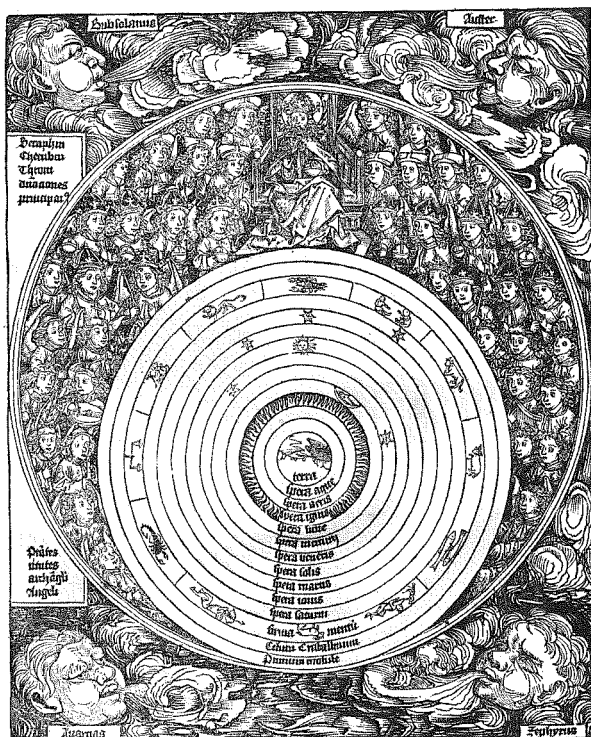


Fig. 2: A symbolic image of the Ptolemaic world system, representing the scientific as well as the theological basis of medieval and early modern astrology. The Earth is in the centre of the universe, surrounded by the planets, the zodiac and the fixed stars. In the highest heaven, God is enthroned as the unmoved mover of the spheres, worshipped by the hosts of the angelic hierarchy. Woodcut in Hartmann Schedel, *Liber chronicarum*, Nürnberg 1493.

Despite the usage of generic labels such as ‘Aristotelian’ physics or ‘Aristotelian-Ptolemaic’ cosmology, there was never any uniformity in astrological theory. In scholastic physics the influence of the stars could be discussed in terms of planetary light affecting the elements, or planets operating through the four manifest qualities of heat and cold, aridity and humidity. A common notion in astrological practice, rooted in Aristotelian physics, was the idea of a correspondence between the Zodiac signs and the four elements fire, air, water and earth. In turn, as the elements and the qualities corresponded to the four cardinal humours of the human body, astrology was adopted into traditional Hippocratic and Galenic medicine to provide the theoretical link between the human microcosm and the macrocosm.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> For informative discussions on elementary medieval and early modern astrology, see Curry, *Prophecy and Power* pp. 8–15; Smoller pp. 16–18.

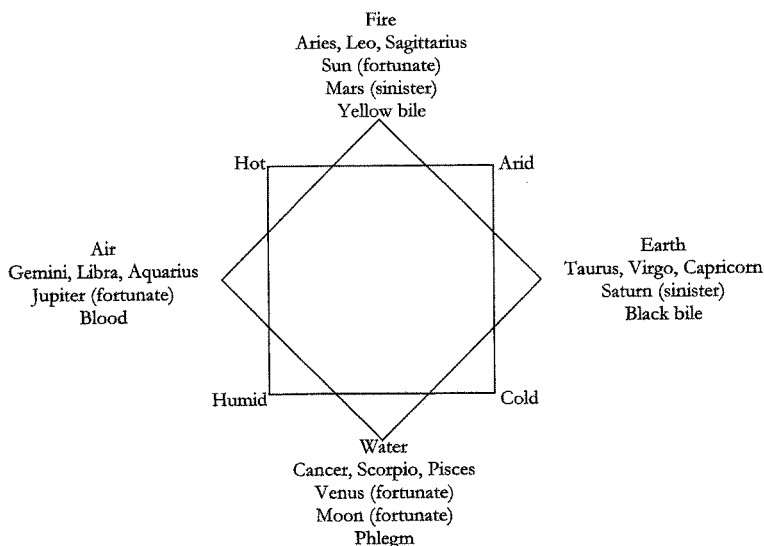


Fig. 3: Figure showing the correspondences between the elements, the 'triplicities' or 'trigons' of the Zodiac, the planets, the cardinal humours and the four manifest qualities. According to common rules of astrological interpretation, based on Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos* and its Arab and Latin commentaries, Mars and yellow bile were thus hot and arid like fire; Jupiter and blood were hot and humid like air etc.<sup>37</sup>

Other astrological theories referred to hidden or occult qualities, emanating from the celestial bodies and corresponding with forces and properties of earthly matter. As an indispensable element in magical theory, this meant that the attraction between iron and magnets could be explained the influence of the celestial spheres, as could – to take two common examples – the capacity of the torpedo fish to stun the fisherman holding the net, or of the *echeneis*, the legendary sucking fish, to halt a ship in full sail.<sup>38</sup>

However, like medieval and early modern natural philosophy in general, astrology was eclectic in both theory and practice. Even if the theories mentioned above could all be described in terms of Aristotelian physics, they could just as well contain elements of Stoic philosophy, where earthly

37 Cf. Smoller p. 16; the seventh planet is missing in the figure: Mercury was generally regarded as changeable and would assume the qualities of the dominant planet at every given moment – a notion probably related to Mercury's function as the gods' messenger.

38 Brian P. Copenhaver, "Natural Magic, Hermetism and Occultism in Early Modern Science" in Lindberg & Westman (eds.) 1990 pp. 272–274, 279; idem., "Scholastic Philosophy and Renaissance Magic in the *De vita* of Marsilio Ficino", *Renaissance Quarterly* vol. 37, no. 4 1984 p. 525.

change was explained in terms of a divine will permeating the universe. Becoming high fashion during the Renaissance, Neoplatonic philosophy also brought notions of an ensouled, essentially divine creation with similar bearing on astrological theory.<sup>39</sup> Yet, what finally united astrological ideas was the fundamental belief that influences, hidden or manifest, linked the spheres of the heavens and the earthly elements together in a hierarchical chain, constituting an organic unity.<sup>40</sup> For this belief, labels such as 'Aristotelian' and 'Neoplatonic' made no difference.

Nevertheless, the close association with the great philosophical schools clearly demonstrates that there was a rational, theoretical basis for astrological divination. The celestial influence on earthly conditions, such as the weather and the humours of the human body, was questioned by few educated people. Astrology had become an integral part of the philosophical study of the heavens and represented a natural order of things as obvious as seasonal change. For long the concepts of *astronomia* and *astrologia* remained, if not identical, then at least hard to distinguish from each other. The mathematical calculation of celestial motion and the art of interpreting the significance of these motions were generally regarded as two parts of one and the same discipline.<sup>41</sup>

## Sceptics and Critics

Still, the close association with recognized philosophical theories did not make astrology unproblematic – on the contrary. Despite its bookish character, astrological knowledge had always been controversial. Philosophical and methodological criticism against the astrologers was nearly as old as the art itself. A sceptic tradition against divination in general had been cultivated among philosophers and intellectuals such as Cato the Elder (234–149 BCE) and Cicero (106–43 BCE). Half a millennium later St. Augustine (354–430) would deliver a criticism of astrological method that would stand the test of time, most notoriously formulated in a paradox of twins. The astrologers simply failed to explain how Jacob and Esau could have different fates according to Genesis, although they must have been born under virtually identical astrological auspices.<sup>42</sup>

39 North pp. 48–50; Pingree p. 119.

40 Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis* pp. 175–176; cf. Curry, *Prophecy and Power* p. 36; Copenhaver, "Scholastic Philosophy and Renaissance Magic" p. 531.

41 Smoller p. 27.

42 St. Augustine of Hippo, *De civitate dei* V:II–VII, *The City of God against the Pagans*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1998 pp. 189–197; idem. *De doctrina christiana*, book 2 ch. 22:33–34, 29:46, *Tolkning och retorik*, Artos & Norma, Skellefteå 2006 pp. 73, 80.

Among later critics, such as Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) and Martin Luther (1483–1546), Augustine would remain a crucial point of reference.<sup>43</sup> However, in Augustine's works, as in the Christian world in general, the criticism of astrologers was primarily formulated in religious terms. The early church condemned astrology as pagan augury through the communication with planetary *daemones* or intelligences, and thus as a violation of the very first commandment of God's law. Astrology was branded as *superstitio*, signifying its opposition to fundamental Christian doctrines, whereas *genethliaci* – astrologers who cast personal horoscopes – were condemned for putting fate in the place of man's free will and for depriving God of his majesty and omnipotence.<sup>44</sup>

There was in other words a discrepancy within the starry art itself, as it balanced on a thin edge between idolatrous reverence for the stars and allowable recognition of the influence of natural forces. Astrology hovered between divination and prophecy, and between godless fatalism and reliance on God's providence. To be sure, all astrological practices could not be branded as illicit per se. Astrology's utility in medicine was mainly uncontroversial, and for a long time the medical faculty at the Sorbonne was formally known as *Facultas in medicina et astrologia*.<sup>45</sup> When Philipp Melanchthon (1497–1560) formulated his view on the issue, he emphatically stressed the unity of the starry sciences. He considered astronomical calculation and astrological interpretation as being two inseparable parts of one and the same discipline, and consequently criticism of the one would be seen as criticism of the other. Yet even Melanchthon stressed that the art had limits. He rejected Muslim authors like Albumasar (Arab. *Abū Ma'shar*, 787–886) and Al-Kindi (c. 801–873) for being propagators of illicit, unchristian practices. In comparison to the pure and unadulterated methods of Ptolemy, Melanchthon considered Arabic astrology to be virtually useless.<sup>46</sup>

43 On the influential criticism of astrology in *Disputationes adversus astrologiam divinatricem*, generally ascribed to Pico della Mirandola, see Eugenio Garin, *Astrology in the Renaissance: the Zodiac of Life*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1983 pp. 79–81; cf. Steven Vanden Broecke, *The limits of influence: Pico, Louvain, and the crisis of Renaissance astrology*, Brill, Leiden/Boston 2003 pp. 55–78; on Luther's criticism see Ingetraut Ludolph, "Luther und die Astrologie" in Zambelli (ed.) pp. 101–106; c.f. Zambelli, "Introduction" in *ibid.* (ed.) p. 2.

44 Tester p. 125; Valerie Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe*, Clarendon, Oxford 1991 pp. 92–101; Smoller 1994 pp. 25–36.

45 Capp p. 17.

46 Stefano Caroti, "Melanchthon's Astrology" in Zambelli (ed.) pp. 110–112.

## Between Nestor and Prometheus

The delicate issue of sorting illicit from allowable usage was thereby something that virtually all practitioners of astrology during the Middle Ages or the Renaissance had to take into consideration. The line was thin, and it was of grave importance to control the balance since the learned, bookish art of astrology was never fully acquitted from the accusation of superstition, idolatry and sorcery. To the non-scholar, there was a nimbus of dark arts surrounding astrological books, with their obscure symbols, tables and mathematical figures in red ink.<sup>47</sup> In the 1650s, citing “A Judicious Author” on the dissolution of the monasteries, the English antiquarian, astrologer and politician Elias Ashmole (1617–1692) claimed that

Many Manuscripts, guilty of no other superstition then [sic] Red letters in the Front, were condemned to the Fire ... Indeed (such was Learnings misfortune, at that great Devastation of our English Libraries, that) where a Red letter or a Mathematicall Diagram appeared, they were sufficient to intitle the Booke to be Popish or Diabolicall.<sup>48</sup>

What Ashmole described, may to some extent be regarded as the ignorant’s reaction against a kind of learning he could not understand and thus feared – a kind of suspiciousness that could strike at virtually any kind of scientific work. But Ashmole’s comment indicates that there were different and overlapping standards when setting the boundaries of worldly learning. There were few – if any – absolute limits, and the settlement of these limits was highly dependent on context. Things that could be said in a private discussion, or even become a subject for an academic disputation in Latin, would not necessarily be appropriate for a vernacular sermon or a public address. Granted, in the early modern world it was quite possible to discuss witchcraft and necromancy as being illicit sciences in themselves. To cite *Paradise Lost* they provided “forbidden knowledge by forbidden means”.<sup>49</sup> They were, however, primarily forbidden as they violated a given ethical code – the Divine Law – based as they were on the worship and invocation of spiritual powers other than God. In the case of astrology, speculative alchemy and magic, this boundary was not very clear, as they were practices founded on generally accepted premises of natural philosophy. The critical

47 Thomas pp. 362–363; J. Peter Zetterberg, “The Mistaking of ‘the Mathematicks’ for Magic in Tudor and Stuart England”, *Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol. 11 no. 1. 1980; Håkansson, *Seeing the Word* p. 10.

48 Elias Ashmole, *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, London 1652 sig. A2v.

49 John Milton, *Paradise Lost* book 12:279, cited in Peter Harrison, “Curiosity, Forbidden Knowledge, and the Reformation of Natural Philosophy in Early Modern England”, *Isis* vol. 92, no. 2 Jun. 2001 p. 275

scholar had to define in what respect these particular “endeavours with occult associations” should be regarded as idolatrous, superstitious or contrary to common reason.<sup>50</sup>

However, more than an issue of the methods to acquire knowledge, the ethical limits of human learning concerned the approach, purpose and moral of the individual scholar. Thus you had to separate natural and pious strivings for knowledge and wisdom, from intellectual ambitions driven by greed, lust for power, and curiosity.

This moral approach is represented among Pagan as well as Christian authors. Yet in a Christian context, curiosity was generally associated with the original sin, which involved the revolt of man against God and the eating of the forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Thus Church Fathers such as Augustine rejected both the object of curiosity, which was worldly and vain knowledge, and its motivation, which was a desire to become like God. Curiosity was in other words associated with pride, being the first and most nefarious of all sins.<sup>51</sup>

Yet to draw the line between curiosity and a legitimate intellectual pursuit was not an uncomplicated issue. Clearly all true, useful and good knowledge – as well as the true and reliable scholar – had to be pious by necessity, and the ends of any learned ambition had to be morally and religiously justifiable. Or, as put by Francis Bacon (1561–1626) in *Novum organum*:

...we want all and everyone to be advised to reflect on the true ends of knowledge: not to seek it for amusements or for dispute, or to look down on others, or for profit or for fame or for power or any such inferior ends, but for the uses and benefits of life, and to improve and conduct in charity. For the angels fell because of an appetite for power; and men fell because of an appetite for knowledge...<sup>52</sup>

This kind of rhetoric about the ethical limits of learning had particular bearing on astrological practices in contemporary discourse. In the 1550 edition of *Emblematum liber* – a collection of commonplace wisdom and moral statements, presented in the form of symbolic pictures with short epigrams – there are four emblems set under the caption of *Astrologia*. One of them shows a hunter, aiming at a crane in the sky but failing to observe a snake lurking in the grass. This image thus represents the astrologer who is absorbed by his ambition and aloof from the world. Another depicts Icarus who challenged the gods by flying too close to the sun. The enclosed epigram warns the stargazer from prophesying, since every impostor will fall

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50 Cit. Harrison, “Curiosity, Forbidden Knowledge” p. 278.

51 Harrison, “Curiosity, Forbidden Knowledge” pp. 266–268.

52 Bacon, *The New Organon* p. 13.

“if he flies beyond the stars”.<sup>53</sup> And under the Socratic dictum *Quae supra nos, nihil ad nos* (“What is above us does not concern/is nothing to us”), the Titan Prometheus is depicted, doomed to have his liver eternally hacked by an eagle for stealing the heavenly fire and giving it to man. The epigram describes how Prometheus now condemns the divine flame lit in the human mind. As his flesh is ripped apart by the talon of the “sacred bird” of Jupiter, the hearts of the learned are gnawed by cares when they desire to know “the vicissitudes of the heavens and the gods”.<sup>54</sup>

Originally written and edited by the Milanese jurist and humanist Andrea Alciati (1492–1550), the *Emblemata* would serve as a model for a whole genre, indispensable to the learned culture of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As discussed by Carlo Ginzburg, the emblem books transformed classical pagan ethics into a Christian context in a fashion typical for the humanist ideals of the Renaissance. In the case of Icarus and Prometheus, mythological personae were used as symbols of “astrologers, of astronomers,



Fig. 4: Prometheus representing the vices of a curious mind, embodied by the astrologers; emblem in Andrea Alciati, *Emblemata*, Lyon 1550.

53 Andrea Alciati, *Emblemata* D. A. Alciati, denuo ab ipso Autore recognita, ac, quae desiderabantur, imaginibus locupletata., Lyon 1550 pp. 113–114.

54 Alciati, *Emblemata* p. 112.



of heretical theologians, of philosophers prone to bold speculations, of unnamed political theorists”.<sup>55</sup>

The emblem of Prometheus thus reflects a widespread view of the astrologer as a scholar prone to idle, vain and godless curiosity, striving for knowledge not meant for man. Obviously, astrology was still regarded as a source of knowledge, but in these particular cases it was knowledge desired for objectionable reasons and utilized for the wrong ends. Therefore, even if curiosity and intellectual pride were despicable vices, this did not mean that the astrologer's quest for knowledge should be rejected as such.

Consequently, another aspect of astrology was also displayed among Alciati's emblems. On the very first emblem under the caption of *Astrologia*, the old, wise and experienced Nestor is displayed with a heavy cup of silver in his hand. In the epigram it is stated that the cup – mentioned in the eleventh song of the *Iliad* – represents the sky, where “the nails are the golden stars of heaven” and the doves sculptured above the handles “are thought to be the Pleiades”.<sup>56</sup>

The main moral of the emblem is that all knowledge has to be wielded with both experience and the right moral standards. But the starry sciences were not haphazardly chosen to represent the essence of learning. Within a geocentric world system, where the higher, celestial spheres ruled the inferior elements, astrology and astronomy represented the very highest stage in the hierarchy of worldly knowledge. The wise and pious astrologer or astronomer could embrace the celestial spheres and the whole creation with his mind. Like Nestor he could lift the cup of heavenly wisdom, knowing that “mighty men wage war, the wise man holds the stars”.<sup>57</sup>

55 Carlo Ginzburg, “High and Low: The Theme of Forbidden Knowledge in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries”, *Past and Present*, No. 73. 1976 p. 33, cit. p. 34; as discussed by Ginzburg, the image of Prometheus was quite complex, as his ‘crime’ could be seen as the man-loving act of a tragic hero – a view prevalent in the classical dramas ascribed to Aeschylus. In the simplifying form of the emblems however, Prometheus was generally turned into a polemical invective.

56 Alciati, *Emblemata* p. 110, cit. p. III; “Est coelum, scyphus ipse; color argenteus illi est/Aurea sunt coeli sidera clauiculi./Pleiadas esse putant, quas dixerit ille columbas.” In the *Iliad* the cup of Nestor is described as “...a beautifully wrought cup which the old man brought with him/from home. It was set with golden nails, the eared handles upon it/were four, and on either side there were fashioned two doves/of gold, feeding, and there were double bases beneath it./Another man with great effort could lift it full from the table,/but Nestor, aged as he was, lifted it without strain.”; *The Iliad of Homer. Translated with an Introduction by Richmond Lattimore*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1961, II:632–637.

57 Alciati, *Emblemata* cit. p. III; “Haec Nestor longo sapiens intelligit usu/Bella gerunt fortes, callidus astra tenet.” In several editions of the *Emblemata*, neither this emblem,

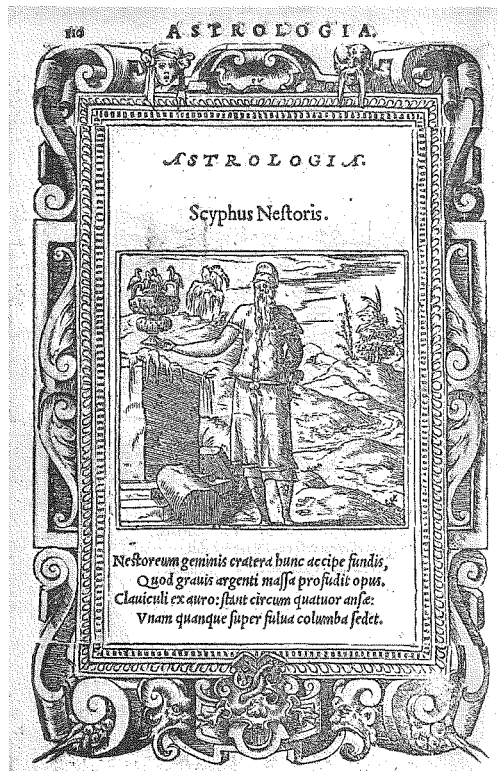


Fig. 5: The cup of Nestor, representing the virtues and rewards of wisdom – and of the starry arts; Andrea Alciati, *Emblematum*.

The astrologer's quest for knowledge could thus reach divine heights. Like all sciences dedicated to revealing the secrets of nature or *Arcana naturae*, astrology could, in context of Renaissance epistemology, become an instrument of some distinct potency.

## The Book of Nature and the Word of God

When Sigfridus Forsius exposed the scientific basics of astrology in his *Great Prognostication* for 1617, he pointed out how changes on Earth were affected by the natural influence of the heavenly bodies. Yet his discussion, based on physical realities, was set in a religious framing. Paraphrasing the *Wisdom of Solomon* in *Septuagint*, characterized both by traditional Jewish piety and conceptions from Hellenistic philosophy, Forsius exclaimed that

nor the dictum *Quae supra nos* was captioned *Astrologia*. Originally the main moral of Nestor's cup was that experience is superior to strength, just as Prometheus stood out as a plain warning against undue curiosity.

“God has created everything in all parts of the world after measure, number and weight”, whereby the whole Creation appeared as both intelligible and meaningful to the human mind.<sup>58</sup>

Thus reflecting the divine providence, “the stars are not created by God in vain, but work much in the lower things”, and while referring to St. Paul and Ecclesiasticus, Forsius claimed that the contemplation of the forces of the stars “will even lead gentiles to God”.<sup>59</sup>

A couple of years later the headmaster of the school in Stockholm, Nicolaus Niurenus (d. 1625) took up a similar thread in a prognostication, where he wrote that “When you gaze upon the Firmament of Heaven, a reason is surely given to think, that there must be an almighty God, who has created and daily upholds such a thing.”<sup>60</sup>

The notion of the complexity and beauty of creation preaching to man was a recurrent theme, both in natural philosophy and among preachers and theologians of the early modern era. Natural philosophy could be described as a kind of liturgy or worship, where the philosopher acted like a priest in the temple of the creation. The notion could be referred back to pagan and Jewish authorities, and it was nourished by such disparate scholars of the early modern era as the renaissance humanist Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) and the natural philosopher and chemist Robert Boyle (1627–1691).<sup>61</sup>

58 Sigfridus Aronus Forsius, *Then stora Prognostica til thet Åår Christi MDC XVII. Medh flijt vthräcknat och judiceret aff naturlige orsaker/ och the gamble Astrologers förfarenheet*, printed by Ignatius Meurer, Stockholm 1616 sig. A2r; “...i Wijshetennes Book/ i thet xi. cap. står skriffuit/ at Gudh alting skapat och förordnat haffuer i Werldennes delar/ efter mått/ taal och wicht”; cf. Wisdom of Solomon 11:20: “thou hast ordered all things in measure and number and weight.”; this quote seems to correspond to Pythagorean notions of reality as constituted by numbers; cf. William Keith Chambers Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy: The Earlier Presocratics and the Pythagoreans*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1962 pp. 311–312 n. 1; on the Hellenistic origin of the *Wisdom of Solomon*, see J. Freudenthal, “What Is the Original Language of the Wisdom of Solomon?”, *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, vol. 3, no. 4 1891 pp. 722–753.

59 Forsius, *Then stora Prognostica til thet Åår Christi MDC XVII* sig. A4r; “...thz stiernorna icke förgäffues af Gudhi skapade äre/ vtan myckit wärcka i alle nidrige ting ... Om stiernonas kraffter/ och huru theas öffuerwägande handleder jämwäl Hedhningar til Gudh/ må man läsa thet 13. Cap. i Wijssheten/ thz 43. cap. Syrachs/ och thet i. Cap. til the Romare/ v. 20.”

60 Nicolaus Petri Niurenus, *Almanach til thet åhret Christi M.DC.XXV – Prognosticon astrologicum, Öffuer the fyre åhrs delars general Wädherleek/ Förmörkelser och Aspecter som kunna infalla. Aff naturlige Orsakers grund stelt och judicerat til thet åhr Christi M. DC. XXV*, printed by Christopher Reusner, Stockholm 1624 sig. A2r. “När en beskoder Himmelens Firmament/ wisseligen giffs tå een orsaak at tänckia/ at thet motte wara en alzmectigh Gudh/ som sådant skapat haffuer och dagligen vppehåller.”

61 Harold Fisch, “The Scientist as Priest: A Note on Robert Boyle’s Natural Theology”,

Clearly this understanding of nature was more than a metaphor. Johannes Kepler, in praise of his own discipline, described astronomers as being “priests of the most high God, with respect to the book of nature”.<sup>62</sup> Thus he implicitly referred to a central theme in medieval and early modern conceptions of the world – the notion of how God himself was revealed in Nature.

Theoretically this idea found its form in a synthesis of Judaeo-Christian theology and Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy. Nature was thought of as reflecting *Logos*, the wisdom of God and the divine Word wherewith the world – according to the Gospel of St. John – was created, redeemed and sustained.<sup>63</sup> Practically the notion was manifested in symbolic or emblematic perceptions of reality that seem to recur – in one form or another – in natural philosophy, magical theory and divination from classical times to the beginning of the eighteenth century. Virtually every phenomenon in creation was laden with a myriad of hidden meanings, intertwined and corresponding with each other. All things and all phenomena were placed within a ‘Great Chain of Being’, binding the world together in a grand hierarchy.<sup>64</sup>

In the Christian context, the core of these notions lay in an understanding of the world conceived as an intelligible text, emanating from God. The meanings displayed in the *Liber naturae*, the book of nature, corresponded with the Word of God revealed in the Holy Scriptures, *Liber scripturae*.

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*Isis* vol. 44, no. 3 1953 pp. 252–265, esp. p. 255; Peter Harrison, *The Bible, Protestantism, and the Rise of Natural Science*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1998 p. 198.

62 Johannes Kepler, Letter to Herwath von Hohenburg, 26 March 1598, in *Gesammelte Werke* vol 7, München 1953 p. 25, cited in Harrison, *The Bible, Protestantism* p. 198.

63 Håkansson, *Seeing the Word* pp. 85, 96–100. A fundamental biblical reference for this complex of ideas is the prologue of the Gospel of St. John, where Christ is identified as the incarnation of the divine *logos*; John 1:1–18.

64 For a discussion on emblematic and symbolic perceptions of the world, see William B. Ashworth Jr, “Natural history and the emblematic world view”, Lindberg & Westman (eds.) pp. 303–332.



Fig. 6: Frontispiece of George Hartgill, *Generall calenders, or, most easie astronomical tables*, London 1594. According to the seventeenth-century astrologer William Lilly (1602–1681), Hartgill was a priest and author of prognostications “who was so happy as to live in those serene Dayes and golden Times, when the Grave Bishops, and learned Orthodox Ministers of this Nation were no invetterate Enemies unto *Astrology*”.<sup>65</sup>

Just how close the relationship between the ‘two books’ could be conceived is vividly depicted in an image of the ‘Christian philosopher’, seen on the frontispiece of a collection of astronomical tables, compiled by George Hartgill (d. c. 1597) in 1594. The picture shows a man, clad in a black robe, distinguishing the scholar as well as the clergyman, with his gaze fixed upon the stars. In his left hand he holds an armillary sphere, a model of the celestial globe representing the universe and the entire Creation, while his

65 Cit. William Lilly, preface in John & Timothy Gadbury, *Astronomicall Tables ... First Invented by George Hartgill Minister of the Word of God. And Now Reduced to our Age*, London 1656 fol 8r.

right hand holds the Bible to his breast. Stating that he “shall contemplate Jehovah’s Word and Works” this figure represents the sacral role of the natural philosopher. This was a role confirmed by Hartgyll himself, who described himself as an astronomer and a “Minister of the Word of God”.<sup>66</sup>

## Knowledge, Power and Prophecy

The view of creation as an intelligible text, which corresponded to the Scriptures, had consequences for both the study of nature and of the heavens. Citing “the renowned Origen” in the prognostication for 1625, Nicolaus Niurenius claimed that

Heaven is like an Opened Book, in which all Times, all mutations, and everything that happens on Earth is being written. But for the sake of the Fall of our first Parents, our eyes are so obscured, so that they can scarcely read therein. When you now ponder the glory and wisdom of our first parents before the Fall, nothing of this was hidden from them, since the Image of God was born like this in himself. Moreover, God has also created Man in particular above other Creatures on Earth, so that he should view this opened Book, the Heaven.<sup>67</sup>

The study of the heavens thus gave the astrologer a glimpse of the time before the fall of Adam and Eve, when the knowledge and wisdom of man had been absolute and not yet been blurred by pride and curiosity. However, this also meant that the natural philosopher or the astrologer, in combination with biblical exegesis, could claim to master a method of understanding the divine mysteries of the world and even the mind of God. When studied by a person with the right skills and inclination, natural philosophy embraced claims of prophetic dignity and provided the scholar, not only with certain and steadfast knowledge of the destinies of the world, but also with insights of the will of the supreme, transcendent being.<sup>68</sup>

66 George Hartgyll, *Generall Calenders, or, most easie astronomicall tables*, London 1594, title page.

67 N. Niurenius, *Almanach – Prognosticon astrologicum ... til thet åhr Christi M. DC. XXV*, sig. Aiv; “Himmelen wara som en Vpslagen Book/ vthi hwilken alla Tjdhher/ alle *mutationes*, så ock alt som skeer på Jordenne wara inskriffuit. Men för våra första Föräldrars Fall skull/ våra ögon wara så förmörkade/ at the ther vthi föga kunna läsa. När en nu begrundar våra förste Föräldrars herligheet och wijsheet för Fallet/ war them sådant intet fördolt/ effter Gudz Beläte sådant aff sigh föddes. Ther til haffuer och Gudh synnerligen Menniskian fram för andre Creatur på Jordenne skapat/ at hon thenne vpslagne Bookan/ Himmelen/ besee skulle.” ‘Människa’, the Swedish word for man as a human being, is of feminine gender.

68 See for instance Harrison, *The Bible, Protestantism* pp. 193–204. For a discussion on the concept of prophecy, understood as an inspired sermon or warning, by which an acquired, divine knowledge is revealed, see Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis* pp. 13–14.

Obviously such claims could easily become problematic. If nature itself revealed prophetic knowledge of the will of God, then in theory virtually anyone with insights in natural philosophy could make statements with claims of absolute normativity. Yet from the perspective of Medieval and Renaissance epistemology, the issue of knowledge, authority and power was even more complicated. God's Word was not just merely a conveyor of metaphysical meanings penetrating the creation, and knowledge of the world was not just a basis for claims of authority. The potency went much deeper. When Francis Bacon coined the classical dictum that "knowledge itself is power", he did so in order to reject heretical doubts about the omnipotence of God: what God knows is equivalent to what he is capable of doing. Thus, to Bacon, knowledge was actually power, or rather *a* power, emanating from the Creator and obtainable to Man created in God's own image.<sup>69</sup> To Bacon, and to the Renaissance mind, knowledge itself was a divine quality with divine claims and with an inherent power to change, transform and reform created reality.

It is in this context the strivings of magicians, occultists and mystics to penetrate the physical world should be regarded. The Hermetists' quest for *prisca sapientia* – the venerable wisdom of the ancients was conceived as reflecting man's adamitic state of mind. In addition the ambition of the alchemists was to achieve not only the regeneration and transformation of the elements, but also the physical and spiritual rebirth of man. Even in the late seventeenth century, scientists such as Robert Boyle expressed hopes of natural philosophy restoring men to a prelapsarian state, both epistemologically and morally.<sup>70</sup>

However, these notions were not only cherished by mystics, magicians

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The original, Greek significance of the word *prophetas* (προφήτης), is probably just "speaker" or "interpreter", implying the will of the gods; Henry George Liddell & Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford 1925; cf. Ivan Egnell & Anton Fridrichsen (eds.), *Svenskt bibliskt uppslagsverk* vol. II, Gävle 1952 col. 728–729.

69 Cit. Francis Bacon, "De Hæresibus" in *Essayes. Religious meditations. Places of persuasion & Dissuasion*, London 1597 sig. E3v; "ipsa scientia potestas est". Bacon's original dictum is thereby essentially distinct from modern notions of knowledge and power – for instance from the assertion of Foucault, that it is "a chimera" to try to separate true knowledge from any system of power, since "truth is already power"; cit. Michel Foucault, *Power/knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*, edited and translated by Colin Gordon et al., Harvester Press, Brighton 1980 p. 133. In Bacon's statement there is a frank realism in the knowledge-power relationship that the postmodern age of Foucault would never acknowledge.

70 Cf. R.J.W. Evans, *Rudolf II and his World: A Studie in Intellectual History 1572–1612*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1973 pp. 196, 201, 276; Copenhaver, "Natural Magic" pp. 267–268; Schaffer, "Occultism and Reason" p. 121.

and philosophers with occult interests. They were an intrinsic part of how the world was conceived, and they were shared, also by the most rigid and orthodox theologians and clergymen. In Lutheran discourse, knowledge of the Gospel and of the true faith practically became an instrumental tool of salvation. Notions of a moralized universe – where phenomena in nature were construed as emblematic signs providing intelligible messages of the divine will – clearly played a part in the confessional conflicts of the sixteenth century. In addition various practices to interpret the signs of nature were adopted by Lutheran scholars in their strivings to acquire solid and authoritative knowledge regarding the divine purpose of the course of the world. Although such knowledge would not be sufficient to fulfil the ongoing Reformation of the Church, it could at least be used to maintain upright conduct in the final age of the world.<sup>71</sup>

Yet, from the perspective of the confessional, social and political conflicts of the Reformation era, the need to distinguish between different claims of divine knowledge and prophetic insights became accentuated. In this context the astrologer stood, metaphorically speaking, on a thin line between Nestor and Prometheus, between enjoying the righteous fruits of wisdom, and the temptation to acquire knowledge not meant for man. For there was no essential, epistemological difference between the knowledge of the wise Nestor, the insubordinate Prometheus and the presumptuous Icarus. They did not represent different kinds of knowledge, but they handled knowledge in different ways. The allowable or illicit status of knowledge was being determined by its use and practice.

However, even if the line was thin, there was a crucial criterion that separated the right and pious striving for knowledge from ungodly ambitions of vain curiosity. The intellectual effort had to be subordinated to religious or confessional goals. As expressed by Philipp Melanchthon in the regulations of the philosophy faculty at Wittenberg, all human knowledge had to be “captivated to Christ” and confirm the Gospel, while all natural philosophy should be used to show the Providence of God in the physical world.<sup>72</sup> In practice however, this meant that knowledge confirming the standpoint of Luther or Melanchthon on any specific issue would generally be accepted. Translated to a Roman Catholic context, this would suggest the subordination of worldly knowledge to the authority of the Church and eventually of the Papacy.

71 See Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis*, esp. pp. 182–209; cf. Scribner, “The Reformation, Popular Magic” p. 485.

72 Cit. Sachiko Kusukawa, *The Transformation of Natural Philosophy: the Case of Philip Melanchthon*, Ideas in Context 34, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1995 p. 187.



Thus, whether a specific practice or the achievements of an individual scholar would be judged to fulfil these qualifications or not, depended on who claim the privilege of distinguishing true and pious wisdom from illicit knowledge and ungodly curiosity. As formulated by Peter Harrison: “many of those who mouthed the rhetoric of curiosity and asserted the vanity of worldly learning did not do so indiscriminately but, rather, attempted to utilize this moral discourse to discredit rival claims to knowledge.”<sup>73</sup>

Considering Alciati’s *Emblemata*: what distinguished Nestor from Prometheus was that the former handled the astrological knowledge in a morally and epistemologically irreproachable way. However, what distinguished the allowable and irreproachable practice from the illicit would change with respect to time period, author and context. As I will try to demonstrate in the following, the orthodox, Lutheran discourse on astrology was no exception to this rule.

## Disposition

The empirical analysis will begin with a survey of astrological literature, in order to expose the role of astrology in the intellectual landscape of sixteenth-century Sweden. The focus here is the everyday application in calendars and medical tracts, but the normative, prophetic potential and the problematic aspects and connotations of astrological knowledge will also be discussed.

In chapter three, the two astrological prognostications of Laurentius Paulinus Gothus will be analysed and set in context of the political and religious crisis of the Swedish realm in the 1590s. The main purpose of this part of the inquiry is to demonstrate the importance of this context in order to understand the different positions on astrology that Paulinus took in these, superficially identical works. In chapter four, the gradual turn towards a principal rejection of astrology in Paulinus’ works is analysed. Here the associations with sorcery, witchcraft and ‘superstition in general’, made in *Ethica christiana* from 1617 is contrasted with the discussion on astrology and the interpretation of comets and other portents in *Cometoscopia*, written during the winter of 1608. The context here is the aftermath of the revolution at the turn of the seventeenth century, where the ongoing conflicts between the Lutheran clergy and the new regime are taken as a central theme. In this chapter, some aspects of Paulinus’ work are also compared with the astrological interpretations in a contemporary comet tract, written by Sigfridus Aronus Forsius.

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73 Cit. Harrison, “Curiosity, Forbidden Knowledge” pp. 277–278.

In chapter five, the focus of the study will shift to Forsius, his career, his writings and his trial before the Uppsala chapter in 1619. Forsius' defence of the astrological art – that often turned to become a defence of his own person – will be compared with the arguments used against him. The reasons of his fall will be discussed and set in relation to the fears of subversive movements, and of the spread of non-conformist and heretical ideas in the 1610s. In chapter six, the reactions to Forsius' writings on the eschatological issues will be analyzed and related to his unique position on the expanding book market. In the last chapter of the book, my conclusions will be presented and further discussed in relation to general trends of social and cultural change in the early modern world.



# Astrology in the Northlands

You have to know enough medicine and astrology not  
to be fooled by medics and astrologers.

Queen Christina of Sweden (1626–1689), *Pensées*<sup>1</sup>

## Out of the Ruins of Learning

At the close of the sixteenth century, knowledge of the starry arts was a rare talent in the Swedish realm, as was bookish learning in general. The monasteries, once the backbone of education and erudition, had been dissolved. Convent schools were closed and monastery libraries were scattered. Cathedral- and municipal schools that survived the Reformation were poorly maintained and adequate only for the rudimentary training of priests and clerks for the expanding state bureaucracy.<sup>2</sup> The University of Uppsala, founded in 1477, had closed due to political turbulence and war in the 1520s. Attempts to resume teaching had been made, but after a promising start in the 1570s, all efforts came to nothing.

The primary reason for the final breakdown of the academy had been the church policies of Johan III (r. 1568–1592). In a fatal combination of genuine religious concerns, theological erudition and high political ambitions, the king had adopted the cause of ecumenical reconciliation in Europe. Not only had he negotiated with representatives of the Holy See and made additions to the Church Ordinance of 1571. In 1576 he also introduced a new

1 *Pensées de Christine, reine de Suède*, Norstedts, Stockholm 1906 p. 86; “Il faut savoir assez de la médecine et de l’astrologie pour n’être pas la dupe des médecins et des astrologues.”

2 Sten Lindroth, *Svensk lärdomshistoria I: Medeltiden Reformationstiden*, Norstedts, Stockholm 1975 pp. 206–222; cf. Jan Brunius, “Från mässböcker till munkepärmor” in Kerstin Abukhanfusa, Jan Brunius & Solbritt Benneth (eds.), *Helgerånet: från mässböcker till munkepärmor*, Carlsson, Stockholm 1993 pp. 15–18; *Vadstenadiariet. Latinsk text med översättning och kommentar*, Kungl. Samfundet för utgivande av handskrifter rörande Skandinaviens historia, Stockholm 1996 pp. 460–461, entry 1190; for a discussion on the social conditions of the school system in sixteenth- and seventeenth century Sweden, see Bengt Sandin, *Hemmet, gatan, fabriken eller skolan: folkundervisning och barnuppföstran i svenska städer 1600–1850*, Arkiv, Lund 1986 pp. 41–46.

liturgy for the Swedish church. Mirroring the king's religious and esthetical ideals, this *Liturgia Svecanae Ecclesiae* preserved or even restored several medieval, supposedly 'popish' elements in the Eucharist and other rites.<sup>3</sup>

The king's attempt to enforce the liturgy in the dioceses was bound to provoke reactions from the clergy.<sup>4</sup> In the following turmoil – known in Swedish historiography as the Liturgical Strife – the academy became a centre for the opposition. The professors fell from royal grace, and some of them, like Olaus Luth (d. 1580), who had lectured in astronomy, were imprisoned for shorter or longer periods. Due to lack of economical support, teaching had already dwindled precariously when the king eventually removed his patronage from the university altogether. In 1580 an outbreak of plague put a final end to all further activity. Olaus Luth perished, and the students fled the city.<sup>5</sup>

Apart from Uppsala, the only remaining institution of higher education in the realm was the *Collegium Regium*, founded in 1576 and initially directed by the Norwegian Jesuit Laurentius Nicolai (c. 1538–1622). In the twofold ambition to gain control of education and to promote the royal church policies, this college was located under the king's direct supervision in the 'Cloister', the former Greyfriars convent in Stockholm. However, as the clerical opposition grew stronger and the negotiations with the Holy See bogged down, the king lowered his ecumenical ambitions and concentrated his efforts on internal ecclesiastical reform. In 1580 Laurentius Nicolai was forced to leave the country, and although the professors formally remained supportive of the liturgy, the College was from 1583 onwards an academy with a pronounced Lutheran tendency.<sup>6</sup>

3 For narrative accounts of the history of the Liturgical Strife and the church policies of Johan III, see Hjalmar Holmquist, *Svenska kyrkans historia vol. III:2, Reformationstidevarvet*, Svenska kyrkans diakonistyrelses bokförlag, Stockholm 1933 pp. 41–107; Åke Andrén, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria 3. Reformationstid*, Verbum, Stockholm 1999 pp. 162–207.

4 As argued by Per Jonsson, the innovations in the new Liturgy were not particularly radical compared to the old missal of 1557. More than a dogmatic controversy, the crisis was thus mainly unleashed by the King's intervention in an ecclesiastical issue; Per Jonsson, *Uppsala möte 1593 – i samtid och eftervärld: några drag i svensk kyrkohistoria under fyra århundraden*, Rformatio, Landskrona 1994 pp. 36–37; cf. Isak Collijn, *Sveriges bibliografi intill år 1600*, vol. II, Uppsala 1927–1931 pp. 458–460.

5 Sten Lindroth, *A History of Uppsala University 1477–1977*, Almqvist & Wiksell, Stockholm 1976 pp. 17–19; The only traces of astronomical teaching preserved from this period are notes from the lectures of Olaus Luth on Johannes de Sacrobosco's *De Sphaera*; cf. Olof Luth, *Nogre stycker aff thenn frije konst astronomia* (Cod. Holm. D 77), Almqvist & Wiksell, Uppsala 1935.

6 Gunnar Bolin, "Johan III:s högskola å Gråmunkeholmen I", *Samfundet S:t Eriks årsbok*, Stockholm 1912 pp. 1–62; idem, "Johan III:s högskola å Gråmunkeholmen

Theology and the training of priests remained the main emphasis of the College, but there were also ambitions to encourage humanist learning. Greek, Latin poetry and eloquence, and Hebrew were taught, and there were chairs in physics and mathematics. Some instruction was even available in medicine, the main entrance to learn the basics of astrological practice. Thus the medic Johan Schilander, renowned for his skills in surgery and 'mathematics' (i.e. astrology), lectured at the College while Laurentius Nicolai was still in charge, but what his lectures contained is not known. Later the professor of physics, Laurentius Johannis Laelius (d. 1603), taught medicine – at least he wrote a thesis on nutrition. However, in this thesis there are no astrological references.<sup>7</sup>

As far as can be judged, the students remained few throughout the College's existence, and all activity ceased in the early 1590s. All in all, the possibilities to improve in astronomy and astrology – or in any of the higher faculties – were virtually nonexistent within the Swedish realm during the sixteenth century. Consequently, very few indications of such knowledge have been preserved.

## Traces of Astrological Practice

Yet in Sweden as elsewhere, astrology was still included in basic conceptions of chronology and natural philosophy. At the beginning of the sixteenth century "a very precious and marvellous clock" had been erected in the cathedral of Uppsala – a clock that showed the cycles of the moon and the movements of the planets "by a most clever reckoning".<sup>8</sup> Clearly it was a

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II", *Samfundet S:t Eriks årsbok*, Stockholm 1918 pp. 1–59; on Laurentius Nicolai Norvegicus (Norw. *Laurids Nielsen*) – or 'Klosterlasse' (i.e. 'Cloister-Larry') as he was nicknamed by his adversaries among the Swedish clergy – and his mission to Sweden, see Oskar Garstein, *Rome and the Counter-Reformation in Scandinavia* vol. I, Universitetsforlaget, Bergen 1962 pp. 40–47, 89–260; for a somewhat acid, yet in part substantial criticism of Garstein, see Sven-Ulric Palme, review in *Historisk Tidskrift* XLV No. 1, Oslo 1966 pp. 125–161.

7 Bolin, "Johan III:s högskola å Gråmunkeholmen I" p. 33; cf. Augustin Theiner, *Versuche und Bemühungen des heiligen Stuhles in den letzten drei Jahrhunderten, die durch Ketzeri und Schisma von ihm getrennten Länder des Nordens wieder mit der Kirche zu vereinen*, Augsburg 1838 p. 464; Laurentius Johannis Laelius, *Theses ordinarii, exercitii, ad disputandum propositae*, printed by Andreas Gutterwitz, Stockholm 1587, reproduced in Bolin, "Johan III:s högskola å Gråmunkeholmen II" p. 26; cf. Isak Collijn, *Sveriges bibliografi intill år 1600: 1583–1599* vol. III, Uppsala 1932–1933 p. 54; see also Lindroth, *Svensk lärdomshistoria I* pp. 224–229; Lindroth, *A History of Uppsala University* pp. 19–20.

8 Cit. Olaus Magnus, *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus*, Rome 1555 vol. 1, cap. 32 p. 70: "In metropolis Ecclesia Vpsalensi ... valde pretiosum, mirabileq' horologium

status symbol, manifesting the wealth and might of the cathedral and of its archbishop Jakob Ulvsson (d. 1521). However, the clock had also been intended as a benefit to the newly founded university, “since all students in these parts are highly inclined to learn of the courses, nature and effects of constellations and stars”.<sup>9</sup>

Astrological medicine had also been practiced in Sweden since prior to the Reformation, albeit on a basic level. There were few, if any educated physicians within the realm. Yet it is likely that practitioners in monasteries and hospitals, as well as the surgeons of the Barber’s guild in Stockholm, were skilled enough to calculate the auspices before performing bloodletting and other standard treatments.<sup>10</sup> Astrological tables and guidelines for medical purposes are preserved in calendars of prayer books and other manuscripts from late fifteenth century onwards.<sup>11</sup> In a law codex, drawn up on behalf of the magnate and nobleman Arvid Birgersson Trolle (d. 1505), it states that the Moon in Gemini “rules over the shoulders and the arms; bleed not on your arm, do not cut your nails, take no vows”. The Moon in Cancer “rules over the breast, lungs and waist; bleed not your breast liver or lung, have sweet drinks”.<sup>12</sup> Auspicious moments for non-medical undertakings were also heeded. In a contemporary prayer book, Leo is described as

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habetur, cuius diurno pariterq’ nocturno motu planetarum, solisq’, & lunę accessus, & recessus perspicacissima ratione considerantur.”

- 9 Cit. *ibid.*: “... quod omnes studiosi illarum regionum ad syderum, astrorumq’ cursum, naturam, effectusq’ cognoscendos non mediocriter ... sint inclinati”; cf. *Vadstenadiariet* pp. 410–411, entry 986; N.V.E. Nordenmark, *Astronomiens historia i Sverige till år 1800*, Uppsala 1959 pp. 1–4; Anna Götlind, *Technology and Religion in Medieval Sweden*, Falun 1993 pp. 144–146.
- 10 On medieval physicians in Sweden, and on medical skills among cloister people, especially the Brigittine nuns in Vadstena, see Charlotte Christensen Nugues, “Skolmedicinen i det medeltida Sverige” in Gunnar Broberg (ed.), *Til at studera läkedom: Tio studier i svensk medicinhistoria*, Sekel, Lund 2008 p. 73; Lindroth, *Svensk lärdoms-historia I* pp. 147–160; most of the barbers in Stockholm were of German origin, and had probably been apprenticed abroad; cf. Henrik Schück, *Stockholm vid 1400-talets slut*, Geber, Stockholm 1951 pp. 57, 61–62.
- 11 Cf. the calendar in the law codex of Arvid Knutsson (d. 1497), British Museum, Cod. ADD. MSS. 30061; fol. 1r–9r.
- 12 *Läke- och örte-böcker från Sveriges medeltid*, Norstedts, Stockholm 1883–1886 p. 470; “Geminj/Här jnnen rader manen ower skuldrene oc arma lat ey vpo tyn arm, skär ey tyne nagle, tagh enga loffwan/Cancer/Här jnnen rader manen offuer brystet lwnger oc riiff [sic] lat ey tit bryst liffwet eller lwngne drik sötan dryk...” It is impossible to estimate the circulation of this kind of literature. There are only a handful of preserved copies and in those cases their owners may be identified, these clearly belonged to the aristocracy. On the two law codices of Arvid Knutsson and Arvid Trolle, see Sven Ulric Palme, *Riksföreståndarvalet 1512: studier i nordisk politik och svensk statsrätt 1470–1523*, Uppsala 1949 pp. 417–420.

“firmly standing”. Thus the reader is advised to begin house building under its influence, “yet not of wood for that they easily burn” – a heading that reflects the notion of Leo as a fiery sign. According to the same source you should avoid “cutting new clothing and speak with mighty lords” when the moon is in Scorpio.<sup>13</sup>

The astrological content of these texts is basic, yet still in accordance with contemporaneous medical theory. The notions of planetary influence on the bodily fluids, and of the Zodiac signs ‘ruling’ different limbs of the human body were derived from authorities such as Galen and Avicenna (Arab *Ibn Sīnā*, c. 980–1037), whose works were compulsory reading for medical students throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. In his ‘wholesome medic book’ from 1578, the Swedish court physician Benedictus Olai (c. 1523–1582) stands firmly in this tradition when discussing in which cases you should heed the Zodiac signs for letting the blood of a patient.<sup>14</sup>

To underline the commonplace character of these ideas, the book of Benedictus Olai was a more or less verbatim compilation of two Danish medic books – one issued in 1533 by Christiern Pedersen, canon in Lund, and the other by the Malmö physician Henrik Smid in 1557. In turn, both of these authors referred to older, primarily German sources.<sup>15</sup>

## Medicine for Body and Soul

Needless to say, the astrological advisers in medieval Swedish sources were translations of Latin texts, primarily of clerical origin. The calendars with their astrological tables were in any case modelled after the official liturgical books. The same kind of tables occurred in all printed missals and breviaries issued in Sweden from the 1480s until the eve of the Reformation.<sup>16</sup>

Partly this custom may be seen as a commonplace feature of chronologi-

13 *Läke- och örte-böcker från Sveriges medeltid* pp. 461–488, cit pp. 461–462; “Leo ... är fasth standande tekn Tha är got at begynna mwra hwss oc ey aff thrä for thy at the brynna gerna ... scorpio Tha manen är i tz tekn tha vakta sigh for ny cläde til skärande ok tala mz mechtoga herra”; this particular text is a translation, as may be seen by the claim that it is good to engraft grape vines when the Moon is in Sagittarius – advice that is not easy to follow in northern latitudes.

14 Benedictus Olai, *Een Nyttigh Läkere Book ther vthinnen man finner rådh/ hielp och Läkedom til allehanda menniskiornes siwckdomar bådhe inwertes och uthwertes.*, printed by Anders Torstensson, Stockholm 1578, fol. CLXXVIIIv–CLXXXv

15 On the sources of Benedictus Olai, see Per-Gunnar Ottosson, *Pestskrifter i Sverige 1572–1711*, Linköping 1986 p. 21.

16 See for instance, *Missale Uppsaliense vetus*, printed by Johann Snell, Stockholm 1484, fol. 8r; *Breviarium Strengnense*, printed by Johannes Fabri, Stockholm 1495, fol. 9r; *Breviarium Uppsaliense*, printed by the widow of Johannes Fabri, Stockholm 1496 fol. 13r.



12 34 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 Tylbene talet.

yp e v m b s i 3 q f u n c s t 9 2 g Aries gott tekin.  
3 q f u n c s t 9 2 g r o d t l A r h Aries gott  
9 2 g r o d t l A r h y p e v m b s i Taurus onde.  
A r h y p e v m b s i 3 q f u n c s t Taurus onde.  
b s i 3 q f u n c s t 9 2 g r o d t l Gemini ond.  
c s t 9 2 g r o d t l A r h y p e v m Gemini ond.  
d t l A r h y p e v m b s i 3 q f u n Cancer middel.  
e v m b s i 3 q f u n c s t 9 2 g r o Cancer middel.  
f u n c s t 9 2 g r o d t l A r h y p Cancer middel  
g r o d t l A r h y p e v m b s i 3 q Leo onde  
h y p e v m b s i 3 q f u n c s t 9 2 Leo onde  
i 3 q f u n c s t 9 2 g r o d t l A r Virgo middel.  
t 9 2 g r o d t l A r h y p e v m b s Virgo middel

12 Ar hy p e v m b s i 3 q f u n c o Libra gott  
 m b s i 3 q f u n c s t 9 2 g r o d t Libra gott  
 n c s t 9 2 g r o d t 12 Ar hy p e v Scorpio ondt.  
 o d c l 12 Ar hy p e v m b s i 3 q f u n c Scorpio ondt.  
 p e v m b s i 3 q f u n c s t 9 2 g r o d t Scorpio ondt.  
 q f u n c s t 9 2 g r o d t 12 Ar hy Sagitta. gott.  
 2 g r o d t 12 Ar hy p e v m b s i 3 Sagitta. gott.  
 r hy p e v m b s i 3 q f u n c s t 9 Capri. middel.  
 s i 3 q f u n c s t 9 2 g r o d t 12 Capri. middel.  
 s t 9 2 g r o d t 12 Ar hy p e v m b 12 Aqua. gott.  
 t 12 Ar hy p e v m b s i 3 q f u n c Aquari. gott.  
 v m b s i 3 q f u n c s t 9 2 g r o d p i s c i s middel.  
 u n c s t 9 2 g r o d t 12 Ar hy p e p i s c i s middel.  
 x o d t 12 Ar hy p e v m b s i 3 q f p i s c i s middel.

To be sure, for most people in the sixteenth century, the parish priest would have been the only person among their acquaintance with at least some rudimentary knowledge of natural philosophy and the principles of medicine. Yet still the clerical association with medicine and medical astrology was not just an issue of education.

58 TAMING THE PROPHETS

Sickness, corruption and death were generally regarded as consequences of the fallen creation and of sin. In other contexts diseases could be regarded more directly as works of the devil, or as instruments of God's wrath. And just as prayers and divine interference were seen as necessary remedies to regain bodily health, medical treatment could be seen as a form of liturgy. The limits between the corporeal and the spiritual, and thus between soul and body were imprecise, and in their respective roles, the priest and the physician mirrored each other.<sup>18</sup>

The Reformation did not change these premises. In one of his table talks, Martin Luther himself had emphasized the sacred role of the physician as "God our Lord's mender of the corporeal, just as we theologians are of the spiritual".<sup>19</sup> In Swedish hymnals and prayer books from mid-sixteenth century onwards, astrological tables had the same place as in the medieval missals. Now the so-called Zodiac Man also appeared in the calendars, showing the correspondences between the Zodiac signs and the limbs of the human body.<sup>20</sup>

The function of these tables and figures was practically the same as in Catholic times. Primarily they provided a guide in rudimentary medicine for the pastors. But when Mikael Agri-cola (c. 1507–1557), 'the Reformer of Finland',



Fig. 8: Zodiac Man from the Swedish hymnal of 1622. The printer has apparently used an original German woodcut, as the signs here are described as either 'gut', 'böse' or 'mittel'.<sup>21</sup>

18 Håkan Håkansson, "‘Människan är född till olycka, såsom fågeln till att flyga’: Medicin och religion i reformations- och stormaktstidens Sverige" in Gunnar Broberg (ed.) p. 94; for a recent study discussing the combined religious and medical functions of the visitation of the sick and the anointing of the body, see Stina Fallberg Sundmark, *Sjukbesök och dödsberedelse: sockenbudet i svensk medeltida och reformatorisk tradition*, Bibliotheca theologiae practicae, Artos, Skellefteå 2008 pp. 220–229.

19 Martin Luther, *D. M. Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe: Tischreden*, vol. 1:360, Weimar 1912 p. 151 (autumn 1532); "Sic medicus ist vnsers Herr Gots flicker in corpore, sicut nos theologi in spiritu, das wir die sach gut machen, wenn es der Teuffel verderbt hat"; cf. Håkansson, "Människan är född till olycka" p. 87.

20 See *Then Suenska Psalmeboken förbättrat och med flere Songer förmerat. Ock Kalendarium.*, Stockholm 1549 (only the title page and calendar is preserved); Collijn, *Sveriges bibliografi intill år 1600*, vol. II pp. 166–168, 343–345.

21 *Then Suenska Psalmboken, nyligen öfversedd, corrigerat och förbättrat i Vbsala.*, Stockholm 1622.

issued *Rucouskiria*, the first Finnish book of prayer in 1544, he also added a collection of notices of various subjects to the calendar, including natural philosophy, agriculture, medicine, chronology and astrology.<sup>22</sup>

Agricola had studied in Wittenberg, and according to the humanistic ideals of Philipp Melanchthon, he appears to have regarded virtually all kinds of worldly learning as 'servants of theology'. Philosophy and science should, in other words, serve as a support to evangelical ministers in their preaching and catechism teaching, and this is probably the primary reason why Agricola included these notices. But Melanchthon had also emphasized the role of astronomy, astrology and chronology in the apocalyptic conception of history that constituted an essential part of Lutheran identity and worldview. This view is also reflected in *Rucouskiria*. Although the function of astrology is primarily medical, chronological calculations, related to prophecies attributed to Daniel and Elijah concerning the four 'World Monarchies' and the three ages of the world, are pointing towards the eschatological fulfilment of God's Providence.<sup>23</sup>

### Astrology in the Ascendant

New intellectual impulses from Germany among Swedish clergy are only one of several indications of an upswing in the astrological arts in mid-sixteenth century. At that time the royal court would become a centre of Renaissance culture that apparently attracted astrological practitioners. Virtually all Swedish rulers from Gustav Vasa (r. 1523–1560) to Karl X Gustav (r. 1654–1660) were from time to time presented with horoscopes and forecasts by astrologers and scholars, either in hope of future patronage, or in order to present prophecies and astrological interpretations of notable events.<sup>24</sup>

22 Mikael Agricola, *Rucouskiria/ Bibliasta/ se on/ molemistä Testamentista/ Messuramatusta/ ia muusta monesta/ jotca toysella polella Luetellan/ cokoopoymettu Somen Turussa MDXLIII*, Stockholm 1544, sig. C2v–E6r.

23 Mikael Agricola, *Rucouskiria* D7v–D8v; Agricola's chronology is based on the calculations of Melanchthon and the Brandenburg court astrologer Johannes Carion (1499–1537) in *Chronica* from 1532 – the authoritative world history of the Lutheran movement. The prophecy attributed to Elijah, that the world would stand for 6000 years – two thousand empty, two thousand under the Law and two thousand in the age of the Messiah – originated in the Talmud. The notion of the four 'World Monarchies' – generally meant to signify the empires of the Assyrians (or sometimes the Babylonians, the Chaldeans or the Medes), the Persians, the Greeks and the Romans – was derived from the book of Daniel 7. Both notions appeared in *Chronica* and would play significant roles in Lutheran chronology and apocalyptic writings; Sandblad, *De eskatologiska föreställningarna* pp. 72–81; Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis* pp. 100–115.

24 Henrik Sandblad, "Politiska prognostika om Johan III, Sigismund och hertig Karl",

However, the first practitioners of whom we have more detailed knowledge were physicians in service of the kings of the Vasa dynasty. Thus the French Huguenot Dionysius Beurraeus (d. 1567) was hired as 'physicus and mathematicus' in 1543, while the famous Bohemian astrologer Johann Copp (b.c. 1490), who had once been physician at the Habsburg court, died in Swedish service in 1558.<sup>25</sup> Others would follow, primarily from Germany and the Low Countries, forming a small circle of intellectuals in the courts of Gustav Vasas' sons Erik XIV (r. 1560–1568), Johan III and Karl IX. As educated men the physicians were held in esteem, and their wages and pensions were as high as their tasks were varied. Thus Beurraeus was soon employed as tutor for the young princes Erik and Johan, and throughout his career he was also engaged for various diplomatic missions.<sup>26</sup>

Obviously the astrological skills of the physicians could not be separated from their medical practice. Yet it is clear that they were also consulted as 'mathematicians' in political matters. Among Swedish historians, the astrological interest of Erik XIV – especially his alleged obsession of observing the stars to detect conspiracies and to keep a check on potential rivals – has become notorious. It is also well documented that Benedictus Olai was paid for having "calculated with his Grace in the starry art".<sup>27</sup> Even Gustav Vasa, who in contrast to his sons is often described as an uneducated and practical man and sceptical of astrology, took advice from the stargazers. In December 1543, shortly after the subjection of what had been the most serious uprising against his regime, he wrote to a bailiff in the insurgent province, warning him that "all those who are judicious concerning the courses

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*Lychnos*, Uppsala 1942; Ingvar Andersson, "Erik XIV och astrologien: en översikt över materialet", *Lychnos* 1936 pp. 108–110, 124; Folke Dahl, 'King Charles Gustavus of Sweden and the English Astrologers William Lilly & John Gadbury', *Lychnos*, Uppsala 1937.

25 Andersson, "Erik XIV och astrologien" pp. III–II4; Otto Walde, "Doktor Johann Copp. En astrolog och läkare från reformationstiden i svensk tjänst II", *Lychnos* 1938 pp. 241–249.

26 G. Landberg, "Beurraeus, Dionysius", *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon* (SBL) vol. 4, Stockholm 1924 pp. 97–103.

27 Cit. entry in the accountant books of the royal treasury 9 July 1566, cited in Andersson, "Erik XIV och astrologien" p. 120; Ingvar Andersson, *Erik XIV: en biografi*, Wahlström & Widstrand, Stockholm 1935 pp. 255–257; Rudolf Elander, "Erik XIV:s astrologiska anteckningar om Sturemorden", *Lychnos* 1944–1945 pp. 281–289; in his study, Elander showed that Andersson had exaggerated the significance of astrological calculations for the King's political actions. Erik primarily seems to have used astrology as an interpretative method, rather than as a tool to gain political foresight – especially when he contemplated decisive events of his career after his deposition in 1568.

of the heavens, and who have practised and predicted on the coming year” were of the opinion that there “shall once again be trouble and rebellion” in all Northern realms.<sup>28</sup>

It was also among the medical practitioners of the court that astrological aspects of medicine were first treated at some length, especially in discussions about the plague that would return with gruesome regularity. Planetary aspects had been used to explain the origin of the plague since the times of the Black Death, and in the sixteenth century these notions had become commonplace in medical discourse. Thus, according to Benedictus Olai, it was accepted among “all Mathematicians” that pestilences were generally occasioned by such planetary aspects “that darkens and corrupts as well the earth as the air”.<sup>29</sup> The director of the royal pharmacy Simon Berchelt (d. 1601), explained in a plague tract from 1589 how the “dangerous and poisonous” disease, apart from being occasioned by tainted food and miasmatic air could appear if “a malicious Planet (Saturn or Mars) is in conjunction, and has some bad aspect, within its own house and elevation”.<sup>30</sup>

However, even though astrology had a given place and function in medical handbooks and plague tracts, it did not appear indiscriminately. Astrology was generally presented as a tool to explain causes of diseases and to predict their occurrence, but not to provide a cure. Among the court physicians, Benedictus Olai was the only one who actually heeded astrological aspects when discussing medical treatments, and he only did so in relation to bloodletting.<sup>31</sup> In a plague tract from 1572 by the court physician Willem

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28 Letter from Gustav Vasa to Jören Jönsson Svan 12 December 1543, printed in *Konung Gustaf den förstes registratur* (GIR) vol. 15, Stockholm 1893 p. 585; “Förty att alle the som på Himmels löpen förståndige äre, och haffwe prachiticeret och spott på thet tilstundende 44 Åreth, Dhå äre the alle i then Mening att vthi alle thesse trij Rijker skall åther blifwa buller och vproor igen”; for the characteristic of Gustav Vasa, see Andersson “Erik XIV och astrologien” pp. 112–113.

29 Benedictus Olai, *Een Nyttigh Läkere Book* sig. O3r; “ty alle Mathematici beiake som offtest/ at Saturni och Martis aspect/ ther samme onde giffitghe aspect så wel iorden som wädret förmörkie och förderffue/ ther aff Pestilentia sijn orsaak haffue.”; cf. the report of the Paris medical faculty, October 1348, published in Rosemary Horrox (ed.), *The Black Death*, Manchester Medieval Sources Series, Manchester University Press, Manchester 1994 pp. 158–163.

30 [Simon Berchelt], *Een litten underwijsningh om Pestilenz/ hennes Begynnelse/ Rum/ Kennemerki/ Orsaaker och Läkiedomar.*, Stockholm 1588 sig. A7v–A8r; “Then tridie orsaak / kan och himmelens lopp och *influentia* ware / såsom när något ondt Planet (Saturnus eller mars) är wthi sin sammafögelse / och haffuer någon ond aspect / wthi sitt huss och wphöyelse / och helst sådanne aspecter / som öffuerens komma / medh samma Planeterz ondsko.”

31 Benedictus Olai, *Een Nyttigh Läkere Book* fol. CLXXVIIIv–CLXXXv.

Lemnius (d. 1573),<sup>32</sup> there are hardly any astrological references at all – probably since the tract was intended for practical use among laypeople, “old and young, rich and poor”, to whom learned astrological subtleties would have been of no or little use.<sup>33</sup> However, Lemnius did not ignore general astral considerations. When he recommended native herbs for medical purposes, it was not only for the benefit of those who could not afford the prescriptions of the apothecary. Since such “manifold wholesome spices” grew “under the same celestial temperament close to us and with us” they would also “get on better with our *complexion*, character and nature than any foreign expensive herbs”.<sup>34</sup> The lack of astrological references should not in any case be seen as an indication that Lemnius’ tract was, as has been suggested by modern historians of medicine, “free from the amount of poppycock and superstition, which generally characterizes contemporary pestilence literature”.<sup>35</sup> This opinion appears exaggerated when reading Lemnius’ prescription for extraction of ‘pestilence poison’ from an incised bubo – by applying a living hen with its plucked abdomen rubbed in with salt: “If one hen dies on the abscess, then take another until one survives”.<sup>36</sup>

As part of the court culture, astrological interests were also adopted within a newly emerged class of self-confident and politically influential aristocrats and kinsmen of the royal dynasty. Exclusive astrological books were coveted by members of the royal family and higher nobility, and it is well known that princes and aristocrats like Karl IX and Erik Sparre (1550–1600) used astrological almanacs and ephemerides as diaries and

32 Willem Lemnius was the son of the famous Dutch physician Levinus Lemnius (1505–1568), who in 1564 dedicated an edition of his often cited *De miraculis occultis naturae* to Erik XIV. Being a Calvinist, Willem entered Swedish service in 1561, recommended by his fellow believer Beurraeus; Sven Kjölleström, *Striden kring kalvinismen i Sverige under Erik XIV: en kyrkohistorisk studie*, Gleerup, Lund 1935 p. 16; cf. Olof Hult, *Vilhelmus Lemnius och Benedictus Olai: Ett bidrag till svensk läkarhistoria under Vasatiden*, Stockholm 1918 pp. 19–26.

33 Willem Lemnius, *Emoot Pestilentie huru hwar och een menschia sigh hålla skall/ bådhe gamble och yngel/ rijke och fattigel/ til itt tjensteligit rådh och hielp*, printed by Amund Laurentzson, Stockholm 1572.

34 Lemnius, *Emoot Pestilentie* sig. A1r–A2r; “för ty man finner om sommardag j våra kryddegårder/ ja vthi wild marck på åker och äng/ så många handa nyttig krydder/ som vp vnder samma himmelens temperament när oss och mz oss vpwexer/ och therfore mz vår complexion/ art och natur/ bättre öffuer ens komma än någre fremmande dyre örter”.

35 Cit. Hult, pp. 31–32; cf. Ivan Svalenius, “Lemnius, Willem”, SBL vol. 22, Stockholm 1977–1979 p. 530.

36 Lemnius, *Emoot Pestilentie* sig. A4r; “Om een höna döör på swolman/ så tage een annan til thes een blifuer leffuandes”.

notebooks.<sup>37</sup> Some distinguished families also began to cultivate and support astrological studies among their clients and had nativities cast for their children.<sup>38</sup>

Clearly the benefits of astrology in politics, agriculture and medicine interplayed with the status entailed by patronizing its practitioners. But astrological interests should also be regarded as a part of a new, underlying ideal of nobility, according to which the aristocrat should no longer distinguish himself through his martial virtues only, but also through his erudition. In his '*Oeconomia*, or household book for young nobility', the Seneschal (Sw. *Riksdrots*) Per Brahe the Elder (1520–1590) encouraged hopeful courtiers to diligence in their studies of the liberal arts, among them "*Astronomia* to predict hard, malicious and unfortunate Constellations, Storm and tempest".<sup>39</sup> Yet in context of Per Brahe's programme for aristocratic education, the main reason to study the starry arts was to reform and reinstate the nobleman in his right honour, for his own benefit as well as for his role as a servant of the realm.<sup>40</sup>

### Suspicious Practices

The chronological, agricultural and medical application of astrology, along with the unconcerned references to personal nativities among the nobility (a custom expressly condemned by Augustine and the Church Fathers) and the occurrence of astrological tables in hymnals and prayer books, may seem to indicate that astrology was regarded as an uncomplicated business in sixteenth-century Sweden. Yet it never was.

As early as in mid-fourteenth century, an anonymous Swedish author condemned astrological fatalism in a discussion mirroring contemporary criticism of the influence of the Arab philosopher Averroes (Arab *Ibn Rushd*, 1126–1198) in Christian thinking. Similar arguments can be found in the

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37 See *Calendaria Caroli IX*, publ. by Adam Lewenhaupt, P.A. Norstedt & söner, Stockholm 1903; cf. Otto Walde, "Några kalenderanteckningar av Erik Sparre", *Personhistorisk tidskrift* (PHT) 1922.

38 Sandblad, *De eskatologiska föreställningarna* p. 118.

39 Per Brahe, *Gamble grefve Peer Brahes Oeconomia eller Huusholdz-book, för ungt adels-folck: Skrifwin anno 1581*, De 100 böckerna, Lagerström, Stockholm 1920 p. 14. "... *Astronomia* till att förese och undwijka hårde/ onde och olyckosamma *Constellationes*/ Storm och Owäder."

40 For a recent discussion on Per Brahe's *Oeconomia* and its didactic intentions, see Bo Eriksson, *I skuggan av tronen: En biografi över Per Brahe d.ä.*, Prisma, Stockholm 2009 pp. 379–396.

works of Mathias Ovidi (d.c. 1350).<sup>41</sup> Thus, as astrology slowly gained entrance in Swedish intellectual and cultural life in the later Middle Ages, there were critical voices, emphasizing its illicit character.

Virtually no astrological or astronomical practitioner could be fully acquitted from dealing with dangerous matter. In February 1509, grave rumours had reached the Brigittine convent in Vadstena concerning a fellow brother – Petrus Astronomus or just Master Peder – who had spent the whole winter among the scholars in Uppsala. A few years before, Master Peder had constructed the astronomical clock in the cathedral. Now it was feared that he, in defiance of the Law of God as well as of the Rule of his Order, had transgressed the limits of his art, “practising much what he should not in philosophical and other matters”.<sup>42</sup>

Exactly what he was thought to have done is not known, but the suspicions were in any case so serious, that the abbess and the general confessor had written to Archbishop Jakob Ulvsson about the matter. However, in his response, and in his role as chancellor of the university, the archbishop assured that Master Peder had “conducted nothing but honestly and fairly and in no part practiced what is punishable to your Order”. Indeed Master Peder had only lingered in Uppsala while waiting for open waters, “and as he should have something to do, he has with our consent and at the request of some good young men here read *Spheram materialem* to them, which is not forbidden in the Law.”<sup>43</sup> In other words, Master Peder had lectured on Johannes de Sacrobosco’s (c. 1195–c. 1256) *De Sphaera*, by far the most widespread textbook on astronomy in the Middle Ages. In other words, any person with the slightest of knowledge of the liberal arts would have regarded the lectures of Master Peder as utterly harmless.

Among modern historians, the concerns of the abbess have been treated as an indication of how people with scarce knowledge of the learned discourse tended to regard astrology with suspicion. According to Sten Lindroth, the episode becomes interesting “through the light

41 Bengt Strömberg, “Magister Mathias’ ställning till tidens heretiska strömningar”, *Svensk teologisk kvartalstidskrift* (STK) 1943 pp. 304–306.

42 Letter from Jakob Ulvsson to the monastery of Vadstena 25 February 1509, printed in Claes Annerstedt, *Uppsala universitets historia: Bihang I. Handlingar 1477–1654*, W. Schultz, Uppsala 1877b p. 8; “... som i nv scriffue om Mester Peder Astronomo, at i förnummet haffve, är här i Vpsala oc brwkar mykit thet som honum ej borde in philosophica et aliis tam contra jura quam contra privilegia Ordinis vestra etc”.

43 Ibid; “oc haffver han haft siig her ej annars än erliga oc skälige och ingen del brvkat, ther eder orden äre til straff, oc pa thet han skulle haffve något holle siig med, haffuer han me[d] wore samtykkie oc epter nogre gode vnge mens begär läsit her för them *Spheram materialem*, hwilchet ej förbiudz i Laghen.”; cf. Nordenmark 1959 pp. 4–5.



it sheds on the pious Vadstena; there worldly knowledge was regarded hazardous, the starry arts taught nothing of Christ and Mary.”<sup>44</sup>

Yet this is a suggestion that disregards the long intellectual tradition of the Brigittine Order. The abbess, Anna Fickesdotter (d. 1519), was an author and translator in her own right, by the monks posthumously described as “most erudite according to the conditions of her sex”. In other words, her ignorance should not be taken for granted.<sup>45</sup> Rather her concerns indicated that she was aware that there were certain limits to the astrological arts that should not be transgressed. This is also implied by the archbishop’s assurances.

To be sure, it was not out of ignorance that Laurentius Petri Nericus (1499–1573), the first Lutheran archbishop of Uppsala, in 1540 commented the Swedish translation of a German almanac with an attached astrological practica. As a former student of Melanchthon, clearly aware of the subtleties of natural philosophy, the archbishop promptly stated that almanacs “could very well be useful”, whereas “in these practicas are more folly than useful stuff.”<sup>46</sup> The comment seems to indicate that the archbishop drew a decisive dividing line between allowable and illicit applications of astrology. In context, the ‘natural’, medical or agricultural consideration of planetary aspects in the almanacs would have appeared as harmless and even useful, in contrast to the illicit, vain and ‘superstitious’ casting of prognostications and practicas, horoscopes and nativities.<sup>47</sup>

However, these boundaries and distinctions were never fixed and unambiguous. Astrology was constantly moving on a sliding scale between the legitimate and the illicit, and astrological practice could at any time be conceived in terms of godless fatalism, idolatry and sorcery. Yet these problematic aspects were not primarily associated with astrological practice

44 Cit. Lindroth, *Svensk lärdomshistoria* I p. 137; “Episoden intresserar genom det ljus den kastar över det fromma Vadstena; det världsliga vetandet ansågs där riskabelt, stjärnkunskapen lärde intet om Jesus och Maria”.

45 Cit. *Vadstenadiariet* pp. 434–435, entry 1054; “Hec erat litteratissima secundum conditionem illius sexus.”; cf. Carl Silfverstolpe, *Klosterfolket i Vadstena: Personhistoriska anteckningar*, P.A. Norstedt & söner, Stockholm 1898 pp. 14–15; Gottfrid Carlsson, “Bülow, Anna Fickesdotter”, SBL vol. 7, Stockholm 1927 pp. 3–4.

46 Letter from Laurentius Petri to Georg Norman, 12 November 1540, printed in P.E. Thyselius & V. Ekblom (eds.), *Handlingar till Sveriges reformations- och kyrkohistoria under konung Gustaf I.*, vol. II, Stockholm 1844–45 pp. 241; “Teslikes tycker migh ock så att j these practiker är mera förvitiskt än nyttigt. Almanack wore wel nyttigh”.

47 Distinctions of this kind, derived from authorities such as Augustine and Isidore of Seville (c. 560–636), were often used by astrologers when trying to settle the limits of the art and to show that their own practice was irreproachable; cf. Smoller, *History, Prophecy and the Stars* pp. 27–30.

as such, but with the approach, conduct and moral standard of the practitioner.

In *Rucouskiria*, Mikael Agricola had presented astrology as an indispensable feature in the curriculum of the right evangelical clergyman. But he also emphasized the ethical limits of the art. To avoid the pitfall of fatalism that would always be the companion of the astrologer, he quoted a commonplace saying, generally attributed to Ptolemy: "The wise man will master the stars, since they incline, but do not determine".<sup>48</sup>

In other words, to be properly used, the astrological arts required not only erudition of their practitioners, but also wisdom – a concept that included religious and moral as well as intellectual qualities. It was only with a wise and pious mind that the astrologer could keep himself from the vices of curiosity and undue ambition, or from becoming a subject of the astral determinism and superstitious awe of the augurs – "Do not fear the celestial signs in the way the gentiles are frightened by them", as Agricola warned his readers by quoting the prophet Jeremiah.<sup>49</sup>

The question was not whether astrology was an allowable or illicit practice. The question was whether astrology was practiced in the wrong way, for the wrong purposes by an unwise and morally blameful person. Thus, in the criticism of astrology as a superstitious, unchristian art, lay also an implicit accusation against the practitioner.

Significantly enough, the rumours of sorcery, witchcraft, and invocation of demonic forces that surrounded the astrological sessions of Erik XIV, originated from openly hostile Danish sources during the Nordic Seven Years' War.<sup>50</sup> When a Swedish chronicler later claimed that Erik's astrological studies eventually made him "so distressed and confused, that he then became a harsh and suspicious lord", this statement was biased, not only by the political situation in the realm after the king's deposition in 1568. It also mirrored aversions against Erik's tutor Dionysius Beurraeus, "a Frenchy", who had infected the young prince with his false, Calvinist religion and seduced him with the forbidden fruit of "the art Astronomia, of the forces and effects of the celestial Planets".<sup>51</sup>

48 Mikael Agricola, *Rucouskiria*, sig. C2v: "Vir sapiens dominabitur astris que inclinant/ non necessitant".

49 *Rucouskiria*, sig. C5v: "Ne metuatis Signa celestia/ sicut gentes metuunt ab eis"; cf. Jeremiah 10:2; "...be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them."

50 Andersson, *Erik XIV* pp. 258–259.

51 "Erasmus Ludvigssons Chrönika", *Handlingar rörande Skandinaviens historia. Tolfte delen*, A. Wiborgs förlag, Stockholm 1825 pp. 248–249; "Men sedan han av sin tucktemästare Dionysio Bureo en Fransos blef hållen till den Konst Astronomia, om

## The Sundog of Olaus Petri

An even more elucidative example of how accusations of improper dealings with astrology could be used against political enemies had occurred at the New Year of 1540, when the regime of Gustav Vasa had brought some of the leading evangelical reformers to trial in Örebro in an attempt to quench the last stand of clerical independence. Foremost among the accused were Laurentius Andreae (c. 1470–1552), archdeacon and former royal secretary; and Olaus Petri, commonly known as Master Olof (1493–1552), once the king's chancellor and older brother to Archbishop Laurentius Petri.

Officially they were accused for having withheld their knowledge of a conspiracy uncovered in 1536, allegedly designed by evangelical radicals and German citizens in Stockholm to assassinate the king by placing a powder keg under the royal chair in Storkyrkan ('the Great Church').<sup>52</sup> But Olaus Petri was also accused for what was described as his undue ambition, intellectual pride and curiosity.

In the indictment it is sarcastically stated that "the good gentleman, M. Olof" was well known for his erudition and mastery "in all liberal arts and faculties". Yet he had not been content, as he had also tried to excel "in treason and in the highly praised art, called the courses of the heavens or astronomy ... thereby to prove and propagate his high intellect and profound wisdom to the common man".<sup>53</sup>

the himmelska Planetens kraffter och werkande, blef han theröfver i sitt hufvot så bekymberat och förbistrat, att han sedan blef en omild och misstenkt Herre"; cf. Andersson "Erik XIV och astrologien" pp. 112–113.

<sup>52</sup> The sentence where the accusation is specified is printed in Jan Eric Almquist, "Dödsdomen över Olaus Petri den 2 januari 1540. Några synpunkter på ett gammalt problem", in *Festskrift tillägnad professor, juris och filosofie doktor Nils Stjernberg*, P.A. Norstedt & söner, Stockholm 1940 pp. 49–50; on the conspiracy, often assumed to have originated among German townsmen, radical Lutherans and sympathizers of the popular revolution in Lübeck during the so-called Count's War, see Nils Ahnlund, "Sammansvärjningen i Stockholm 1536", *Samfundet S:t Eriks årsbok*, Stockholm 1951 pp. 25–40; Michael Roberts, *The Early Vasas: A History of Sweden 1523–1611*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1968 pp. 105–106; Henrik Sandblad, "Kring konflikten mellan Gustav Vasa och reformatörerna: Ett par idéhistoriska bidrag", *Lychnos* 1941 pp. 127–146; for critical aspects on the conspiracy as being fabricated by the King as a pretext to crush the political opposition in Stockholm, see Lars-Olof Larsson, *Gustav Vasa – landsfader eller tyrann?*, Prisma, Stockholm 2002 p. 203.

<sup>53</sup> "Handlingar från rättegången med Olaus Petri och Laurentius Andreae i Örebro 1539–1540", *Kyrkohistorisk Årsskrift* (KhÅ), Akademiska bokförlaget, Uppsala 1909 pp. 69–70; "Så war then godhe herren, M. Oluff, huilcken mest vti alle frije konster och faculteter ... sigh wäl öfuedh hafuer och mechtigh förfaren är, icke medh thesse för:ne faculteter eller konster tillfridz, vten wille ... öfua och begründfästa sigh vti fleere konster, nembiligen vti förräderij och vti then högt beprijsedhe konst, som

This allusion to the starry arts referred to the interpretation of a spectacular sundog or parhelia phenomenon over Stockholm in April 1535 – a prodigy that on the initiative of Olaus Petri and the former Master of Mint Anders Hansson (d. 1536) had been depicted on a painting, hung “in full view of every man” in Storkyrkan.<sup>54</sup> Olaus Petri’s interpretation of the prodigy was hardly astrological in any technical sense – but this only confirms that the prosecutors primarily used the term of ‘astronomy’ to emphasize the suspicious character of his activities. According to his prosecutors, Olaus Petri had used the painting for open agitation. According to his prosecutors, Olaus Petri had used the painting for open agitation against the king in his sermons, as he with “comments, words or expositions” had “alleged to the people such a meaning, lo, here punishment must follow, since the worldly authorities have enriched themselves”.<sup>55</sup>

If indeed uttered from the pulpit, this statement would have appeared as an overt attack on the heavy fines, taxes and confiscations of church property that had been the result of the king’s policies. It could even be interpreted as a covert threat or as a warning to a monarch who in the view of the reformers had abused the sword of worldly power given by God – especially since sundogs were described as presages of political upheavals and conspiracies in contemporary literature.<sup>56</sup> The subversive motives of the sermon were also confirmed to the prosecutors as Anders Hansson, Olaus Petri’s “chancellor and adviser”, had been accused, arrested and tortured to death for involvement in the gunpowder plot of 1536.<sup>57</sup>

kallas himmellssens lop eller astronomia ... ther igönom han sitt höge förstondh och diupsinnige wijsdom för then meenige man bewise och vtsprjide wille”; for a critical discussion on the sources of the trial, see Henrik Sandblad, “Gustav Vasa, Ahitofel och sankt Påvel: Ett inslag i reformationskrisen 1539”, *Lychnos* 1960–61 pp. 2–7.

54 A copy of the painting – commonly known as *Vädersolstavlan* (“The Sundog Painting”) – from 1636 may still be seen on display in Storkyrkan; for a study of the origin of the painting, see Andrea Hermelin, “Vädersolstavlan i Storkyrkan. 3”, in *Under Stockholms himmel*, Sankt Eriks årsbok, Stockholm 1999 pp. 41–64.

55 “Handlingar från rättegången med Olaus Petri och Laurentius Andreae” p. 70; “... och förthenskuldth lothe the förmåle samme syn eller teckn opå en tafle, hengde henne vti kyrcken i huars mans åhsyn ... medh huadh comment, glooser eller vtäggninger M. Oluff om samme syen opå predike stoolen giorde ... han gaff folckett före widh sådanne meeningh: ja, här motte straffes, förty öffuerheeten hafuer sigh förseedt”; Ahnlund, “Sammansvärjningen i Stockholm 1536” pp. 22–24.

56 Sandblad, “Kring konflikten mellan Gustav Vasa och reformatörerna” pp. 140–143; as discussed by Sandblad, there were also clear apocalyptic connotations to the portent: in the prophecies spread since the Middle Ages and ascribed to the Tiburtine Sibyl, sundogs were being regarded as portents of the *aetas ferra* – the Iron Age – that would precede the Final Judgement.

57 “Handlingar från rättegången med Olaus Petri och Laurentius Andreae”, p. 70.

The trial in Örebro was the summit of a process where Gustav Vasa with claims of majestic supremacy tried to strengthen his grip over the church and to bring it under the primacy of worldly authority. According to the British historian Michael Roberts, the new political strains were “vibrating with the overtones of German princely absolutism and with mystical suggestions of Divine right”.<sup>58</sup> Such theocratic notions of princely power and of the subordination of the church had initially been embraced and propagated by the reformers as a weapon against Rome. Now they fit extremely well with the practical ambition to quell the independence, also of the evangelical clergy. Consequently, a main point in the indictment had been the ungodly and treacherous desire for a member of the clerical estate to criticize worldly authority. Even for a man with undoubted intellectual qualities, Olaus Petri had been aiming too high, when with his cunning and with the support of the ‘astronomical’ arts, he tried to designate himself as the judge of kings.

Thus, the significance of the sundog was accentuated by the conflict between the worldly authorities and the clergy. Throughout the indictment, the prosecutors had tried to strip off the authority of an opponent, whose position as a clergyman and a spiritual leader would normally have given him precedence in the interpretation of portents and presages. Yet, there was no questioning, neither of the grave significance of sundogs, nor of ‘astronomy’ as a proper method of interpretation. To be sure, the prosecutors referred to charging armies in the skies and other “spiritual visions upon the courses of the heavens and in astronomy” as being “great lies”.<sup>59</sup> Yet when discussing the sundog, they asserted that the king had taken “this aforementioned heavenly sign not just so plainly for a joke”. Like everybody else the king had wondered at the meaning when seeing “six or eight mock-

58 Roberts, *The Early Vasas* pp. 116–121, cit p. 120. A few weeks before the trial in Örebro, the Pomeranian nobleman Georg Norman (d. 1552 or 1553) had been appointed superintendent with full jurisdiction over the clergy in the realm; “The king did not, indeed, style himself ‘supreme head’ of the Swedish church”, as Roberts notes, partly in comparison to the contemporaneous situation in England, “but he did call himself ‘supreme defender’. The difference was not perhaps very material.”; *ibid*, cit. p. 119; cf. Sven Lundkvist, “Furstens personliga regemente: Gustav Vasa, Konrad von Pyhy och den svenska riksstyrelsen 1538–1543”, *Individ och historia: Studier tillägnade Hans Gilllingstam*, Stockholm 1989 pp. 221–223.

59 “Handlingar från rättegången med Olaus Petri och Laurentius Andreae” p. 71; “han hadhe och fåett monge andellige syner opå himmelsens lop och vti astronomien ... hurulunde han seedt hadhe myckett wapnedh krigzfolck, bådhe ryttere och knechter, att storme tillsammans på himmelen och andre fleere slijke hufuudh lögner”; here the indictment refers, not to Olaus Petri, but to the visions of the vicar in Storkyrkan, Hans Kökemester.

sunns in a circle around the true sun". But as he had noticed that "all of them exceedingly perished, and yet the true sun remained the same", the prodigy obviously meant that the false suns, the enemies of the true majesty, should face punishment and downfall – a prophecy fulfilled to its letter with the arrest and execution of the gunpowder plotters in 1536, and at length with the trial of Olaus Petri and his associates.<sup>60</sup>

## A Time for Prophets

Eventually the issue of the sundog in the trial of 1540 concerned neither the possibility nor the legitimacy of certain methods to interpret portents and signs in nature, but the question of who should have the right and the authority to interpret. This was a question not to be taken lightly in the religious and political chaos of the sixteenth century. As had become obvious, for instance during the Peasants' War in Germany in the 1520s and the Anabaptist's rebellion in Münster in the 1530s, prophetic claims, raised by subversive movements and radical reformers, represented a real threat to worldly and clerical authorities.

Among the Lutheran clergy the insecure times also created a need for prophetic guidance in the struggle for the true faith, and for maintaining the position and influence of their estate. In Germany, external pressure and internal conflicts ravaged the evangelical movement after the defeat of the Schmalkaldic League in 1548, and during the so-called Adiaphoristic Controversy that followed in its wake.<sup>61</sup> As a parallel, the Swedish clergy fought on home ground against menacing Calvinist and Catholic influences high up in the hierarchies of church and state.<sup>62</sup>

During the Liturgical Strife in the 1570s and 1580s, the ever-present fears of re-catholization became acute. Apparently Johan III had approached Rome, both politically and theologically, and consequently influential Swedish clergymen described his "quarrelsome Romano-Swedish Liturgy" as a devilish device of the Papal Antichrist to split the church

60 "Handlingar från rättegången med Olaus Petri och Laurentius Andrae" p. 71, cit. p. 70; "Doch lichwell slår Kon. Mitt wår nådigste herre, thette för:ne himmels teckn icke än så platt för skämtt, att thett iw skulle nogett betecknedh hafue, efterty thett synttes sex eller otte wäder soler vti en kreetz kringh om then rette sool, the doch alle synnerligen förginges, och then rette naturlige sool blef doch widh sigh."

61 Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis* 1988 pp. 64–65; Hsia, *Social discipline in the Reformation* pp. 11–12, 28–30.

62 Fears of Calvinist influences within the church itself first became apparent during the so-called Liqueur Strife (concerning the use of other liquids than wine in the Eucharist) in the 1560s, when Johannes Nicolai Ofeegh as bishop of Västerås was accused for Calvinist tendencies; Kjölleström pp. 197–239.

and to deceive the faithful into apostasy in the Last Days.<sup>63</sup> The prophetic message of the Apocalypse was applied to the Swedish reality, which in turn placed the struggle of the Swedish clergy in a universal context of immense significance.

However, as the antiliturgists shared their apocalyptic worldview with most scholars of the time, the desire to acquire knowledge of the Last Days would also appear in other learned tracts and treatises. Swedish students who travelled to Germany could witness the afflictions of the Lutheran movement and how the contemporary challenges were interpreted in astrological terms by theologians and stargazers. Apparently inspired by the grave expectations and prophecies that surrounded the fatal year of 1588, a scholar and astronomer named Nicolaus Ringius (c. 1580–89) had a ‘Theological prognostication’ published in Wittenberg in 1587, with extensive exegetic, numerological and astrological surveys. The following year Georgius Olai (d. 1592), who had recently returned from studies abroad, published his *Calendarium duplex* – the Christian and Jewish calendars for 1588, published together with “some prophecies or conjectures on the greatest changes and final end of the world”.<sup>64</sup>

Both Ringius and Georgius Olai based their arguments on the most profound learning of their time: a main reference for them both was Cyprian Leowitz and his theory of the eschatological significance of the great conjunctions between Jupiter and Saturn. Georgius Olai stands out somewhat through his application of Jewish philosophy and mysticism, with references both to the Talmud and Kabbalah, in the tradition of scholars such as Pico della Mirandola and Andreas Osiander (1498–1552).<sup>65</sup> Still both Georgius Olai and Ringius shared the ambition to inquire into the Scriptures and the signs of the times – into *Liber scripturae* as well as *Liber naturae* – in order to reveal the secrets of the eschatological drama. Thus both authors used their astrological skills to provide evidence that the last

63 Cit. Abraham Angermannus, *Dialogus om then förwandling som medh messone skedde ... Vthi hwilkom clar och beständigh äthskildnat giord warder, emellan wår svenska christeliga, och påweska ogudeliga messo, och rett underwijsning och förstånd nu j thenna tijdh tagas kan om then trätodrygha romareswenska liturgia*, printed by Clement Schleich, Wittenberg 1587, title page; Sandblad, *De eskatologiska föreställningarna* pp. 90–114.

64 Nicolaus Ringius, *Prognosticon Theologicum och Nyttigh vnderwijsning om Domadags närwarelse*, printed by Simon Grönenberg, Wittenberg 1587; Georgius Olai, *Calendarium duplex Christianorum et Iudeorum, Cum Prognostico Astrologico, ... Item! Någhra Prophetier eller Gissningar! om Werldenes största FörWandlingar och ytersta ända*, printed by Andreas Gutterwitz, Stockholm 1588.

65 Sandblad, *De eskatologiska föreställningarna* p. 151.

struggle of the faithful now had to be fought, and that the final redemption was near.<sup>66</sup>

## Under a Normative Firmament

As the religious controversies of the 1570s and 1580s developed, they intertwined with the ongoing power struggles between Johan III, his brother Duke Karl, and leading families of the aristocracy. Orchestrated by strife and discord between estates and social strata, these conflicts came to their logical continuation in the 1590s.



Fig. 9: Allegory showing the sundog over Stockholm 1535, copperplate engraving by Jacob Matham, Haarlem c. 1599, from Boström 1958 p. 15.

Sigismund (r. 1592–1599), the Catholic son of Johan III, had been elected king of Poland in 1587. In 1592 his succession to the Swedish throne unleashed a crisis, ending in civil war, revolution and eventually in the seizure of power of the king's uncle Duke Karl (from 1603 recognized as Karl IX).<sup>67</sup> In

66 Both *Prognosticon Theologicum* and *Calendarium duplex* and their sources have been thoroughly examined in Sandblad, *De eskatologiska föreställningarna* pp. 121–168, see esp. p. 150–152 for Georgius Olai's use of the Talmud and Kabbalah, and for his dependence on Osiander and Pico.

67 For an English account of the political history of Sweden and Finland during the



this agitated context, prophecy and interpretation of signs in nature would become important elements in political discourse and propaganda.

Soon after the deposition of Sigismund, a Dutch copperplate engraving appeared, using the 1535 sundog over Stockholm to convey a message applicable to the current situation in the Swedish realm.

Filled with Biblical quotations and enigmatic symbols – some of them with clear astrological significance – the engraving appears as a rebus, ambiguous and intentionally hard to interpret. Yet, as suggested by the Swedish art historian Kjell Boström, the engraving was probably executed in 1599 on the initiative of a loyalist Swedish exile in the Low Countries.<sup>68</sup>

In the middle of the picture, between symbols of vanity and triumph, a seer is shown at the city gates, studying the sundog. This is probably a reference to the Proverbs, quoted on the engraving: “[Wisdom] crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors. Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice [is] to the sons of man.”<sup>69</sup> Other Bible quotations allude to the obligation of the subjects to pledge allegiance to the king, and to the divine retribution that will fall on those who do not hold on to their oaths. In context of the situation in the spring of 1599, when Sigismund’s as well as Karl’s emissaries negotiated with the Dutch authorities, the engraving appears as a prophetic warning, not to make allies with the new Swedish regime.<sup>70</sup>

More unambiguous astrological auspices could also be invoked. In a loyalist pamphlet, issued in Warsaw on the eve of Sigismund’s campaign to regain his hereditary kingdom in 1598, a long account of atrocities and tyrannical excesses committed by Duke Karl is concluded by a proclamation that the ongoing usurpation will eventually fail “according to the movements and the influence of the heavens and the stars”. The grounds for this assertion the anonymous author had found “in an Almanac” written by a Master Koedros, who was “usually in the habit of being correct”. Another indication that the end of Karl’s regime approached, the author found as he dated his pamphlet when “the Moon was in the Crab”. This could only mean that “all evil and treacherous design” should be “in retrogression, like the crayfish, God grant.”<sup>71</sup>

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period, see Roberts, *The Early Vasas* pp. 273–393.

68 Kjell Boström, *Jacob Matham och vädersolarna över Stockholm*, Almquist & Wiksell, Stockholm 1958 p. 24.

69 Proverbs 8:3–4.

70 Boström pp. 16–24, 83–84.

71 [Brev till Arvid Eriksson Stålarms med anklagelser mot hertig Karl], MfCollijn R.222 sig. D3v–D4r, “Ty iag hafuer läsit i en Allmenack såm een Mester Koedros benemd haffuer giort/ han plägar såm åftest halle rätt ... Då war Månan i Krabben: och

These particular references to astrological auspices were the simplest imaginable. Apparently the anonymous pamphleteer understood astrology no more than he apprehended satire. The cited astrologer, Master Koedros, was the fictitious author of a series of mock-prognostications, filled with meaningless forecasts that resembled the vague and ambiguous style of authentic prognostications.<sup>72</sup> Indeed the quoted statement of Master Koedros, interpreted by the pamphleteer as a presage of the downfall of Duke Karl, was utterly pointless: "in this year, every man should not have his will".<sup>73</sup>

But to the pamphleteer, the main point was never the accuracy of the forecast. It was not because Duke Karl was bound to fall that "every honest Swedish Man" should do his best to "deaden, fend off and hinder" his "will and intent". On the contrary: Karl would fail in his ambition since "God Almighty in the first place, who hates all injustice and disorder, then all God's creations, the stars and the revolving heavens in particular should oppose it".<sup>74</sup>

The pamphlet indicates that there was awareness, even among laypeople and non-scholars, that the heavenly bodies – the highest of God's creations and agents of his will – also provided knowledge of absolute and normative character. In this case the stars were presented as moral guides, rather than as political advisors, but they still promoted a certain political standpoint and encouraged direct military action. He who did not act in accordance to the signs provided in nature, would face the same risk as Duke Karl: divine retribution and eventual demise.

Despite the rhetorical overtones in the references to the stars as norma-

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borde ond och förrådlig anslag/ äfter himmelens och Stierneenes läpp och Influens gå tillbake/ kräfuete gången/ däd Gudh gifue."; Collijn, *Sveriges bibliografi intill år 1600: 1583–1599* vol. III p. 258.

72 Silvia Pfister, *Parodien astrologisch-prophetischen Schrifttums 1470–1590: Textform – Entstehung – Vermittlung – Funktion*, Verlag Valentin Koerner, Baden-Baden 1990 pp. 576–578; François Rabelais' *Pantagrueline Prognostication* (1532) is probably the most famous example of the genre: "This year the blind will not see much, the deaf will hear rather poorly, mutes will not talk much, the rich will be little better off than the poor, and the healthy will stay better than the sick"; *The Complete Works of François Rabelais*, University of California Press, Berkely Cal. 1991 p. 750.

73 [/Brev till Arvid Eriksson Stålarml], MfCollijn R.222; "J dette år skall all man icke hafue sin willie."

74 [/Brev till Arvid Eriksson Stålarml], MfCollijn R.222, "... först och främst Gudh Alzmächtig/ sām hatar all orättwijse och oårdning/ Sedan och alle Gudz Creatur/ synnerligen stiärnor och himmels läpp skole stå där emot ... Så bör och/ så mykid meere/ huar ärlig Swänsk Man hialpe til att förtage/ affwäre och förhindre sadane Härtigens willie och vpsätt."

tive messengers, it would be a mistake to regard this kind of astrological use, or the interpretation of other signs in nature, solely as devices for propaganda. This becomes obvious when studying the richly illuminated manuscript ‘On the signs and wonders that preceded the liturgical uproar’, written by Joen Petri Klint (d. 1608), who was vicar of a rural parish in the diocese of Linköping.

The antipapal and antiliturgist bias of Klint’s text is quite explicit: after the disposition of Sigismund, Klint would also profess himself an adherent of Duke Karl and the new regime. Yet, when a sundog appeared in April 1596, Karl had only been recognized as regent during the king’s absence in Poland. Officially the duke functioned as the king’s deputy.

In his account, probably written close in time to the occurred phenomenon, Klint claimed that the mock-suns of the sundog had represented treacherous men and enemies of both king and regent “who have intruded in the Government”.<sup>75</sup> At first he identified these men with the governors of the royal castles – in reality appointed by Sigismund to control tax levies and to keep a check on the regent. However, this interpretation would change with the political events. In the following year, the governors had

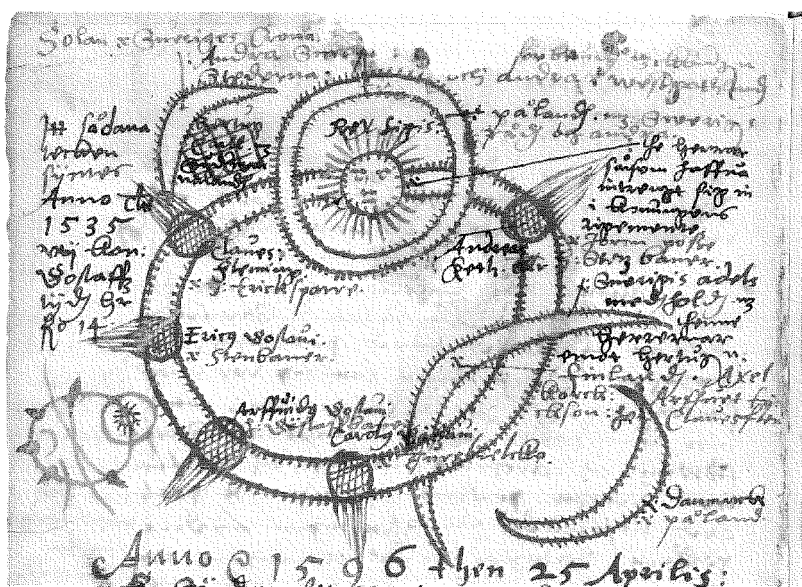


Fig. 10: Joen Petri Klint, the sundog of 1596, compared to the sundog of 1535 shown to the left, “On meteors”, Cod. Linc. N 28 fol. 172v.

<sup>75</sup> Joen Petri Klint, *Om the tekn och widunder som föregingo thet liturgiske owäsendet*, Cod. Linc. N 28 fol. 38, cit. fol. 172v.

been disposed. Consequently Klint replaced their names with the names of the leaders of the royal council, who had fled to the king in Poland when the breach between him and the duke had become definite.<sup>76</sup>

This procedure seems to indicate that Klint's primary intention was to analyse and understand the greater events of the time, and to detect the traces of divine order in an insecure world. His book cannot in any case be reduced to a propaganda piece: despite the fact that the result corresponded perfectly with Klint's religious outlook and political preferences, his method was a logical consequence of the conception of creation as a manifestation of God's word and wisdom.

## Prophecy and Worldly Learning

Thus the notion of planetary aspects, wonder signs and heavenly prodigies as divine messengers was intrinsic to how the world was generally perceived and interpreted. But astrology also shared its normative and prophetic potential with practically all arts revealing the secrets of nature, including physics, natural philosophy and medicine.

Medical discourse in particular appears as a parallel to the pursuit of divine guidance among the heavenly bodies. Even a secular court physician such as Willem Lemnius emphasized that although pestilences had natural causes, they primarily appeared as "God's fatherly birch and for us a punishment for our sins"<sup>77</sup> – a statement often repeated in Swedish literature in the following century. Indeed, with the plague as one of the apocalyptical scourges, medical tracts tended to become virtual homilies of penitence that turned the human body into a battlefield in the eschatological struggle between God and the devil.

In this context, astrology became problematic, not because it lurked as an illicit art outside the accepted systems of knowledge and learning, but because it remained an inseparable part of these systems. In an extensive treatise from 1590, Petrus Pauli Gothus (1550–c. 1594) – royal chaplain, vicar in Storkyrkan and elder brother of Laurentius Paulinus Gothus – criticized astrologers, physicians and other worldly scholars for solely regarding "the wise experience of the Pagans" when discussing the natural and astrological causes of the plague. Yet he did not criticize them because their conclusions were necessarily wrong or illicit. On the contrary, their statements on natural causes of the plague should not be "rejected or despised", for "what they have in such issues considered scrupulously and rightly, that should we also

<sup>76</sup> Boström 1958 pp. 27–32.

<sup>77</sup> Lemnius, *Emoot Pestilentzie* sig. A2v: "... thenne almenlighe siwckdom/ vthan twif-fuel/ är Gudz Faderlige rijs och oss til itt syndestraff ..."

take for a benefit". The problem was that pestilences also had to be counted among all other portents, prodigies and hellish inflictions that had occurred in the recent years, and daily announced the coming of the Last Judgement. For Petrus Pauli it was therefore necessary to assert that "here is another Mover of the stars, of the celestial spheres and of all the elements, which is the Eternal Almighty God". Despite their obvious influence on earthly matter, the celestial bodies were merely instruments of God's Providence, "as is written in the old Verse: *Astra regunt homines, sed regit astra DEVS*" – Stars rule men, but God rules the stars.<sup>78</sup>

As intimated by Petrus Pauli, this sententious phrase was commonplace in astrological literature. The notion of how God, the unmoved mover, steered the spheres and determined their influence, could to some degree be used to reconcile astral determinism with the notion of divine omnipotence. By using the phrase, the astrologer could protect himself from accusations of ungodly fatalism, and also from failures in his predictions: the future would in any case rest in the hands of God. Melanchthon used the phrase frequently, mainly to emphasize the role of the heavens as both revealers and executors of the will of God. In turn, this notion represented the point where 'natural' divination and religious prophecy completed each other, and where the Book of Nature and the Scriptures would speak with one voice.<sup>79</sup> However, in the case of Petrus Pauli, the phrase was primarily used to emphasize the superiority of Theology over worldly learning and, consequently, the authority of the clergy. Petrus Pauli's criticism of the astrologers concerned the question of who would have the right to interpret the signs in nature. It was not a rejection of the interpretative art itself.

But this also meant that astrological statements and interpretations could never be disinterested. As exemplified by the reference to the almanac of 'Master Koedros' above, any astrological auspices, no matter how harmless, could be provided with new, politically and religiously potent meanings.

78 Petrus Pauli Gothus, *Een rett Christeligh Vnderwijsningh/ om heela Menniskionnes leffnat här på Jordenne: Huru hon skal rettelighen igenom allahanda Plåghor/ Pestilentzer/ och Dödzfaarar/ j Gudhi behållen warda/ alting wel öffuerwinna/ een saligh Menniskia döo/ och Gudz rijkē medh glädhie ärfua.*, printed by Andreas Gutterwitz, Stockholm 1590 sig. B2r, B3v; "Ty icke kan man rättelighen döma om thenna plågha effter the Hedniskes wijsa förfarenheet ... Och ändoch at thenna theas *Rationes*, besynnerligh *sapientum Philosophorum*, äre ingalunda ogillande eller förachtande. Ty thet the haffua j sådana saker granneligha och rätt achtat/ thet bör och oss för godho tagha/ Dock medh sådana beskeed/ at här är een annor höghre *Motor, Stellarum, orbium celestium, & omnium Elementorum*, hwilken är then Ewighe Alzmächtige Gudh ... och them effter sitt Guddomligha försyn/ som han wil/ regerar han ... såsom och j then gambla Vers författat är: *Astra regunt homines, sed regit astra DEVS*."

79 Cf. Caroti, "Melanchthon's Astrology" pp. 117–120.

Thus, the prophetic and normative potential was not necessarily intrinsic in astrological predictions. Nor would it depend on the intentions of the author. The potency of astrological forecasts appeared in the reception and in the communication between authors, intermediaries and receivers. Depending on context, any kind of astrological literature could become a medium of prophecy and preaching – or indeed of religious and political agitation. The almanac genre was no exception.

## Prognostications and Prophecy

As Laurentius Paulinus Gothus remarked in his almanac and prognostication for 1592, it had been the custom to issue annual calendars ever “since the times of Regiomontanus”.<sup>80</sup> Since they appeared on the European book market in the latter decades of the fifteenth century, almanacs – generally with prognostications for the coming year attached to the calendar – had become a public success. Almanacs were not only the most common astrological medium; they were also one of the more well-spread genres of printed literature on the whole. Judging only from the number of German editions, more people in the Holy Roman Empire may have had access to almanacs and prognostications, than to any other kind of print during the period 1480–1630.<sup>81</sup>

The situation on the Swedish bookmarket, such as it was in the sixteenth century, was quite different. Astrological literature was probably spread in the same way as the broadsheets and theological tracts that flowed in from the continent during the Reformation.<sup>82</sup> To be sure, there are hardly any

80 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Almanach Och Practica wppå thett M. D. XCII. Åhret – Prognosticon astrologicum Eller Practica Wppå thett Åhr ... M.D. CC. II.*, printed by Augustin Ferber, Greifswald 1591 fol. 19r; förfarenheet/ haffwer sedhan *Regiomontani* tijdh/ with pass 151 åhr/ brwkeligitt waritt/ ath Mann åhrlige Calender haffwer pläghe wthgåå låthe.”; Johann Müller Regiomontanus (1436–1476), Bavarian mathematician and one of the greater authorities of late medieval astronomy; he published the first known printed ephemerides in 1474; *Neue Deutsche Biographie* (NDB) vol. 21, Berlin 2003, pp. 270–271.

81 Barnes estimates a total figure of approx. 1,940 editions of vernacular almanacs in the German countries during the period 1480–1630; Robin Bruce Barnes “Hope and Despair in Sixteenth-Century German Almanacs”, *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, 1993 p. 440; cf. Ernst Zinner, *Geschichte und Bibliographie der astronomischen Literatur in Deutschland zur Zeit der Renaissance*, Stuttgart, 1964.

82 Cf. Isak Collijn, *Sveriges bibliografi intill år 1600: 1530–1582*, vol. II, 1927–1931, Uppsala pp. 81–82; on the general influx of primarily German literature during the sixteenth century, see E.I. Kouri, “The early Reformation in Sweden and Finland, c. 1520–1560” Ole Peter Grell (ed.), *The Scandinavian Reformation: From Evangelical Movement to Institutionalisation of Reform*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1995 p. 59.

indications that almanacs and prognostications were consulted outside the limited circles of the nobility. Yet it may be assumed that they were also spread among clergymen and townspeople – especially among the German merchants in the cities.

When the first almanacs and prognostications, written by Swedish authors, finally appeared in the 1580s, they did so, more and less as an extension of the German book market.<sup>83</sup> To understand the place and function of astrological literature in Sweden at the close of the sixteenth century, it is therefore necessary to understand the German background and the role almanacs and prognostications played during the Reformation.

Apart from the almanacs, more extensive prognostications and practicas had become distinguished features in an exploding market for printed pamphlets and leaflets at the turn of the sixteenth century. As they generally predicted dramatic events and disaster and the coming end of the world, the prognosticators indiscriminately interpreted astrological calculations in combination with portents, Biblical quotations and sayings attributed to various prophetic authorities – such as the Tiburtine sibyl, the Calabrian abbot and apocalyptic Joachim of Fiore (c. 1135–1202), and the Swedish visionary St Bridget (1303–1373).<sup>84</sup>

The impact of prophetic prognostications on early modern culture can hardly be doubted. Apocalyptic visions, linguistic and numerological speculations and rather advanced chronological and astrological theories that primarily had been the object of scholarly discussions, had now become available to the common man. The frequent use of illustrations, suggestive and fairly easy to interpret even to the illiterate, seems to have contributed to a kind of sensationalism that provoked criticism – not only from the clergy, but also from other astrologers.<sup>85</sup> A famous example is the so-called deluge

83 From 1581 to 1599, ten Swedish almanac editions appeared, several of them were printed in Germany; see G.E. Klemming & G. Eneström, *Sveriges kalendariska litteratur. 1: Svenska almanachor, kalendrar och kalendariska skrifter intill 1749*, Stockholm 1878 pp. 1–2; cf. Collijn, *Sveriges bibliografi intill år 1600: 1583–1599* vol. III; one edition referred to by Laurentius Paulinus Gothus in his prognostication for 1598 is not mentioned in these bibliographies; see below p. 98.

84 Helga Robinson Hammerstein, “The Battle of the Booklets: Prognostic Tradition and Proclamation of the Word in early sixteenth-century Germany” in Zambelli, (ed.) pp. 129–132, 139–140; Dietrich Kurze, “Popular Astrology and Prophecy in the fifteenth and sixteenth Centuries: Johannes Lichtenberger”, Zambelli (ed.) pp. 179–185, 190–191; Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis* p. 142. All these studies focus on the Holy Roman Empire; for a discussion on prognostications in a more all-European context, see Anthony Grafton, *Cardano’s Cosmos: The World and Works of a Renaissance Astrologer*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass. 1999 pp. 38–55.

85 Cf. Robert W. Scribner, “Flugblatt und Alphabetentum. Wie kam der gemeine

debate in the 1510s and 1520s, provoked by a series of unusual conjunctions that would appear in the watery signs of the Zodiac during Shrovetide and Lent in 1524. In what has been described as the first mass media event in Europe, several scholars and astrologers claimed that unserious prognosticators and greedy book printers stirred up panic and fear through their exaggerated forecasts, and through their frightening pictures of flood waves and falling cities.<sup>86</sup>

Obviously, the prognostications mirrored the times in which they were written and spread. The main focus of the prognosticators was the eschatological and religious issues, whereas exhortations of moral betterment in the prognostications promoted contemporary calls for religious and social reform. The astrological and prophetic message resounded in a context of social tension and political polarization within society.

In perspective of the conflicts that would eventually erupt in full-scale revolts during the Peasant's War in 1524–1525, it is easy to see the subversive potential of the prognostications. For instance, in a famous prognostication for the ominous year of 1524, it is described how Jupiter and Saturn would conjunct in Pisces, and how their fight for dominion on the firmament would portend a clash between earthly estates and social classes. Apart from a flood, emanating from the Pisces, the woodcut on the title-page shows how Saturn – traditionally represented by an old cripple with a scythe – raises the flag of rebellion and leads an army of peasants to overthrow the regime of Jupiter, represented by the Emperor and the clerical hierarchy.<sup>87</sup> Yet the purpose of the author, the virtually unknown Leonhard Reynmann,

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Mann zu reformatorischen Ideen?", in Hans Joachim Köhler (ed.), *Flugschriften als Massenmedien der Reformationszeit*, Stuttgart 1981 pp. 65–76; Hammerstein pp. 129–132; Kurze pp. 190–191.

<sup>86</sup> Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis* p. 143; Paola Zambelli (ed.) pp. 1–11; Hammerstein p. 141.

<sup>87</sup> Aby Warburg, *Heidnisch-antike Weissagung in Wort und Bild zu Luthers Zeiten*, Heidelberg 1920, pp. 29–32; Robert W. Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation*, Cambridge 1982 pp. 124–125; Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis* p. 143; Heike Talkenberger, *Sintflut: Prophetie und Zeitgeschehen in Texten und Holzschnitten astrologischer Flugschriften 1488–1528*, Tübingen 1990 p. 237; the motive of the woodcut in Reynmann's *Practica* mirrors the notion that the seven planets, due to their given properties and mythological attributes, ruled over certain social classes and categories of people. Thus soldiers were designated as children of Mars, and craftsmen and merchants as children of Mercury and so on. Saturn – in Roman mythology identified with the Greek Chronos, and later recognized as a god of agriculture and harvest – ruled over peasants and farm workers, but also over criminals and cripples, whereas Jupiter ruled over princes and priests and other people of power and authority; cf. Dieter Blume, *Regenten des Himmels: Astrologische Bilder in Mittelalter und Renaissance*, Berlin 2000.



**Practica vber die grossen vnd manigfaltigen Coniunction der Planeten/die in jar 1524. D. XXXij. erscheinen/vn vngezweiffelt vil wunderparlicher ding geperen werden.**

Zuf R<sup>o</sup>. Pap. May. Gnaden vnd Freibaiten/Git sich meniglich/die meine Practica in zweyen jaren nachzudrucken bey verliung. 4. Mart. 1524. Golt.



Fig. 11: A celestial carnival: with their suggestive symbolic language, the illustrations probably played a more important communicative role than the texts in the prognostications of the Reformation. On the title page of Leonhard Reynmann's practica, the sins of the old society are washed away by the deluge portended by the conjunctions in Pisces during Shrovetide and Lent in 1524. Saturn commands a host of peasants to turn the social order upside down, overthrowing the regime of Jupiter, the Emperor and the Papacy.

had not been subversive. In the text of the prognostication, several factors suggest that he regarded the contemporary political and religious radicalization among the peasants as a threat against the social order given by God.<sup>88</sup> Indeed, for most prognosticators, the explicit and primary purpose of their work was to provide knowledge and guidance to a suffering Christianity. The prognostications were generally supposed to enlighten their readers of the grim destiny of the fallen world, and to bring them to the essential issues of salvation while enduring the tribulations of the final age. As described by Joseph Grünpeck, “an unworthy priest” and humanist in an often reissued and plagiarized prognostication from 1508, prophetic revelations, prodigies and the “astronomical art” should all be heeded to reveal the deep distress of the “small ship of St. Peter”.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Talkenberger pp. 238–240.

<sup>89</sup> Joseph Grünpeck, *Speculum naturalis caelestis et propheticae visionis*, printed by Georg

An old image and a common metaphor for the Church Militant and the catholic, universal communion of all Christian believers, the threatened Ship of St. Peter was a recurrent picture in pamphlets and prognostications.<sup>90</sup> Through the eschatological perspective, the image also illustrated the need to lead and reform the church in the Last Days – a need that would become a literally burning issue in the ongoing conflicts between the peasantry, representatives of the free cities, regional princes, the papacy and the Emperor.



Fig. 12: 'The Small Ship of St. Peter'. Woodcut from the 1508 edition of Joseph Grünpeck's *Speculum*.

Stuchs, Nürnberg 1508 sig. A2r., A6v–B1r; a German edition was issued simultaneously cf. Joseph Grünpeck, *Ein spiegel der naturlichen himlischen vnd prophetischen sehungun*, printed by Georg Stuchs, Nürnberg 1508. Later Grünpeck's prognostication was reissued (and plagiarized) in several Latin and vernacular editions. In the 1508 edition, the Latin version was dedicated to the clergy, and the German to princes and estates of the Holy Roman Empire.

- 90 Joseph Grünpeck, *Speculum* sig. A6v–B1r. During the deluge debate, the threatened Ship of St. Peter was a recurrent motive in several pamphlets and prognostications; cf. Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk* pp. 106–115. In a Swedish context, the *navicula petri* had been used as a metaphor for the Church Militant by Hans Brask (1464–1538), last Catholic bishop of Linköping; Per Stobaeus, *Hans Brask: En senmedeltida biskop och hans tankevärld*, Artos, Skellefteå 2008 p. 13.

A woodcut from Grünpeck's prognostication shows the Pope as the head of the clerical hierarchy, running the Ship of St. Peter aground. In the stern of the ship, the Emperor, princes and other representatives of worldly authority stand praying, while a man by their side holds the sail, where the crucified Christ, the Word incarnated on Earth is depicted. As the man is clad in what resembles a doctor's cloak and cap, he seems to represent the scholar interpreting the Word of God as revealed both in the Scriptures and in the Book of Nature. It is the learned seer who provides the knowledge necessary to steer the ship afloat, and to reform the church.<sup>91</sup>

This image may appear as an overt attack on the papacy, and a clear indication that the author had pledged himself in the long conflict between the Pope and the Emperor over the supremacy of the Church. However, this may be an explanation *post eventum*. In the text, Grünpeck carefully directed his warnings to the Christian communion, stating that the spiritual leaders would only be the first to taste "the cup of tribulations" when the Ship of St. Peter was wrecked; the worldly authorities would soon follow.<sup>92</sup> Hereby the image appears as a call for reconciliation and Christian unity. In relation to the text, the contrast between the distress of the prelates and the pious approach of the worldly princes may just as well have had a rhetorical purpose, emphasizing just how deep the crisis of the Christian church actually was.

Nevertheless, moods and views expressed in text and image in Grünpeck's *Speculum* and many other prognostications would promote the same antipapal sentiments that characterized the Lutheran movement from its beginnings, forming its common worldview and conception of the determination and nature of the struggle for reform.<sup>93</sup>

## Astrological Preachers

This kind of extensive, illustrated and explicitly prophetic literature may appear to be essentially different from the briefer prognostications or practicas that since the fifteenth century had been published together with the annual almanacs. In the Holy Roman Empire, these minor prognostications had generally been products of academic professors and court astrologers,

91 For a divergent interpretation of this picture, with more emphasis on the subordination of the praying bishop at the mast, and of the man at the sail as a director of the supremacy of worldly power, see Talkenberger p. 129.

92 Joseph Grünpeck, *Speculum* sig. B1r; "Et si primi biberimus tribulationum calices: ipsi quiquid in fundo residebit v'l fecis vel veneni: id totum epotabunt. quod imprimis coiecturali ex consideratione confirmari potest."

93 Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis* pp. 7, 64–65.

emphasizing their craft as a practical tool to predict weather and regular natural change for everyday use of the readers.

But the differences were not so great. Regular or not, changes in nature could not be separated from religious and ethical matters. Everyday practical advice was combined with normative and moral statements, provided with the prophetic potential of the verdict of the stars. From the 1530s onwards, the market of almanacs in the Holy Roman Empire would be dominated by new generations of authors, mostly municipal physicians and professionals with Lutheran and evangelical ties. In the wake of this shift, many prognostications were filled with explicit evangelical preaching, outspoken theological and confessional traits, and social and moral ethics. The apocalyptic strain also grew stronger. In the two last decades of the sixteenth century, Lutheran clergymen and qualified theologians began to write prognostications in increasing numbers. Meanwhile, but not necessarily correlated to this trend, interpretations of the Scriptures and different kinds of presages tended to replace references to classical astrological authorities as the main sources of the predictions. Clearly astrological figures still supported the forecasts of coming disasters and scourges, as well as the even more frequent lamentations over moral decline and outspoken pessimism towards the state of the world and the future. But most prognosticators predicted harsh times, regardless of which planets or aspects dominated the auspices. Indeed almanac writers in late sixteenth-century Germany tended to express their total alienation and disgust towards social conditions and the sins of humanity, as they anyway regarded the world as doomed. Whereas penitence and prayers could be used as a means of saving one's soul, there was little hope of rescuing the body from the apocalyptic afflictions and scourges of the imminent doomsday.<sup>94</sup>

The apocalyptic tone of almanacs and prognostications may be seen as expressions of general sentiments and views spreading within the Lutheran community. As has been argued by Robin Barnes, the prophetic claims and apocalyptic understanding permeating the popular prognostications were not just uttered by desperate zealots, 'wild-eyed magicians', or by a small elite of 'doomsday intellectuals'. The many editions suggest that there was a demand for this kind of literature, and that the almanacs represented an economic interest for printers and booksellers. Considering who the authors were – medics and priests of good repute, as well as humanist scholars – the prognostications definitely appear as bearers of common and widely shared notions. Moreover the apparent willingness of authorities within the free cities of the Empire to allow the printing of the prognostications

94 Barnes, "Hope and Despair" pp. 455–458.

seems to indicate that these ideas and ethics were deeply rooted in urban, Lutheran societies.<sup>95</sup>

Clearly the severe dissent that splintered the Lutheran movement affected the pessimistic tendencies of the prognostications of the late sixteenth century, as did the threats of re-catholization under the Tridentine reforms and the successive progress of the Calvinist movement. A basic trend of Lutheran almanacs and prognostications from the 1580s was – in the words of C. Scott Dixon – a “sense of frustration and failure”, as it became clear that “the preaching of the gospel was not enough to indoctrinate the teachings of the church or the fear of God.” However, according to Dixon, this sense of frustration could also help to explain the promptness with which Lutheran clergymen turned to the astrological art. Obviously they shared the ambition of ‘secular’ prognosticators to acquire knowledge through their astrological endeavours. But equally obvious they used an already existing medium to evangelize, a medium that was already spread among virtually all categories of people. As Dixon writes, the very popularity of the almanacs made way for “the rise of the ‘preaching of the stars’” and of almanacs as “a type of literature for the masses which could reach the widest possible audience and still trumpet the call to reform.”<sup>96</sup> The willingness to adopt astrology as a prophetic tool may therefore not necessarily have been an instance of personal conviction. We may also see it as a rhetoric technique to present a message in a form that would appeal to the receivers. Just as the almanac genre was adjusted to fulfil its purpose to spread the Word of God, the astrological zeal among Lutheran clergymen may also be regarded as a method to adjust a message to the genre.

Still, this demonstrates that as long as it served the Lutheran cause, astrology could not be rejected light-heartedly as a superstitious craft, or as a method to acquire knowledge not meant for man. Yet as we shall see, contemporary Swedish sources will show that sharp limits were actually drawn between the illicit and the allowable, whenever astrology was discussed. However, these limits would be drawn differently, depending on the situation in which they were settled.

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95 Barnes, “Hope and Despair” pp. 443, 446–449.

96 Cit. Dixon p. 414; cf. Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis* pp. 155–168.

# Piloting the Wreck of St. Peter

God hath granted me to speak as I would, and to conceive as is meet for the things that are given me: because it is he that leadeth unto wisdom, and directeth the wise.

Wisdom of Solomon 7:15

## Two Prognostications

From the beginning, there were inconsistencies concerning the starry arts in the works of Laurentius Paulinus Gothus. In his first astrological prognostication for 1592, he had vehemently attacked what he described as superstitious and unchristian practices among the stargazers:

...what can ever be more foolish than the wish to judge about what will happen to a human being during his span of life? Namely, about his beauty, his conduct, wits, misfortune, matrimony, dealings and travels. Is the Human being not the created image of God himself, and has he not begotten a free will in such earthly things? Has he not been put as a master over all perishable creations? Certainly. How can he then be subjected to the stars?<sup>1</sup>

To some degree, there is nothing remarkable about this statement. Due to its potency for good or for evil, astrology was an art caught between devilish sorcery, idolatrous augury and divinely inspired prophecy. Therefore it was crucial to the practitioner to define the limits of the art, and to

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1 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Almanach Och Practica wppå thett M. D. XCII. Åhret – Prognosticon astrologicum Eller Practica Wppå thett Åhr M.D. CC. II.*, fol. 18r: “Ty hwadh kann någon tijdh därtighere wara/ änn willie dömma om the Tingh som een menniskio wthi sijn lijffztijdh wederfares skolle? Nempelig/ om hennes degghelicheet/ sedher/ förstånd/ olycko/ Echtskaap/ handell och reesor. Ähr icke Menniskiann effther Gudhz egghet belethe skapadt/ och haffwer aff Gudhi/ wthi sådanne timmelige tingh/ een frij willie bekommet? Ähr hoon icke till een herre satt öfwer allt som aff Gudhi till förgängelicheet skapadt är? Wisseligh. Hwrw kan hon doch Sti(ernorne) wndergiffwen wardhe?”.

distinguish his achievements as being of the right, allowable and godly kind. Consequently, the scepticism towards dubious practices of astrology was an integral part of the genre.

What is more startling, is that Paulinus only six years later, without reservations, emphatically defended astrology in virtually all aspects. In his prognostication for 1598, astronomy and astrology were described as inseparable, equally necessary in both the spiritual and the worldly domain. Indeed there were, as Paulinus wrote, “some people who repudiate and vilify Astrology in particular, some of evilness and cussedness, some of imprudence and foolishness”. Yet he maintained that the true scholar would “ever be ready to find wise answers and arguments” to respond such people “and thoroughly present to them”.<sup>2</sup>

Even if this change of standpoint seems radical, it does not indicate that Paulinus had undergone a conversion from being sceptical to becoming a believer in the astrological art. Disregarding the fact that we cannot access the personal convictions of a man who has been dead for more than 350 years, it would be anachronistic to use concepts as ‘sceptic’ or ‘believer’ as if the question concerned the ontology of astral influence. Moreover, considering the examples presented in the previous chapter, it becomes clear that the problematic and suspect aspects of astrology were primarily accentuated in contexts where the motives or the moral character of the practitioner were already being questioned. The arguments were generally biased by underlying interests, whereas the approach towards astrology among the critics depended on the individual practitioner, and the purpose for which astrology was being used.

When studying the seemingly alternating approaches towards astrology revealed in the writings of Laurentius Paulinus, these texts must therefore be regarded in their proper context. As far as possible, the situation in which the texts were written, and the reality to which they refer has to be outlined. Not only will it be necessary to discuss the social and intellectual background of the author. We will also have to consider the genre as such – how a prognostication was outlined and what could generally be expected to be found between its pages, as well as its functions and significance in late sixteenth-century Sweden.

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2 L. Paulinus Gothus, [Almanac for 1598] – *Prognosticon astrologicum* ... M. D. XCIIX. sig. A6r: “Ändoch någhre finnes som synnerligh *Astrologiam* sompt aff ondsko och wrångwiso/ sompt aff oförstånd och dårachtigheet förkasta och bakdanta/ til hwilkos kloke beskeed och gensäyelser at swara/ och them grundelighen förleggja/ man sigh altidh wil redebogen finna lathe.”

## The Education of an Astronomer

Lars Pávelsson of Gothia, Latinized as Laurentius Paulinus Gothus, was born in 1565 in Söderköping. By European standards, his birthplace was a minor, rural town in the province of Östergötland, yet in comparison it was still one of the more important commercial cities in the realm. At the time of Paulinus' birth however, the war with Denmark and Lübeck had struck against the whole province and hindered the business and industry of the class of merchants and craftsmen from which he originated. Not only were the townspeople forced to pay war taxes and provide both army and navy with food supplies, equipment and manpower: in December 1567 the whole city was burned to the ground. It is disputed whether this was done by Danish troops or by the Swedish army trying to hinder the foraging of the approaching enemy. To the inhabitants it would have made little difference either way.<sup>3</sup>

However, despite the tumultuous times, Paulinus' family seems to have managed rather well. His father Pável Pedersson, who was a craftsman, maintained a prominent position on the city council, and the family could also rely on a well-kept network of social connections and patrons, stretching to the very highest circles of the realm. Pável Pedersson's brother Lars, or Laurentius Petri Gothus (c. 1530–1579), had been studying in Wittenberg on scholarships granted by Duke Erik (the future Erik XIV). In 1559, he dedicated a Latin poem to his high patron – *Strategema gothici exercitus adversus Darium* – in which he combined classical motifs from Herodotus and Xenophon with elements from Johannes Magnus' (1488–1544) fanciful historiography over the 'Gothic' ancestors of the Swedish kings. Through this erudite work he contributed to the propaganda machine of the Vasa dynasty as well as promoting his own career. In 1566, he became professor of Greek at Uppsala, and he was later appointed vice-chancellor of the university. In 1574, he succeeded his father-in-law and namesake Laurentius Petri Nericus as archbishop.<sup>4</sup>

3 Daniel Rantzau's war diary, 4 December 1567, printed in Holger Rørdam (ed.), *Monumenta historiae danicae: Historiske kildeskrifter og bearbejdelser af dansk historie især fra det 16. Aarhundrede*, vol 2:1, Copenhagen 1884 pp. 55–58; Sven Ljung, *Söderköpings historia. Första delen. Tiden till 1568*, S:t Ragnhilds Gille, Söderköping 1949 pp. 325–332.

4 Kurt Johansson, "Retorik och Propaganda vid det äldre Vasahovet", *Lychnos* 1969–70 pp. 26–28; Johan Nordström, "Laurentius Petri Gothus' Strategema gothici exercitus: Ett återfunnet humanistepos", *Sammlaren* 1922 pp. 221–237; Collijn, *Sveriges bibliografi intill år 1600 vol. II* pp. 262–264; Hjalmar Holmquist, *Svenska kyrkans historia vol. III:1, Reformationstidevarvet*, Svenska kyrkans diakonistyrelses bokförlag, Stockholm 1933 pp. 400–401.



Of Paulinus' two known brothers, Hans Pávelsson appears to have served in the treasury of Duke Karl, while Peder Pávelsson or Petrus Pauli after studies in Rostock and other German universities received a master degree in philosophy in the late 1570s. Ordained by his uncle in Uppsala, he first became headmaster of the school in Enköping, but from 1582 he resided in Stockholm as a preacher at the royal court. In 1584, he became lecturer at the *Collegium regium*, and the following year he was appointed vicar at Storkyrkan.<sup>5</sup>

For his own part, Paulinus attended school in Söderköping from the age of six, but after his father's death, his mother Karin Pedersdotter arranged for him to continue his studies in Enköping under the headmastership of his elder brother. In 1582, he returned to Söderköping where he began studies in Greek, which was unusual at the time.<sup>6</sup> At the age of twenty, he entered the *Collegium regium*, where two years later he became assistant master and lecturer in rhetoric and Latin grammar.

At this time however, Paulinus obtained the means and the opportunity to continue his studies abroad, and in September 1588 he was matriculated at the University of Rostock in Pomerania. For three years he studied astronomy at the medical faculty and theology. In 1591, he continued to Greifswald, where he had his first prognostication printed. Eventually he travelled to Helmstedt, where he also seems to have attended lectures in astronomy: the Scottish scholar Duncan Liddel (1561–1613), who occupied the chair in astronomy, has in any case been mentioned as one of his teachers. In Helmstedt he concluded his academic travels by receiving a master's degree at the philosophy faculty in April 1592.<sup>7</sup>

5 Herman Lundström, *Laurentius Paulinus Gothus: Hans lif och verksamhet*, vol. I–II, Uppsala 1893 p. 4; Magnus Collmar & Anne-Marie Lenander Fällström, *Strängnäs stifts herdaminne*, Södermanlands museum, Nyköping 2000 p. 12; Lindroth, *A History of Uppsala University* p. 17; Gunnar Hellström, *Stockholms stads herdaminne*, Stockholm 1951 p. 420; Collijn, *Sveriges bibliografi intill år 1600 vol. II* p. 481. Paulinus also had a sister named Birgitta; Lundström, *Laurentius Paulinus Gothus* p. 7.

6 In the School Ordinance of 1571 (modelled after Melanchthon's school statutes for Saxony), Greek had not been included in the curriculum; Lundström, *Laurentius Paulinus Gothus* p. 10.

7 *Carmina gratulatoria In honorem Ornatissimi & doctissimi Iuuenis DN. Lavrentii Pavlini Gothi ... 25. Aprilis diem ... summus Magisterij Siue Doctoratus Philosophici gradus decerneretur. Scripta ab amicis*, printed by Jacob Lucius, Helmstedt 1592; Johannes Matthiae Gothus, *Een Christeligh Lijk-Predikan Om en Scaffares eller Lärars Embete vthi Gudz församling, och then löön han hafuer til at wänta. Öfuer then sal. Hoos Gudh/ Fordom Hög-Ährewyrdige och Höglärde Herren/ Doct. Lars Paulinum Gothum*, printed by Zacharias Brockenius, Strängnäs 1651 p. 39; cf. Adolph Hofmeister & Ernst Schäfer (eds.), *Die Matrikel der Universität Rostock* vol. 2:2, Rostock 1891 p. 227;

Some of Paulinus' biographers have tried to trace his later positions on philosophical issues by focusing on his education and his teachers. For instance, it has been suggested that the fairly critical view of astrology, expressed in the 1592 prognostication, owed much to Paulinus' preceptor in astronomy in Rostock, Henrich Brucaeus (1531–1593). According to a later statement, Brucaeus contested "the astrological fallacy of his time" and "did everything to counteract the influence of astrology in medicine".<sup>8</sup> However, teaching astronomy in a medical faculty could hardly be justified without emphasizing celestial influence on the human body. Brucaeus actually made some ironic comments in letters to his friend and former student Tycho Brahe (1546–1601) for his dealings with astrological almanacs and prognostications. However, in this case his primary concern had been the risk that quack astrologers would "confirm the vanity of the art" with their futile predictions.<sup>9</sup> His errand was not to discredit astrology itself.

In any case it is impossible to approach the conceptual world of an individual scholar like Paulinus, only by focusing on his teachers or on the curriculum of his studies. For instance, the philosophical standpoint which primarily characterized Paulinus' future works was his adoption of the 'Socratic' philosophy of the Huguenot humanist Pierre de la Ramée or Petrus Ramus (1515–1572). Important in Paulinus' Ramistic approach was also the coherent conviction that the 'pagan' philosophy of Aristotle should not be granted any influence whatsoever in theology or in Christian ethics.<sup>10</sup> However, this was a standpoint that was not favoured at Paulinus' universities in Germany. The influential professor at the theological faculty in Rostock, David Chytraeus (1530–1600), clearly defended the application of Aristotelian philosophy and metaphysics as a support for theological studies. Helmstedt, where Paulinus graduated, was according to a modern scholar even known as "a centre for anti-Ramistic, Aristotelian studies".<sup>11</sup>

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Olle Hellström, "Laurentius Paulinus Gothus", SBL vol. 22, Stockholm 1977–1979 p. 369; Collmar & Lenander Fällström pp. 12–13.

8 Lundström, *Laurentius Paulinus Gothus* pp. 32–33; Lindroth, *Paracelsismen i Sverige* p. 51; cit. Otto Krabbe, *Die Universität Rostock im funfzehnten und sechzehnten Jahrhundert, Erster Theil*, Rostock/Schwerin 1854 p. 709.

9 Cit. letter from Henricus Brucaeus to Tycho Brahe, printed in I.L.E. Dreyer (ed.), *Tychonis Brahe Dani opera omnia* vol. VII p. 92; cf. Victor E. Thoren, *The Lord of Uraniborg: A Biography of Tycho Brahe*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, NY. 1990 p. 215; as the former preceptor of Tycho Brahe, Brucaeus would eventually become one of his more frequent correspondents; see *ibid.* pp. 22–24, 117.

10 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Ethicae Christianae I* pp. 171–172; Wilhelm Sjöstrand, "Till ramismens historia i Sverige", *Lychnos*, Uppsala 1940 pp. 204–211.

11 Cit. Janis Kreslins, "A Safe Haven in a Turbulent World: The University of Rostock and Lutheran Northern Europe", in Inger Ekrem, Minna Skafte Jensen & Egil

Thus, whether we discuss Paulinus' Ramism or his views on astrology, we cannot rely on his education to explain his positions and attitudes. As far as we know, the sources of Paulinus' astronomical learning and astrological interests did not substantially differ from the average curriculum of any contemporary scholar studying the subject.

Still, the intellectual and social significance of his educational years in Germany cannot be denied. Since the death of Melanchthon in 1560, Rostock had surpassed Wittenberg in popularity among Swedish students. In modern literature David Chytraeus is mentioned as "a friend of everything Swedish", and he is said to have contributed "more than anyone else" to the theological climate during the formative years of Lutheran orthodoxy in Sweden.<sup>12</sup> Yet, as discussed by Janis Kreslins, much of Rostock's significance to Swedish scholars was probably due to the fact that the university never became the "bastion of intransigent Lutheran orthodoxy" that has sometimes been suggested. Chytraeus himself appeared as a fairly moderate voice – both in relation to the conflicting factions of Lutheranism in Germany and to the conciliatory ambitions among Catholic princes and theologians. As long as Johan III lived, Chytraeus also avoided committing himself to the religious controversies in Sweden.<sup>13</sup> Thus, while Rostock and its teachers could be accepted even by the most zealous anti-liturgists, it was virtually the only university in Germany to which Johan III was willing to send Swedish students with royal scholarships.<sup>14</sup> It is hardly surprising, that when Uppsala University was reinstated in mid-1590s, the professors appointed were not only former students and teachers from the royal college in Stockholm; with one exception they were also alumni from Rostock.<sup>15</sup>

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Kraggerud (eds.), *Reformation and Latin Literature in Northern Europe*, Scandinavian University Press, Oslo 1996 p. 36; Otfried Czaika, *David Chytraeus und die Universität Rostock in ihren Beziehungen zum schwedischen Reich*, Luther-Agricola-Gesellschaft, Helsinki 2002 p. 375.

12 Cit. Lindroth, *Svensk lärdomshistoria I* p. 218.

13 Kreslins, "A Safe Haven", cit. p. 36; for a brief orientation to Chytraeus and his involvement in the conciliatory ambitions of Maximilian II, see Andrén, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria 3* p. 159. It may also be noted that Henrich Brucaeus, who lectured at Rostock for over a quarter of a century, was a Catholic who reportedly converted to the evangelical faith on his deathbed; *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* vol. III, 1876 p. 374; see also Czaika, *David Chytraeus und die Universität Rostock* pp. 373–377 for a discussion on Paulinus' readings and applications of Chytraeus.

14 Bolin, "Johan III:s högskola I" pp. 6–7.

15 Of the four professors directly transferred from the college in Stockholm, Jacobus Eriici had studied in Greifswald and Wittenberg, and the sojourns in Rostock of the remaining three were of various length; see Bolin, "Johan III:s högskola II" pp. 3, 6–7, 58. Still their joint connection to Rostock demonstrates the small, intimate and

## Swedish Almanacs

Even if nothing in particular can be said about the significance of Paulinus' education, the academic travels provided opportunities for Swedish students to make acquaintances and establish connections. To a certain extent any foreign academy could also become a haven at a safe distance from the control of authorities and clerical superiors in Sweden.<sup>16</sup> Due to its popularity, the University of Rostock thus became a central hub in the social and cultural networks of Swedish intellectuals during the latter part of the sixteenth century. Here the future leaders of the Swedish church met with priests exiled for their resistance against the liturgy; here they discussed theology and philosophy with scholars from all over Germany and Scandinavia. Here they published theses, poems to honour their patrons, libels and – in a few cases – almanacs and prognostications.

Virtually all Swedish almanac writers from the two last decades of the sixteenth century had been studying in Germany,<sup>17</sup> and at least four out of ten known almanac editions published up until 1600 had been printed while the authors were still abroad. Thus the impetus and the models of Swedish almanac literature were undoubtedly German. Neither Paulinus, nor any of his fellow prognosticators, could have been unaware of the significance and function, not only of astrology in the contemporary debates and controversies of the Lutheran world, but of the almanac and the prognostication as a literary genre, and as a popular item of print.

Considering the intensified confessional tendencies and apocalyptic expectations in German almanacs, especially during the 1580s, it is tempting to regard the appearance of almanacs on the Swedish book market in the same decade as an effect of similar tendencies – as if Swedish students and clergymen had adopted the genre together with the views and sentiments of their fellow German scholars.

Obviously, there were Swedish clergymen who regarded the grave political and religious conflicts in their homeland as part of the same evangelical and apocalyptic struggle that was fought in Germany. The

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narrow character of the intellectual circles in Sweden. All Swedish archbishops from 1599 until the death of Paulinus in 1646 were educated in Rostock – three of them were from virtually the same generation of students; Czaika, *David Chytræus und die Universität Rostock* p. 99; cf. Otfried Czaika, "David Chytræus och hans betydelse för utformningen av en svensk bekännelsekyrka", *KhÅ* 2004 pp. 23–27.

16 Some of Rostock's popularity among Swedish students may have been due to the fact that it was primarily an undergraduate institution that could provide a firm basis for further studies at other universities; Kreslins, "A Safe Haven" pp. 30–33, 39.

17 The only exceptions are Olaus Andreae and Gerardus Erii, joint authors of an almanac and prognostication for the year 1600, who both studied in Uppsala.

future archbishop Abraham Angermannus (c. 1540–1608), who had been exiled due to his relentless resistance to the liturgy and the policies of Johan III, referred to his own strife as inseparable from the greater context of the conflicts ravaging the Lutheran movement in Germany. In Angermannus' works, the Liturgical Strife became a battlefield in the Adiaforistic Controversy, concerning the degree to which religious rituals were to be seen as confessional actions, and thus relevant for the issues of salvation, or just as *adiaphora* – indifferent matters of form.<sup>18</sup> Angermannus even sharpened the apocalyptic polemics of his German predecessors. In his works the adherents of the liturgy were depicted as worshipers of Antichrist. Willingly or unsuspecting they prepared the way for the Papacy, the Whore of Babylon, who in the Last Days would take his seat in the Temple of God and seduce the congregation of Christ.<sup>19</sup>

The recurrent themes of the German almanacs were thus of immediate significance even in a Swedish context. As we have seen from the examples of Nicolaus Ringius and Georgius Olai, Swedish scholars were also acquainted with the astrological methods used to acquire the apocalyptic knowledge brought to bear on these issues.

However, in the earliest Swedish almanacs and prognostications, both confessional and apocalyptic tendencies are conspicuously weak. They occur, but mainly as commonplace commentaries, such as when Petrus Olai Vadstenensis, author of the oldest preserved Swedish almanac, referred to “the 5. dangerous years” between the ominous conjunctions of 1583 and 1588 as a time “in which all people ought to look after themselves well, and diligently prepare and keep guard for the great day of the Lord”. Yet Petrus Olai also referred to the exhortations of Christ to keep a never failing watch and stay sober, since no one will know the time and moment for the Second Advent, no matter what chronological calculations and numerological measurements have been made.<sup>20</sup>

18 See for instance Abraham Angermannus, *Forum adiaphororum h. e. sententia ecclesiae reformatae, veram, orthodoxam & perpetuam scripturae sacrae, sanctorum patrum, & totius catholicae & apostolicae ecclesiae doctrinam de ritibus & ceremonijs ecclesiasticis*, printed by Matthias Welack, Wittenberg 1587; cf. Sandblad, *De eskatologiska föreställningarna* p. 103; on the often related controversies between ‘Philippists’ and ‘Flacians’ or ‘Gnesiolutherans’, see Kolb pp. D1289–D1305; for a brief but perspicacious discussion on the so-called Augsburg and Leipzig interims and the Adiaforistic controversy, see Parker pp. 78–79.

19 Sandblad, *De eskatologiska föreställningarna* p. 105.

20 Petrus Olai Vadstenensis, [Almanac for 1585] – *Practica Eller Coniectura Astrologica, de Symmetria seu habitudine superiorum ad inferiora corpora, Vppå hele Werldennes rette Salighethz/ wårs Herres och Frelsares Jesu Christi åhr/ thet M. D. LXXXV*, printed by Andreas Gutterwitz, Stockholm 1584 sig. B1r.: “Thet andre vthaff the 5. farlighe

Yet, this does not mean that Swedish almanac writers and prognosticators differed from their German colleagues concerning eschatological issues. It only suggests that the early Swedish prognostications primarily served another purpose than their German equivalents. As we shall see, Paulinus developed some distinct eschatological themes with bearing on the debates in Germany. However, these themes only appeared in his second almanac for the year 1598. This strengthens the suspicion that the two works were written in different contexts and with different purposes.

## Almanacs and Patronage

Although they rarely referred to the classical authorities in their prefaces and dedications, the Swedish almanac writers generally stressed the bookishness and learned tradition of their endeavours. They emphasized the benefits of astrological studies, not only in everyday use by the common man, but in the governance of the realm and in the church. Yet, despite the apparently increased interest for astrology in late sixteenth-century Sweden, there are no indications that almanac writing was a profitable business. In the 1540s, Jürgen Richolff (1494–1573) – for a few years director of the royal print in Uppsala – complained that “such print does not pay”.<sup>21</sup> Four decades later it was still reported to involve a considerable loss to the authors. In 1587, Johan III rewarded Jacobus Erici (d. 1619), professor in Greek at the *Collegium regium* and corrector or *Inspector typographiae* at the royal print in Stockholm, with 50 *daler* for his “bother and expenses” when he had dedicated an almanac to the king “us to honour and service”.<sup>22</sup> Ten years later Laurentius

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åhren/ j hwilke alle Menniskior/ måge sigh wel före see/ och moth then stora HErrans  
dagh sigh fliteligen beredha/ och vppå wachta...Matt. 24. Waker/ warer nöckter/  
och bedher/ at j måge stå för Herren/ ty j wetten icke time eller stund/ när HERren  
kommandes warder/ etc.”

- 21 Letter from Laurentius Petri to Georg Norman, 12 November 1540, printed in P.E. Thyselius & V. Ekblom (eds.), *Handlingar till Sveriges reformation- och kyrkohistoria under konung Gustaf I.*, vol. II, Stockholm 1844–45 p. 241: “Men tryckiaren sägher at slicht prent löser sigh icke, Ty til thet sidsta Almanach gjorde han sielff förlaghet, såsom han och sielff lät thet förswenska och tryckia”
- 22 Cit. Johan III's directions to Johan Sass 22 Feb. 1587, cited in Collijn, *Sveriges bibliografi intill år 1600 vol. III* p. 47; cf. Klemming & Eneström p. v; fragments of a Swedish almanac, naming 1588 as ‘the coming year’ may be identical to this issue, UUB, Rar. Fol. 10:39. 50 *daler* was definitely good payment; in 1585 it was equivalent to 400 days of work for a manual labourer. For this amount one could buy two small oxen, or approx. 200 gallons of red wine, or 785 gallons of Rostock beer – or 9600 sheets of paper; see Lars O. Lagerqvist & Ernst Nathorst-Böös, *Vad kostade det? Priser och löner från medeltid till våra dagar*, 5th revised edition, Natur och kultur/LT, Stockholm 2002 p. 63.

Paulinus stressed that the publication of annual calendars could not be accomplished without some costs, which he had experienced when he issued his first almanac “a couple of years ago, to the benefit of my fatherland”.<sup>23</sup>

Obviously, it was in the interest of the authors to emphasize, and perhaps to exaggerate the costs involved. But still they had to bear the expenses themselves if they wanted to have their work printed.<sup>24</sup> Thus it is striking that several of the early Swedish almanacs were written and printed when their authors were still students in Germany, dependant on scholarships and benevolent patrons for their livelihood.<sup>25</sup> Yet, still the work and the money spent were regarded to be worth while. When studying the dedications, it becomes apparent that the late sixteenth-century Swedish almanac should be regarded primarily as a qualifying piece of work, a *specimen eruditionis*, to demonstrate the ability and diligence of the author. To its form, the almanac was directed to a much wider circle of readers than for instance a dissertation written in Latin, and consequently it would serve better to express gratitude towards patrons and benefactors, or even to attract potential patrons for the future.<sup>26</sup>

Consequently, the authors lay much emphasis on their dedications. In his prognostication for 1592, Paulinus was explicit in his ambition to qualify himself as a scholar of importance, as he turned to Princess Anna (1568–1625) – daughter of Johan III – hoping that she would not disdain the “humble work”. Pointing out his modest endeavours in the arts of astronomy and astrology, Paulinus explained that he had dedicated the calendar and the practica to the princess for all the “great and manifold charitable deeds” that she and her royal father had performed, not only for the benefit of Paulinus himself, but for his kinsfolk.<sup>27</sup>

23 L. Paulinus Gothus, [Almanac for 1598] – *Prognosticon astrologicum ... M. D. XCIIX*, sig. A6r.

24 On the profitability of early Swedish almanacs, see Klemming & Eneström p. v; for a general discussion on printed books and patronage in early modern Europe, cf. Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors and Libraries*, Polity Press, Cambridge 1994 pp. 37–38, 48.

25 Principally academic travels in the sixteenth century would have been financed by scholarships – that is by means provided by the cathedral chapters and paid through the tithes of each diocese. But students regularly had to rely on the remainders of the charity to which they were entitled during their school years, on their parents or other relatives, or on various patrons; Sven Göransson, *De svenska studieresorna och den religiösa kontrollen från reformationstiden till frihetstiden*, Acta universitatis Upsaliensis, Uppsala 1951 pp. 2–3; Ragnar Ohlsson, *Abraham Angermannus: En biografisk studie*, Svenska kyrkans diakonistyrelses bokförlag, Stockholm 1946, p. 5 note 8, pp. 22–30.

26 Klemming & Eneström p. xiv.

27 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Almanach Och Practica – Prognosticon astrologicum M. D. XCII*

More than being an act of gratitude, the remark emphasized Paulinus' own connections with the royal family in the eyes of other readers – colleagues and potential benefactors – confirming his scholarly claims. Similar motives may be suspected when Olaus Andreae (d. 1649) and Gerardus Erii (d. 1618) dedicated their almanac for the year 1600 to Gustavus Adolphus, the oldest son of Duke Karl. Thus they entreated the not yet five-year-old prince to receive their humble and simple work, hoping that he “would help and dispatch us poor people and our studies to the best.”<sup>28</sup>

The presumptive readers of early Swedish almanacs were few and belonged to narrow circles of colleagues, patrons and princes and lords of the realm. The circle of authors was even narrower: of eight known Swedish almanac writers from the late sixteenth century, six were closely acquainted with each other. Seen from Paulinus' perspective, they actually appear as members of his own social network. Jacobus Erii had probably been Paulinus' teacher at the royal college in Stockholm. Ericus Thomae Medolerus (d. 1630), who wrote an almanac for 1588, studied together with Paulinus at the college, as is proved by complimentary poems they both wrote to their preceptor in physics. When later studying in Rostock together, they published an elegy on a fellow student who had died abroad.<sup>29</sup> Johannes Petri Blanchovius (d. 1612), who dedicated his almanac and prognostication for 1596 to Abraham Angermannus, wrote an epigram in Paulinus' prognostication for 1592.<sup>30</sup> As professor in astronomy at Uppsala, Paulinus

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fol. 19r-20r, cit. 19v: “... stoore och margfaldighe wälgerninghar (Hwille H.K.M. sampt E.F.N. bådhe mijne förwanther och migh H.K.M. sampt E.F.N. Vnderdånighe och Trooplichtighe Tienare/ wthaff obegrijpeligh Gunst och Nådhe mildeligh bewijst haffwe)”); the kinsfolk of Paulinus may refer to his uncle and elder brother.

28 Olaus Andreae & Gerardus Erii, *Almanach och Practica Vppå thet åhr/ effter wår Herres och Frelsares Jesu Christi nådbefulle födhelse M. D. C. – Prognosticon astrologicum, Eller Een liten Gisning aff Stiernornes lopp och egenskap ... på thet år effter Christi bördh M. DC.*, printed by Andreas Gutterwitz, Stockholm 1599 sig. Aiv., cit. sig. A4r: “...oss fattige personer/ sampt våra studier til bästa befordra och förhjelpa wille.”

29 Laurentius Paulinus Gothus & Ericus Thomae Medolerus, *OPHNOI in obitum praeclara eruditione et egregia virtute praestantis iuuenis, Ioannis Aeschilli Stocholmensis*, printed by Augustin Ferber, Rostock 1591; see also the complimentary poems of Paulinus and Medolerus, addressed to Laurentius Johannis Laelius in Heinrich Bünting, *Itinerarium sacrae scripturae/ Thet är Een Reesebook/ Öffuer then helighe Schriff/ uti två Böker deelat ... Förswenskad aff Laurentio Iohannis Laelio uti Stockholms Collegio Professore Physico*, Printed by Andreas Gutterwitz Stockholm 1588 vol. I sig. A5r-b, vol. II sig. N4b.

30 Johannes Petri Blanchovius, “In Zoilum”, in L. Paulinus Gothus, *Almanach Och Practica – Prognosticon astrologicum M. D. XCII* fol. 31v–32r. The title is an implicit accusation against malevolent critics, referring to Zoilos, a Greek grammarian and cynic philosopher from Alexandria, third century BCE., known as a captious critic



would also become the preceptor of the aforementioned Olaus Andreae and Gerardus Eriici.

Even in those cases where there are no certain indications that the Swedish almanac writers were personally acquainted, we may see how they at least knew *of* each other and of their respective works. In his second prognostication, Paulinus set out to correct the “manifold *errata* and delusions” of a Swedish almanac edition for 1598 written by Israel Olai Fortelius (c. 1571–1614), “both in what concerns the calendar itself, and customary order of Holidays, as well as the prognostication and the astrological judgements”.<sup>31</sup>

Apparently the criticism hit the mark. In his prognostication for the following year, Fortelius had his tutor from Rostock, Johannes Sturm (d. 1625),<sup>32</sup> write a postscript. Here Sturm assured that Fortelius, being his “good friend and disciple”, began to learn bookish arts “with great diligence” on his arrival in Germany, with special devotion to his “studies in astronomy and astrology”. Thereby Fortelius had astonishing results, and Sturm presumed that he would become the pride and comfort of his parents, a benefit to his fatherland “and a source of great renown to myself.” Without mentioning any names, Sturm also concluded that he doubted whether sensible people would really approve of the criticism of Paulinus, “who without reason has disliked the almanac of Israel”. Moreover, Sturm himself had “taught and presented to Israel such a method as to judge from the themes of the sky which I from experience and diligent observation for ten even years, have perceived to be true.”<sup>33</sup>

of Homer; Johannes Petri Blanchovius, *Prognosticon astrologicvm Eller Practica på thet år effter wårs Frelsaes och Salighgönares Jesu Christi födhelse M. D. XCVI.*, probably printed by Andreas Gutterwitz, Stockholm 1595; only the title page has been preserved. In 1605, Blanchovius would become Paulinus’ fellow professor of theology at Uppsala – replacing Jacobus Eriici who had fallen from grace with Karl IX; Claes Annerstedt, *Uppsala universitets historia: Första delen 1477–1654*, W. Schultz, Uppsala 1877 p. 126; Collijn, *Sveriges bibliografi intill år 1600 vol. III* pp. 22–24.

<sup>31</sup> L. Paulinus Gothus, [Almanac for 1598] – *Prognosticon astrologicvm ... M. D. XCIX* sig. A6v: “Ther til medh befinnes och många *errata* och wilfarelser vthi then Almanach som vppå thette tillkommende 1598. året/ på vårt Swenske tungemål vthi Rostock tryckt är/ bådhe vthi thet som sielfue Calendario/ och Helghedaghars brukelighe ordning/ så wäl som Prognostico och *iudicijs Astrologicijs*”. The almanac mentioned by Paulinus has not been preserved and is not reported in any current bibliography, but Fortelius’ reaction confirms its existence.

<sup>32</sup> Johannes Sturm, or Sturmius, had studied philosophy and medicine in Rostock and Helmstedt and became professor of logics in Greifswald in 1599 – he should not be confused with Johannes Sturm (1507–1589), Calvinist intellectual and school reformer of Strassbourg.

<sup>33</sup> Johannes Sturm, “Til then fromme och Christende Läsaren”, in Israel Olai Fortelius, *Prognosticon. På thet år effter Jesu Christi Födelse. M.D.XCIX.*, printed by Stephan

The altercation between Paulinus and Fortelius confirms that the first Swedish almanacs were regarded as investments in learned prestige. Apparently they were worthy of defence in the ongoing quest for support and patronage. It also reveals the reciprocity in learned networks, since not only Fortelius, but also Sturmius had interests to defend. As a senior student, Sturmius seems to have held a private seminar in Rostock, supervising several Swedish and Finnish students.<sup>34</sup> In turn, Paulinus' students would rise in defence of their preceptor. In their almanac for the year 1600, Olaus Andreae and Gerardus Erii emphatically refuted the 'malevolent accusations' of Fortelius and Sturmius in an extensive postscript, covering eleven pages in Latin.<sup>35</sup>

The episode also sheds some light on the conspicuous lack of apocalyptic and prophetic tendencies in the early Swedish almanacs. They were probably never meant for the public market or for an audience in need of moral preaching, but instead intended for initiated people, friends, colleagues and benefactors. In this context, prophecy and apocalyptic expositions would have been pointless.

### A Sample of Learning

In the first opening of Paulinus' almanac for 1592, basic chronological facts are settled according to the calculations in Johannes Carion's *Chronica*.<sup>36</sup> The age of the world is thus estimated at 5,554 years, with the time passed since specific biblical events as the Flood and the Exodus carefully noted. The current year is designated as the twenty-fourth of the reign of Johan

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Möllman, Rostock 1598 sig. B14v–B15r: "Ty när han först kom til Tyskland/ aff sijne förelrdar vth send/ begaff han sigh strax medh stoor flijt til at lära bokelige konster/ och svnnnerlig til *Astronomie* oc *Astrologie studia*; ther vthi han/ så länge han hoss migh wistas haffuer (ther är all then tijdh han här vthe warit haffuer) sigh mijkitt förfremiat och sådana frucht giort haffuer at iagh ther öffuer stoorliga haffuer glädz: haffuer och förmoodat at han skulle wara sitt Fädernesland til gagn/ förelrdar Slecht och goda wener til hugnad och äre/ och migh sielff til stoor berömelse. Twifflar iagh for then skul mijkitt/ om hans/ som Jsraelis Almanach haffuer vthan skääl ogillat/ *de aeris qualitatis. iudicial* skole medh retta/ aff förståndigom mera aff hålles än Jsraelis. Ty iagh haffuer (doch vthan Roos och berömelse) ett sådana sätt vnder wijst och förestält Jsraeli at *iudiciera è celi thematibus*/ hwilken iagh aff förfaaarenheeten och fljittig *observation* nw vthi jämpn tijo år/ haffuer förnummit sann at wara."

34 Czaika, *David Chytræus und die Universität Rostock* p. 122.

35 Olaus Andreae & Gerardus Erii, *Almanach och Practica – Prognosticon astrologicum* ... M. DC. sig. A11v–A16v.

36 For bibliographical notes on this almanac, see Collijn, *Sveriges bibliografi intill år 1600 vol. III* p. 131.

III.<sup>37</sup> In the calendar every opening covers a month. The biblical readings for each Sunday and religious festival are presented, and symbols display the planetary aspects and notions of auspicious and inauspicious days for various undertakings. For every month except May and December there are also related dates for various historical events – a more or less given feature of Swedish almanacs, providing moral examples or corresponding parallels to contemporary issues and events.<sup>38</sup>

So far, Paulinus' almanac did not differ from any other contemporary issue. The genre had been standardized for about a century when the first Swedish almanacs occurred, and the disposition was virtually identical. Only in the content of the historical notices is it possible to see some indication of the personal preferences of the authors, or at least probable adjustments in regard to the addressees and presumptive readers. Petrus Olai Vadstensis, for instance, declared his approval to King Johan's ecclesiastical reform in his almanac for 1585 with several references to liturgical inventions and pre-reformatorial events.<sup>39</sup> In Paulinus' almanac, the entry for August mentions the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572. In twenty years, this had become a commonplace example of the bloodthirst of Catholics among Protestants of all denominations. Yet as Paulinus specifically emphasized how Pierre de la Ramée was "pitiably murdered" during the riots, the reference also betrays his Ramistic inclinations at an early stage of his career.<sup>40</sup>

The prognostication for 1592 is separated from the almanac by a new title page, followed by a dedication discussing the benefits of the starry arts. In the dedication, Paulinus also took the opportunity to expound basic astrological theory. With reference to Ptolemy, he stated that the astrological art is divided between *Astronomia* – the study of the celestial revolutions and

37 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Almanach Och Practica – Prognosticon astrologicum M. D. XCII* fol. 1v–2r. Laurentius Paulinus followed the most cited of the chronological reckonings of the *Chronica*, stating that Christ was born Anno Mundi 3 962; see Sandblad, *De eskatologiska föreställningarna* p. 80 note 4.

38 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Almanach Och Practica – M. D. XCII* fol 2v–14r. Historical notices disappeared from Swedish almanacs soon after the turn of the seventeenth century: at least there are none in the almanacs of Sigfridus Aronus Forsius, who dominated the Swedish market until the mid-1620s. In Stina Hansson's survey of seventeenth-century almanacs, historical notices are not reported until 1639, but after that they were rarely omitted; Stina Hansson, "1600-talsalmanackan – allemansbiblioteket?", *Lychnos* 1986 p. 30.

39 Petrus Olai Vadstensis, [Almanac for 1585], printed by Andreas Gutterwitz, Stockholm 1584 fol. 3r–14r.

40 Cit. L. Paulinus Gothus, *Almanach Och Practica – M. D. XCII* fol. 10r: "An. 1572. 24 Aug. årh Petrus Ramus Phil. & Eloq. Reg. Professor, wthi thet vpror som i Parijs skedde/ iemmerligen förmördet."

the measurement of time – and *Astrologia specia*, through which the astrologer can study the planetary aspects to judge what influences will effect the elementary world. But whereas the former is certain and useful, the latter is unsure and often practiced carelessly: “Thus is *Astrologia*, peradventure not without reason, come in great contempt among many people”.<sup>41</sup>

However, although there were reasons to be cautious, astrology should not be rejected *a priori*. Indeed, “if one will rightly see and carefully consider, what *Astrologia* teaches and contains” it could be useful of it “inasmuch as Natural Causes and daily experience will permit”.<sup>42</sup> Problems only appear when the astrologer forgets to regard the ‘natural’ causes in their proper order, or when the forecasts turn from general conjectures to statements concerning the individual, defying the free will of man. Such practices are forbidden for any Christian, and if requested, Paulinus will happily provide all sorts of proof and examples from the Word of God and from the Church Fathers against such superstitions and delusions.<sup>43</sup>

Paulinus may appear as somewhat inconsistent in these statements, as his almanac is full of symbols for aspects appropriate for specified and individual undertakings. Yet in astrological forecasts, the natural influences of the stars and the free will of the individual would always be weighed against each other. Where to draw the line between the two was more or less an open issue. The same may be said of the somewhat fluid distinctions between ‘supernatural’, ‘unnatural’ and the ‘natural’ causes emphasized by Paulinus. For his part, Paulinus rejected the vanity of those who prescribed auspicious moments in which to cut hair and nails, to put on new clothes, to travel, to buy and sell and to speak to high lords. On the other hand however, Paulinus accepted astrological advice concerning the weather, medical treatments and agriculture, at least when given in accordance to the accumulated experience of, not only “*Medicis* and *Mathematicis*”, but also of “prudent farmers, Mariners and Others”.<sup>44</sup>

However, as to underline Paulinus’ objections, the forecasts of the prog-

41 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Almanach Och Practica – Prognosticon astrologicum M. D. XCII* fol. 16v; “Så åhr Astrologia/ [till] ewentyrs icke wthann orsaak/ hoos mongom wthi stort föracht kommen.”

42 Ibid. fol. 16v–17r; “Doch om Man rätt tillsee och grannelighe öffwerwäghe will/ hwad Astrologia lærer och innehaller/ kan Mann henne icke aldeles förkaste/ wthan såå myckit såsom Naturlighe Orsaker och dagheligh förfarenheet medgiffwe/ medh rette bruke och behålle.”

43 Ibid. fol. 17r–19r.

44 Ibid. fol. 17v–19r: “...icke allenest *Medicis* och *Mathematicis*: wthan och försichtige åkermän/ Skipzmän och Androm”; cf. the recommendations in the almanac fol. 2r–14r.

nostication for 1592 are quite laconic. Since the aspects and their influence are already indicated in the calendar, Paulinus limited his conjectures for the coming year to a few headlines.<sup>45</sup> All in all, considering a couple of coming eclipses, the retrograde movement of Saturn in Cancer, a conjunction between Saturn and Mars and the influence of a comet that occurred in the winter of 1590, Paulinus concluded that the year would bring much evil. Famine, disease and other scourges could be expected and there would be great transformations, both in the spiritual and the worldly domain. According to Paulinus, all these expectations could be studied further in a Swedish prognostication published some years previous. He do not mention which, but he is most certainly referring to the short prognostications for the years 1590–99 included in Georgius Olai's *Calendarium duplex* from 1588.<sup>46</sup>

Despite all knowledge provided in this and other prognostications, Paulinus eventually stressed that “we Christians” should not rely too much on, nor be frightened by, “such vain conjectures of the Chaldeans, Egyptians, Arabs and other pagans, on whose writings and opinions *Astrologica superstitio* is founded”. Instead all people and estates should have “this Theological, certain and truthful prognostication before the eyes”, namely that those who fear God and love righteousness can expect not only earthly felicity and prosperity “but also eternal bliss, joy and happiness in Heaven”. Thus you should strive to live a Christian life, carefully heed the Word of God, receive the sacraments and love your neighbour “so that we may avoid the timely punishment, which seems to be approaching out of Natural Causes”.<sup>47</sup>

45 Ibid. fol. 25v–31r.

46 Ibid. fol. 21v, fol. 24r–v; Georgius Olai, *Calendarium duplex* sig. Ffir–Hh4r. Olai's conjectures were in turn based on Cyprian Leowitz' ephemerides.

47 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Almanach Och Practica – Prognosticon astrologicum M. D. XCII* fol. 24v–25r; Fol 24v: “Dochlijkwel skolle wij Christne/ sådanne the Caldeers/ Aegyptiers/ Arabers och andre hedningers fäfenghe gijsningar/ wppå hwars schriffther och meninger Astrologica superstitio funderat ähr/ icke förnyckitt wppå hierthet legge/ eller oss förskreckie låthe: Wthan skolle eller/ ia mykitt mheer/ thette Teologiske wisse och sanferdige Prognosticon/ för öghen haffwe Nemplige/ ath wthi alle Folk och ständer/ then som Gudh fructer och dyrcker rättfärdigheten/ Gudi kärkommen och behageligh ähr/ och haffwer förthenskull/ icke allenest all timmeligh wälferd/ lycko och framgångh: wthann och een ewighwarande Salighet/ frögd och glädie i Himmelen/ aff honom wisseligen till ath förmodha. Hwarföre skolle wij oss om itt gudheligit leffwerne högeligen beflijthe/ Gudz Saliggörande ordh grannelighe wppå hiertet legge/ The högwerdighe Sacramente wyrdelighen brwka/ och wårom Næste all Christeligh kärleck wälwillegh bewijse/ påå thett ath wij thett timmelighe straffeth/ som wthaff Naturlighe Orsaker synes tillstunde willie/ wndwijke”.

## God and the Stars

As in the contemporary German almanacs, there is a strong emphasis on moral issues in Paulinus' prognostication. Although foretold by the stars and occurring "out of Astrological causes", coming disasters are discussed in terms of divine punishments, avoidable only through penitence.<sup>48</sup> However, the eschatological references are quite vague, and the forecasts are obviously played down in relation to other issues – there is for instance a long account on how the New Year has been reckoned in different calendars. The emphasis of the text confirms that the main purpose of the prognostication was to display the skills and erudition of its author, and not to preach repentance or vigilance in the face of the approaching day of the Lord. For instance, when Paulinus discussed the occurrence of a forthcoming eclipse, he emphasized his personal efforts while pointing out that he, through his "emendation" had not only adapted the usual Alphonsine and Prutenic tables to the horizon of Stockholm, but also calculated in concordance with "Calculo Copernicano" – the astronomical tables of Copernicus.<sup>49</sup>

In this context, Paulinus' criticism of vain and superstitious practices of astrology was quite commonplace. The reservations may appear harsher compared to other contemporary Swedish almanacs, but they are by no means unique in relation to the wider European debate. The critical comments also emphasized the merits of astrology when practised by a right Christian scholar. Indeed, citing Ptolemy, Paulinus stated that such knowledge that "only a few can pursue" is often met "with much reprehension" by the ignorant.<sup>50</sup> The exclusiveness of astrology is thus emphasized. This is further stressed on the very last page of the prognostication by a quotation by Girolamo Cardano (1501–1576), who claimed that to man nothing is more difficult than trying to reveal the future. "For this [task] is obscure to such a degree, that if not encouraged by some divine inspiration, it hardly brings any praise". Yet, whatever knowledge is being revealed on these terms "should by right be called divine".<sup>51</sup> As one of the most celebrated scientists

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48 Ibid. fol. 31r

49 Ibid. fol. 30r.

50 Ibid. fol. 14v: "*PTOL: Cap. I. lib. I. de Ast. Jud. Plerumq. fieri solet, ut quicquid pauci assequi possunt, id in multorum reprobationem incurrat.*" The quoted work of Ptolemy is probably one of the annotated, Latin editions of the *Tetrabiblos* issued by Girolamo Cardano in the latter part of the sixteenth century; see below p. 151.

51 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Almanach Och Practica – Prognosticon astrologicum M. D. XCII* fol. 32v: "Homini nihil est difficilius scientiâ futurorum. Haec namq. adeò obscura est, ut nisi divino aliquo afflatu adjuvetur, vix laudem afferat; et ob id qui in eâ claruerunt, divini merito vocati sunt."; cf. Girolamo Cardano, *De subtilitate libri XXI*, Paris 1550 fol. 263v.

and astrologers of the sixteenth century, Cardano was often cited by later prognosticators. But in this context the quotation is used to focus on a recurrent theme in astrological literature: all efforts to reveal the future are meaningless if they are not subordinated to a righteous and Christian mind.

In comparison, a somewhat different approach may be found in the prognostication for 1600 by Paulinus' students Olaus Andreae and Gerardus Erii. Here they maintained that a particular solar eclipse was bound to portend "much evil" and "dangerous plots and practices" against princes and rulers. Primarily this was because the eclipse would occur when Mars "with its hard opposite aspect affects the Sun, which is the Regent of Kings, princes and high Governmental persons". The ominous character of the eclipse would be increased by its occurrence "*in domo carceris*" (the 'house of prison'): the twelfth house of the horoscope, traditionally associated with confinement, secrets, unknown enemies and conspiracies.<sup>52</sup>

In writing this forecast, Olaus Andreae and Gerardus Erii were treading on thin ice. Clearly the forecast demonstrated the political benefit to sovereigns, both of astrology and the services of prognosticators. In other words, it was an ideal statement in a text directed to a mighty benefactor-to-be. But at the same time it was a perilous strategy: increasing the suspiciousness of the authorities during times of political turmoil and war was dangerous. Forecasts of conspiracies and rebellions could become self-fulfilling – or at least be utilized in subversive agitation. Even if the prognostication was printed in a small edition, it was still published and could be spread outside the reach of the authorities.

Although their forecasts were supported by conventional interpretations of benevolent and malevolent planetary aspects ruling the year, Olaus Andreae and Gerardus Erii still stressed that ominous constellations should primarily be regarded as tokens of God's wrath. In a commonplace turn in astrological literature, they made reservations against their own prediction. They emphasized that God would always remain "the highest Lord and Regent over all things" who could be harmed "neither by Saturn nor Mars". Whatever the astrologer might predict, God could alter according to his will. Thus God would hopefully be induced to preserve all Christian rulers "as particularly our graceful Prince of the Realm and Sovereign from all

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52 Olaus Andreae & Gerardus Erii, *Almanach och Practica – Prognosticon astrologicvm* ... M. DC., sig. A7r-v; "Först/ effter Mars medh sin hårde *opposito aspectu*, anstötter Solen/ som är Konungers/ Fursters och höge Regementz personers *Dominus & quidem in domo carceris*, hotar hon sådana Personer medh mykit ondt/ farlige anslagh och practiker." A horoscope is generally divided into twelve 'houses' with certain properties, each representing a section of the sky at a given moment.

harm and danger”.<sup>53</sup> Another eclipse indicated great religious change and persecutions of the community of God: “Yet, in particular should prayers of true Christians and Godfearing people avert this evil, in accordance to the experience and *testimonia*, which we have within the great and unwavering Prognostication, the Holy Scriptures.”<sup>54</sup> Thus the auspices should be weighed and interpreted against the Word of God and the Bible. Even if astrology might prove useful, it is not the natural forces of the celestial bodies that should be heeded in the first place. The Scriptures are the primary authority, and without them any prognostic statement would be futile. Despite differences in approach and reliance on the astrological auspices, the statements of Olaus Andreae and Gerardus Erixi are concordant with what Paulinus had maintained in his first prognostication.

### The Revolution of the 1590s

When Olaus Andreae and Gerardus Erixi wrote their almanac, their preceptor had already published his second issue. But as Paulinus, presumably in the summer of 1597, decided to publish a new almanac for the coming year, circumstances had changed in his own life as well as in the Swedish realm as a whole.

After the death of Johan III a general synod, consisting of both clergymen and representatives of the worldly regime, had been summoned to Uppsala in February 1593. This was partly as a reaction to the church policies of the late king, but the synod was also an attempt to put up a unified front before the arrival of his successor from Poland. Clearly one purpose of the assembly was to restrain the power of Sigismund, or at least to hinder any influence of the Catholic king in the religious issues.

The assembly had eventually agreed to abolish the liturgy and to accept the *Confessio Augustana* as an official creed, thus formally turning the church in Sweden into an evangelical confessional communion. In the argumentation against the liturgy, verdicts from four theological faculties of Lutheran universities in Germany was invoked. The Formula of Concord – originally created to reconcile the factions of the Lutheran movement in the Holy Roman Empire – was not formally approved by the synod, but

53 Olaus Andreae & Gerardus Erixi, *Almanach och Practica – Prognosticon astrologicvm* ... M. DC. sig. A7v; “Gudh som öffuer all ting then högste Herren och Regenten är/ hwilken hwarken aff Saturno eller Marte kan meen lijdhä/ han wärdigas alle Christne Regementz personer/ som synnerligh wår nådige Landzfurste och Oefuerheet för all skadha och farligheet nådeligen beware.”

54 Ibid. sig. A8r-v; “Dock synnerligh kunne Christrogne och Gudhfruchtige menniskiors böner thette onde affwenda/ effter then förfarenheet och *testimonia*, som wij haffue vthi then stoore och oryggelige *Prognostico*, then helgha Schriff”.



its influence on the resolution was notable. Thus the religious ceremonies were generally declared *adiaphora* by the synod, yet with the reservation that evangelical congregations should not oblige to the enemies of the Gospel during times of prosecution. The liturgy of Johan III was thus primarily rejected due to its 'popish' connotations, and not because the ceremonies were 'superstitious' in themselves.<sup>55</sup>

As the resolution of the Uppsala Synod was later ratified by the estates, the principle of unity in religion as the foundation of society and political order was codified.<sup>56</sup> In accordance with this ambition, the synod had also agreed to radically restrict the scope of practicing Catholic faith in the realm. At the estates assembly in Söderköping in 1595 Catholic worship was banned altogether. Meanwhile, Duke Karl had gained the title and the authority of regent in his nephew's absence. Now he strengthened his grip on government by exploiting the disunity between the estates, the king and the aristocracy of the royal council.<sup>57</sup>

When Paulinus dedicated his almanac to the duke in the summer of 1597, the political crisis had become acute. Against an explicit royal ban, the duke had summoned the estates to Arboga in February. Although he did not gain the unconditional authority as regent and the absolute, monarchal freedom of action that he had initially demanded, he gained a resolution which allowed him to claim legitimacy for the political and military measures taken against the royal governors, who had controlled the royal castles since the king left for Poland in 1594.<sup>58</sup>

Yet, in the wake of his attempts towards sovereignty, the duke had become more or less politically isolated. The majority of the royal council had not attended the meeting in Arboga, and several of the more influential

55 Andrén, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria* 3 pp. 216–217; cf. The Formula of Concord art. 10, printed in *Svenska kyrkans bekännelseskriterier*, Samfundet Pro fide et christianismo, Verbum, Stockholm 2000 pp. 529–531, 652–657.

56 See the discussions in Ingun Montgomery, "...enighet i religionen och den rätta gudstjänsten är den kraftigaste grundval till ett ... varachtigt regemente...", in Göran Inger (ed.), *Den svenska juridikens uppblomstring i 1600-talets politiska, kulturella och religiösa stormaktsamhälle*, Nerenius & Santérus, Stockholm 1984 pp. 47–63.

57 Roberts, *The Early Vasas* pp. 327–368.

58 Ibid. pp. 369–393; Sven A. Nilsson, "Förvaltningen och länen i striden mellan Sigismund och hertig Karl" in Gunnar Dahlström, Paul Hallberg & Åke Holmberg (eds.), *Vetenskap och omvärdering: Till Curt Weibull på hundraårsdagen 19 augusti 1986*, Göteborgs universitet, Göteborg 1986 pp. 142–163; Sven Lundkvist "Hertig Karl och kungakronan 1598–1604", HT 1965; for a thorough study of the debate between principal power and clerical establishment, see Ingun Montgomery, *Värjostånd och lärostånd: Religion och politik i meningsutbytet mellan kungamakt och prästerskap 1593–1608*, Acta universitatis Upsaliensis, Uppsala 1972.

councillors, among them the Chancellor Erik Sparre, had fled to the king in Poland. The dominant inclination of the three upper estates had been to carefully restrict the power of the duke, as he was now openly suspected for having ambitions to usurp the throne. For his political survival, the duke now depended on the support he could gain from the peasant estate. Here the outbreak of widespread revolts in Finland in the previous winter – the so-called Club War – against the martial rule of Sigismund's military governor Klas Fleming (c. 1530–1597) had played straight into his hands. The Club Men's uprising had tied the troops of the duke's enemies in Finland, meanwhile he could appeal to the reports of the excesses of Fleming's soldiers in his agitation. Although the regime of the duke still officially claimed authority in the name of the king, the breach between Sigismund and his uncle was definite by the summer of 1597. The civil war in Finland appeared likely to spread to the rest of the realm, west of the Bothnian Sea.<sup>59</sup>

Conflicts also occurred between the duke and the Swedish clergy. As part of his efforts to assert ducal autonomy, Karl had supported exiled, anti-liturgist dissidents like Abraham Angermannus during the Liturgical Strife in the 1570s and -80s. To secure their support, he had accepted a far-reaching independence of the clergy in his duchy. Initially, he also kept a low profile in theological issues. However, as regent, representing worldly authority in the King's absence, Karl also claimed the position of defender of the church – *custos ecclesiae* as defined in a tradition confirmed both by Luther and Melanchthon. According to the duke's rhetoric, this meant that he would protect the evangelical faith and the resolutions of the Uppsala Synod against any violation of religious guarantees given by the king as one of the conditions for his coronation in 1594. Yet in practice, the duke would use this as a political weapon while claiming the right to oppose, and even withdraw his allegiance from the king, whenever he judged that these guarantees had been infringed.<sup>60</sup>

But although the clergy mainly accepted the duke's claims and initially saw him as an ally against any attempts of re-catholization, suspicions soon arose over his political and his religious ambitions. Disagreements occurred concerning what right the worldly authorities had to intervene in ecclesiastical issues, and accusations were raised against the duke for

59 Roberts, *The Early Vasas*, see esp. pp. 364–372; Heikki Ylikangas, *Klubbekriget: Det blodiga bondekriget i Finland 1596–97*, Atlantis, Stockholm 1999 pp. 87–89, 102–103.

60 Montgomery, *Värjostånd och lärostånd* pp. 124–135; Ingun Montgomery, "The institutionalism of Lutheranism in Sweden and Finland", in Ole Peter Grell (ed.), *The Scandinavian Reformation*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1995 pp. 158–160.

being a secretive Calvinist. Previously such accusations had been spread by adherents of King Sigismund, but now they were heard from prominent Swedish clergymen. To be sure, they were not totally unfounded. In his theological writings, the duke recognized no authority except the Scriptures and his own conviction. In terms that in some cases approached Calvinism he rejected several matters of dogma concerning liturgy, the sacraments and the real presence in the Eucharist that had become decisive dividing points between the two major evangelical denominations. Yet the accusations of Calvinism also appeared as a method to discredit the duke, limiting his possibilities to use the issue of religion to strengthen his position against the king. In the continuous struggle, the archbishop and the main part of the leading clergy actually strived to remain loyal to Sigismund – or at least to keep balance between the king and the duke. At the meeting in Arboga, the clerical estate had constituted the main opposition against the regent, together with the attending representatives of the burgher estate and of the nobility.<sup>61</sup>

The combination of intransigent Lutheranism among the clergy on one hand, and an openly displayed loyalty towards a Catholic monarch on the other, may appear somewhat unexpected. From the beginning of Sigismund's reign rancorous attacks on 'soulmurdering' Jesuits had been heard from the pulpits. Priests had been instigators of religious riots and attacks on the king's Polish bodyguard in Stockholm in 1594. Yet in their argumentation, the clergy mainly referred to the religious guarantees given by the king as a basis for their loyalty. As long as these guarantees were not violated, they appeared to accept the Catholic Sigismund, even in his sovereign role as *custos ecclesiae* of the evangelical congregation in Sweden, as he had sworn at his coronation.<sup>62</sup> Only a few days before the final defeat of Sigismund in September 1598, the archbishop and the Uppsala chapter signed a subservient assurance of their allegiance to the king. As permanent members of the chapter, the professors of the university, including Paulinus, also signed the document. This would later prove fatal.<sup>63</sup>

One of the reasons of this pragmatic royalism was that the higher clergy, partly as an outcome of the Uppsala Synod, acted with a new self-confidence under the leadership of Abraham Angermannus. From his election as archbishop he had gained a stronger position with widened and formally sanctioned authority, as it was initially given with the consent of Duke Karl.

61 Montgomery, *Värjostånd och lärostånd* pp. 155–165, 196–205; Montgomery, "The institutionalism of Lutheranism" pp. 161–164; Ohlsson pp. 296–298, 308–310, 329–334.

62 Jonsson p. 46.

63 Montgomery, *Värjostånd och lärostånd* p. 181; see below p. 142.

Moreover, under a monarch who could not intervene in issues of religion due to his Catholic faith, it was possible to claim greater independence in relation to the worldly authorities. This opportunity was clearly embraced and openly demonstrated by the archbishop, even to the point of breach with his former patron, Duke Karl.<sup>64</sup>

## The Advancement of a Scholar

As for Laurentius Paulinus in these turbulent days, he was no longer a simple *studiosus*, travelling among the Lutheran universities of northern Germany. A few months after his graduation in Helmstedt he returned to Sweden in order “to show and prove his ability and erudition, also no longer depriving the Fatherland of his service, where it would be orderly demanded and requested”, as put of one of his early biographers. He had arrived well in time to participate in the Uppsala Synod in the winter of 1593, hereto “strengthened and aroused by his friends”.<sup>65</sup>

When the proceedings opened in Uppsala, Paulinus was chosen as *actuarius* or recording clerk. The circumstances are obscure; according to a later statement he was personally picked by the chairman, Nicolaus Olai Bothniensis (c. 1550–1600), who had observed the skills of this “new Master of Arts and student of the most Holy Theology”. It is clear that Paulinus, through his old network of former teachers and colleagues from the *Collegium regium*, became closely associated with an influential circle within the Swedish clergy. The college had dispersed at the death of Johan III, but its professors continued to play a significant role during the prelude to the synod. Among them Bothniensis, former lecturer in Hebrew and exegesis, held a senior and dominant position. With no doubt he already knew Paulinus well when he chose him as his assistant.<sup>66</sup>

Among the many issues discussed at the synod, the need to institute an academy to provide the church and the civil administration with competent servants had become urgent. In August 1593 the first official document

64 Andrén, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria* 3 pp. 221–222; Stefan Östergren, *Sigismund: En biografi över den svensk-polska monarken*, Fredestad förlag/Catholica AB, Ängelholm 2005 pp. 83–91; Montgomery, *Värjostånd och lärostånd* pp. 127, 151.

65 J. Matthiae Gothus, *Een Christeligh Lijk-Predikan* p. 40; “... at tee och bewijsa sin Skickelicheet och Lärdom/ jämväl icke längre vndraga Fäderneslandet sin Tjänst/ hwar den blefve ordenteligen eskadt och begäradt. Hwarföre han och strax widh sin heemkompt styrckt och vpweckt aff sine Wenner at reesa til Vbsala Möthe”.

66 Westhius, *Memoria Parentalis* cit. sig. B3v; “In qvo concilio, perspectâ ab Ecclesiae praesulibus, Synodi imprimis Praeside, M. Nicolao Bothniensi, novi Philosophiae Magistri, & SS. Theologiae studiosi solertiâ & dexteritate, ad negotia publica adhibitus est, ipsiq’ partes *Actuarij* commissae”; cf. Andrén, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria* 3 pp. 212–216.

confirming the reopening of the university in Uppsala, was signed by Duke Karl and the royal council. When the lecturing began, perhaps as early as the same autumn, the professors had been more or less directly transferred from the old college in Stockholm.

Despite his relative youth, Paulinus was one of them, as he in 1594 was appointed professor of logic. Later one of his biographers claimed that it was the “capacity and proficiency” wherewith he had handled the assignment at the Uppsala Synod, that would eventually qualify him for his professorial chair. However, as he had “spent and devoted a good part of his youth on *Studium Matheseos*, and won that commendation, that he could turn it into a profession” he was soon offered the chair of mathematics and astronomy.<sup>67</sup>

Obviously the descriptions of Paulinus’ skills and learnings related above are biased. They are all taken from commemorative speeches given at his funeral, and the poetic formulation of how the Uppsala Synod became the moment when Paulinus advanced “as from the shadow into the Sun” is clearly panegyric to its character.<sup>68</sup> Still the quotations are enlightening, as they reveal how crucial Paulinus’ relationship with Bothniensis as a friend and benefactor had been for his advancement, regardless of his actual qualifications.

Paulinus’ engagement at the Uppsala Synod not only prepared his career path. It also revealed, on a personal level, the deep rift torn within the clergy during the Liturgical Strife. Even though the uniform consensus on the religious issues expressed by the synod has often been regarded as a reflection of general and dominant sentiments and views among the clergy, it should be remembered that total concordance was also an impression openly attained by the majority of the meeting. The overall goal of the synod, to achieve unity in religion, merged with the issue of its legitimacy, and it was for the same reasons the resolution of the synod was sent to be confirmed by the clergy in all parishes, and by all estates throughout the realm. When Bothniensis reportedly heralded the passing of the *Confessio Augustana* with the sententious phrase “now is Sweden become one man, and we all have one Lord and god”, these words could be construed as more than just an exclamation of triumph or a description of what he regarded

67 Cit. J. Matthiæ Gothus, *Een Christeligh Lijk-Predikan* p. 40; “... det Proof aff sin *Capacitet* och *Skickelighet* ... Såsom han nu en godh Deel aff sin Vngdom hafwer lagdt och begifwit til *Studium Matheseos*, och wunnit det berömmet/ at han kunde göra *Profession* ther aff”; cf. Lindroth, *A History of Uppsala University* pp. 21–24; Hellström, “Laurentius Paulinus Gothus” pp. 369–370; Annerstedt, *Uppsala universitets historia I* pp. 76–77, 82–84.

68 Westhius, *Memoria Parentalis* cit. sig. B3v; “Qvâ occasione, ex umbrâ qvasi in Solem progressus”

as an accomplished feat. It was a performative statement, putting an end to discussion and beseeching any potentially or secretly opposing clergyman to submit to the majority of the synod for the sake of unity.<sup>69</sup> Several of the representatives of the royal council previously supported the church politics of Johan III and even supervised the introduction of the liturgy in the dioceses. The many timorous apologies and excuses expressed by former liturgists and compliants in Uppsala – even among the bishops – also testifies that the radical anti-liturgist standpoint had not been as mainstream as it may appear in the eyes of posterity.<sup>70</sup>

In Paulinus' case, the conflict also tore a rift within his own circle of friends and relatives. As archbishop his late uncle had tried to maintain a conciliatory position between the factions. Yet, initially he accepted the reforms of Johan III, and he also contributed to the edition of the so-called 'Red book', the new liturgy of 1576.<sup>71</sup> Among Paulinus' associates

69 The passage is reproduced in Hilding Pleijel, "Nu är Sverige blivet en man ... En luthersk kamp- och segerparoll", in idem, *Svensk lutherdom: Studier i luthersk fromhet och svensk folkkultur*, Svenska kyrkans diakonistyrelses bokförlag, Stockholm 1944 pp. 47–52; cf. *Svenska riksdagsakter jämte andra handlingar som höra till statsförfattningens historia* (SRA) vol. 3:1, Norstedts, Stockholm 1894 pp. 29–30; "Tå sade praeses nu är Sverige bliffuit en Man och alle haffuom wij en Herre och gud". Unfortunately the quotation is dubious, as it only occurs in one of several contemporary accounts of the meeting (there are virtually no records preserved from the proceedings). Still it has become a standard quotation in Swedish historiography, and it is idiomatic for how the Uppsala Synod and its significance have been conceived by posterity; cf. Montgomery, "The institutionalism of Lutheranism" pp. 153–160; Roberts, *The Early Vasas* p. 335.

70 According to Hjalmar Holmquist, at least three main lines can be identified at the Uppsala Synod: the "Gnesiolutheran influenced orthodoxy" – a line which some former liturgists joined to save their positions and to confront threatening Calvinist tendencies; a second line, primarily represented by Duke Karl and the primates of the two dioceses within his duchy, is described as being close to "the older acridly anti-cultic and anti-scholastic Lutheranism with its front primarily pointed towards Rome"; and finally the "middle group" consisting of "the professors from Stockholm and other clergymen influenced by ... the tolerant Rostock orthodoxy", Holmquist, *Svenska kyrkans historia vol. III:2* pp. 156–166, cit. pp. 154–155. Holmquist's division is simplified and problematic in many aspects – especially when regarding the labels used to describe the different lines. But still it indicates that the divisions at the Uppsala Synod were grave, and that the unified front displayed after the assembly was the result of how one dominant faction had overcome the others. Concerning the liturgy it appears as if the anti-liturgists had won a discursive victory: it was no longer possible to defend the liturgy without being branded as a Papist.

71 Cf. *Liturgia Suecanae Ecclesiae*, printed by Torbjörn Tidemansson, Stockholm 1576; the introduction of the liturgy was probably written by the king's secretary, Petrus Michaelis Fecht (d. 1576). However, it was signed by the archbishop; Collijn, *Sveriges*

from the *Collegium regium*, Bothniensis, Petrus Kenicius (1555–1636) and Ericus Jacobi Skinnerus (d. 1597) successively dissociated themselves from the king's policies as the general opinion among the clergy definitely turned against the liturgy in the early 1590s. Laurentius Johannis Laelius, to whom Paulinus had addressed two complimentary poems in 1588, seems to have remained loyal to Johan's ecclesiastical reorganization. Eventually he would be exiled for his support for King Sigismund. He died as royal secretary in Poland.<sup>72</sup>

Petrus Pauli, Paulinus' own brother, had as vicar in Storkyrkan been a firm supporter of Johan III's reforms and of the liturgy. He even seems to have brought his zeal a little too far. According to later complaints he had "in the pulpit, in the streets [and] in banquets" frequently scolded his adversaries among colleagues and citizens in Stockholm for being "traitors and the king's unfaithful men". Representative parishioners described him as being "restless, proud, spiteful, mean" and "feeble in his head in drunkenness". Eventually, when Johan III was forced to dismiss him from his incumbency, this seems to have had more to do with his ambitions and his problematic character than with his liturgism or his alleged Catholic inclinations.<sup>73</sup> However, the liturgism of Petrus Pauli was not only cosmetic or an expression of opportunism. He was the only person to stand up and defend the liturgy at the Uppsala Synod. Consequently he was severely beset by old and new enemies during the sessions; even members of the royal council let fly at him "with the strongest of words and threats". Eventually he had to yield, "confess his folly" and renounce his former standpoint. However, his apology was not accepted as it was judged to be "false, incorrect and hypocritical". On 8 March 1593, he was publicly

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*bibliografi intill år 1600 vol. II* p. 458. The depreciatory naming of the 'Red Book' as the new liturgy referred, not to the red-coloured leather binding of some exclusive copies as has sometimes been suggested, but to its manifold liturgical instructions or 'rubrics' (after Latin *ruber*, 'red'); Andrén, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria* 3 p. 176; on the later positions of Laurentius Petri Gothus in relation to Johan III's theology and church policies, see *ibid.* p. 191.

72 The different approaches towards the liturgy among the professors in Stockholm has been thoroughly discussed by Bolin, "Johan III:s högskola II" pp. 41–59; on Paulinus' addresses to Laelius see above p. 97 n. 29.

73 Cit. "Stockholms Borge's Swar På then orolige, Högferdige, Hetzke, Nideske Manssens Peer Pāwelsons ... Schrifftelige och Muntlige förtaal och Smäleek", printed in Bengt Bergius, *Nytt Förråd af äldre och nyare handlingar rörande nordiska historien. Första stycket*, Stockholm 1753 pp. 98, 100; *Stockholms stads tänkeböcker från år 1592 vol. I, 1592–1595*, Stockholms stadsarkiv, Stockholm 1939 p. 110; Aron Westén & Carl Edmund Wenström, *Svenska kongl. hofclericiets Historia. I:I*, Stockholm 1799 pp. 181–187.

deprived of his clerical office and handed over to the worldly authorities.<sup>74</sup>

Apparently the two brothers of Petrus Pauli reacted differently to his fall; Hans Pålvelsson is said to have left the service of Duke Karl and travelled to Warsaw to make complaints to the king about the treatment of his brother, emphasizing how the religious ceremonies were now handled in a "Calvinist fashion and manner".<sup>75</sup> Laurentius Paulinus, on the other hand, joined the winning faction among the clergy in opposition to his brothers. Yet, according to a later tradition he had been seen, standing in the hall and "beheld with grief and tears" how his brother was defrocked.<sup>76</sup>

## To Approach a Prince

By the summer of 1597, the position Paulinus had gained through his zeal and his contacts seemed assured. The economic situation of the professors was unstable, but at least Paulinus no longer had to prove his ability to gain entrance to the narrow academic circles of promising scholars. Whatever were his reasons to publish a new almanac and dedicate it to Duke Karl, his purpose was not to show off his mathematical skills.

As a professor Paulinus was seated in the cathedral chapter of the archdiocese of Uppsala, and he could be regarded one of the main representatives of the clerical estate. As such he was certainly aware of the conflict between the regent and the king. It also appears as if he and his colleagues in the chapter mainly supported their archbishop in his opposition to the duke, although they denied their previous commitment after Karl's seizure of power.<sup>77</sup> Paulinus would also have known of the ongoing military mobiliza-

74 Cit. SRA 3:1 pp. 56, 60; Hans Cnattingius, *Uppsala möte 1593: konturer av en kyrkokris*, Svenska kyrkans diakonistyrelse, Stockholm 1943 pp. 104–108.

75 Jonas Werwing, *Konung Sigismunds och Konung Carl den IX:des Historier*, utg. av Anders Anton von Stiernman, Stockholm 1746 p. 175; "*Hans Pålvelsson ... kom den 27 Maji til Warschaw med sin Broders M. Peder Paulini skrifuelse til Konungen, Jesuiterne och de Swenske Secreterarne, berättandes at i Swerige handlades alt på Calvinistiskt sätt och manér*".

76 Lundström, *Laurentius Paulinus Gothus* cit. p. 6 n. 3, cf. p. 35 n. 2; here Lundström cited the relation on Petrus Pauli in the *Historia* of Arnold Johan Messenius (1608–1651) concerning the dissension between Sigismund and Duke Karl; cf. Verner Söderberg, *Historieskrifvaren Arnold Johan Messenius*, Akademiska boktrycket, Uppsala 1902 pp. 88–90.

77 Montgomery, *Värjostånd och lärostånd* pp. 157–158, 161; it is not easy to form an opinion of the attitudes of the clergy in general and of the professors and capitulars in particular. Initially, the mood seems to have been quite benevolent towards Duke Karl – not very surprising since he had supported the university and issued its charter together with the royal council in 1595. But it seems as if the ambitions of the duke eventually turned opinion in the king's favour. To be sure, the duke seems to have



tion, and the measures taken by Duke Karl – still officially in the name of the king – to outmanoeuvre influential loyalists and local governors and to gain control of the fortified castles. In a letter to the archbishop and the chapter members of Uppsala, dated 25 May 1597, the duke announced that he was marching south to handle those councillors and noblemen of Östergötland and Småland who had not attained the meeting in Arboga in February. Sharply reminding the addressees to remember what had been decided by the estates – implicitly concerning his authority as regent – he instructed them with a covert threat, to prosecute all who defected as being “unrighteous and unfaithful men to his Majesty, and the troublesome and detached limbs of the Realm”.<sup>78</sup>

However, nothing of the disturbing news of the time, or of any dissension whatsoever, can be traced in Paulinus’ dedication to the duke, dated less than two months later.<sup>79</sup> The text is characterized by gratitude and subservient phrases, presenting the reasons why Paulinus had his prognostication issued under the patronage of Duke Karl. Primarily, the duke was honoured for the care he had already taken towards the holy Church and the fatherland, and above all since he “out of a high and godly consideration” had summoned the Uppsala Synod, “where the Papist *Liturgia* and all its enclosed, poisonous delusions and superstitious ceremonies that hovered

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had a supporter in Nicolaus Olai Bothniensis, who opposed his archbishop on several occasions. However, it remains clear that the professors exaggerated their support of the duke’s cause after the deposition of Sigismund. Even the incident in September 1598, when Bothniensis and Jacobus Erici joined a force of peasants and townspeople, mobilized to hinder the landing of loyalist troops from Finland, is an affair that is obscure and dubious in many parts, and not a proof of any particular sympathies towards the duke. When Laurentius Paulinus later claimed to have exhorted the peasantry in Uppland to show “concord and fortitude against the Finnish soldiery”, this was clearly a biased account to show his loyalty to the new regime; cit. relation of the professors in Uppsala, 8 August 1606, printed in “Handlingar angående Karl IX:s råfst med professorerna i Uppsala med anledning af deras bref till konung Sigismund år 1598 m.m.” KhÅ 1909 p. 109; Ohlsson pp. 317–319, 387–388.

78 Ohlsson p. 311, cit. p. 341, “k. M:tz orättrådige och otrogne men och riksens orolige och afsyndrede lemmer”.

79 The only extant copy of the almanac is intact, apart from the title page. According to the colophon it was printed in Stockholm by Andreas Gutterwitz in 1598. However, this could be a misprint, since the dedication is dated in Uppsala as early as 10 July of the previous year, sig. Arov. The disposition is conventional, and identical to the almanac for 1592, although the attached prognostication is far more extensive; the booklet covers 46 leaves. The copy has been manually paginated, but in the following references are made according to the original pagination; cf. Collijn, *Sveriges bibliografi intill år 1600 vol. III* pp. 271–272.

here in the Realm some years before, was rejected and contested".<sup>80</sup> According to Paulinus, it was thanks to Duke Karl that a true Christian religion, solely founded upon the biblical teachings of the prophets, the evangelists and the apostles, had finally been established in the realm. Hereby the duke was rendered not only earthly, but also eternal renown. Secondly, the duke had supported the academy of Uppsala, "wherein, as in a precious treasury, the true and unadulterated Religion, together with other high, useful and necessary arts, is kept and spread among the youth of the Swedish Realm", all to unspeakable benefit and "to improvement and prosperity of as well God's Congregation as of worldly Regiment".<sup>81</sup> Finally, the duke had, through the consent of the absent king and in accordance with the humble wish and request of all the estates, taken the heavy burden of government upon his shoulders. Thereby, as a good Christian lord and a true hereditary prince of Sweden, Karl had endeavoured to protect the weal of the king, the fatherland and the subjects.<sup>82</sup>

The significance of this panegyric should not be overestimated. Even if there is a clear impression that the dedication was meant to reach the ear of its addressee, the duke was hardly the only intended reader. In the dedication Paulinus carefully stressed the common interest of the estates in the contemporary political strife, and the praise of the duke was clearly conditional and subordinate to the decisions from 1593. Therefore it seems as if the message of the prognostication aimed at something different, lying beyond the addressee's person.

### Making Godly Use of *Astrologia*

In the dedication, Paulinus once again explained the benefits of astronomical and astrological knowledge. First of all, according to the first chapter of Genesis, the celestial bodies had been created to separate day from night. Through their regular and steadfast movements, the celestial bodies thus

80 L. Paulinus Gothus, [Almanac for 1598] – *Prognosticon astrologicum ... M. D. XCIIX* sig. A7v–A8r; "Först/ at E:F:N: aff itt högt och gudeligit betenckiande/ haffuer latidt tilsammankalla vthi Vpsala itt frijt Almennelighit *Concilium*. åhr effter Christi byrdh 1593. j Februarij och Martij Månader/ vthi hwilket then Påweske *Liturgia* medh alle sine medhfölgende förgiffthige wilfarelser och widhskipeliche Ceremonier/ som här vthi Rijket någhre åhr tilförrenne swäffuadhe/ äro samhalleligen aff alle Rijkzens Ständer förkastade och wedhersakade".

81 Ibid. sig. A8v, "vthi hwilken/ såsom vthi een kosteligh Skattkammer/ then rette och oförfalskede Religion/ medh sampt andre höghe/ nyttighe och nödighe konster förwarade/ och ibland Sweriges Rijkens vngdom vthspidde warda ... så wäl til Gudz Församblings såsom werldzlige Regementes förkoffring och framgång".

82 Ibid. sig. A8v–A9r.

guaranteed a correct chronology which all priests were obliged to learn and to teach their parishioners. According to Paulinus, chronology was the very tool with which you could learn of all things that have occurred “both in God’s Congregation and in the worldly regiment, both before and after the Flood from the beginning of the world”. But the celestial bodies also bore witness of Him who had settled their course and determined their influence. Thus they were of assistance, not only in learning of the creation, the fall and the redemption of men through which the history of the world should be understood, but also in recognizing the wisdom and providence of God.<sup>83</sup>

In the context of late sixteenth-century discourse, the issues of providence and history, and of the fallen creation, would inevitably involve eschatological connotations. Thus Paulinus stressed that “a certain token” of the impending end could be conjectured “of the courses of the heavens, particularly of the great conjunctions of the higher planets within the 12 celestial Signs, as of the continual eclipses of the Sun and the Moon”.<sup>84</sup> However, he did not expound any theory about the correspondence between the conjunctions and the shifts of history; he merely concluded that astrological auspices should be reckoned among the many signs of the coming end as “daily experience proclaims, and Christ himself teaches” in the eschatological prophecies of the Second Advent.<sup>85</sup> Yet according to Paulinus, the study of the stars was a source of knowledge of God, not only to Christians but to all people, “as is revealed by the Pagan Scriptures, and as the Apostle, Romans 1, well certifies.”<sup>86</sup>

The reference to St. Paul’s letter to the Romans was a standard quotation in Medieval and Renaissance philosophy. Emphasizing how the knowledge of God was revealed through nature, and how it was thereby attainable even for the pagans, it was used as a general argument for employing pagan authorities in Christian thinking. However, in astrological literature it also functioned as an authoritative statement in defence of the starry arts.

83 Ibid. sig. A2r–A4v, cit. sig. A3r–A3v; “... hwarigenom man alt thet som bådhe vthi Gudz Församling och thet werldzlighe Regementet/ bådhe för och efter Syndeflodhen ifrå werldennes begynnelse/ hänt och sigh tildraghit haffuer/ til at rätt och grundelighen förstå.”

84 Ibid. sig. A4v; “Ytterlighere kan man aff Stiernorners lop/ synnerligh aff the öffuerste Planeters stoore tillsammanfölger vthi the 12. himmelske Tekn/ såsom aff Solennes och Månens idkelighe Förmörkelser och andre Aspecter/ itt wist kennemärke haffue ...”.

85 Ibid. sig. A5r; “hwilket dagheligh förfarenheet tilkenne giffuer/ och Christus sielf lärer/ Luc: 21. och Matth: 24.”

86 Ibid. sig. A4v; “som vthaff the Hedniske Skrifter vppenbart är/ och Apostelen Rom : 1. nogsampt betyghar.”

Sigfridus Aronus Forsius used it on several occasions, for instance in his prognostication for 1606 and in his *Great Prognostication* for 1617, as did Nicolaus Niurenus in his prognostication for 1625.<sup>87</sup> In the case of Paulinus, the application is conspicuous, as it seems to be directly contrary to what would later become a central issue in his authorship – the absolute rejection of paganism in Christian philosophy, and of the authority of Aristotle in particular. Yet, even though Paulinus in the current case seemed to accept pagan authorities, he still emphasized that “the Pagan Writers have neither properly understood, nor been able to write anything wise or veracious” concerning the creation and the fall of men, “as their Histories compared to and considered with the holy Scriptures, will certify well enough.”<sup>88</sup>

When Paulinus turned to defend astrological judgements and predictions, he discussed astronomy and astrology as entities which are separate, yet unconditionally dependent on each other. Through their natural qualities and aspects, the stars should be regarded as “Signs and causes of manifold vicissitudes and changes of the weather and the temperaments of Men, by heat and cold, dryness and moisture.” Hence Paulinus concludes that both “*Astronomia* and *Astrologia* ... are so highly necessary arts, both in Spiritual and Worldly Regiment”, that you can manage without them “no less than air and water (as the saying goes)”.<sup>89</sup> But the discussion is not very

87 N. Niurenus, *Almanach – Prognosticon astrologicum ... til thet år Christi M.DC. XXV*. Sig. Arv; Sigfridus Aronus Forsius, *Prognosticon astrologicum. Thet är: Naturlighe Prophetier och Gissningar/ om allehanda tilkommande hendelser j Lufften och nidre på Jordnellen aff naturlighe Orsaker/ och then godhe Stiernekonsten/ sammanhemptadhe och judicerade/ til Åår/M. DC. VI.*, printed by Johann Balhorn, Lübeck 1605 sig. A2r–v; idem, *Then stora Prognostica ... MDC XVII* sig. A4r; cf. above p. 44; for a discussion on Forsius’ application of these Pauline verses, see Terhi Kiiskinen, *Sigfrid Aronus Forsius. Astronomer and Philosopher of Nature*, Lang, Frankfurt am Main 2007 pp. 49–50; cf. Romans 1:20: “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead”.

88 L. Paulinus Gothus, [Almanac for 1598] – *Prognosticon astrologicum ... M. D. XCIIIX* sig. A4r; “thet doch the Hedniske Scribenter hwarken görlighen förstådt eller ther om något wist och sanfärdigt haffue schriffue kunnet/ som theres Historier medh then helgha Schriff tilsammanlijkade och öffuerwägne/ noghsampt betygher.”

89 Ibid. sig. A5r–v; “... Tekn och orsaker til mångehande omskiffelser och forändringar vthi wädherleken och Menniskionnes temperament/ vthaff hette och köld/ tårcka och wätsko/ hwilke the igenom theres Natur och egenskap/ åtskillelighe aspecter och rörelser ... Äro förthenskuld *Astronomia* och *Astrologia*, hwilke om Himmelsens lop och thes wärkan handla/ så högnödighe konster/ bådhe vthi Andelighit och Werldzlighit Regemente/ at man them intet hellere än wädher och watn (som man säya plägher) miste och vmbäre kan”; cf. Olaus Andreae & Gerardus Eri, *Almanach och Practica – Prognosticon astrologicum ... M. DC.* sig. A2v–A3r.

extensive: since the influence of the stars is obvious to each and everyone, and since the study of these forces reveals the providence and omnipotence of God, no further proof or arguments are necessary to convince the reader of the utility and of the licit and godly character of astrology.<sup>90</sup>

It has been suggested that the 'compliant' attitude towards 'judicial astrology' displayed in Paulinus' second prognostication, should be regarded as an adjustment to appease the astrological interest of the addressee, Duke Karl.<sup>91</sup> However, this assumption is not very well supported by the sources. According to a preserved reckoning from the duke's bookseller in Stockholm, some astrological titles were found in his library. Moreover, notes in his personal diary suggest that the duke consulted his almanac, for instance before taking a bath. Sometimes, when the duke made notes on his journeys, he piously added a wish that God would graciously let them begin in a 'good moment'. This phrase appears to refer to notions of 'good' and 'bad' moments in accordance with astrological auspices.<sup>92</sup> However, these indications hardly suggest anything more than that the duke shared the intellectual interest of most European princes of his epoch. The reasons for Paulinus' sudden astrological commitment must be found elsewhere.

Apart from the general approach of Paulinus' two prognostications, there is also one striking difference between them: they refer to different authorities in the principal discussions on astrological theory and practice. Although Paulinus is careful and critical in the prognostication for 1592, the argument is supported by his readings of the classics of natural philosophy and astrological theory, such as Ptolemy and Cardano. In the prognostication for 1598 however, the quotations used by Paulinus to defend astrological practice are exclusively biblical. Thus it could be suspected that the author strived to emphasize the correspondence between the celestial signs and the Scriptures in order to strengthen the authority of his forecasts. Yet still the reckoning and the analysis of the celestial aspects followed prevalent astrological methods. In the actual forecasts the biblical perspective is toned down.

90 Ibid. sig. A5r-v. The Bible quotations referred to by Paulinus on this point, from Job 9 and Amos 5, were so commonplace in apologies of astrology that their original meaning, concerning the omnipotence of God through the creation of the stars had been virtually lost.

91 Nordenmark, *Astronomiens historia* p. 17.

92 Magnus von Platen, "Hertig Karls bokräkningar", *Lychnos* 1956 pp. 77-84; *Calendaria Caroli IX* pp. 169-172; the same wish that God would 'let it be done in a blissful moment' is expressed when the duke recorded his wedding with Kristina of Holstein-Gottorp 27 September 1592.

## Auspices of 1598

Compared to the prognostication for 1592, the forecasts for 1598 are extensive and detailed. Mars, in the watery sign of Cancer at the vernal equinox, would together with Mercury in the fiery sign of Aries be the ruling planet of the year. According to Paulinus these auspices meant “a tempered weather, concerning moisture and aridity”. Yet, one should “surely presume much storm and tempest, and also thunder and flash”. Thus Paulinus rejected the opinion of “Leowitz and others”, who had predicted plenty of rain for the year as a whole.<sup>93</sup> According to its nature, Mars would bring threats of war, insurrection and bloodshed. Moreover, since Mars “in the house of concord will be affected by the noxious aspect of Saturn from the abode of brothers and kinship”, there would be dissension between people who had entered pacts of peace and friendship.<sup>94</sup>

In the summer of 1597 there was hardly any need of astrologers to predict outbreaks of disturbances and civil war in the realm. But Paulinus put these threatening auspices into an apocalyptic context, concerning not only the Swedish realm, but Christianity as a whole.

In most prognostications, the general forecast of the year should have been followed by specific statements of the seasons, especially concerning the weather and harvest prospects. But in 1598 three eclipses would occur with such grave, protracted and widespread consequences, that Paulinus considered them more important to heed. First a total lunar eclipse would occur on 11 February at daybreak. According to the planetary aspects, it would cause much calamity to mankind during the year. True religion would be oppressed, and there would be war and bloodshed, secret conspiracies, robbery, shipwrecks and high mortality among livestock. Law and justice would be violated – although Paulinus wearily stated that such infamies were only too common already – while severe outbursts of ague, consumption and pestilence should be expected. Young people in particular would perish, due to the unnatural moisture of the weather.<sup>95</sup>

Two weeks later, 25 February, a partial solar eclipse would occur in the house of religion at a time when Mercury was harmed by Saturn in

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93 Cit. L. Paulinus Gothus, [Almanac for 1598] – *Prognosticon astrologicvm ... M. D. XCIX* sig. B4v–B5v; “ändoch *Leoviti*us och andre förmäle mykit regn och idheligh wätsko tilstunda: Lijkwäl kan man intet annat här aff beslwa än een tempereret wädherteek/ hwadh wätsko och torka tilkommer ... Doch skal man myken storm och owäder/ sampt medh dunder och blix/ wisseligen förmoda”

94 Ibid. sig. B5v; “...effter han *in domo concordiae* aff Saturni skadehlighe aspect/ *ex domicilio fratrum & consanguinitatis* anstödt warder”.

95 Ibid. sig. B7v–B9v.

the house of politics. Great changes were expected both in religion and in worldly politics. There was a severe risk that the 'Mahometan sect' and the 'Turkish tyranny', would conquer new land, especially in the south and east. Yet although the most severe consequences of this eclipse would befall distant realms and countries, Denmark and Norway and the west part of Sweden would not be able to avoid its ominous influence, intensified as it would be by a conjunction between Mars and Saturn on 17 August.<sup>96</sup>

That the Sun and the Moon would both lose their glare within a fortnight was particularly ominous, and a clear reminder of the apocalyptic prophecies of the Second Advent in the Gospels.<sup>97</sup> The references to Islam and the Turks were also drenched with apocalyptic connotations. Identified with Gog and Magog in the Book of Revelation, the Turk was often referred to in Lutheran teaching as being the body of Antichrist in the eschatological drama, with the Papacy as the head. The medieval prophecy of how Gog and Magog in the last days, around the year 1600, would rule over Germany and Italy was well known and recurrently cited in apocalyptic works throughout the sixteenth century. In Swedish literature, it had been recently related by both Nicolaus Ringius and Georgius Olai.<sup>98</sup>

So far, the forecasts seemed concordant with the apocalyptic strains in contemporary astrological literature. But Paulinus would not bring the eschatological issues any further. A third, total lunar eclipse would occur on the evening of 6 August 1598. Although dominated by Venus, holding back the influence of a concurrent conjunction of Jupiter and Mars, this eclipse would be a benevolent token of peace and concord, good voyages at sea and prosperity in most trades and crafts, "which God would us gracefully

96 Ibid. sig. B10r-v.

97 Ibid. sig. B7r-v; see Mark 13:24; "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light"; cf. Matthew 24:30; Luke 21:25.

98 The prophetic statement of the invasion of the Turks around the year 1600 can be traced to the sayings attributed to the Franciscan friar and apocalyptic Johann Hilten (c. 1425–1507), who was active in Livonia in the latter part of the fifteenth century. Hilten's obscure and often fragmentary prophecies became a part of reformatorial tradition – partly through the writings of Melanchthon. One reason for his popularity among Lutherans was that he had predicted a great Reformation of the church would to begin around 1516; Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis* pp. 43, 98; Sandblad, *De eskatologiska föreställningarna* pp. 140–42, 156; for a contemporary Swedish account of the prophecies of Gog and Magog applied to the Turks, see N. Ringius, *Prognosticon Theologicum* sig. J4r–L5v, with references to Hilten sig. K3v–K4r; for a different approach, see G. Olai, *Calendarium duplex*. Olai is referring to a 'Turkish' prophecy, stating that their empire would come to an end 140 years (135 according to Christian chronology) after the fall of Constantinople, which means that it will occur in 1588. Yet Olai maintained that this event might be delayed through God's providence, "So that the fall will be even greater", cit. sig. Z2r.

grant”.<sup>99</sup> This consoling statement concludes the general forecasts, and the remaining chapters only discuss the weather through the coming seasons and the harvest prospects for the year. The prognostication ends with a pious prayer that God Almighty – who can rule all things according to his will – would endow all people a blissful new year and provide them with all they needed for body and soul.<sup>100</sup>

In the perspective of the apocalyptic motifs of the prognostication as a whole, Paulinus may have regarded the three eclipses in a symbolic sense. The calamities portended by the first two, and the hopes of peace and prospering in the future heralded by the third, corresponded to the trials and persecutions that would characterize the last age before the final redemption of mankind.<sup>101</sup> Yet compared to the prognostication for 1592, the unexpectedly optimistic conclusions of the forecasts for 1598 are striking. All strains of preaching and moral lectures that characterized the first prognostication are in the second one embedded in interpretations of what will occur according to the observed planetary aspects. When God is mentioned, he is primarily acting through the natural forces of stars and planets. Granted, it would still be necessary that every person “with incessant prayer and sighing turn to the Lord almighty, who can prevent all dangers, out of his inconceivable power and unfathomable mercy”. But here we also find appeals to “look after oneself well” and to act with care in the turbulent shifts of celestial influence.<sup>102</sup>

The difference is small, but significant. In the assurances made for 1592, repentance was the only way to avoid the divine punishment portended by the planetary aspects. In the text for 1598, there are choices of action that can affect the outcome of the auspices. The forecasts for 1598 also provided a more concrete warning to the reader than mere ordinary appeals for penitence – warnings with clear political implications.

During one of the eclipses of 1598, the partial dominance of Mercury and the influence of the Sun in the house of religion will be affected by

99 L. Paulinus Gothus, [Almanac for 1598] – *Prognosticon astrologicum ... M. D. XCIIX* sig. B10v–B11r.

100 Ibid. sig. B15r.

101 Expressed hopes of short periods of reconciliatory peace and prospering on Earth were generally features of millenarian or chiliastic literature; see below p. 259. Although Paulinus hardly embraced chiliast ideas, his statement alludes to similar notions in its optimistic awkwardness.

102 L. Paulinus Gothus, [Almanac for 1598] – *Prognosticon astrologicum ... M. D. XCIIX* sig. B6v; “Hwarföre är aff nödhenne/ at hwar och en seer sigh wäl före/ och söker til then Alzmechtighe HERran medh idkeligh böön och suckan/ som alle fahrligheter/ efter sin obegrijpelighe macht och grundlöse barmhertigheet förhindre kan”.



“the poisonous rays of Saturn and Mars”. These aspects were ominous to mercurial people such as *Philosophi*, secretaries, scribes, merchants and craftsmen who could not expect any success during the year. But even more misfortune and danger would fall upon persons of high station, both in the spiritual and worldly domains, “Wherefore great Potentates, Princes and Lords should in time safeguard themselves”. Paulinus even suggested that “A mighty Lord shall be in great mortal danger, and become assailed of his Realm and Regiment”.<sup>103</sup>

Obviously, this was the kind of ambiguous, yet suggestive statement that could be found in virtually any contemporary prognostication. But written in the summer of 1597, and seen in the light of the strained relationship between the king and the regent, it could undoubtedly be interpreted as a warning. In classical literature, similar prophecies had appeared as the implement of divine retribution upon the hubris of princes.<sup>104</sup> Still, Paulinus was careful not to indicate too much. The warning is not specified, and there are no threats of divine punishment or appeals to reconcile the contending factions. Yet, still the objective statement of the stars could be interpreted as a message directed to all political actors. For the only way to avoid the dangers of the future was to act cautiously and thus to defy the evil influence of the stars. Implicitly, he who allowed himself to be ruled by his passions and ambitions in accordance to the planetary aspects – and thus to risk the fragile peace of the realm – would also face the risk of ultimate demise.<sup>105</sup>

## Starry Rhetoric and Calendar Reform

Paulinus’ apology of astrological practice in the prognostication for 1598 may primarily have indicated that he – whatever his personal views on astrology may have been – regarded the current forecasts as crucial to the message he wanted to present to his readers. But taking the prognostication as a whole, this suggestion does not give the full picture. The apology of astrology may also have another function in relation to more principal and burning issues.

103 Ibid. sig. B6r–v; “Hwarföre stoore Potentater/ Furster och Herrer måghe sigh j tijdh grannelighen tagha til wahra ... En mechtigh Herre skal stå j stoor lijfzfahra/ och bliffue anfechtadt om sitt Rijke och Regemente.”

104 The most classical example is probably the prophecy of the Delphian oracle: “if Croesus should make war on the Persians, he would destroy a mighty empire”, Herodotus, *The Histories of Herodotus*, transl. by Henry Cary, D. Appleton & Co., New York 1899 1:55, p. 19.

105 Without presuming too much, this middle course answers quite well to the position taken by the clergy at the meeting of the estates in Stockholm 24 July–14 August 1597; cf. Montgomerie, *Värjostånd och lärostånd* pp. 167–168.

In a separate chapter in the prognostication, Paulinus presented a “short relation and instruction” on the new Gregorian calendar. According to Paulinus, this was a necessary discussion. There had been much unrest and dispute in the Christian community and among clerical and worldly authorities ever since Pope Gregory XIII “fifteen years ago” had commended the new calendar through “the Apostolic authority, he falsely appropriate himself”. The issue of the calendar had become especially grave since this ‘popish device’ had been accepted even in countries “who are agreed with us in Faith and the Christian Religion”.<sup>106</sup>

Indeed the introduction of the Gregorian calendar in 1582 had caused a wave of indignation all over the Lutheran world, from Germany to the Polish provinces in the Baltic. It had appeared in a tense situation. The Formula of Concord had been issued only five years previously as a final attempt to unite the struggling Lutheran factions. Consequently, in tracts, pamphlets and almanacs and prognostications, the new style was rejected as a new device of the papal Antichrist to deceive and splinter the true believers, and to confuse their chronological notions at a time when they should focus on the imminence of the last days and the final struggle of the faithful and righteous.<sup>107</sup>

Paulinus was not the first Swedish author who referred to these controversies. In 1587 Abraham Angermannus had indirectly related the calendar issue to the Liturgical Strife in Sweden, by presenting a disputation by Jacob Heerbrand (1521–1600) to Swedish readers. Thus the calendar reform was discussed as a part of the enticing *adiaphora* with which the Papacy strived to ensnare the faithful.<sup>108</sup> A year later Georgius Olai claimed that the Pope ought to have cancelled the reform, rather than causing “such Discord and Uproar within religion” – particularly in respect to “the short time, in which the World may still prevail”.<sup>109</sup>

106 L. Paulinus Gothus, [Almanac for 1598] – *Prognosticon astrologicvm ... M. D. XCIIIX* sig. A7r: “thet Nye Påweske Calendarium som Gregorius XIII. för 15. år sedan instichtede ... såsom ock nw vthi the Landskap som medh oss j Tronne och then Christelighe Religion eente äro/ brukelighit är”; Sig. AIIr: “Een kort berättelse och vndwijsning ... then Apostoliske myndigheet/ som han sigh falskelighen tilägner/ heele Christenheten påbudhit haffuer”.

107 Barnes, “Hope and Despair” p. 445; Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis* p. 112.

108 The quoted disputation is Jacob Heerbrand, *Disputatio de adiaphoris et calendario Gregoriano*, printed by Alexander Hock, Tübingen 1584, cited in A. Angermannus, *Forum adiaphororum* 1587 sig. B8r–K5v; Sandblad, *De eskatologiska föreställningarna* pp. 103–104.

109 G. Olai, *Calendarium duplex* sig. Drv; “then korta tijhen/ hwilken Werlden här efter stånda kan ... än at han sådana Oenigheet och Vproor vthi religionen affstadh komma skulle.”

Paulinus' case against the new calendar is based on a similar argumentation. Even if there were indeed some advantages compared to the old calendar, it was still clear that no papal decree "whatever semblance or embellishment it may have" could have any jurisdiction over the evangelical congregation, since the Pope was "the renounced enemy of Christ's communion and the veritable *Antichristus*", who had "placed himself in God's Temple".<sup>110</sup> Indeed the pope used the new calendar

... in the same way as he intended to sneak into our Fatherland Sweden through his Liturgical Missal in later years: Thus he looks for an opportunity to force himself into all evangelical communities with his poisonous, idolatry teachings, and comes so in a fair semblance in simple sheep's clothing, But inside he is a ravenous Wolf, who intends to cause the gravest harm and the eternal damnation of the Flock of Christ.<sup>111</sup>

In Paulinus' discussion, the Gregorian calendar was nothing but a new trickery. The Pope was desperately trying to regain his authority and revenue, which had been "much weakened" through the Reformation in "Sweden, Germany, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, England, Scotland and other countries".<sup>112</sup>

At first sight, the polemic seems to be a warning to worldly and clerical authorities not to fall for the papal enticements and be lured back into the Roman fold. But at the time Paulinus published his almanac, the calendar reform was hardly discussed in Sweden – at least there are virtually no other reports in contemporary sources. It may also be noted that Paulinus himself, in a comment in the prognostication for 1592, stated that the Julian calendar "that is still in use among us" counted on a year slightly longer than the actual revolution of the sun. This reveals that he had considered the Gregorian calendar as an alternative to the old style, yet at that time he

110 L. Paulinus Gothus, [Almanac for 1598] – *Prognosticon astrologicum ... M. D. XCIIIX* sig. A11v; "...oanseet hwadh skeen eller blommerning thet haffue kan ... Effter han är Christi Församblings affsagde fiende/ och then sanskyllighe *Antichristus*, som haffuer satt sigh j Gudz Tempel..."

111 Ibid. sig. A13v–A14r; "liike såsom han genom sin Liturgiske Messebook j förldihne åhr achtede snijke sigh in vthi wårt Fädhernesrijke Sverige: Så söker han ock tilfålle at inträngie sigh medh sin förgifftighe affgudeske läro vthi alla Euangeliske Församblingar/ och kommer så vnder itt fagert skeen vthi eenfaldighe fåraklådher/ Men inwertes är han en glupande Vlff/ then ther söker Christi Hiordz yttersta skadha och ewighe fördömmelse."

112 Ibid. sig. A14r; "... effter hans myndigheet och inkompst bleff mykit förswagat/ then tijdh han genom then H. Lutherum miste Sverige/ Tydskland/ Danmarck/ Franckerrijke/ Nidherland/ Engeland/ Skotland/ och andre Landskap/ weet han icke medh hwadh lämpe han til sitt wälde återkomma kan/ vthan igenom sådanne finantzterij..."

made no references to the ongoing controversy in Germany of which he must have been well aware.<sup>113</sup>

Six years later, Paulinus stressed that the Gregorian calendar could not be accepted “by those who profess the Augsburg Confession.” It would overthrow nothing less than “the right and veritable means for our Salvation, which is the Faith in our only Saviour and Redeemer Christ”.<sup>114</sup> Now the liturgy had been abolished, *Confessio Augustana* accepted and unity in religion achieved within the realm through the resolution of the Uppsala Synod. Therefore, it was crucial not to make any new concessions to the papacy, especially since the sovereign king was of Roman faith. To be sure, Paulinus stressed that the choice of calendar would normally be reckoned as a ‘free issue’ – *adiaphora* in other words – on which one for the sake of unity may tolerate divergent opinions with those “that are agreed with us in Faith”. Yet, it was essential that one should “not yield an inch to, or include those who are the enemies of the Gospel and the adversaries of Christ” – not even in such free matters – “lest you should seem to approve of their false faith, and thus wear the cloak on both shoulders”.<sup>115</sup>

In this formulation, Paulinus’ instruction on the new calendar reflected both the decisions of the Uppsala Synod and the tenth article of the Formula of Concord, where it was stated that in times of prosecution of the true faith, no concessions to the ‘enemies of the Gospel’ could be accepted, no matter how insignificant they appeared. The main reason why the new calendar had to be rejected was that through its popish origin it threatened the concord between all confessors of the true evangelical faith. In addition, it would threaten the Swedish ‘unity in religion’ that had been achieved at the Uppsala Synod.

In Paulinus’ discussion, the new calendar was mainly a focal point for the burning issues of faith and for how the true evangelical church should relate to the papacy at the end of time. In the instruction, Paulinus referred to a “general assembly and gathering” in Rome in 1328, where the Holy Roman Emperor “with the judgement and consent of all princes and bishops in Italy, Germany and France” declared the pope to be “an Arch-heretic,

113 Ibid. fol. 23r.

114 Ibid. sig. A15v; “Hwarföre kan thette Calendarium ingelunde aff them som then Augsburske Confession bekenne/ antaghit bliffue/ effter thet omkull slår thet rätte och sanskyllighe medhel til wår Saligheet/ som är Troon på wår eende Frelsare och Återlösare Christum.”

115 Ibid. sig. A15v; “...medh osz i Tronne eense äro ... Vthi lijke måtte skal man j sådanne frije ting icke til thet ringeste wijke eller inrymma them som äro Evangelij fiender och Christi mootståndere/ på thet man icke skal synes gille theres falske läro/ och dragha så kappen på bådhe axlarne ...”

the Antichrist, a Wolf in God's communion and a Thrice crowned Spectre". Thus the pope was revealed as a beast who demanded to be worshipped in God's place and strived after dominion in both spiritual and earthly things. Later on, Paulinus claimed, this resolution was confirmed by other emperors and bishops, and its validity had been proved through the exegetic comments of the Scriptures by many highly learned men.<sup>116</sup>

This passage in Paulinus' account is obviously a rhetoric example. It refers to the conflict between the Avignon pope, John XXII, and Louis IV the Bavarian, where the emperor – morally supported by leading representatives of the Franciscan Order and by intellectuals like William Ockham and Marsilius of Padua – defied the papal claims of earthly authority.<sup>117</sup>

In his argument for unity within the evangelical movement, and in his cause to demonstrate the devilish origin of the Papacy, Paulinus thus refers back to the continuous conflicts of religious and political supremacy during the Middle Ages. This was not an unusual approach. Neither the early reformers, nor the Lutherans of Paulinus' time regarded themselves as dividers or founders of a new religious communion. They saw themselves as the true heirs of the legacy of the early church and of the Apostolic tradition. Moreover, among Lutheran scholars it was commonplace to refer to movements and individuals whom they regarded as their predecessors in their struggle for the Gospel. Jan Hus (c. 1372–1415) is probably the most well-known example of such a historical character, who was regarded as a precursor of Luther himself.<sup>118</sup>

However, in the panegyric dedication to Duke Karl in the prognostication for 1598, Paulinus' narrative also involved the complicated and highly topical issues of worldly and spiritual authority and of the primacy over the church. Clearly the 'general assembly and gathering' in Rome in 1328 should be regarded as a parallel event to the 'free general *Consilium*' in Uppsala in 1593. Both assemblies were summoned at the initiative of Christian princes

116 Ibid. sig. A12r–A13r, cit. sig. A12v; "Hwarföre wij ock rättelighen hålla honom för Antichristo och then Babyloniske Skökian och Wildjwret/ om hwilke Johannes taler i Vppenbarelsen/ Cap: 17. Hwilken Titel honom icke nylighen vthan för 300. åhr sedhan widh pass/ är tillägnat aff Keysar Ludouico IIII. medh alle Fursters och Biscopars dom och samtyckie vthi Italien/ Tydskland och Franckerijke/ ther han vthi itt almenneligit Möthe och Samqwem bleff förschreffuen och vthropat för en Huffuudkettere/ Antichristo/ en Vlff i Gudz Försambling/ och ett Trekrönt Spöke/ som i Guddommelige/ Andelighe och Werldslighe saker Regementet åstundar".

117 For this conflict, see for instance Alois Schütz, "Ludwig der Bayer", NDB vol. 15, Berlin 1987 p. 338.

118 Cf. Robert W. Scribner, "Incombustible Luther: The Image of the Reformer in Early Modern Germany", *Past & Present*, No. 110 1986, p. 41.

of true faith who fought against the devilish intentions and ambitions of the papacy. Thus, in both passages the important role of the worldly authorities to protect and to promote true faith is emphasized. In the context of the current situation, with the potential threat posed by the religious convictions of the sovereign King Sigismund, Paulinus' contribution to the calendar controversy may be read as an appeal to Duke Karl. Thus Paulinus is urging the duke, not only to resist any attempt to introduce the new style in Sweden, but to take his responsibility as an evangelical prince to protect the religious unity of the realm.

Yet despite the unrelenting, anti-Catholic formulations, this was not a positioning in the political conflict between the Catholic king and the regent. The main task that Paulinus seemed to assign to Duke Karl and the worldly authorities was primarily to hold onto the unity in religion acquired through the resolution of the Uppsala Synod. This was a task that would not be helped by escalating the conflict with the king, or by raising the stakes in the political game. Neither should the subservient phrases be seen as an indication that Paulinus promoted princely supremacy over the church. For his subjection is conditional: as a representative of the academics and of the clergy, Paulinus will only accept the sovereignty of the regent as long as he respected the decisions of the 'free concilium' and consequently the formal freedom of the church and of its prelates and clergy. This emphasis on clerical independence had also been a main point in the postulates of the clergy at the Uppsala Synod.<sup>119</sup>

### Supporting the Argument

Even if the role of the clergy was being played down in the dedication, written as it was with a clear address to the duke, the prognostication was obviously meant to be spread among scholars and clergymen, friends and colleagues who were likely to share views, opinions, hopes and fears with the author. For the Swedish clergy – at least among the dominant faction – evangelical faith had not been secured at the Uppsala Synod. Although the king's Catholicism would remain a main issue, they did not fully trust the worldly regime under Duke Karl either. Apparently they feared for the independence of the church under his rule, even in doctrinal issues. From the point of view of the leading circles of the Swedish clergy, the political and religious struggle had yet to be fought, as a part of the good struggle of the faithful at the end of time.

From this perspective, Paulinus' almanac and prognostication appears

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119 See Jonsson pp. 17–25.

on the whole as a general warning to worldly authorities and as an attempt to mobilize the clergy not to make any concessions in faith or ceremonies or to deviate from the decisions of the Uppsala Synod – not even on issues that might seem indifferent. Weighing the astrological predictions together with the excursus of the Gregorian calendar there seems to be a balance. Both features were used by Paulinus to support the struggle of the Swedish clergy to maintain its position as an independent corporation, responsible for the creed and the spiritual welfare of the realm. From this perspective, the clergy could accept the protection and supervision of the worldly authorities represented by Duke Karl, but would still claim the right to be freed from its intervention.

When comparing Paulinus' two almanacs, it is important not to focus on the particular difference that has been regarded the most conspicuous in the eyes of posterity: the obviously different approaches towards astrology. Seeing the 1598 almanac as a whole, placed in its proper context, it is possible to argue that Paulinus, like many German clergymen before him, used the almanac as a channel for his preaching. Thereby it may be argued that he adjusted his presentation to the standards of the genre. However, when considering Paulinus' quite emphatic defence of astrology however, it should also be remembered that he was arguing, not primarily as a priest and clergyman, but as a scholar and academic. Thus, the formal authority he presented was of a professor in mathematics and astronomy at Uppsala. Consequently, he took upon himself the role, not of the preacher, but of the philosopher and interpreter of the Word of God as it was revealed in the Book of Nature. It was from this position he argued as he strived to pilot the Ship of St. Peter among the perilous shores of a condemned world. His rhetoric was built upon the means this role would grant him. Under these circumstances it would have been an effective method to undermine virtually all support of his argumentation, not to defend astrology as an allowable and true Christian practice.

# Monopolizing Prophecy

‘And this change, O most learned Prince, has doubtless been brought to pass by the powerful incantations of those wicked persons who now call themselves kings and queens of Narnia.’

‘I am rather of the opinion,’ said Rabadash, ‘that it has come about by the alteration of the stars and the operation of natural causes.’

C.S. Lewis, *The Horse and his Boy*

## Astrology and the Dark Arts

Regardless of his personal convictions and motives, Paulinus came out in favour of astrology in his prognostication for 1598. Moreover, as he passed this verdict as professor of astronomy at the venerable university of Uppsala, it was a statement of some dignity. Apparently, astrological forecasts could be regarded as an allowable and useful Christian practice, and an indispensable part of the starry arts.

However, twenty years later when he returned to the issue, he had reversed his approach. *Ethica christiana* was an extensive work Paulinus wrote as bishop of Strängnäs, published in seven volumes between 1617–1630. Originally the *Ethica* was intended as an aid for catechism teaching and daily pastoral care of the clergy in the diocese. Here the evangelical faith was expounded together with a code of Lutheran civics and ethics.

The first volume of the *Ethica* concerned “the Law of God, or the Canon of Christian Life”. Here Paulinus discussed astrology and ‘starry conjectures’, not only as vain and futile practices, but as sheer superstition, exercised in defiance of the very first commandment of the Law of God. Astrologers and augurs, and those who consulted them, were sorted among pagans who worshipped false gods, Epicureans who believed in no god apart from their own carnal desires, and papists and liturgists who confessed the name of God but did not worship him by heart. Indeed, the astrologers were hardly better off than the worst kind of idolaters, who made pacts with the devil and practiced forbidden, magical arts.<sup>1</sup>

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1 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Ethica christiana I* pp. 66–80, cit. title page.



Thus the parallel between astrology and magic is maintained from the beginning. According to Paulinus, *magia* was originally a Persian word, simply meaning 'wisdom' or 'reason', and as such it could refer to allowable knowledge "either in the H. Scriptures, or Philosophical arts".<sup>2</sup> However, the term was generally used to signify *magia illicita*, meaning 'forbidden prudence' or just plain superstition, a category that Paulinus divided into the subcategories divination and sorcery. According to Paulinus, it could not be denied that these forbidden practices implied scholarly studies. With reference to Pliny's natural history, he traced the origin of the magical arts to Zoroaster, "an excellent artist in the courses of the Heavens and other natural things". But this scholarship Zoroaster had achieved, only "through a secret Compact with the Devil".<sup>3</sup>

The correspondence between idolatrous divination, illicit magic and astrology was also stressed by Johannes Rudbeckius in his *Homily of Penitence* from 1615. "Besides God", he thundered from the pulpit, "a large amount [of people] worship the devil and his delusions, with conjuring, superstitions, Necromancy and Sorcery". In the same breath he pronounced a verdict over all those who tolerated astrology and soothsaying. According to Rudbeckius, it had gone so far that astrology

... is openly lectured and printed among us, yes, even that they who do such things have allowance and employment. One has his *Thema nativitatis* erected and want to know from the Aspects of the planets what will happen and befall unto him: the other, when he will travel by land or water or begin anything notable, he asks Stargazers for advice, on which day he shall do it; is that not so? Yet this is apparent, recognized and gross idolatry among us who want to be Christians.<sup>4</sup>

2 Ibid. p. 192; "... loffigit Förstånd/ anthen i Then H. Scrifft/ eller Philosophiske konster".

3 Ibid. p. 194; "Vthi synderhet skrifwa Plinius och Iustinius/ at widskepelse/ leferij och troldom/ skola haffua theres begynnelse ... Vtff en förnemligh konstner uthi Himmels lopp och andra Naturliga ting/ benemd Zoroasters/ Hwilken sådant lärde genom hemligit Compact med Diefwlen".

4 Johannes Rudbeckius, *Boot och Båtrings Predikan*, sig. C2v; "En stoor deel bredhe widh Gudh dyrka dieffulen och hans spökelse/ medh signelse/ widskepelse/ Swartekonst och Truldom. ... likwål kunne wij sådant wål lidha/ at thet vppenbarligha hoos oss läres och tryckes/ ja ock at the haffua vnderhold och bestelning som sådant göra. Then ene låter erigera sit Thema nativitatis och wil weta aff planeternes Aspecter hwadh honom henda och wedherfaras skal: Then andre när han will resa til land eller watn eller någhot annat merkelighit begynna/ så fråghar han Stiernekikare til rådhz/ på hwadh dagh han thet göra skal: är thet icke så? Lickwål är thetta itt vppenbara/ bekendt och grofft Affgudherij ibland oss som wele wara Christne."

## 'Planet Reading' and Legal Practice

Obviously this association with illicit magic had the potency of turning astrology into a nasty matter for practitioners of the art.

During the sixteenth century, a theocratic view of legislation had become dominant within the Lutheran world. Magical crimes like *maleficium*, malevolent sorcery, tended to be regarded as being offences, not just against man, but against religion and even against God himself. In trials of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Sweden it was the very act of sorcery that was punished, rather than the harm done by magical means – as had been the previous juridical custom. As the ethical norm of this new legal trend, the Old Testament was regularly given primacy at the expense of the New, and the necessity to punish practitioners of magic was stressed in order to prevent divine retribution from falling upon the whole people. Statutes of the Pentateuch were invoked in legal practice, sanctioned by the worldly authorities and eventually codified in an appendix to the Code of Laws in 1608. As for sorcery, the statement of Exodus was normative: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."<sup>5</sup>

In practice, death sentences and executions for sorcery became more frequent after the turn of the seventeenth century. In Östergötland, severe persecutions broke out as the autonomous ruler of the province, Duke Johan (1589–1618), issued a decree in 1614 with harsh and rather arbitrary penalties stipulated for sorcery. A nervous atmosphere had spread among the clergy and interacted with the personal fears of the duke, whose health was failing. According to contemporary accounts, it was Claudius Prytz (1585–1658), chaplain at the ducal court, who had instigated the trials when he uncovered a witch who had put a hex upon the duke and his wife. At least ten women were executed for witchcraft between 1616 and 1620.<sup>6</sup>

5 Cit. Exodus 22:18; Bengt Ankarloo, *Trolldomsprocesserna i Sverige*, Rättshistoriskt bibliotek vol. 36, Stockholm 1984 pp. 52–65; 95–102; Linda Oja, *Varken Gud eller natur: synen på magi i 1600- och 1700-talets Sverige*, Symposium, Stockholm 2000 pp. 59–63; Marie Lennersand, *Rättvisans och allmogens beskyddare: Den absoluta staten, kommissionerna och tjänstemännen, ca 1680–1730*, Studia Historica Upsaliensia, Uppsala 1999 p. 26; cf. Henrik Munktel, "Mose lag och svensk rättsutveckling. Några huvuddrag", *Lychnos* 1936 pp. 136–139; for a discussion on the notion of divine retribution, see Göran Malmstedt, *Helgdagsreduktionen: övergången från ett medeltida till ett modernt år i Sverige 1500–1800*, Göteborg 1994 pp. 193–199; although often regarded a 'Protestant' or 'Biblicist' phenomenon, this view had deep roots in religious thinking and was by no means unfamiliar to Catholic standards; cf. Scribner, "The Reformation, Popular Magic" pp. 485–486.

6 Ankarloo pp. 70–71; Johan Alfred Westerlund & Johan Axel Setterdahl, *Linköpings stifts herdaminne. D. 3*, Linköping, 1917–1919 pp. 94–95; Duke Johan was half-brother to Sigismund and cousin to Gustavus Adolphus, hereditary prince and from 1606

Previously, two other cases had occurred in Östergötland, indicating that improper use of astrology also could have juridical consequences. During the infamous general visitation and inquisition of Archbishop Abraham Angermannus in 1596, a man called Clas Planetläsare (i.e., 'Planet reader') was accused for having exercised "much superstition".<sup>7</sup> In May 1603 a certain Olof Djäkne was convicted in Vadstena for the "conjuraton and superstition he practiced in the district with planet reading and otherwise." In the latter case, the penalty for the offence is settled in plain text: "And was for this sake banished [from] all Östergötland. [If he is] discovered in the province hereafter, [he] shall hang."<sup>8</sup>

In both cases, the vague distinction between sorcery and divination was virtually nonexistent. 'Planet reading' seems to have signified some kind of incantation, performed in order to call down astral forces or to invoke celestial intelligences or daemons. In context, the word 'read' (Sw. *läsa*) should not be understood in terms of interpreting the configurations of the stars, but in pronouncing a verbal incantation. This meaning of the word 'read' also appears in contemporary legislation and court records, not only in Sweden, but in Scandinavia as a whole. In a case from the city of Malmö in 1578, a woman called Inger Hyrens was accused of having performed a ritual of exorcism, in which "she began to read and beseech the sun and the moon and the stars in heaven".<sup>9</sup> In the sentence of Olof Djäkne, his 'planet reading' also seems to be mentioned as part of his conjurations.

As such, astral and planetary invocation (generally performed with

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autonomous ruler of a duchy with its heartlands in the province of Östergötland; cf. Folke Lindberg, "Hertig Johan av Östergötland och hans furstendöme", HT 1941 p. 117.

7 *Ärkebiskop Abrahams räfstr: Efter originalakterna*, Otto Holmström (ed.), Wretmans tryckeri, Uppsala 1901 p. 155; "Liungh sochen. Clas Planetläsare brukar myckin wyskepelse."

8 *Vadstena stads äldsta tänkeböcker ("Domboken") 1577–1610*, Almqvist & Wiksells boktryckeri AB, Uppsala 1945–52 p. 335, "Item blef Oluf dieckne tiltalet om micket signelsse och wiskäpelsse, hann bruket ij bygdenn medh planeteläsningh och elliest. Och blef för then skull förwijster hela Östergötlandh. Finnes han hernäst i landet, skall hengias."; cf. Henrik Munktel, "Från gången tid. Ett par anteckningar om spådoms- och signeriediktet", *Svensk juristtidning* 1942 pp. 330–331.

9 Record of the municipal court of Malmö 1 oktober 1578, printed in *Malmö tingbøger 1577–83 og 1588–90. Udgivet ved af Selskabet for udgivelse af kilder til dansk historie*, Köpenhamn 1968 p. 54; "Saa begynte hun adt læse och formane soel og maane og stierneerne paa himmelen." For a similar application of 'reading', see the first post-reformatory edict on sorcery in Norway, issued for Stavanger och Bergenshus in 1584, quoted in Hans Eyvind Næss, *Trolldomsprosessene i Norge på 1500–1600-tallet*, Stavanger 1981 p. 79; for the trial of a sorcerer and 'planet reader' outside Scandinavia, see Edmund Kern, "Confessional Identity and Magic in the Late Sixteenth Century: Jakob Bithner and Witchcraft in Styria", *Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol. 25 no. 2 1994 p. 335.

hymns and astrological talismans) had long been incorporated in learned magic, firmly rooted in scholastic as well as Neoplatonic philosophy.<sup>10</sup> Obviously, the discussion on planetary intelligences or *daemones* concerned matters of a subtle and esoteric character, which were difficult for the unlearned to obtain. Still, the three cases mentioned above indicate that astral magic was also practiced by people with little or no bookish education. Inger Hyrens seems to have been a woman of humble origins, excluded from all scholarly learning, while the nickname 'Djäkne' suggests that Olof had been a student.<sup>11</sup> Thus he and Clas Planetläsare probably belonged to a certain category of vagrant practitioners of magic among runaway priests, sextons and students, "often adventurous and disreputable characters", to quote Bengt Ankarloo.<sup>12</sup> This probably made it easier for the authorities to categorize their practice of 'planet reading' as a kind of sorcery.

The profession of the learned astrologer was not so easily rejected. In Paulinus' *Ethica*, astrology and divination were clearly separated from sorcery – a crucial distinction, since it was mainly the second category that would bring the death penalty in court. Yet in their essence, idolatrous divination and devilish sorcery both infringed the first commandment. *Magia Astrologica & Incantatrix* – astrological and incantative magic – were parallel categories.<sup>13</sup>

## Astrology and confessionalization

Despite the clear verdicts of prelates like Paulinus and Rudbeckius, there were ontological differences between various 'orthodox' standpoints in the discussions on astrology. In his tract *Magia incantatrix* from 1632, Ericus Johannis Prytz (1587–1637) would refer to the general influence of the planets as an example of natural causes of earthly phenomena.<sup>14</sup> For his part,

10 Cf. Brian P. Copenhaver, "Renaissance magic and Neoplatonic Philosophy: 'Ennead' 4.3–5 In Ficino's 'De vita coelitus comparanda'" in Gian Carlo Garfagnini (ed.), *Marsilio Ficino e il ritorno di Platone: studi e documenti*, Olschki editore, Florence 1986 pp. 353–354, 364–366.

11 Originally a *djäkne* signified a deacon or some kind of office holder in medieval clerical hierarchy. In the seventeenth century however, it usually referred to the disciples of the cathedral schools and young students, probably as they executed clerical and liturgical duties as part of their education; see *Ordbok över svenska språket, utgiven av Svenska Akademien* (SAOB).

12 Cit. Ankarloo p 51.

13 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Ethica christiana I* pp. 171, 201; in Swedish clerical and juridical sources, sorcery is generally divided between *signeri*, downright verbal magic and *lövjeri*, which is "its operative equivalent" working with "all kinds of magical adjuncts"; cit. Ankarloo p. 50.

14 Ericus Johannis Prytz, *Magia incantatrix*, Cod. Linc. Nv20 fol. 63r; Ericus was the

Paulinus played down their significance. In the *Ethica* he even categorically denied that conjectures that actually had “some Reason with them” had anything to do with “the aspects of the Stars, the 12 heavenly Houses, or other Fantastic rules, That Stargazers prescribe”. Allowable conjectures concerning the weather and suitable times for household business could only be referred to “the orbit of the Sun and the Moon, and the conditions of the times.”<sup>15</sup>

Yet as a whole, Paulinus’ censure against astrology in the *Ethica* relates to a general trend of confessionalization, mirroring an ambition of rooting out the ‘Popish leaven’, religious heresy, sorcery and superstition. As suggested by Sten Lindroth, the period was characterized by an “intensified interest for the issues of orthodoxy” and by “the principle of religious intolerance”, codified in the statutes of Örebro the very same year as the first volume of the *Ethica* was published – 1617.<sup>16</sup>

As Lindroth remarked, this development had clear political connotations. Since the revolution of the 1590s, the confessional issues had been emphasized as the main basis for the legitimacy of the new regime and as the primary token of loyalty to the ruling branch of the Vasa dynasty. The statutes of Örebro, with their harsh penalties for suspected Catholic renegades, were directly related to the dynastic conflict with Poland.<sup>17</sup> But it is also clear that the struggle against the machinations of the papal Antichrist and the ambition to systematically root out heresy and sorcery should be seen as expressions of an apocalyptic understanding of the world, and of the last struggle of the faithful against the onset of a devilish reality.<sup>18</sup>

From this perspective, what appears to be hardening attitudes towards astrology might be part of a general ambition to eradicate not only harmful magic, but indeed every practice that could not be accepted from an orthodox Lutheran perspective. This would include surviving Catholic customs and prayers, as well as pure deception and charlatanry. Thus Paulinus altered outlook and the anathema he pronounced on the astrologers, could be used

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younger brother of Claudius Prytz.

15 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Ethica christiana* I p. 203; “Somblige aff förb.te Gisninger kunna någorlunda hafwa Skääl medh sigh ... icke efter Stiernornes aspecter/ The 12 Him-melske Hws/ eller andra Phantastiske reglor/ Som Stiernekikare föreskrifua: Vtan synnerlige efter Solennes och Månens lopp/ och tidzens omstendigheter.”

16 Lindroth, *Paracelsismen i Sverige* p. 421; “Ett stegrat intresse för renlärighetsfrågorna gör sig med tiden gällande ... i Örebro stadga 1617 proklamerades, ehuru med udden blott mot papismen, den religiösa ofördragsamhetens princip.”

17 Ibid; cf. Michael Roberts, *Gustavus Adolphus: A History of Sweden 1611–1632. Vol. 1, 1611–1626*, London 1953 pp. 374–375; Östergren pp. 176–177.

18 Ankarloo p. 57.

to confirm the theories of 'Lutheran Orthodoxy' and confessionalization as a movement to achieve social discipline and the 'Reformation of Popular Culture' as the nemesis of magic in early modern Europe.

Yet as we have seen, Paulinus' prognostication for 1598 had by no means been less 'orthodox' than his *Ethica*. On the contrary, it was a work more or less dedicated to the issues of true and pure faith. The 1598 prognostication paraded virtually every quality one could expect of an 'orthodox' text, including the claim of primacy of the interpretations and of the religious standpoints represented, the emphasis on the necessary unity of all true believers, and the catholicity of the true Christian church throughout history – primarily expressed by references to the medieval conflicts between the pope and the emperor.<sup>19</sup>

### Comets and Astrology

As discussed in the previous chapter, the different approaches towards astrology in Paulinus' works may be regarded as an issue of context. Obviously the prognostication for 1598 and the *Ethica* belonged to different genres. Moreover, Paulinus' role had also changed. His promotion to the episcopal chair had widened his sphere of authority as well as his responsibility for the faith and moral life of his subordinates, both clergymen and laymen. But still the shift in the argument is radical. Between his prognostication and the *Ethica* however, Paulinus had published another work where astrological methods and practices were discussed. This work was *Cometoscopia*, a tract on the interpretation of "Comets, and Fiery blazes and Wonder signs", written in the wake of the appearance of a comet in the autumn of 1607 – later known as Halley's Comet.<sup>20</sup>

Even though Paulinus' tract is unusually extensive, it may be counted as a work within a vast literary genre. Virtually every comet observed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries would be followed by a torrent of tracts and pamphlets, issued in order to explain their ominous significance and to provide advice about how one should act when they appeared.

In accordance with Aristotelian physics, comets were generally regarded

19 In this discussion I follow John B. Henderson, *The Construction of Orthodoxy and Heresy: Neo-Confucian, Islamic, Jewish, and Early Christian Patterns*, State University of New York Press, Albany, NY 1998 p. 85: "All of the orthodox traditions surveyed here attributed to themselves certain qualities, particularly *primacy* (or originality), *a true transmission* from the founder to the present day, *unity*, *catholicity*, and a conception of orthodoxy as a *middle way* between heretical extremes."

20 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Cometoscopia Comet Spegell/ Thet är: Christeligh och nödhörffigh Vnderwijsning/ om Cometer/ sampt Eldzblåsz och Vndertekn*, printed by Ignatius Meurer, Stockholm 1613.

as meteorological rather than celestial phenomena. Their significance was not necessarily interpreted in astrological terms, but since they appeared in the night sky and seemed to correlate with the planets and the Zodiac signs, they were generally heeded by the astrologers. Among the natural philosophers the origin and ominous significance of comets was also mainly associated with astrology. The planets were believed to influence the burning, desiccating properties of comets, as well as their tendency to spread poisonous, corruptive fumes and miasmata in the air and over the earth. Thus, in the comet tracts the calamities portended were generally explained as natural. But regardless of the theories invoked, the comets tended to be treated primarily as instruments of God's justified wrath, and in the end as presages of the imminent Last Judgement.<sup>21</sup>

Admonitions to penitence were recurrent themes in the comet tracts, and *Cometoscopia* is no exception. It is a religious text to its core, filled with grave warnings to the Christian congregation, to fear God, repent of their sins and to pray for forgiveness and mercy in face of the final trials of the world. In *Cometoscopia*, the discussion of astrology concerned questions of how comets should be interpreted and what methods of doing so would take precedence in the intellectual and theological discussion. Eventually, the question of whether astrological methods should be used to divine the significance of comets concerned the issue of who had the ultimate right to interpret the prophetic and apocalyptic messages provided by portents and wonder signs.

## The Usurper and the Scourge of God

In accordance with the unstable nature of all *meteora* and fiery blazes, the comet had appeared without warning upon the dark autumn sky in late September 1607. The harvest was over; the for once abundant crops had been gathered, and the people of the Northern realms should have been able to look to the approaching winter with confidence. Instead they turned their faces to the sky in fear and beheld the hairy star that lightened the spheres of the heavens with a spectral glare.<sup>22</sup>

According to the scholars, whether they were priests, medics or astrologers, every apocalyptic scourge could be expected in the wake of the comet. False teachers would cause dissension and bewilderment in religious

21 Sara Schechner Genuth, *Comets, Popular Culture, and the Birth of Cosmology*, Princeton, NJ 1997 pp. 38–50, 91–103.

22 Bill of intercession (Sw. *Böndagsplakat*), 4 October 1607, *Wj Carl then nijonde medh Gudz nådhel Sweriges/ Göthes/ Wendes ... etc. Konung ...*, printed by Andreas Guterwitz, Stockholm 1607.

matters; the crops would fail, with food shortages, heightened bread prices and starvation as a result, and diseases and pestilence would desolate whole regions. Hard times would provoke dissent among peasantry and craftsmen, and at anytime the unrest could explode in revolt and rebellion, religious schisms and war between nations.<sup>23</sup>

Moreover, many scholars considered – with support from classical authorities – that of all portents and presages of unrest and distress, comets were the strongest indicators of the coming fall of realms and kingdoms, and of the demise of rulers, of kings, princes and lords.<sup>24</sup> The comet seen in 1558, still in living memory of many people, had been regarded as a presage of the deaths of the Emperor Charles V and Christian III of Denmark. In Sweden, it was generally associated with the death of Gustav Vasa in 1560. Another comet, seen in 1590, was later interpreted as a presage of the death of Johan III.<sup>25</sup> The phenomenon was commonly recognized. In a tract, published when the comet of 1607 was still visible, Sigfridus Forsius gave a medical explanation with reference to the desiccating properties of comets: they made man and beast hot and agitated, wherefore “many persons of high degree, of worries, wrath and bitterness, fall into grave and severe diseases, and die away”.<sup>26</sup>

Not surprisingly, the former Swedish regent Duke Karl, now elected and recognized as king by the estates, became disturbed by contemplating these future prospects. A bill of intercessions was issued 4 October 1607, referring to the gruesome portent.<sup>27</sup> But since the comet had “instilled fear of some instant danger” within the whole realm, the king had also demanded a reliable judgement of what could be predicted from the phenomenon. While residing at the royal estate of Väsby near the silver mine of Sala in Västmanland, the king had therefore summoned Laurentius Paulinus to the court, well knowing that “no one in the whole fatherland” could be compared to Paulinus “when it came to inquire on Astronomical matter”.<sup>28</sup>

23 Cunningham & Grell pp. 13–14.

24 Schechner Genuth p. 28; Björn Hedberg, *Kometskräck: En studie i folkliga och lärda traditioner*, Uppsala 1990 pp. 54–59.

25 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Cometoscopia* pp. 103, 107.

26 Sigfridus Aronus Forsius, *Een berättelse/ Och eenfalligh: Judicium, Om then Cometen som nu j thetta Åår M DC VII. j Septembri och Octobri Månader/ j 34. daghar widh pasz syntes/ och ännw til är ... Allom fromom och Gudhfruchtigom til vnderwijsning och bootförmåning.*, printed by Anund Olufsson, Stockholm 1607, sig. C2v; “...ther igenom många höghe Personer för mycket bekymmer, wredhe och bitterheet, falla i swåre och häfftighe siukdomar, och döo sin koosz.”

27 Bill of Intercession, 4 October 1607.

28 Westhius, *Memoria Parentalis* sig. C2v; “... qvi cum magnitudine insigni, aspectu terribili, nec non motu planè admirabili, & omnibus Regni incolis ... neminem



According to Paulinus' own account, the king exhorted him to write a tract on comets and their significance, "Which I then instantly put together (after the measure of my humble talent)", and the completed manuscript was presented to the king in Örebro the following winter. Apparently it was favourably received, since the king ordered Paulinus to have "the same Tract" translated from the vernacular into Latin and printed "in both languages".<sup>29</sup>

When discussed in the literature, the commission given to Paulinus in 1607 has primarily been regarded as the whim of a frightened monarch, who had the same firm beliefs in portents and supernatural signs as he is said to have had in the compelling influence of the celestial bodies. It has been suggested that Paulinus was sent for, because the king "got worried and decided to summon some competent person, of whom he could gain reliable explanations concerning the significance of the awful comet".<sup>30</sup>

There is some support for this assumption in the sources. In another account, enclosed in a sermon held at the funeral of Karl's sister Sofia (1547–1611), Paulinus claimed that Karl had taken the sinister significance of the comet to heart, as if it concerned him personally. "I know well", the king had told his chaplains, "that as Comets appeared before the deadly departures of my late Father and Brother King Johan, thus this Comet is a certain Sign and Presage, that my days are soon counted, and the time steadily approaches [when] I shall part from this quarrelsome world".<sup>31</sup> Therefore the clergy should no longer pray for his reign to become long and prosperous, but only to be peaceful and quiet until the end: "When God

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in universâ Patriâ, qvo ad rerum Astronomicarum cognitionem, cum *Paulino* esse conferendum".

- 29 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Cometoscopia* sig. A4r; "När then Cometen sigh yppade/ Åhr 1607 ... Nådigst befalte/ vppå Wäsby Gård/ tijt iagh tå effter H.K.May. Nådige wilia kalladt wardt/ at iagh skulle Skriffteligen författa en Tractat om Cometer: Hwilken när iagh tå strax (effter min ringa gåffuos mått) stälte/ och Högbemälte H.K. May. Vthi Oerebroo Möthe/ Winteren näst föliande/ vnderdånighen lät presentere/ gaf H.K. May. i befallning/ at iagh samma Tractat på latin affsättia/ och sedhan på bägge Tungomålen aff Trycket skulle vthgå låtha."
- 30 Cit. Lundström, *Laurentius Paulinus Gothus* p. 93; cf. Nordenmark, *Astronomiens historia i Sverige* pp. 17–18; Sandblad, *De eskatologiska föreställningarna* pp. 249–250.
- 31 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Symbolum Carolinum Thens Stormechtigste/ Höghborne Furstes och Herres Her Carls Then IX.des ... Symbolum, Iehova solatium meum, Gudh min Tröst*, printed by Ignatius Meurer, Stockholm 1613 p. 24; "När H.K.M. blef varse then Cometen som syntes/ Åhr 1607. På hwilken tijdh H.K.M. war stadd på Wäsby gård/ sade han til sina Hoffpredikanter: Jag weet wäl/ at såsom Cometer sig yppade för min Salige Herfaders och Herbroders K. Johans/ etc. dödellige affgång/ Så är och thenna Cometen itt wist Tekn och Förbudh/ at mine dagar äro snart räknade/ och tijden fast nalkas at iagh skal kilias ifrå thenna bullersamma werldenne".

so decides, I am ready to follow, For God is my Consolation, who shall eventually rouse me from the Earth”.<sup>32</sup>

Obviously, Paulinus’ account was nothing more than a pious and edifying tale, where the late king was portrayed as a model Christian prince in his readiness to follow God’s final call. Yet, still the commission entrusted to Paulinus reveals an experienced need for an authoritative explanation of the comet passage of 1607. Clearly the comet would have been ominous to any ruler, but for Karl the passage was particularly badly timed. As later pointed out by one of Paulinus’ early biographers, the king was *nuper coronato* – newly crowned – when the comet appeared. Barely six months had passed since Karl, after long and conflict-laden negotiations with the estates, had been anointed in the cathedral of Uppsala 15 March 1607.<sup>33</sup> Taken as a pretext that God regarded the accession with disapproval, and that Karl’s days on the throne were numbered, the comet could be used as an argument against the questioned legitimacy of his regime. And as we will see in the following, the motives behind the king’s request were probably more complicated than simply calming his anxieties. It was not just consolation for his corporal and spiritual welfare that Karl demanded from Paulinus.

## The Context of 1607

Although the outcome of the revolution of the 1590s may appear as a coup d’état, staged by one man to usurp the throne, Karl had been dependent on the support of the estates to sustain his accession to power. However, after the civil war and the ratification of the deposition of Sigismund in 1599, Karl’s dependence was turned to interdependence. There was no turning back, and to the representatives of the estates, it was now clear that they would stand and fall with the duke. Thus it lay in their interest for him to be recognized as king – a title he eventually claimed in 1603 and which was secured to his heirs by the Act of Succession, passed by the estates in Norrköping the following year.<sup>34</sup>

Yet, despite interdependence and continuous executions and political purges to suppress the opposition, opposition is precisely what faced Karl at the many meetings and diets held throughout his reign. The nobility regarded Karl’s power politics with suspicion and viewed with contempt his ‘rule of secretaries’ – the systematic placement of commoners in influential

32 Ibid. p. 25; “När Gudhi så synes är iag redhbogen til at fölia/ Ty Gudh är mijn Tröst/ hwilken skal på sidstone vpwäckia migh vtaff Jordenne”.

33 Westhius, *Memoria Parentalis* sig. C2v; “... ipsi *Regi Caroli*, nuper coronato ...”

34 See Sven Lundkvist “Hertig Karl och kungakronan 1598–1604”, HT 1965 pp. 129–152.

positions within the administration. The aggressive war politics against Poland in the Baltic, maintained through heavy war taxes and conscriptions, was criticised by the peasant estate, and in their petitions Karl was occasionally and not unjustly accused of being the cause of the war. Relations to foreign powers were also weak, since Catholic as well as Protestant princes regarded Karl as a usurper. Until his death Karl had difficulty making allies and achieving foreign recognition of his regime.<sup>35</sup>

Nor had the previous conflicts with the clergy been settled. During the 1590s, the issue of religion had played a major part, both in the ambition of estates, factions and corporations to put joint pressure on the Catholic king in order to restrain his scope of action, and eventually in legitimatizing the final act of deposing him.<sup>36</sup> Now a similar strategy was used against Karl. After his recognition as sovereign ruler, Karl claimed not only the title of defender of the church, but also the role of its primate, responsible for the continuous reformation and eventually for the formulation of the creed. As such, he would not let his policies be restrained, either by binding himself to the *Confessio Augustana*, or to the resolution of the Uppsala Synod – even though a great deal of his legitimacy rested on these documents.<sup>37</sup>

Consequently, the new Archbishop Olaus Martini (1557–1609) as well as Laurentius Paulinus – now arguing from his position as senior professor of Theology at Uppsala – had openly rejected the theological views of the king. The Bishop of Västerås, Olaus Stephani Bellinus (d. 1619), had accused Karl of planning to introduce the Reformed Heidelberg Catechism in Sweden. Thus, the old accusations of Calvinism towards Karl reappeared, ensuring that he could not be regarded as being of pure faith, wherefore his position as *custos ecclesiae* could be called in question.<sup>38</sup>

This prevailing opposition would arouse the suspicions of the king. In his summons to the estates' assembly in Stockholm in the summer of 1605 – mainly arranged in order to deal with old enemies – Karl referred to conspiracies and 'papist' machinations in virtually every corner of the realm.<sup>39</sup> After the disastrous military defeat at Kirchholm (now Salaspils) in Livonia in September the same year, the enthusiasm for the war politics sank even

35 Roberts, *The Early Vasas* pp. 395–397; Montgomery, *Värjostånd och lärostånd* pp. 220–230; cf. Sven A Nilsson, "Politisk mobilisering i den svenska militärstaten", *Scandia* 1994 pp. 117–119.

36 Östergren pp. 89–90.

37 Montgomery, *Värjostånd och lärostånd* pp. 218–228.

38 Montgomery, *Värjostånd och lärostånd* pp. 262–263; Holmquist, *Svenska kyrkans historia vol. III:2*, p. 276; Hellström, "Laurentius Paulinus Gothus" p. 370.

39 Montgomery, *Värjostånd och lärostånd* p. 258.

further, and the need grew to find scapegoats and enemies within.<sup>40</sup> In December 1605, a royal secretary and former student from the Jesuit college of Braunsberg, Petrus Eriki (c. 1580–1606), was arrested after being exposed as a concealed Catholic. The evidence was thin, but in his correspondence with foreign princes, Karl apparently seized the opportunity to depict the affair as a malevolent design of the Polish king towards his own life. At the same time, he delivered a political message to the estates that could not be misinterpreted. At a meeting in Örebro in April 1606, Petrus Eriki was publicly executed by having his limbs crushed before his heart was cut out and placed in his mouth. Hereby Karl stated that there would be neither peace, nor negotiations of armistice with such a treacherous enemy as the Polish king – and there would be no flagging of the war efforts.<sup>41</sup>

The trial of Petrus Eriki was an extreme event, but it exposed the risk of opposing the new regime – or even of being suspected of opposition. Measures were also taken against the more insubordinate prelates and clergymen. Abraham Angermannus had been deposed as archbishop in 1599 and spent periods in custody for his loyalty to Sigismund. Ericus Eriki (c. 1545–1625), bishop of Åbo, had participated in the loyalist defence of Finland in 1599. After a time of imprisonment, he suffered the continuous suspicions and discontent of Karl IX. In 1606 or 1607, he appears to have been suspended from his office.<sup>42</sup> In September 1606, Olaus Bellinus was also suspended from the See of Västerås, suspected for having lodged a student, later exposed as an “apparent traitor and papist”. According to the accusations, Bellinus had even confessed his regret to the same student “that great injustice has befallen the king in Poland”. But Bellinus was also accused of old crimes, for instance for having accepted the liturgy of King

40 Roberts, *The Early Vasas* pp. 404–411; Montgomery, *Värjostånd och lärostånd* p. 261; contemporary (yet obviously biased) accounts of the pursuit of the opposition may be found in the reports of the former municipal secretary in Stockholm, Hans Bilefelt, who functioned as Sigismund's agent in Lübeck, see Lars Sjödin, “Hans Bilefeldts rapporter till Knut Persson åren 1602 och 1605”, HT 1939 pp. 419–449; see also the account of executions on the order of Karl IX in *Hertigh Carls slaktarebenck* (i.e., ‘the slaughtering-block of duke Karl’), a libellous pamphlet, probably written by Gregorius Laurentii Borastus (c. 1580–1656) and originally published in Kraków in 1617; see Tor Berg (ed.), *Hertigh Carls slaktarebenck*, Stockholm 1915, pp. 72–73.

41 Helge Almqvist, “Karl IX och Petrus Petrosa. En gammal tradition i ny belysning”, PHT 1912 pp. 22, 41; Anders Piltz, “Petrus Eriki”, SBL vol. 29, Stockholm 1995 pp. 213–214; Lars-Olof Larsson, *Arvet efter Gustav Vasa: berättelsen om fyra kungar och ett rike*, Prisma, Stockholm 2005 pp. 385–386.

42 Eric Anthoni, “Ericus Eriki”, SBL vol. 14, Stockholm 1953 pp. 200–203; cf. Erik Pettersson, *Den skoningslöse: En biografi över Karl IX*, Natur och kultur, Stockholm 2008 p. 162; Larsson, *Arvet efter Gustav Vasa* p. 376.

Johan “uncompelled and unconstrained” when he was appointed bishop in 1589 (an accusation that could be applied to the majority of the Swedish clergy at the time) and for having counteracted the decisions of the diets in Söderköping and Arboga in 1595 and 1597.<sup>43</sup>

### King, Clergy and the Academy

In this context of heated political and religious strife, conflict was also brewing between Karl and the professors of the university. The king’s suspicions against the university consistory in general and Paulinus in particular, had probably been aroused by their more or less open support of the common cause of the clergy. In the summer of 1606 however, the letter where Abraham Angermannus and all the professors of Uppsala had affirmed their allegiance to King Sigismund in 1598 was suddenly unearthed. The deposed archbishop was again arrested, and on 10 July Paulinus and two of his colleagues were summoned “through night and day” to Stockholm, where they were put on trial.<sup>44</sup>

Primarily, it was the secrecy of the document from 1598 that made it suspect. The accusations against Paulinus and his colleagues were mostly vague and concerned their tendency to counteract Karl during the conflict with Sigismund. No sentence of the trial is preserved, but Abraham Angermannus was kept in prison where he died the following year. Paulinus, who like his colleagues did his best to put the blame on Angermannus, was deposed from his academic chair and exiled to a retirement post as vicar in the parish of Näs south of Uppsala.<sup>45</sup>

As suggested by Ingun Montgomery, the trial of the professors was primarily a “showdown with the leading theologians of the realm” in order to subdue their opposition and demonstrate how much they actually depended on his benevolence. The accusations were also insignificant compared to the

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43 Cit. Letter from Karl IX 8 September 1606, printed in Herman Lundström, “Till frågan om Vesterås biskopen Bellinus afsättning”, HT 1901 p. 81; the student, that may have been one of the suspected accomplices of Petrus Erics, had according to Karl’s wording been “appointed to put us to death” by the Polish king; cf. Holmquist, *Svenska kyrkans historia vol. III:2* pp. 278–280; Ingun Montgomery, *Värjostånd och lärostånd* pp. 264–265.

44 Entry in RA. RR B101 fol. 247r, 10 July 1606; “Till M. Lars Paulinus och M Olof i Tillinge att de igenom Dagh och Natt begifwer sigh hijdh till HK.Mtt Datum ut suprerius. Samma meningh till Mester Jacob.”

45 Ohlsson pp. 405–411; cf. Annerstedt, *Uppsala universitets historia I* p. 127; Lundström, *Laurentius Paulinus Gothus* pp. 85–88; preserved documents from the trial, with the apologies of the professors and comments of Karl IX are published in “Handlingar angående Karl IX:s räfst med professorerna”.

assurances of loyalty he got from the accused during the trial.<sup>46</sup> However, the trial may also be regarded as a strategy to gain control over the university.

As we have seen, the university had been restored in the mid-1590s to meet the demand for trained ministers, clerks and officials for clerical and governmental service. Another purpose, although not necessarily mentioned in the official statements, was to provide an intellectual bulwark for the true faith. Yet despite the broad consensus concerning the need for the academy, it had soon become a field of struggle between worldly and clerical authorities. The consistory was dominated by the same faction of priests and theologians that had been the driving force behind the Uppsala Synod. In the wake of the revolution of the 1590s, this faction tended to use the university as a centre for their opposition against Karl IX – who for his part nourished the ambition to bend the university under his own will. In order to centralize the administration and gain control over the academy, the king strived to restrict its independent status that had been guaranteed through the University Charter.<sup>47</sup>

Still in 1604, Karl had demonstrated his benevolent interest and presented a proposal for a new ordinance for the university, with prospects of proper funding and new professorial chairs. But at the same time he tried to reduce the professors of theology from three to two. Moreover, none of the professors other than the theologians should be allowed to take holy orders, which indicates the direction of the king's politics concerning the academy. Karl had earlier expressed his displeasure that all students at the university seemed to be aiming for a clerical career: "If anything good should come out of the Academy, then all [students] should not be allowed to become Priests, but some [should] also be tutored for the worldly regime".<sup>48</sup> In his proposal it was also suggested that all professors should be appointed directly by the king with right to depose them at will.<sup>49</sup> However, the proposal did not pass, and when no improvements of the administration of the academy could be accomplished, the king blamed the professors for allowing its decline. The consistory on the other hand complained over what they described as their meagre allowances and the general mismanagement of the university.

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46 Montgomery, *Värjostånd och lärostånd* p. 265.

47 Annerstedt, *Uppsala universitets historia I* pp. 128–129; Lindroth, *Svensk lärdomshistoria I* pp. 340–344; Ingun Montgomery, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria 4. Enhetskyrkans tid*, Verbum, Stockholm 2002 pp. 18–24.

48 Letter from Karl IX to the professors, 30 August 1602, RA, RR B96 fol. 163r, cited in Annerstedt, *Uppsala universitets historia I* p. 106 n. 6; "Och ther något gott skulle blifua uthaf then Academie, då motte icke alle blifue Prester, uthan somlige och informeres till thett werldzlige regementhe".

49 Annerstedt, *Uppsala universitets historia I* p. III.

In his introductory lecture as newly appointed professor in 1604, Johannes Rudbeckius pointed out the neglect of the worldly authorities, criticizing what he described as a widespread opinion, that unnecessary costs were spent on schools and academies.<sup>50</sup>

When the professors complained to the king in December 1605, and pointed out that the university needed lecturers in politics and medicine, the king let them know that there were no competent people at hand – or at least no one reliable. Instead the king suggested that the consistory should provide the names of some Swedish students “who are in Germany and could be suitable to use in the other faculties”. The procedure was necessary so that the king, before anyone was appointed, would “know who they are, if they are not a bunch of Papists and Jesuits”. This was a clear reference to the newly arrested Petrus Eri and his alleged accomplices, “these rogues, who His Royal Majesty now have in his hands”, and who had “come here to thrust their fatherland into all evil”.<sup>51</sup>

The episode and the agitated tone in the communication clearly demonstrate the suspicions of Karl vis-à-vis the university that reached its peak with the trial of Paulinus and his colleagues. In November 1606 the professors once again requested that “the numbers of reading masters should become sufficient” and that “Laurentius Paulinus ought to come to his profession once more”. In his reply, the king rhetorically asked the consistory “if they want to have such men in company who so without deserving have wished the life and weal of us”. Stating that “he who has no falcons, he will have to hunt with owls”, the king suggested that if there were anyone within in the consistory who had not been “in council” with Paulinus and the other suspended professors, and who could hold two chairs, he would be content to “once again raise their allowance”.<sup>52</sup> In other words, the king would not

50 Johannes Rudbeckius, *Oratio de literarum et scholarum utilitate simul ac necessitate habita in illustri academia Upsaliensi*, cited in Annerstedt, *Uppsala universitets historia* I pp. 116–117.

51 “Karl IX:s svar på professorernas förfrågan genom Johan Jöransson och Johan Skytte”, Stockholm 26 December 1605, RA, RR vol. B99 fol. 268v; “De andre, som i Tyskland äre och kunne ware tienlige til att brukes i de andre *Faculteter*, som ähndå fheelles, dem måge *Professores* namngifue, att H.K.M:tt mhå wette huilke dhe äre, om de icke äre een hoop *Papister* och *Jesuitae*, som thesse Skielmer H.K.M:tt. nu hafver Händer emellan, och på allt ondt Jhn kompne att skynde deris Fädernes Land vdi.”

52 “Karl IX:s instruktion för L. Cawer och Johan Skytte angående det svar som de skola i Upsala afgifva å Universitetets senaste hemställan, Stockholm d. 14 Nov. 1606.”, RA, RR vol. B102 fol. 106v; “Til den Sidste deres begeren, att talet på Läsämästerne motte blifwe tillfyllest, som på Norrköpingz Herredagh blef bewilliet, och att *Laurentius Paulinus* motte komma til sin *profession* igen, Skall dem så swares; Att wij wore nådigest till fridz, att talet måtte blifwe fullt, Hwar man wiste någre tienlige till att bekomma.

support the university until its professors had proven politically reliable. His reluctance to allow Paulinus to return to his academic position seems to have been rooted.

## Becoming a Prelate

None of these conflicts had been solved when Paulinus was summoned to write his comet tract in the autumn of 1607. He was still in deep disfavour, and at the Coronation Diet in March of the same year, the clerical estate had proved to be the most stubborn in their demand for confessional guarantees in Karl's Coronation Charter. In the end they had been forced to accept the king's terms. In their oath of allegiance, they had to swear to the king that they would never accept any heretical dogma or ceremonies – as if they indeed accepted the king's sovereignty over the creed. The king on the other hand, did not issue his charter until after the coronation. Thus his signing of the charter could not be invoked as a condition for his royal dignity, as had been the case of Sigismund's commitments in 1594.<sup>53</sup>

Yet, even though the opposition had been more or less subdued, much of the enmity remained when the manuscript of *Cometoscopia* was presented during a council meeting in Örebro in the winter of 1608. Primarily the meeting had been arranged to discuss the new privileges of the nobility; yet, some prominent clergymen had also been summoned to discuss the revision of the Church ordinances and the liturgical handbook. Sometime during the proceedings, the king had demanded a statement from the councillors, requesting "that the bishops and the clergy should answer to the racket they began at the coronation".<sup>54</sup> The meeting in which *Cometoscopia* was presented was in other words a scene of confrontation. The king tried to gain political support from the councillors in order to rebuke the clergy for their stubborn opposition – an opposition of which Paulinus was still a leading figure. Yet, despite the deadlock in the relations between king and clergy, the meeting in Örebro became a turning-point in Paulinus'

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Men den som icke hafwer Falcker han måtte beetha med Vgler, Derföre sände wij dhem derheden som hafwe warit der förr, och gifwe them andre som der nu äre i betenckande, om de wele hafwe sådane Karler som oss så oförskyt hafwe trachtet effter Lif och Welferd i vmgenge hoos sigh, andre wette wij inthet tilgå, ähr der och någon af dhem der nu äre, och icke hafwe waritt medh desse i Råd som Kan tiene twänne *Professioner*, då wele wij äther öke deres Vnderhold, och gifwa dhem så mycker som man elliest skulle gifwe twå till dhess man kan få flere som der äre tienlige till."

53 Montgomery, *Värjostånd och lärostånd* pp. 273–276, 282–283; Roberts, *The Early Vasas* pp. 423–425.

54 Montgomery, *Värjostånd och lärostånd* p. 370.



career. During the proceedings he was seemingly restored to royal favour and elected bishop of Skara by the assembled clergy.

This was not the first time he had been offered an episcopal chair. As newly appointed Archbishop of Uppsala in 1637, Paulinus recalled how the king in 1607 at Väsby had offered him the bishopric of Åbo through the agency of the court chancellor Nils Chesnecopherus (1574–1622).<sup>55</sup> Later one of Paulinus' biographers referred to the expositions on the comet held at the same occasion as the key to his following promotion – a statement that caused a modern historian to suggest that Paulinus “owed his restoration to Karl IX's favour to his astrological expertness in interpreting the significance of Halley's Comet”.<sup>56</sup>

However, Paulinus' restoration owed more to politics than to his expertise on comets. According to his own words, Paulinus had been offered the bishopric of Västerås as early as “at the end of the year of disgrace 1606”. At that time he was still deep in royal disfavour, judging from the argument between the king and the university consistory related above.<sup>57</sup> Therefore it is likely that this alleged offer, as well as the renewed offer of a bishopric in 1607, should be regarded as part of the king's ambition to restrain the clerical opposition. The sees offered to Paulinus were not formally vacant. Their incumbents – Olaus Bellinus and Ericus Erici – were the most prominent among those prelates whose loyalty had been called in question, and whom the king apparently would have removed. Thus, in exchange for a bishopric and his personal benevolence, the king would have had Paulinus recognize his sovereign right to set aside the Church ordinance, not only in appointing bishops, but in deposing them at will. It was probably not due to Paulinus' modesty that he declined these offers “out of the gravest

55 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Oratoria introductoria ad archiepiscopatum Ubsaliensem*, cited in Lundström, *Laurentius Paulinus Gothus* p. 92.

56 Westhius, *Memoria Parentalis* sig. C2v; “Et ut suum, de praedicto Cometâ, iudicium, ex fundamentis Astronomicis ostenderet, mandavit. Cui mandato, cum mox obtemperasset, & sine longâ morâ satisfecisset, in Regiam vicissim receptus gratiam, praeter omnem opinionem, amplissima Dioeceseos Aboënsis Episcopus designator.”; cit. Roberts, *Gustavus Adolphus* vol. 1 p. 379.

57 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Oratoria introductoria ad archiepiscopatum Ubsaliensem*; “Primo Arhusiensem, sub egressum anni disgratiae 1606:ti ... Deinde Aboënsen in Aula Wesby prope fodinum argenteam Salensem, anno 1607 per D. Nicolaum Chesnecopherum Aulae Cancellarium”; here Lundström suggests that Paulinus may have been erroneous in his recollection, and that he was offered the see of Västerås before his fall from grace; Lundström, *Laurentius Paulinus Gothus* p. 92 n. 2; however, Paulinus' statement makes sense as Bellinus' suspension as bishop of Västerås in September 1606 coincided with Paulinus' exile to Näs.

reasons". When Paulinus eventually accepted his bishopric at the meeting in Örebro in 1608, he succeeded to a vacant diocese. Moreover, he was elected exclusively by the present representatives of the clergy, while the king only gave his formal consent to their choice.<sup>58</sup>

Therefore, the significance of Paulinus' comet tract in explaining his restoration should not be exaggerated. The king quickly lost his interest in the fate of the comet book. As for the printing, Paulinus explained that he "due to scantiness" could not "comply with the gracious will of His Royal Majesty" and have *Cometoscopia* published. In other words, no means were provided, and when the book was finally published – probably at Paulinus' own cost – the king had been dead for two years.<sup>59</sup> In respect of what has been discussed above, it rather appears as if the king, by consulting Paulinus and giving him the commission to write *Cometoscopia*, primarily seized an opportunity to tie a prominent leader of the opposition closer to his own person.

Apparently a rapprochement *had* come about, and henceforth the king found the services of his new bishop useful. Paulinus took part in a revision of the clerical books initiated by the king, and shortly after his ordination he participated in a diplomatic delegation, sent to Estonia in a fruitless attempt to reach a peace agreement with Poland. In February 1609 Paulinus was appointed bishop of Strängnäs on the direct initiative of the king, who according to Paulinus' biographer, wished to "have him close, and to listen eagerly to him in more secret counsels".<sup>60</sup>

This appointment was an obvious violation of the statutes of the Church Ordinance, although neither Paulinus nor any other representatives of the clergy seem to have objected at the time. The See of Strängnäs was a more central position than Skara, due to its vicinity to Stockholm, and as we have seen it had also been more or less subjected to Karl's sovereign authority as Duke of Södermanland during the Liturgical Strife. Apparently it still played a significant part in his church policies.

58 Cit. Westhius, *Memoria Parentalis* sig. C2v-C3r; "Quam tamen Provinciam, sicut biennio ante Arhusiensem, cum ob causas gravissimas, modestè recusasset"; cf. Lundström, *Laurentius Paulinus Gothus* pp. 99–100.

59 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Cometoscopia* sig. A4r; "Och althenstund iagh på then tijdhen såsom och sedhan/ för oförmöghenheten skuld/ H.K. May. Nädighe wilia icke kunde efterkomma/ hafuer iagh nu thet i wärcket stält".

60 Cit. Westhius, *Memoria Parentalis* sig. C3v: "... qui illum, sine dubio, in propinquo habere, & ad secretiora consilia adhibere cogitabat"; cf. Lundström, *Laurentius Paulinus Gothus* pp. 100–101, 109–110.

## Portents, Penitence and Politics

Still the consultation of Paulinus in the autumn of 1607, and the completed *Cometoscopia*, was not without significance. As a book on interpretations of divine signs and portents, the text is apparently characterized by the different and even opposite interests that converged at its conception. It had been commissioned by the highest representative of the worldly authorities, yet at the same time it was written by a prominent member of the clergy with a political and religious agenda of his own.

What is clear, judging from other sources, is that whatever the king believed the comet of 1607 would bring, he heeded its generally ominous significance. But he also had concerns of how it might be conceived by his subjects. In the bill of intercessions, issued on the 4 October while the comet was still visible, the authorities stressed the necessity for all subjects to repent and do penitence for their sins. Indeed it was well known to all “what famine and high prices have been in later years passed”, wherefore it should be remembered that the “abundance and rich blessings of God we have again witnessed for a couple of years after the hunger” had been bestowed upon the realm only by divine grace:

And since God Almighty sees, that we are ungrateful to him for such his manifested blessings, and do not celebrate and praise him therefore, nor mend our sinful living with serious ardour and repentance, but fall out of one sin into another; Therefore he now thus comes, and let the token of his wrath be seen in the sky, Since now a burning Comet is shown, thence we all should have a warning ...<sup>61</sup>

To appease God, and to reduce the sin and felony committed by the people as a whole – lords and princes not excepted – the king ordered “The Archbishop, along with all Bishops, Vicars in the Cities, and all Preachers and Teachers in the countryside” to hold services and sermons on specific days of intercession every week, according to a procedure outlined by “Archbishop Lars” – Laurentius Petri Nericus – in mid-sixteenth century. This would

61 Bill of intercession 4 October 1607; “J thet/ at hwadh för hunger och dyrr tijdh som vthi framledne förupne åhr warit hafwer/ thet är edher alle wetterligt/ så at mången j hungers nödh hafwer måst sätta lijfwet til: Twert om igen/ hwadh ymnogheet och Gudz rijke wälsignelse wij hafwe åter på någhre åhr förnummit igen efter hungeren/ thet niute wij alle samptligen ännu (thess Gudhi ware tack och lof) til godhe ... Och efter Gudh Alzmächtigh seer/ at wij äre honom för sådane sine bewijste wälgerninger otacksamme/ och icke lofwe och prijsse honom therföre/ ey heller medh en alfvarsam ijdher och ånger bättre vårt syndige lefwerne/ Vthan falle vthur then eene synden j then andre/ Therföre så kommer han nu/ och låter see sitt wredhes tekn på himmelen/ Efter som nu en brinnande *Comet* är syntz/ ther af wij alle mäghe hafwa en warnagel”.

be of benefit, not only for the glory of God, but also for the eternal bliss of Christian souls and for the subsistence of the temporal life on Earth.<sup>62</sup>

In the reference to the authority of the late archbishop there is a breath of clerical bias, which makes it tempting to suggest that Paulinus' summons to Väsby in the autumn of 1607 actually concerned the formulation of the Bill of Intercession, rather than a consultation concerning the significance of the comet. Unfortunately, there is nothing in the sources to support such a presumption. But the message of the bill may still shed light on the king's motives to request a written interpretation of the phenomenon.

First the ongoing conflict with the deposed King Sigismund and the loyalists in Poland should be considered. Karl needed arguments to oppose any attempts to use the comet and the portended misfortunes as a pretext to discredit his right to the throne. In the bill it was made clear that any divine scourges falling upon the realm in the wake of the comet were due to the sins and the ungratefulness of the people as a whole. To be sure, nothing specific was said to support the legality of Karl's accession to power. But apart from the obligation to praise God for the current abundance of crops, game and fish, the subjects were exhorted to remember other blessings that had been bestowed by God. Thus they "securely and without hindrance may come to the Church and hear his Divine word", all since the realm had been kept "unaffected of all hostile accession, so that foreign Masters still unto this day have not been able to rule and reign over us."<sup>63</sup>

Through this formulation the regime displayed its major arguments to demonstrate its legality. The successful defence of true religion and worship, which remained a prime motive in Karl's apology of the usurpation, and the defence from 'foreign masters' that according to the rhetoric would follow if King Sigismund was restored to the throne are mentioned as divine gifts of

62 Bill of intercession 4 October 1607; "Och befale wij förthensskuld Erchiebiscopen/ sampt alle Biscopar/ Kyrkieherdar j Städherne/ och alle Predicanter och Lärare på Landzbygden/ at the icke allenast efterfölje för:de Erchiebiscop Larses förmaning/ Vthan och äre thenne wår befallning hörige och lydige/ at hålla vthi Städherne två gånger Bönedaghar hwar weku/ eller hwar dagh som tilförende är gifwit tilkänne/ och afbedie Gudz wredhe och förmane folcket til boot och bättring"; on the tradition of 'days of intercession', see Malmstedt, *Helgdagsreduktionen* pp. 94–106; cf. Joachim Östlund, *Lyckolandet: Maktens legitimering i officiell retorik från stormaktstid till demokratis genombrott*, Sekel, Lund 2007 pp. 36–44.

63 Bill of intercession 4 October 1607; "Äre wij nu Gudh för sådane wälgerninger och andre flere tacksamme/ Som är: At wij säkert och obehindrade måghe komma tilsamman i Kyrkian/ och höra hans Guddomelige ord/ om wij elliest hadhe någhon hugh eller wilie ther til. Jtem: Sitte medh fredh och roo hwar och en j sitt eghit höghsäte/ och äre oanfechtade för all fiendtligh tilsätning/ så at främmande Herskap ännu til thenne dagh icke hafwe fått rådha och regera vthöfwer oss."

God's grace. Indirectly, the policies of the new regime – even the aggressive and severely criticised war against Poland in the Baltic – are portrayed as being directly sanctioned by God.

However, the purpose of the bill of intercession extended further than merely covering the need of the regime to refute any loyalist attempts to discredit its legality. It was written with the certain conviction that hard times had been portended, caused by the manifold, unpunished sins and felony against the Law of God committed by the people. This meant that the comet could be regarded as a sign that the worldly prince, being *custos utriusque tabulae* or guardian of both tables of the Decalogue, responsible for punishing crimes against God as well as man, had not sufficiently maintained moral and religious discipline. Eventually it was the king's responsibility that God's vengeance now hung over the whole people. Thus the bill of intercession gave the authorities the means to fulfil their duties, and to communicate the need of repentance to all the subjects.

It is in this context that we should see the king's request to Paulinus, to expound his opinion on the comet of 1607. The themes of repentance that characterized the bill of intercession as well as *Cometoscopia* cannot be separated from the ongoing struggle between king and clergy concerning their respective rights and duties, and who was to be in charge when defining the 'true evangelical religion'. At the core lay a mutual ambition to reform, not only the faith, liturgy and religious practices of the evangelical church, but also the very morals and values of society as a whole. The struggle between king and clergy concerned the issue of who should be in charge of leading this reformation, and where the limits between their respective spheres of authority should be drawn.

In this struggle between the worldly and the spiritual domain, both sides based their arguments on the authority of God and on God's Word revealed both in the Scriptures and in nature. The reactions to the comet of 1607 point to this: even if Karl in his debates with the clergy refused to accept any other theological authority than the Bible, he apparently regarded this comet as an intelligible expression of the will of God. Besides, by consulting Paulinus the king recognized his authority, not necessarily as a theologian, but as an astronomer, to interpret the meaning of the phenomenon. Thus, when Paulinus discussed the astrological and scientific methods to interpret the significance of the comet of 1607, he did so in a context where it was of grave importance to maintain this authority in order to keep the right to interpret the prophetic, divine message communicated through the Book of Nature. This will be considered when discussing the critical outlook he developed towards astrology and astrological methods.

## Methods of Interpretation

Being written “All People, in whatever Estate and Condition they may be, to Warning, correction and improvement”, *Cometoscopia* was outlined in three parts. First, Paulinus explained what kind of phenomena comets and other fiery blazes were, “how one should rightly regard them” in a physical and spiritual sense, and what consequences this would have for any attempt to divine their significance. Secondly, he explained what scourges, changes and punishments they portended. Finally, he discussed how the Christian community should act in order to avoid the punishments portended and save body and soul. Thus it was implicitly stated from the beginning that the issue of the physical substance and quality of comets and fiery blazes, was subjected to the divine will.<sup>64</sup>

Obviously, God’s ordaining of comets did not hinder the natural philosophers from trying to divine what calamities they portended. Everyday experience and evidence from scholars of old clearly demonstrated that these methods were fairly reliable. Paulinus even presented a list of criteria to judge what consequences a comet would have, based on Girolamo Cardano and his annotated edition of Ptolemy’s *Tetrabiblos* from 1554.<sup>65</sup>

The interpretative variables were legion, including several astrological elements. Red coloured comets were regarded as Martial, bringing not only war and bloodshed, but also hot weather and drought, conflagrations, heated fevers, lunacy and untimely births. Dark and obscure comets were generally Saturnal, portending snow, earthquakes and diseases, failing crops and want of metal ore. Bright, shiny comets were Jovial, bringing dissent in religious and worldly issues, heated fevers and the death of high ranking individuals. If trailing a long tail or rays in shape of a broom the comet would also bring stormy weather, rebellion and success for false teachers. A short tail, or no tail, at all would bring pestilence and disease, bad harvest, high prices and long periods of war and bloodshed.<sup>66</sup>

These and many other rules of interpretation were not only included by Paulinus as an act of reverence for the authorities. He was using knowledge based on notions of natural and supernatural correspondences between phenomena in the heavens and on earth, sharing emblematic significance and physical qualities – notions that could not be ignored by any scholar.

64 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Cometoscopia*, title page; “Allom Menniskiom/ vthi hwad Stand och Condition the hãlst wara/ til Warning/ Rãttelse och förbãttring.”

65 Cf. Girolamo Cardano, *In Cl. Ptolemaei Pehsiensis IIII de Astrorum Ivdicijs, aut, ut uulgò uocant, Quadripartitae Constructionis libros commentaria*, printed by Heinrich Petri, Basel 1554 pp. 150–159.

66 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Cometoscopia* pp. 7–11

Later on in the text, Paulinus claimed that the observer of comets ought especially to notice their form and shape. Since comets often appeared with beams in the shape of swords, halberds, arrows and bolts, birches and lashes – all of them instruments of vengeance and punishment – Paulinus argued that the comets themselves would “preach and proclaim for what reason’s sake they are ignited in the high, in the sight of all mankind”, namely that “God in his righteous wrath will haunt men with all sorts of perdition and scourges”.<sup>67</sup> Paulinus also wrote a detailed account, based on observations of the current comet concerning its shape, colour and movements, with the explicit intention that the reader, by means of the described methods would be able to judge “What significant mischief and perdition will follow this comet, in Spiritual as well as in Worldly estate”.<sup>68</sup>

Still Paulinus made no attempt to present any interpretation himself; on the contrary he stated that:

What concern these aforesaid Rules and Conjectures, since they are devised by Pagan *Philosophis*, through the diligence, Speculations and curiosity of human reason, by which God is often more dishonoured, than honoured and lauded, and Man becomes more deceived away from God and from devoutness of God, than strengthened and persuaded thereto: thus one should let such things be in its worth, and submit it to others, who are set to deal with aforesaid conjectures.<sup>69</sup>

Thus Paulinus criticized those astrologers and natural philosophers, whose interpretations he had just accounted for and presented as optional for others to use at will. Yet it should be noted that Paulinus did not criticize the theoretical basis for any interpretation of comets, astrological or otherwise, but only those scholars and astrologers who developed a too inquisitive mind when searching for the meaning of comets, and focused on the wrong issues. For when discussing the corporeal consequences of comets, and not their overall, eschatological significance, astrologers, philosophers and diviners tended to draw people away from what was really at stake: the

67 Ibid. p. 18; “Så skole the wäl sielffue predika och förkunna för hwadh orsaak skuld the vthi högdenne i hela Menneskelighe Släcthes åsynn vptände äro ... Hwadh är thet annat/ än the medh mångehanda skapelse låta förnimma/ at Gud vti sin rättfärdiga wrede wil heemsökia menniskiona med allahanda fördärf oc landzplågor?”

68 Ibid. p. 110; “Hwadh märckeligh skadha och fördärf/ så wäl i Andelighit som Werldz- lighit stånd thenne Cometen wil effterfölia”; cf. sig. B2v-B3r.

69 Ibid. pp. 11–12; “Hwadh thesse förbemälte Reglor och Gissningar belangar/ effter the äro vpfundne vthaff Hedniske *Philosophis*/ genom menniskelighit förnufftz snålheet/ Speculationer och Förwetenheet/ medh hwilka Gudh ofta meer wanährat/ ähnährat och berömd/ och Menniskian mera bedraghen ifrå Gudh och Gudz fruchtan/ än ther til styrckt och beweeckt warder: Therföre låter man sådant wara i sitt värde/ och heemställer thet androm/ som medh förbemälte gisningar haffue til at beställa.”

repentance of the sinners in face of the afflictions of the End Days and the salvation of their souls.

From this perspective worldly knowledge of comets was not in vain. Although no man had such profound knowledge that he could exactly “know and foretell, what Comets and other such Wonders may signify, or with what kind of Punishment God intend to scourge the world”, it would still be useful to inquire what calamities and changes *could* be expected. Paulinus demonstrated that the experience of the worldly wise was indeed indispensable by quoting Herodotus, who had exhorted his readers at the appearance of any sign “in Heaven or otherwise, that you should studiously heed what will follow thereafter”. When a similar sign occurred “you should then be able to judge thereof” that the same kind of misfortune and change was at hand. Paulinus stressed that since you could realize what terrible effects all comets had through the writings of pagan authors as Ptolemy, Pliny, Seneca and Hermes Trismegistus, it should be evident to anyone that not even the pagans regarded such blazes as pure natural phenomena, but as wondrous signs of God.<sup>70</sup> Still, in Paulinus’ account, the knowledge bestowed to the pagans was not laudable in itself. Their example was used, not to elevate them as ideals, but to emphasize the baseness of those who ignored the message of the comets, revealed by true ministers of God:

If now the pagans, who know nothing of God, have with such great diligence and awe, looked at such unusual Stars, Who can say, that it will not be more bearable for them on the Judgement Day, than for others, who know the will of God, and still not only neglect to act thereafter, but even openly disdain and scoff the warning signs of God...<sup>71</sup>

Therefore, as far as worldly knowledge led man to earnest repentance and

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70 Ibid. pp. 12–13, 18–19, cit. pp. 30–31; “Ändock ingen Menniskios Förstånd är så diup-sinnigt/ at thet kan til pricka weeta och föresäija/ hwadh Cometer och andra sådana Vndervärck hafwa til at betydha/ eller medh hurudana Straff Gudh ärnar framdeles hemsökia Werlden/ för hennes margfaldiga synder skuld ... Lijkwäl är thet nyttigt/ at wij vthaff Gudz heliga ord sampt längligh förfarenheet ransaka/ hwad olycko och förändringar ther efter sigh tildraga plägha ... Förmaner och *Herodotus*/ när något Tekn skeer/ i Himmelen eller eliest/ at man skal gifwa fljrtig acht vppå hwad sigh ther efter tildrager/ och thet granneliga beskrifwa och antekna/ på thet när någhot sådant tilkommande tijdher sigh åter förnimma låter/ man tå skal kunna ther aff besluta/ at lijka olycko och förändring ther efter skal wara til förmodande.”

71 Ibid. p. 19; “Haffua nu Hedningarna/ som aff Gudhi intet wetta/ medh så stoor fljrt och bäffuan/ beskodhat sådane owanlighe Stjärnor/ Hoo kan säija/ at them icke warder dräghelighare på Domedagh/ än androm/ som wetta GVDz wilia/ och lijkwäl icke allenast intet göra ther efter/ vthan och ther til medh vppenbarliga förachta och bespotta Gudz warningz tekn”.



conversion to God, it could be regarded as good and useful. If performed with the right intentions, not even astrological interpretations of the comets were to be rejected.

## Dismissing the Sceptics

Using comets as examples, Paulinus emphasized that God, just as in Noah's days, would put his "righteous wrath" before the eyes of all people as warnings for the sake of their "countless and coarse sins". Since comets and wondrous signs in Paulinus' days were seen "much more frequently and awful, than any time before" it should be clear to all that God "forthwith will make an end of this evil and insidious world".<sup>72</sup> To convince all true Christian and godly people of the absolute need to repent their sins, it was therefore necessary to refute those sceptics who not only refused to heed the teachings of the clergy, but who denied what they should be able to see with their own eyes. According to Paulinus, some of these sceptics were ignorant people who rarely looked up upon the heavens to behold the "wisdom and omnipotence of God", and who could not even tell the difference between "disappearing wonder stars" like comets, and ordinary heavenly bodies:

... when you from the Pulpit or elsewhere speak about Comets, and through that opening thence do what admonition is suitable and necessary, they thus remonstrate, that it is nothing but Fable works and Priestly fabrication [Sw. *prästedikt*] to scare commoners and simple people.<sup>73</sup>

Other people, who regarded themselves "mighty wise", referred to the natural causes of comets and the fact that they seemed to appear "regularly the one year after the other" to assure themselves that they portended nothing of specific significance. There were also "Epicureans, who altogether deny the actual and concordant meanings of Comets, and moreover persuade others that they should regard them as just nothing". Yet others were so

72 Ibid. sig. B1v; "Uthi lijka mätto steller GÜdh alzwäldigh ännw alle dagar oss för ögonen sina rättferdige wrede/ emoot våra otalige grofwa synder och missgerningar/ och vthtrckeligen låter förnimma/ icke allenast igenom sitt H. ordz alwarlige predikan: vtan och genom mangfaldige vndertekn/ som nw myckit oftare och förfärligare låta sigh see/ än någhon tijd tilförenne/ att han oförtöfwat wil göra een ända medh thenna arga och ilfundige werldenne".

73 Ibid. sig. B2r; "Somblige/ såsom the icke ofta lyffta theas öghon vp åt Himmen til at beskoda Gudz wiszheet och alzmachtigheet/ och icke heller kunna göra någon åtsilnadt emellan the warachtige Himmelske Lius och andra förswinnande Vnderstiernor: Så hålla the så före/ när man vthaff Predikostolen eller eliest talar om Cometer/ och genom thet tilfället gör then förmaning ther vthaff/ som ther til tiener och är aff nödenne/ at thet är intet annat än itt Fabelwerck och Prestedicht til at skräma the gemeene och enfoldige."

scornful that they made fun of the comets under “a good sneer and Evening twaddle where they come together, and with facetious vanity call them good signs.” Thereby they claimed that if the comets were indeed portending war, pestilence and hunger “as the Priests constantly call out” then they would herald good times for people “inclined to become Soldiers and Warriors” and to “Apothecaries and Physicians, Priests, School persons, also for those who have their corn bins full”.<sup>74</sup>

All these categories of unbelievers seem to suggest that the view of comets as prophetic signs of God’s wrath was contested. Paulinus even claimed that those godly people who actually relied upon the teachings of their clerical supervisors were quite few. The main impression given is of a church whose ministers were not believed by the majority of their congregations.

However, this statement should mainly be regarded as a rhetorical device, rather than a description of an actual situation. Here, as in other passages in the tract, Paulinus made a point of the prophetic voice going unheard in the world and of the widespread disobedience towards the clergy among God’s people. As a parallel he cited a passage from the Gospels, reminding his readers how Christ cried over the cities of Galilee, as they had witnessed his wonders and still would not believe.<sup>75</sup>

Whatever people in general believed the comets would portend, it remains clear that Paulinus’ picture of despised priests and prophets in a world of unbelievers has to be seen as part of an ambition to mobilize the church militant in the End Times. It was an attempt to establish a clerical interpretation of comets and other portents, and thereby to settle what deeper meaning these omens revealed within the world drama. Yet, it would be a mistake to regard this ambition merely as a strategy to preserve and extend the influence and power of the clergy within society.

74 Ibid. sig. B2r; “En part som sigh sielfwa hålla mechte kloke/ ändoch the gifwa medh/ at sådana nyie Stiernor äro förhandena: Lijkwål/ althenstund the hafwa theras naturliga orsaker/ och synes jämliga thet ena åhret effter thet andra/ Så hålla the så före/ at the hafwa intet synnerligt på sigh/ och görs föga behof at bekymbra sigh om/ eller hafwa någon fara före hwad de wärckia och betyda. Låte sigh och wål finna någre Epicureer/ som Cometers egentliga och likmätiga Betydningar aldeles förneka/ såsom och öffuertala andra/ at the them platt intet achta skola. Månge äro och så spotzke emoot GVDh/ at the wål thåras göra sigh aff sådana hans warningz under/ itt gott Löye och Afftonsack ther the tilhopa komma/ och medh skemptig fåfengio kalla them goda tekn. Ja/ säya the/ skal fölia aff thenne Cometen/ krijgh/ Pestilentz/ Hunger/ dyrr tidh/ som Presterna fast ropa om: Så är thet gott för them som haffua lust til at bliffua Soldater och Krigsmän/ för Apotekare och Läkiare/ Prester/ Skolepersoner/ Jtem för them som hafwa Spannemåls Lärarna fulle”.

75 Ibid. p. 19; here Paulinus references the passage in Mathew. 11:20–24; see also p. 12 for other examples from the Scriptures – Numbers 14:11; Ecclesiasticus 36:6; and Psalms 73 – where God complained that the people would not believe his signs.

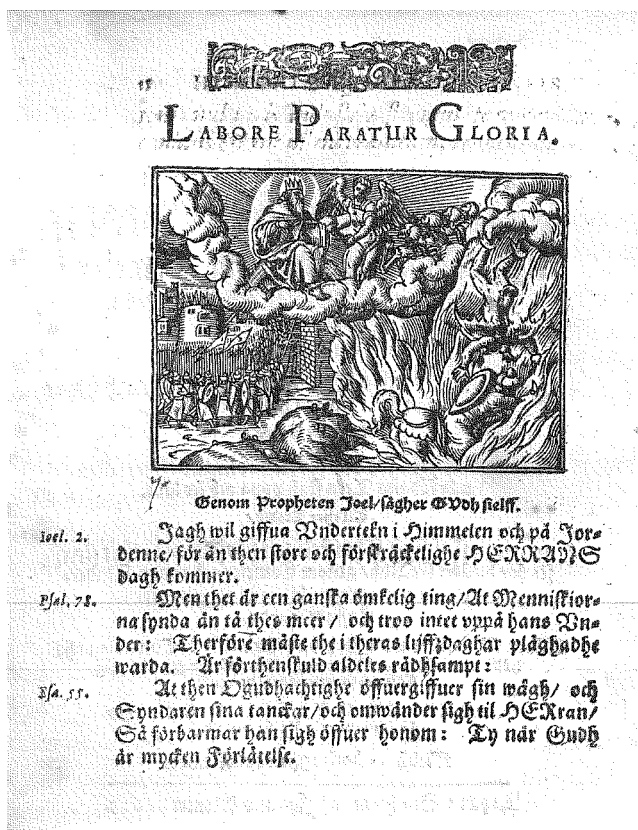


Fig. 13: Reverse of the title page of *Cometoscopia*, with Bible quotations confirming that signs in the sky will precede divine retribution on earth, but that God's grace will eventually be bestowed upon the penitent. The woodcut displays the casting out of Satan from the heavens, possibly as a reminder of the coming scourges – cf. the Book of Revelation 12:12: “Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.”

Obviously, there is an ambition to discipline the laypeople revealed in Paulinus' text. The congregation should be led along an ethical course, framed by moral rules and religious dogma determined by the leading representatives of the clergy. Moreover it cannot be denied that this ambition had political dimensions. But the urgency of mobilizing the faithful was accentuated by the apocalyptic reality permeating the *Cometoscopia*. All the scourges and punishments portended by the comets in the form of war, hunger and corporeal and spiritual pestilence – which refers to the spread of diseases

as well as of false religion – were nothing but “a virtual Figure and depiction of the final day”.<sup>76</sup> The gravity of the calamities portended not only meant that “the ultimate end of the World” would come at length “But that it within a few years, weeks or days should be certainly expected.”<sup>77</sup> For Paulinus and his contemporary colleagues in the church and the academy it seemed perfectly clear that Christ would soon return “to hold a righteous and austere Judgement over the living and the dead”. Therefore, as long as “the time of grace is at hand”, all people should humbly repent their sins and do penitence to avoid the judgement that would otherwise fall upon, not only the hypocrites and unrepentant, but the whole of creation.<sup>78</sup>

In face of the final judgement, people would have to turn back to the tenets of the true evangelical church, and to heed the admonitions of its clergy in order to secure their corporeal welfare and the salvation of their souls. The political issue of the influence and position of the church within society was therefore part of the all-embracing issue of the redemption of mankind.

## The Nature of Comets

This was, in a few short words, the core of the divine message of comets and other fiery blazes in the skies. At the same time as they called for the repentance of sins, the appearance of comets confirmed the task given to the clergy and outlined their mission in society – to be the teachers and shepherds of the Christian flock.

As evident from the views of the sceptics however, other interpretations were possible. Even in cases when comets were heeded as bad omens, they were not necessarily interpreted in ways the clergy preferred. There was an obvious risk that they could be used to contradict the evangelical teachers on essential points. In order to utilize the prophetic possibilities that emerged with the passage of a comet, and to hinder other actors and pretenders from

76 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Cometoscopia* p. 23; “...en skeenbarligh Figur och affmålning til then yttersta daghen”; cf. p. 57 concerning the “spiritual plague” as an apocalyptic scourge.

77 Ibid. pp. 23–24; “Så betydha the icke allenast then yttersta Werldennes ända/ omsider tilstunda: Vthan och at han innan någhra fåå åhr/ wekor eller daghar skal wisseligen wara förmodande.”

78 Ibid. sig. Brv; “... och att wår HErre JEsus CHristus/ när wij som minst äro thet förmodande/ warder kommandes i Himmels skyn/ til att hålla en rättferdigh och streng Dom öffuer lefwandes och döda/ På thet wij måge taga oss wäl til wara/ och emedan nådennes tijdh är förhanden/ göra en sanskyldig boot och bättring/ och således vndfly thet förskräckeliga straff och plågo/ som alle Skrymtare och Obootferdige öffuergå skal.”

doing the same, it was of grave importance for Paulinus as a representative of the clerical estate, to maintain the credibility of his interpretation, and to prove that his conclusions were correct.

In this discussion, Paulinus focused on the issue of the nature of comets and what was possible to know about them. In the first chapter of the tract, concerning 'The Philosophers' Judgement of the Origin of Comets', Paulinus initially stated that the reason of man had been "wretchedly ruined and obscured" through "the lapse and transgression of our first parents". Human knowledge and perception were limited as a consequence of the Fall, a condition that even the gentiles of the pre-Christian world had recognized: "*Homines aut nihil, aut parum sciunt*" – 'Men know either nothing or very little' – as Paulinus quoted "the wise Pagan Socrates".<sup>79</sup>

The original damage to human understanding concerned not only "spiritual and Divine Issues, which the carnal man cannot comprehend and fathom", but also "corporeal things", and remained a basic condition to which all natural philosophy and science was subjected.<sup>80</sup> As a consequence, any knowledge of comets provided by the natural philosophers could at the best be regarded as limited:

Such is the way of all *Philosophis, Physicis, Mathematicis, Astronomis*, That is, all Worldly wise, Masters and experienced in heavenly and other natural arts, that among them is seen great debility, Lack of understanding and Uncertainty concerning the orbits of the Stars and Comets ...<sup>81</sup>

Therefore even the wisest could not tell what "virtues and effects" of the comets would occur "in heaven, in the Air and in the Vicissitudes of all Nature". Any true knowledge bestowed on man had to be regarded as an act of divine grace.<sup>82</sup>

From the very beginning of the tract, Paulinus stated that his purpose was not to present a complete account of what the worldly wise would think of the nature of comets. Indeed, when consulting the philosophers, one would

79 Ibid. pp. 3–4; "Såsom Menniskionnes Förnuft är igenom våra förste Föräldrars fall och öfwerträdelse jämmerliga förderfwadt och förmörkadt ... Såsom then wijse Hedningen Socrates ther om offta hafuer klagadt och sagdt: *Homines aut nihil, aut parum sciunt*, Menniskiorna weta anten intet eller mechtsa lijtet."

80 Ibid. p. 3; "... icke allenest vthi andelige och Gudomelige Saker/ hwilka then kötzliga menniskian icke kan begriipa och vthransaka".

81 Ibid. p. 3; "Så går thet och til medh alla *Pilosophis, Physicis, Mathematicis, Astronomis*/ Thet är/ alle Werldslige wijse/ Mestare och förfarne vthi himmelske och andre naturlige konster/ at hoos them synes stoor swagheet/ Oförstånd och Owissheet vthi Stiernornes och Cometers lopp ..."

82 Ibid. p. 3; "... kraffter och wärckan/ som sig tildraga vthi himmelen/ i Wädret och hela Naturens Omskiftigheete".

find “much uncertainty and unsteady pretension”. The scholars would not even agree upon where within the natural hierarchy comets belonged.<sup>83</sup> Some thought, in accordance with Seneca and Apollonius,<sup>84</sup> that comets were not temporary blazes at all, but heavenly bodies that, like the stars and the planets had existed since the beginning of world. This was an opinion based on the “duration, glare and orbit between East and West of certain Comets”. Those who held this opinion claimed that it was the distance to the earth that created the illusive inconstancy of comet appearances. But Paulinus maintained that comets were demonstrably unstable, short-lived and irregular phenomena compared to the celestial bodies. Even if there were reports of comets that had been visible for months, in rare cases for more than a year, these were mere exceptions to the rule. Paulinus even claimed – with reference to Cardano’s commentaries on Ptolemy – that these durable comets should be regarded as miracles, rather than as natural phenomena.<sup>85</sup>

Others held that comets were not natural at all. Like “those Pillars of Cloud and Fire through which God guided the people of Israel in the desert”, they saw comets as “created by God and placed in the highest, just as new Creations, When some particular Affliction, Scourge or other perdition is at hand.”<sup>86</sup> However, according to Paulinus, this opinion had no firm support among the authorities and could not be wholly accepted. The advocates of this view did not consider that since God rested on the seventh day of the Creation, he would no longer create new matter out of nothing. Secondly it seemed to “Exclude all natural Means and Causes, through which God Almighty affects everything among the Creatures in due order.”<sup>87</sup> Instead one had to rely on what most natural philosophers and astronomers could agree upon: comets were natural, meteorological phenomena, drawn out from the earth into the high and ignited either by forces unleashed by solar or lunar eclipses, or by the influence of the planets, in particular Mars and Mercury.<sup>88</sup>

83 Ibid. p. 4.

84 Probably referring to Apollonius of Perga (c. 262–190 BCE), astronomer and geometer.

85 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Cometoscopia* pp. 4–5.

86 Ibid. p. 5; “...såsom the Molns och Eldzstödher/ genom hwilka Gudh ledsagade Jsraels folck I öknena/ icke hafwa altidh warit til/ vthan äre först aff Gudhi ther til förordnade: Så skal thet och hafwa sigh medh Cometerne/ N. At the icke vthaff naturliga orsaker hafwa thetas Vrsprung och Begynnelse: Vthan warde aff Gudhi skapade och i högdenne vpsatte/ aldeles såsom nyie Creatur/ När någon synnerlig Olycko/ Landzplågo eller annat förderf är förhanden.”; cf. Exodus 13:21–22.

87 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Cometoscopia* p. 5; “...hon vtheluter alle naturlige Medel och Orsaker/ genom hwilka Gudh alzwäldig ordentliga all ting wärker vthi Creaturen”.

88 Ibid. p. 6; cf. Sara Schechner Genuth, *Comets, Popular Culture, and the Birth of Cosmology*, Princeton NJ, 1997 pp. 94–96.

Thus the philosophers presented manifold and inconsistent opinions and theories concerning the origin and the physical character of comets. But Paulinus did not regard it as his task to judge between them, as long as none of these theories encroached upon the divine meaning displayed in the sky. Wherever they had their path, and of whatever substance they were, no philosopher could deny that comets portended serious changes in the lives of men. Therefore, unless you were a godless Stoic, they should be regarded as tokens of God's justified punishment. Those who regarded comets as pure signs of wonder were right, insofar as they pointed out "the Significance, to which God provides such Signs". Implicitly referring to Tycho Brahe and his famous observations of the nova in 1572 and the comet of 1577, Paulinus even claimed that the view of comets as wonder signs corresponded to the appearance of a specific kind of

... high and almost supernatural Comets, that some assiduous *Astronomi* have, in some recent years, observed with certain instruments, and discovered that they have their space and place above the Sun; Yes even among the fixed stars in the Firmament of Heaven, where Aristotle and his lot deny that any such moistness and matter may come, of which Comets are caused.<sup>89</sup>

Even Tycho Brahe had described the 1572 nova as a "rarer and greater miracle than anything that has occurred since the creation of the world" and regarded it as a clear token of the approaching end of the world.<sup>90</sup> For his

89 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Cometoscopia* pp. 5–6: "Lijkwål är hon icke aldeles förkastandel/ allthenstund hon rätteliga föregifuer/ om then Betydhning/ til hwilken Gudh sådanne Tekn förordner: Såsom och eendels förklarar the höge och nästan öfwnaturlige Cometers Vrsprung/ som någre dräfflige *Astronomi* hafwa vppå någre förlidne åhr/ medh wissa Jnstrument observeret/ och befun[n]edt at the theras rum oc ställe hafwa haft öfuer Solen/ Ja och ibland the orörlige stiernor vthi Himmels Firmament/ tijt ARIstoteles och hans anhang/ förneka ingen sådan fuchtigheet och materia komma kunna/ vthaff hwilken Cometer måge förorsakes."; for a short and informative study of Tycho's achievements in this respect, see Owen Gingerich, "Tycho Brahe and the Nova of 1572", in M. Turatto, S. Benetti, L. Zampieri & W. Shea (eds.) *1604–2004: Supernovae as Cosmological Lighthouses*, ASP Conference Series, vol. 342, Astronomical Society of the Pacific, San Francisco 2005 pp. 3–12. That Paulinus had read Tycho is beyond doubt: as professor of astronomy he lectured over the Tychonian world system as a parallel hypothesis to the Ptolemean and Copernican systems; see N.V.E. Nordenmark, "Laurentius Paulinus Gothus föreläsningar vid Uppsala universitet 1599 över Copernicus hypotes. Jämte inledning och översättning utgivna med understöd av Längmanska kulturfonden", *Arkiv för astronomi* vol. 1 n:o 24, Stockholm 1951 pp. 261–299.

90 Tycho Brahe, *De nova et nullius aevi memoria prius visa stella*, in I. L. E. Dreyer (ed.), *Tychonis Brahe Dani Opera omnia* vol. I, Copenhagen 1913–1929 p. 30, cited in Håkan Håkansson, "Tycho the Apocalyptic: History, Prophecy and the Meaning of

part, Paulinus also included the great nova of 1604 when he argued that such ‘comets’ were particularly sinister, since they defied the laws of the Creation and infringed on the natural order:

Are now the Elements and other Natural things, that are ordained to the benefit of Men, apparent Signs of God’s wrath, How much more are such wondersome New Stars and Blazes the Messengers of the wrath and cruelty of God.<sup>91</sup>

This meant that even if “the Worldly wise” could provide natural explanations for their origin, it was not possible to regard comets in general, and definitely not all comets, as mere “Natural Things”. Instead one had to regard them as “sheer miracles, and the particular work and wonder of God”.<sup>92</sup>

## The Primacy of Exegetics

The emphasis on comets as being supernatural phenomena had nothing to do with their physical constitution: they were not regarded as spiritual matter. But their final causes, and the purposes for which they were lightened or created, were spiritual. They emanated directly from the will of God, and it was not necessary to know their essential nature, as long as their religious significance was heeded.

Now Paulinus was aware that natural philosophers generally agreed that the order of creation was evidence of God’s goodwill towards men. Therefore they also knew that as men sinned, all natural things and good gifts could be turned to instruments of God’s wrath. Nothing was wrong in regarding comets as natural phenomena, as long as their capacity to preach the warnings of God and to point out the imminence of coming judgement was firmly heeded. Citing Martin Luther’s homily for Epiphany,

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Natural Phenomena”, in Jitka Zamrzlová (ed.), *Science in Contact at the Beginning of Scientific Revolution*, Acta historiae rerum naturalium necnon technicarum, National Technical Museum, Prague 2004 p. 211.

- 91 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Cometoscopia* pp. 16–17: “Äro nu Elementen och andra Naturligha ting/ som Menniskiomen til godho äre förordnade/ vpenbara Tekn til Gudz wredhe/ Huru mykit meer äro sådane vnderlighe Nyia Stiernor och Blåss Gudz wredhes och grymheetz Budhbärare ... Hedningarna skriffua/ en Comet haffuer sina Naturliga orsaker/ Men Gud förordnar ingen som icke betydher een wiss olycko/ och medh fåå ord skal en wetta (sägher han) När någhot sigh förwandlar i himmelen öffuer thes gemena art och egenskap/ Tå låter Gudz wredhe wissierlighen see sitt tekn.”
- 92 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Cometoscopia* p. 12; “Ändoch the Werldzlighe wijse giffua någhre naturlighe orsaker före/ hwar vthaff Cometer hafwa theras vrsprung/ Jtändelse/ Lopp/ Figur och Betydhning/ som förbemålt är: Lijkwål kan man icke så aldeles/ icke heller alla Cometer vthi gemeen/ hälle för Naturlighe Ting/ vthan man måste achta them för ijdel Mirakel och Gudz besyn[n]erliga wärck och vnder.”



Paulinus demonstrated how the philosopher's knowledge and the Word in the Scriptures could interact to create a uniform understanding of comets, fiery blazes and even eclipses, as they were discussed by Luther in his homily for the second Sunday of Advent:

Thus experience teaches, and thus speaks Christ, that such signs in the Sun, the moon and the stars, should signify the ultimate perdition of the World. But how such things come to pass, or what Natural or secret virtues and effects these signs have, that Soothsayers and Augurs much fumble and grasp for, That is neither useful nor necessary for you to know: It is enough that you thereof can perceive the wrath of God, and thus be wakened to a righteous living. Thus speaks Luther.<sup>93</sup>

In Paulinus' argument, this significance of comets placed them above all other physical portents in dignity. Clearly he adjusted his message to the current situation, with the comet passage of 1607 fresh in mind. But his emphasis on the supernatural nature of comets also confirmed his main focus, forcing natural philosophy as the basic, intellectual prerequisite for any divinatory practices, to become subjected to theology and exegetic discipline – and thereby to the supervision of the clergy. The ultimate truth of the comets could not be found in the learning of the philosophers, whose endeavours to acquire knowledge of the divine mysteries balanced on the brink of illicit augury, driven by sinful curiosity. The Word of the Book of Nature had to be read in the light of the Word of the Scriptures.<sup>94</sup>

Therefore the art of divining the meaning of comets appeared in a new focus. The message provided by the comets had to be weighed against the knowledge revealed directly by God through his prophets, evangelists and apostles. The main conclusion of this discussion is that a diligent exegetic study must have precedence before all other divinatory methods. Without support from the Scriptures, no knowledge provided by philosophers and astrologers was of any use.

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93 Ibid. p. 17; "Ty lærer förfarenheten/ Så talar och Christus/ At sådana tekn vthi Solen/ månen och stjärnorna/ skola betydhä Werldennes yttersta fördärff. Men huru sådant går til/ eller hwadh Naturlighe eller heemlige krafftter och wärckan thesse tekn haffue/ ther Spåmän och Tåknetydhare mykit famla och gespa effter/ Thet är tigh hwarken nyttigt eller aff nödhene til at weta: Thet är nogh at tu ther vthaff kan förnimma Gudz wredhe/ och således bliffua vpwäckte til itt Bootfärdigt leffuerne. Så talar Lutherus."

94 Ibid. pp. 20–21.

## The Primacy of True Preachers

However, it was not enough, merely to refer to the Bible to warrant a correct interpretation of comets, since even opponents of the evangelical cause could declare their reverence to the authority of the Scriptures. For instance there were 'Popish' astrologers who denied the eschatological significance of comets by claiming that since such phenomena were not explicitly mentioned as presages in the apocalyptic prophecies of the Scriptures, they could not be regarded as signs of the Last Judgement. But according to Paulinus this objection could be easily refuted as a device of "devilish fabrication to confuse the simple". The argument of the Catholic sceptics served only to strengthen the 'Epicurean' popes in their personal, ungodly opinions that there was no heaven or hell – and thereby no judgement.<sup>95</sup> Instead Paulinus claimed, once again with reference to Martin Luther's homilies, that comets should be counted among those stars, fires or fiery blazes that were indeed mentioned as presages of the final judgement in the Bible. Besides, it would be meaningless to regard contemporary comets merely as presages of the arrival of Antichrist as some of these 'popish' astrologers claimed, since – as had already been certified by the evidence of the Scriptures – "it is clearer than the Sun, that the Pope is truly the Antichrist".<sup>96</sup>

The endeavours to extract and interpret the true message of portents, natural signs and biblical prophecies required not only complementary exegetic studies. They also had to be performed under the supervision of true teachers and ministers of the Word, subjected to theological expertise. Even if most people regarded comets as ominous portents, their full meaning might remain hidden if the preaching of the herdsmen of God's flock were not heeded.

However, Paulinus not only positioned his argument in relation to confessional enemies. As seen earlier, Paulinus was eager to confine the scope of interpretations of comets based upon the statements of 'wise pagans' – mainly by emphasizing the moral and epistemological limits of man as a fal-

95 Ibid. p. 21; "Så haffuer sådana theras Jnsagho platt ingen grund/ vthan är een dieffuulsk dicht til at förwillla the eenfaldighe/ och styrckia någre Påwers ogudhachtigha mening/ som haffua troodt och bekändt/ hwarken himmelen eller helwetet wara til".

96 Ibid. p. 22; cit. p. 21; "Så haffuer sådana theras Jnsagho platt ingen grund/ vthan är een dieffuulsk dicht til at förwillla the eenfaldighe/ och styrckia någre Påwers ogudhachtigha mening/ som haffua troodt och bekändt/ hwarken himmelen eller helwetet wara til ... Och görs icke behoff at the Påweske dröma meer ther om/ at Cometer skola wara Antichristi förbudh som the falskeligen föregiffua/ effter thet är klarare än Solen/ at Påwen är sanfärdeligha Antichristus"; for this last statement, references are made to Daniel 12; Colossians 2; 1 Timothy 4; 2 Thessalonians 2, while the general reference is to Luther's homilies for Second Advent and Epiphany.

len creature. But his criticism of the ‘diligence, speculations and curiosity’ of the human reason that ‘dishonours God’, is largely directed against scholars mentioned in pejorative terms as augurs and soothsayers – and astrologers.

Compared to Paulinus’ prognostications from the 1590s, this categorization seems to imply that new boundaries had been drawn in the orthodox discourse, which placed astrology beyond the limits of allowable pursuits of knowledge. However, taking Paulinus’ tract as a whole, it becomes clear that his interpretation did not differ much from any contemporary, astrological interpretation of the comet.

Although he regarded both categories as God-sent afflictions, Paulinus seemed to separate “noxious changes in the Elements and other natural things” from the more direct apocalyptic scourges.<sup>97</sup> In contrast a primary ambition of a contemporary astrologer would probably have been to link them together in a chain of causal connections. However, in accordance with common astrological practice Paulinus still demonstrated how physical changes and spiritual scourges interacted, as both were subjected to the Providence of God.

In Sigfridus Forsius’ comet tract – the only preserved ‘astrological’ interpretation of the comet passage of 1607 issued in Swedish – the introductory discussion seems to point in the same direction as the conclusions in *Cometoscopia*. Forsius described how God, in addition to sending his prophets and priests, also ordained the whole of creation to proclaim his will, from the spiritual world and the celestial spheres, down to the elemental world, and to turn sinners to repentance before it was too late:

He sends his faithful and grave Teachers, he let the whole Nature, Heaven and Earth, Preach for us, through strange signs and portents, of which one part are Natural and Material, one part Supernatural, Immaterial and Fantastic. Natural are those, albeit occasioned and roused through natural causes (especially, after a secret order of God, towards the time when vice is prevailing at its most), yet herald much evil to the world through their strangeness, and as they rarely occur, Such as the great conjunctions of the upper planets, the great Solar eclipses, Comets and other Fiery *meteora* in the air ...<sup>98</sup>

97 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Cometoscopia* p. 32; “... skadeliga förändringar vthi Elementen och andra naturliga ting.”

98 Forsius, *Een berättelse/ Och eenfallight Judicium* sig. Azv; “Han vthsänder trogna och allfuarsamme Lärare/ han låter hela Naturen/ Himmel och Jord/ Predika för osz/ igenom selsamma tekn och wijdhunder/ aff hwilke en part Naturlighe och Materialiske äre/ en part Öffuernaturlighe/ Omaterialiske och Phantastiske. ... Naturlighe äre the/ som ändoch at the igenom naturlighe orsaker förorsakadhe och vpwäckte warda (synnerliga effter en hemligh Gudz ordning/ emoot then tijdh synden j werlden mäst tagher öffuerhanden:) doch lijkwäl igenom sijn selsamheet/ och j thet the sällan

The two tracts appear to agree, both in their common errand and in their view of nature as mirroring and conveying the will God. The references to the apocalyptic realities and the admonitions to repentance are virtually identical. Although he was not as explicit as Paulinus, Forsius also relied on the authority of the Scriptures – especially the prophecies in Luke 21 – when making his conclusions concerning the necessity to repent before the Judgement.<sup>99</sup> The only striking difference, taken from the quotation in Forsius' tract above, is that Paulinus never explicitly mentioned planetary conjunctions to be divine signs – as he had done in the prognostication for 1598.

## Conjunctions and History

Still this small difference is significant. In the apocalyptic literature that flooded the European book market in the latter part of the sixteenth century, the great planetary conjunctions had played a distinctive role in the conception of the eschatological historiography from Creation to Doomsday.

In medieval and early modern chronology, linear and cyclical conceptions of time were generally combined. While seasons and ages seemed to move in regular cycles, and the past foreboded and corresponded with the present, it was clear that history, seen in the tradition from the Scriptures and the Church Fathers, had a beginning and a given end. In Cyprian Leowitz' authoritative *De coniunctionibus magnis* from 1564, which in turn was based on the works of Albumasar and medieval Christian scholars, these linear and cyclical conceptions had also been synthesized with an astrological key to interpret history, with focus on the regular conjunctions between Jupiter and Saturn.<sup>100</sup>

Due to their slow orbits these two planets conjunct only in cycles of about twenty years. Generally astrologers regarded such *coniunctiones magnae* or great conjunctions with reverence, as they were believed to portend great changes on earth. However, apart from being rare occasions, their significance was also determined by the fact that they successively appeared in a row of three zodiac signs at a distance of 120 degrees from each other

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skeel/ werldena mykit ont bebådha/ Såsom the öffuerste Planeters store Möthen/ Solennes store Förmörkelser/ Cometer/ och andre Eldz *meteora* i lufften"; Forsius also mentions monstrous births and strange appearances among 'growing things' and 'man and beast' as natural omens.

99 Forsius, *Een berättelse/ Och eenfallight Judicium* sig. D1v-D2r.

100 For a discussion of the astrological theories of the great conjunctions as the key to the 'theology of history' and the prophetic application of the historical narrative, see Krzysztof Pomian, "Astrology as a Naturalistic Theology of History" in Zambelli (ed.) 1986 pp. 35–41.

(see figure below). In astrological terminology such a row was designated as a 'triplicity' or 'trigon', which in turn was regarded as corresponding with one of the four elements.<sup>101</sup> Due to the precession of the firmament the trigons of the great conjunctions would shift in cycles of nearly two hundred years – from the fiery to the airy, from the airy to the earthy and from the earthy to the watery. Every such shift was described as a *coniunctio maior* or a greater conjunction, while a *coniunctio maxima*, the greatest and most ominous of all planetary conjunctions would occur when after about 795 years a full cycle through all trigons had been completed, and Jupiter and Saturn would once again conjunct in the fiery trigon.<sup>102</sup>

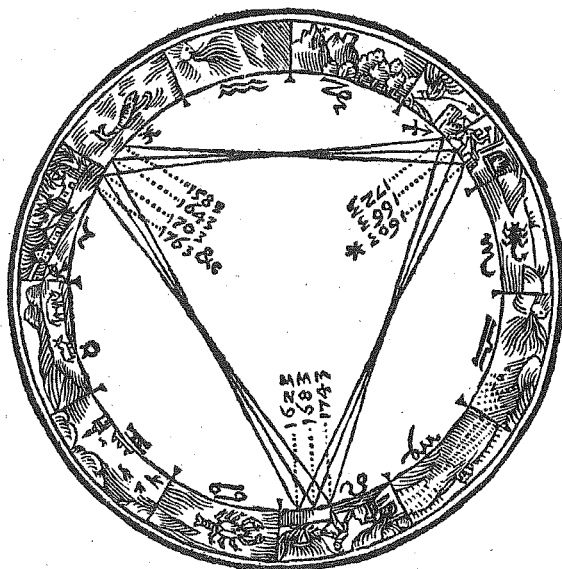


Fig. 14: Diagram of the 'great conjunctions' between 1583 and 1763, from Johannes Kepler, *De stella nova* (1606). The first conjunction in the fiery trigon in 1603 marked with an asterisk. This regular and esthetical system was not watertight however – as is seen above, the conjunction of 1643 actually occurred in Pisces, a watery sign.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>101</sup> See fig. 3 above p. 36.

<sup>102</sup> Leowitz, *De coniunctionibus magnis sig.* M2v-M3r, N2v-N3v; cf. Sandblad, *De eskatologiska föreställningarna* pp. 136–139; Margaret Aston, "The Fiery Trigon Conjunction: An Elizabethan Astrological Prediction", *Isis*, vol. 61, no. 2 1970 pp. 160–165, 170–171; for a brief and instructive account of the 'trigon theory' and its application in medieval Europe, see Smoller pp. 21–22.

<sup>103</sup> Johannes Kepler, *De stella nova in pede Serpentarii, et qui sub ejus exortum de novo iniit, trigono igneo*, Prague 1606 p. 25.

The *coniunctio maxima* and the re-entrance in the fiery trigon thus foretold the very greatest of changes. In his *Astronomiae instauratae progymnasmatum* from 1592, Tycho Brahe revealed how every such conjunction had corresponded to decisive shifts in history – including the great flood of Noah and the fall and redemption of man. Now, as the conjunction in the watery sign of Pisces in 1583 would be the last before the world once again entered the fiery trigon, Tycho argued that the final, sabbatical age was at hand, of which the great nova in Cassiopeia in 1572 had been a presage.<sup>104</sup>

Leowitz' *De coniunctionibus magnis* had been a main source for Tycho's discussion on this point. As we have seen, this work had also been central to the apocalyptic calculations of the Swedish scholars Nicolaus Ringius and Georgius Olai in the 1580s. Directly or indirectly it was also Leowitz' theory Forsius referred to when he included a short account of the ages of the world in his comet tract from 1607. Thus Forsius designated the conjunction of 1603 in the fiery sign of Aries as being of "the most remarkable and vigorous" kind of which "have occurred only 7 since the beginning of the world".<sup>105</sup> In the following, Forsius showed how the second of these seven conjunctions had preceded the Flood of Noah, while the third coincided with the Exodus of the Jewish people and the Law of God given to man. The fourth had marked the end of the Assyrian Monarchy and the foundation of Rome; the fifth marked the advent of Christ. The sixth and latest had appeared during the reign of Charlemagne, foreboding his reforms of the Roman Empire, which according to the historians was the last of the four World Monarchies that had been prophesied in the book of Daniel.<sup>106</sup>

Forsius' chronological tables are virtually identical to Tycho's account, primarily as they both based their works on the same authoritative source. The differences between them are mainly due to the fact that Tycho concluded his chronology with the conjunction of 1583, and Forsius with the conjunction of 1603 – quite naturally as he wrote his text in 1607.<sup>107</sup> However, the meaning of the correlations between the conjunctions and the ages of the world were the same. As Forsius explained, the current, seventh *coniunctio maxima* corresponded to "the seventh day in the week, when

104 Tycho Brahe, *Astronomiae instauratae progymnasmatum* in *Opera omnia* vol. III p. 311; cf. Håkansson, "Tycho the Apocalyptic" p. 230.

105 Forsius, *Een berättelse/ Och eenfalligt Judicium* sig. D4v: "Then Tridie Coniunction kallas Maxima, hon skeer allenast j hwario 795. åht/ när hon skrijdher aff Watns Triplicitet i j Eldz Trigono, effter 19. åhr. Thenne är then merckeligheste och kragtighast ibland the andre/ mädhan hon och så sällan skeer ... Sådane äre allenest 7. ifrå werldennes begynnelse skedde".

106 Ibid. sig. D3v-D4r.

107 Cf. Tycho Brahe, *Astronomiae instauratae progymnasmatum* p. 312.

the Sabbath of the Lord begins".<sup>108</sup> In both accounts, this could only mean that the times were consummated. With the greatest authorities of his art, Forsius could assure that since the world was once created in the fiery trigon of the Zodiac, it would now go through its "greatest changes" and perish "through fire, as the Scriptures proclaims."<sup>109</sup>

## Comets and History

The calculations of Tycho Brahe and Forsius seem to be exactly the kind of astrological conjectures that were rejected in *Cometoscopia*. But Paulinus did not refer to the theories of the great conjunctions, and he made no comments on astrological attempts to demonstrate how the world was inexorably coming to its final age. Instead he conceived a world chronology of his own, where he inserted "the Examples of the Comets, as they have appeared one year after another", from the Flood to "the new Wonder star" that had appeared in 1607.<sup>110</sup>

In this catalogue of all known comets throughout history, each one is listed with explanations of the afflictions they had portended – hunger, pestilence, storm, earthquakes, floods, war, treason and changes of regimes – all related to accounts from the Bible and other histories. For instance, Anno Mundi 1758 "A Comet was seen in the Heavens, 65 days through" after which followed the punishment of Babel and the confusion of tongues.<sup>111</sup> A comet seen in AM 3492 heralded the Persian wars, while another in 3788 foretold the deaths of the war heroes Hannibal and Scipio Africanus. Even the Star of

108 Forsius, *Een berättelse/ Och eenfallight Judicium*, sig. D4v; "Thenne [Conjunctio maxima] måste nu wara then sidzste j thenne werldenne/ lijka som then sjwnde daghen j wekone/ tå Herrens Sabbath ingår."; later Forsius would take the analogy between the seven days of the creation and the ages of the world even further, see Sigfridus Aronus Forsius, *Prognosticon Astro-Theologicum. Til thet Vndersamma Förändringsåret MDC XX*, printed by Ignatius Meurer, Stockholm 1619 sig. B4r.

109 Forsius, *Een berättelse/ Och eenfallight Judicium*, sig. Err; "Ty skee och så vnder thenne Eldz Triplicitet the störste werldennes förändringar/ och werldenns ände igenom eld/ som Scriften thet förkunnar."; cf. sig. A2v for a declaration of the end of the world under the fiery trigon; that the world was created in the same trigon is not mentioned explicitly, but it may be concluded by the table of sig. D3v.

110 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Cometoscopia* pp. 64–65; indragher Cometernes Exempel/ efter som the thet ena åhret efter thet andra sigh yppat haffua ... in til then nye Vnderstiärna/ som syntes Anno 1607."

111 Ibid. p. 65; "Syntes en Comet vthi Himmelen/ 65 daghar igenom"; in Paulinus' account, notices from Johannes Magnus' history of the Gothic and Swedish kings are set alongside the traditional historiographies. For instance, in the wake of this particular comet, Magog, son of Japhet is said to have crossed the Baltic and founded the kingdoms of Sweden and Gothia.

the Magi was counted among the comets: in AM 3963 “a New star let itself be seen in the East, which also led the Wise men from there to Bethlehem”.<sup>112</sup>

In Paulinus’ account, the comets were thus given a pivotal role in the narrative of the redemption of Man. This became even clearer as the whole historiography implacably pointed towards the coming apocalypse. When “the Greek Monarchy” ended in the wake of a comet in AM 3806 (i.e. 157 BCE) “and came under the power and dominion of the Romans”, this was a reference to the notion of the Roman Empire as being the last of the world monarchies. As comets foretold the sacrilege of the Temple of Jerusalem as related in the Books of the Maccabees, Paulinus provided an annotation in the margin, reading “The destruction of Churches, and oppression of the Religion”. Thus the persecution of the Jewish people under foreign lords corresponded to the persecutions of the congregation of God in the Last Days.<sup>113</sup>

Even the rise of the Papacy as the Antichrist was foretold by the appearance of two comets in 603 and 605, which heralded the proclamation of the pope as “*Episcopus Oecumenicus* or *Universalis*”, and that the Roman Church should be Head of Christianity in the World”.<sup>114</sup> As a more recent presage of the Reformation and the rise of the evangelical movement, a solar eclipse and a comet in 1409 foretold the Council of Konstanz “wherein many Heretical Articles were decreed” and the “assiduous Teacher” Jan Hus was condemned as a heretic. Here Paulinus quoted a widely spread and “remarkable Prophecy on Doctor Luther” attributed to Hus when facing the stake:

From this time a hundred years/ the guile of the Pope shall be revealed./ Now here a Goose<sup>115</sup> is roasted but then a white Swan shall come/ That you shall let be unroasted/ He shall tear your net asunder.<sup>116</sup>

112 Ibid. pp. 65–74; cit. p. 74; “... haffuer ... een Nyy Stiärna lätet sigh see i Österlanden/ hwilken och ledhsagadhe the Wijse män ther ifrå och til Bethlehem”.

113 Ibid. pp. 71–72; “Kyrkiors förstörning/ och Religionens förtryck ... Widh thenne tijdhen bekom och then Grekeske Monarchia sin ände/ och kom vnder the Romares wäld och Regemente.”

114 Ibid. p. 85; “*Episcopus Oecumenicus* eller *Vniuersalis*, och at then Romerske Kyrckia skulle blifua Huffwudet för Christenheten i Werldenne”; this happened during the short papacy of Boniface III (Feb.–Nov. 607). According to Paulinus, this had been prophesied in Daniel 12, 1 Tim 4, 2 Thess 2, and in the Book of Revelation.

115 *Husa* in Czech means goose.

116 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Cometoscopia* p. 94; “...vthi hwilket många Kätterske Artiklar wordo beslutne/ och then dräflighe Läraren *Iohannes Huss*/ sampt medh några andra/ bleff dömd och vthropat för en kättare ... När *Iohannes Huss* leddes vth til dödhen ... Haffuer han talat thenna märckelighe Prophetia om D. Luthero: Från thenne tijdh itt hundrade åhr/ Skäl Pāwens swek bliffua vppenbar./Nu steeks een Gåås på thenne



That the End was approaching was also made clear by the frequency by which the wonder signs of God were seen in Paulinus' own time. Of forty-four reported comets and fiery blazes since the Flood, fourteen had occurred only in the previous hundred years. In the latter decades they had also become more dreadful, "since God Almighty from the beginning of the World" had never ignited such wonder stars as the novas of 1572 and 1604, especially in respect to their height, greatness and durance "as all *Mathematici* and *Astronomi* must admit". Thus, if all comets had hitherto been signs of God's wrath, as Paulinus had clearly demonstrated through his historical account, what should not these two portend? Especially the latter was ominous since "this Comet before all others, have been more remarkable and supernatural."<sup>117</sup>

When we read Paulinus' historical narrative, it is tempting to suggest that he tried to construct a world chronology to compete with the apocalyptic claims of the astrologers, and that his tendency to omit the theories of the conjunctions was based upon principal objections. However, Paulinus did not totally dismiss the symbolic value of astrological figurations in his chronology. With an incidental reference to the theories of the great conjunctions, Paulinus remarked that the nova of 1604 had occurred in the "celestial, fiery sign of Sagittarius", as if to emphasize its apocalyptic significance.<sup>118</sup> Even more striking, as the very first example in his chronology, preceding the Flood of Noah, Paulinus claimed that:

When you wrote from the beginning of the World 1656 [years] ... appeared among other signs under the Sky a great Comet in the Watery sign of Pisces, which with the ever greatest speed, ran through *Zodiacum* or the 12. Heavenly Signs in four weeks, until it eventually disappeared in the same Watery sign.<sup>119</sup>

Baan/ Men tå skal komma en hwijt Swaan/ Then skolen i låta osteekt bliffua/ Han skal idhert nåät sönderrijffua."; for the origin of this prophecy in the legacy of both Jan Hus and Martin Luther, see Scribner, "Incombustible Luther" pp. 41–42.

117 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Cometoscopia* pp. 109–110; "Och efter GVDh Alzwoldigh icke ifrå Werldennes begynnelse sådana Vnderstiärnor/ hwilka thenne högden/ stoorheten och warachtigheten hafft/ någon tijdh haffuer låtet vthi himmelen vptända och förnimma/ såsom alle *Mathematici* och *Astronomi* måste bekänna/ som thesse twänne Sålssamme Stiärnor ... Så kan intet annat skee/ än at the måste wara wisse GVDZ wredhes tekn ... Som thenne Cometen fram för alla andra/ märckeligare och öffuernaturlighare warit haffuer."

118 Ibid. pp. 64–110, cit. p. 109; "... vthi thet himmelska Eeldzteknat *Sagittario*".

119 Ibid. p. 65; "När man skreff ifrå Werldennes begynnelse 1656. För CHRJSTJ Födhelse/ 2307. åhr/ efter *Funcij* Men 2314. efter *Bucholceri* räkning/ yppadhe sigh ibland andra Tekn vnder Himmelen en stoor Comet vthi thet Watuteknat Fiskarna/ hwilken medh allsomstörste hastigheet vthi fyre wekor/ lop *Zodiacum* eller the 12. Himmelske Tekn igenom/ til thes han på sidstonne vthi samma Watutekn förswan."

Here the apparent association between the deluge in Genesis and the watery trigon of the Zodiac described an emblematic correspondence between heaven and earth that no astrologer would have missed. But this astrological aspect of Paulinus' account of the first comet of the world was not allowed to become a main issue in the interpretation of its significance. The focus of this comet and the disaster it portended – the great deluge with its crucial motifs of judgement and salvation – ensured that any astrological interpretation was subjected to the main emphasis on the providence of God. The primary point of Paulinus' discussion, is that he in the times of tribulation encouraged the clergy to

... exhort their listeners and others that such afflictions by no means appear out of chance or Coincidence. For all things, both in Heaven and on Earth, however insignificant ... are ruled by God, and have to accommodate themselves after his Divine will and Providence.<sup>120</sup>

Now this would hardly be denied by any contemporary astrologer, but Paulinus takes the discussion further:

Neither any affliction nor misfortune is caused by the stars, or by their orbits and Aspects, as a part *Astrologi* falsely pretend with the greatest blasphemy of God and to the seduction of many people, which is to be seen and perceived by many Testimonies of the Scriptures, Especially by the Prophet Isaiah.<sup>121</sup>

Paulinus seems to indicate that many astrologers did not consider God as the first cause in their conjectures. They tended to forget that it was God who punished the sinners through his hosts of scourges, such as fire, water, hunger, death, wild beasts and locusts – or, as stated by the prophet Amos, “there is nothing evil in the city that the Lord has not done”.<sup>122</sup>

However, this description of the astrologers' lack of piety hardly re-

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Generally, Paulinus does not report his sources in this catalogue, but when he settled the year for this comet – which is certainly not mentioned in the Bible – he refers to two Lutheran chronologists, Johann Funck and Abraham Bucholzer.

120 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Cometoscopia* pp. 134–135; “Thernäst skola the förehålla theas åhörarom och androm/ at sådana plåghor ingalunda komma vthaff någhon slump eller Händelse. Ty alle ting/ bådhe i Himmelem och på Jordenne/ ware sigh så ringa som the någhon tijdh wara kunne/ The regeras aff Gudhi/ och måste lämpa sigh effter hans Gudhommeligha wilia och Försynn”.

121 Ibid. p. 135; “Icke heller förorsakar sigh någhon plågho eller olycko aff stjärnorna eller theas lopp och Aspechter/ som en part *Astrologi* medh Gudz største försmädelse och många människors förförelse falskeligha föregiffua/ hwilket aff många Skriffthenes Witnesbörd/ Synnerligha hoos Propheten Esaïam är til at see och förnimma.”

122 Ibid. p. 135; “Ty thet är intet ondt i Stadenom thet Herren icke gör”; cf. Amos 3:6: “... shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?”

sembles Forsius' discussion, where the astrological aspects were more or less unconditionally subjected to the Providence of God. Yet in Paulinus' account, it seems as if the astrologer was primarily used as an example, set in contrast to the godly and Christian pursuer of knowledge of the final age of the world. Philosophical theories concerning the physical constitution and properties of comets were not useless in themselves. Not even the astrological methods to estimate and foretell the consequences of comets were to be rejected *a priori*. But if these theories and methods were not kept under tight rein, they threatened to entice people to dismiss the essential issue: comets revealed a divine message that could only be fully understood by the frame of interpretation provided by true evangelical teachers of the divine Word. In Paulinus' rhetoric it appears as if the astrologers threatened to secularize the interpretation of the book of nature in two respects: first by defusing the active role of God in nature; secondly, and as a consequence of this, by defying clerical authority over worldly learning.

### The Change of Scenes 1607–1613

The discussion of astrology in *Cometoscopia* seems to reflect an ambition to control the right to prophesy. In this ambition the apocalyptic outlook served as an enhancement of the claims raised. It emphasized the urgency of the message that the clergy wanted to communicate to their congregation. Just as "the Sodomites, Gomorreans and the Jewish people" in times of old disdained "the exhortations of their faithful Preachers" and the warnings of comets and other wonder signs, the entire world now faced its utter end, "enclosing all those who live on Earth as in a noose."<sup>123</sup>

Apparently this was an honest expression of experienced fears and concerns about the salvation of the people – but as such it also put emphasis on the authority of the clergy. In the final chapter of the tract, on how to conduct oneself in times of affliction portended by comets, a clear line is drawn between the worldly authorities and the clergy, concerning their respective sphere of competence. In accordance with Lutheran doctrine, Paulinus made clear that the first duty of the worldly authorities concerned religious issues. They should "Have God's Word before their eyes" and thus

123 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Cometoscopia* p. 23; "the Sodomiter Gomorreer och thz Judeska folket/ hafua förachtat theas trogne Predikanteris förmaningar/ oc the[n] warning som genom Cometer och andra vndertekn hafuer varit stält för öghonen/ och äre ther igenom oförmodelighen medh förskräckeligt straff öffuerijlade och i grund förderffuade wordne: Altså warder och then yttersta Werldennes ända och vndergång/ vthi altsomstörsta hastigheet/ och vti itt ögnableck såsom een snaro kringhwärfuandes allom them som boo på Jordenne."

resist superstition and false worship, and uphold churches, schools and academies. To avoid the retribution of God's wrath, they should also lead the intercessions of the Christian congregation and punish offenders of the Law of God, showing that they "beareth not the sword in vain".<sup>124</sup> On the other hand the clergy, being the servants of the Word and "Ministers of the secret of God" had the sole right and responsibility to formulate the faith that the sovereign was set to protect. This standpoint was constantly stressed in the conflict with the worldly authorities that reached its peak when *Cometoscopia* was presented to Karl IX in January 1608.<sup>125</sup>

However, if the time and the context of the conception of *Cometoscopia* are regarded as important for the analysis of the text, a minor problem arises. We cannot know for sure whether the printed version from 1613 is identical to the tract presented five years before. Granted, there are reasons to believe that no major editorial change had been made. The tract seems to have been rather rapidly compiled: according to Henrik Sandblad, the composition contains obscurities and inconsistencies, "things that Laurentius under other circumstances had hardly been guilty of."<sup>126</sup> In the preface of *Cometoscopia* it is also stated that God "recently in the year 1607, in the months of September and October, has ignited under the sky a new burning blaze" – a formulation that suggests that only a few months had passed since the comet had been visible when the preface was written.<sup>127</sup>

Still *Cometoscopia* was published in a different context than it was written, which must be considered when analysing the text. With regard to the conflict between the clergy and the worldly authorities that prevailed in the winter of 1608, it is clear that none of the parts could be brought to fully accept the other's claim of sovereignty over the church. The open dispute had dampened with the failing health of Karl IX. The king had a stroke in August 1609, and although he resumed his government in the beginning of the following year, he never fully recovered before death caught up with him in October 1611.<sup>128</sup>

At the king's funeral in January the following year, Paulinus held a sermon that may be seen as an appraisal of the revolutionary years from a

124 Ibid. cit. pp. 126, 129; "Haffua Gudzs ord för ögonen [...] At hon icke bär Swärdet förgäffues".

125 Ibid. cit. p. 132.

126 Sandblad, *De eskatologiska föreställningarna* p. 250 note 2; "Framför allt genom den mycket bristfälliga kompositionen och den på åtskilliga ställen framträdande oklarheten och inkonsekvensen i tankegången – sådant som Laurentius under andra omständigheter knappast skulle ha gjort sig skyldig till."

127 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Cometoscopia* sig. B2v.

128 Roberts, *The Early Vasas* pp. 425–426, 459.

clerical perspective. Paulinus compared the late king to Josiah, “the fifteenth King of Judah”, known for his zeal for religious reform and for putting an end to the false religion and idolatry practiced by his fathers, and rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem. According to Paulinus, Josiah also established a clerical council and provided the religious officials with their subsistence to maintain the services in the Temple. Moreover, Josiah “cleansed the Kingdom of Judah from all Soothsayers, Augurs, and all abomination, in order to rehabilitate the Word of the Law”.<sup>129</sup>

The example of Josiah had been used before by Lutheran reformers in Germany to depict their ideal of worldly authority. In England his name was often associated with the personae of Edward VI (r. 1547–1553).<sup>130</sup> In other words, through this sermon Karl was posthumously restored with an image of an ideal Christian prince. To be sure, Paulinus referred to the death of Josiah in an unrighteous war against Egypt, implicitly emphasizing that Karl was not faultless. Yet at the same time he stressed that the tribulations, wars, heavy taxation and disunity in politics and religion that had characterized Karl’s reign were not solely of his doing. Those who thought so should look at themselves to see the beam in their own eyes – unless they were not hot-headed dreamers who reviled lordship and sovereignty altogether. Instead of putting the blame on the dead king, everyone should confess their guilt to the previous misfortunes. The unrest in the wake of the deposition of Sigismund should be seen, not as the doings of Karl, but as a punishment for the sins of the people, and as a sign that the end of the world was at hand.<sup>131</sup>

In reality the death of the king opened new possibilities for the clergy. The charter issued for the succession of Gustavus Adolphus in 31 December 1611 guaranteed the privileges and liberties of the estates. Through them the clergy could maintain its position without the immediate risk that the king would interfere in issues concerning the formulation of the creed. Although

129 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Iosiae Then Femptonde Juda Konungz Historia Vthi Then stormechtigeste Högborne Furstes och Herres/ Her Carls then IX.des/ Sweriges/ Göthes/ Wendes/ Finners/ Carelers/ Lappers i Norlanden/ the Caijaners och Esters i Lifland/ fordorn Konungz (nu högloffligste och Christelige ihugkommelse) Salighe Lekamens Nedhersättielse/ Vthi then sttore Salen/ uppå Nyköpingsz Slott/ then 5. Januarij/ Anno/ etc. MDCXII.*, printed by Ignatius Meurer, Stockholm 1613 pp 19–21, cit. p. 20; “Theslijkes rensade K. Josias vth alla Spåmän/ Tecknarydare/ och all Styggelse vtur Juda Land/ på thz han skulle vprätta Lagzens Ord”; cf. 2 Kings 22–23.

130 Sergiusz Michalski, “Das Phänomen Bildersturm. Versuch einer Übersicht” in Robert Scribner (ed.), *Bilder und Bildersturm im Spätmittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit*, Wolfenbütteler Forschungen, Wiesbaden 1990 p. 78; Margaret Aston, “Iconoclasm in England: Rites of Destruction by Fire”, in *ibid.* p. 178.

131 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Iosiae Then Femptonde Juda Konungz Historia* pp. 23–24; 37–39.

the Formula of Concord was not accepted, as the representatives of the clergy had initially requested, the charter implied that the king pledged himself – and thus the whole realm – to the Confessio Augustana and to the decisions of the Uppsala Synod.<sup>132</sup> Thus the situation of 1613 appeared radically changed compared to the autumn of 1607 when the comet first appeared.

However, in the printed version of *Cometoscopia* the dedication to the dowager Queen Kristina (1573–1625) serves as an intermediary between the two contexts. In subservient terms Paulinus flattered the pious desire of the queen to read “miscellaneous useful writings” concerning “the Salvation of men (which I in truth have heard from many people, as well as from Your Majesty’s own verbal relation)”. Paulinus presented his book as a token of gratitude for the “particular favour and grace” the queen had bestowed upon him, both personally and on behalf of the “strenuous Office” that he had been undeservedly entrusted as bishop.<sup>133</sup>

Clearly these phrases of courtesy reveal virtually nothing, apart from Paulinus’ wish to gain the patronage of the queen, in order to discourage presumptive critics and to give “to the disobliging a warning”.<sup>134</sup> However, the conclusion of the dedication is quite instructive:

Actum Strängnäs, in the year 1613, 8 Septembris. On which day the distinguished City Jerusalem, 1573 [sic] years ago, is been pitiably ravaged and utterly destroyed. May God Almighty most gracefully deign to preserve the Realm of Sweden, with its high persons in authority, Along with its fortifications, Countryside and Cities, and its inhabitants, from the poisonous conspiracies and invasion of the Roman and all harmful Parties, for the sake of his Son Jesus Christ, whom with the Father and the H. Ghost be praised and honoured, in all eternity, Amen.<sup>135</sup>

132 Hjalmar Holmquist, *Svenska kyrkans historia vol. IV:I, Svenska kyrkan under Gustav II Adolf 1611–1632*, Svenska kyrkans diakonistyrelses bokförlag, Stockholm 1938 pp. 28–32.

133 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Cometoscopia* sig. A4r; “synnerliga ynnest och nådhe ... mödhesamma Embetz ... såsom E. May. besynnerligh lust haffuer at läsa allehanda nyttighe Skriffter/ Särdelest then H. Biblia/ och the Böker ther vthaff vthdragne äro/ och menniskionnes Saligheet angå (thet iagh aff mångom i sanning/ såsom och aff E. May. eghen Nådige mundtliche berättelse förnummedt)”.

134 Ibid. sig. A4r; “... them wrångom en warning”

135 Ibid. sig. A4v; “Actum Strängnäs/ Åhr 1613. then 8. Septembris. På hwilken dagh then berömelighe Stadhen Jerusalem/ för 1573. [sic] åhr/ aff then Romerske Krijgsmachten är iämmerlighe sköfladt och i grund fördärfuadt worden. Then Alzmechtighe Gudh wärdighas Sweriges Rijke/ medh höghe öffuerheetz Personer/ Sampt Befästningar/ Land och Städher/ och thes Inwånare/ för then Romerskes och alla skadhelighe Partijs förgiftighe stämplingar och infall/ nådigst bewara/ för sin Sons JESU CHRJTJ förskyllan/ hwilkom medh fadhrenom och then h. Andä/ ware loff/ ähra och prijs/ i

In *Cometoscopia*, the wonder signs, prophecies and calamities that preceded the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 had been a recurrent motive. They were used as a parallel to emphasize the apocalyptic gravity of the signs that appeared in Paulinus own times. Indeed, as God did not spare his own chosen people when they would not listen to his warnings, there was no reason to think that the coming afflictions should be more lenient. Yet as is demonstrated by the quotation above, the grim destiny of the Jewish people was more than an example. It revealed a correspondence with the new People of God, partly identified with Christianity as a whole, partly with the Swedish people, and with the deadly threats that faced the realm in the End Times.<sup>136</sup>

When Paulinus wrote his preface and dated his tract, the confessional conflicts had become more accentuated in European politics. There was an armaments race and unrest between the factions in the German lands. In this situation King Sigismund in Poland had approached the Habsburg dynasty, and recently an agreement had been reached with the Emperor through the mediation of the Holy See. This was conceived as a serious threat to the Swedish regime, and the fear was not unfounded: a possible reconquest of Sweden was discussed in one of the articles of the treaty. But this also meant that Sigismund linked his dynastic cause to the confessional conflicts within the Empire, which in turn strengthened the willingness to accept the new Swedish regime among Protestant powers. This increased the prospect of future alliances, and in September 1613 Count Palatine Johan Casimir (1589–1652) was sent to Sweden as an emissary of the Evangelical Union.<sup>137</sup>

In this context, it is not surprising that the experienced need to control prophetic claims and expressions had not diminished among the Swedish clergy. The message of *Cometoscopia* had not lost its urgency. Yet the primary threat to the Swedish clergy was no longer the ambitions of their worldly sovereign. Paulinus' statement bears witness to the union of the state and

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alla Ewigheet/ Amen.”

<sup>136</sup> For a discussion on the notion of the correspondence between the Jewish and the Swedish peoples, set in a European perspective, see Nils Ekedahl, *Det svenska Israel: myt och retorik i Haquin Spegels predikokost*, Studia rhetorica Upsaliensia, Gidlund, Uppsala 1999 pp. 18–21.

<sup>137</sup> Roberts, *Gustavus Adolphus vol. 1* pp. 168–169; Östergren pp. 172–173; although it seems to have accentuated the confessional anxiety among non-Catholics in Germany, the alliance between Poland and the emperor was primarily founded on practical considerations and mutual political interests; see Walter Leitsch, *Moskau und die Politik des Kaiserhofes im XVII. Jahrhundert I. Teil 1604–1654*, Verlag Hermann Böhlau Nachf., Graz-Köln 1960 pp. 158–161; Åke Kromnow, “Johan Kasimir”, SBL vol. 20, Stockholm 1973–1975 pp. 204–205.

church against a common enemy, and how the joint Catholic forces of Sigismund, the Papacy and the Habsburg emperor – the head of the Holy Roman Empire as the last of the four world monarchies – were now conceived by the Swedish clergy as becoming the ultimate, apocalyptic threat to the People of God and the true Church.

## Monopolizing the Formation of Knowledge

As discussed above, *Cometoscopia* was written with an underlying intention to maintain clerical authority. The interpretation of comets moved within a field of tension between the more or less outspoken ambitions of the worldly authorities to claim sovereignty over the church, and the external threat from the enemies of Faith, within and outside the realm. Compared to the *Ethica*, where astrological divination is discussed as a clear offence against the Law of God, the criticism in *Cometoscopia* is rather mild. However, there are significant points where the two discussions converge.

The divine Law and its application in the juridical system had been a central field for the struggle between worldly and clerical authorities. This was particularly the case during the crisis of the 1590s and its aftermath. Hardly any contemporary actor denied that the legislation should reflect Christian ethics, based on the two tables of the Law of God. But the role of the sovereign as *custos utriusque tabulae*, as contrasted to the competence of the clergy in issues of church discipline and penalties for transgressions, remained a source of dissension and conflict. In 1607 the deposed Archbishop Angermannus was even accused for ambitions to re-establish clerical jurisdiction and thus to initiate a new kind of ‘popish’ tyranny.<sup>138</sup>

However, when the first volume of the *Ethica* was issued in 1617, the most acute disunity had been settled. Although issues of conflict remained, worldly and clerical authorities had now approached each other and invented functional forms of cooperation. Their spheres of authority were better defined, and while the clergy now seem to have accepted the sovereignty of the king and also the expansive war politics, they were granted a higher degree of independence. In other words, as a corporation led by the bishops, the clergy had been dragged into the project of the Swedish military state. In exchange for relatively free hands in confessional issues they provided a Lutheran state ideology that legitimized the whole regime, together with a large body of clergymen who could serve as competent state officials and channels of communication to the subjects.<sup>139</sup> At the same time it is clear

<sup>138</sup> Ankarloo pp. 54–59.

<sup>139</sup> See for instance Sven A. Nilsson, “Krig och folkbokföring under svenskt 1600-tal” in idem, *De stora krigens tid: om Sverige som militärstat och bondesamhälle*, Studia



that high representatives of the clergy continued their struggle in diocese chapters and in the university council for the right to formulate problems and to set the agenda. In this context, the *Ethica* may be seen as an expression of the same ambition that had characterized *Cometoscopia*.

As an introduction to a deepened discussion on God's Law in the *Ethica*, Paulinus claimed that despite the clear commands on idolatry, blasphemy and sacrilege in the first table, there were indeed "Some carnally minded" that "either of Misunderstanding or Presumptuousness"

... impose and maintain some wrongful Opinions and detrimental delusions concerning *Ethica gentili* and *Magia Astrologica & Incantatrice*, that is, on the ethics of the gentiles and especially of Aristotle, on Starry conjectures, and other arts of Divination, Sorcery and practices with magical adjuncts, through which many [people], as well in this day as in times of the world passed, will let themselves be seduced from God, His Holy Word and Truth, and have converted the right service of God into Idolatry and vain deceit.<sup>140</sup>

Thus the whole discussion on superstition, illicit magic and astrology is directly inserted into a wider and hot-headed academic debate that draw a dividing line straight through the orthodox discourse. It concerned the issue of worldly philosophy and its normative influence on faith, religious doctrine, science and social life.

The previous year, Paulinus had been involved in an argument with Jonas Magni Wexionensis (1583–1651), professor of Ethics in Uppsala, who in a few academic theses had defended the application of Aristotle in Christian ethics and metaphysics. Jonas Magni argued that divine morals and knowledge of God were inherent in the hearts of all men, pagans included, and that pagan authorities in ethics were necessary points of reference for Christian faith. From his episcopal chair in Strängnäs, Paulinus had reacted vehemently. With Petrus Ramus as his main weapon he rejected all such

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historica Upsaliensia, Uppsala 1990 pp. 68–71; Montgomery, *Värjostånd och lärostånd* pp. 33–43; Ingun Montgomery "Gustav II Adolf och religionen" in Gudrun Ekstrand & Katarina af Sillén (eds.), *Gustav II Adolf – 350 år efter Lützen*, Livrustkammaren, Stockholm 1982 pp. 66–69; Nils Runeby, "Godh politie och regemente" in *ibid.* p. 82; cf. Braddick pp. 287–291.

140 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Ethica christiana* I p. 171; "Men altenstund Någre kötzlige Sinnade, anten aff Missförstånd eller Förmätenhet/ Här emot införa och förfechta någre wrånga Meningar och skadeliga wilfarelser/ om *Ethica gentili* och *Magia Astrologica & Incantatrice*, thet är/ om Hedningernas och i synderhet Aristotelis dygdeläro/ om Stiernegisningar/ sampt annan Spådom/ Trolldom och Leferij/ Therigenom monge/ så wäl i thenna dagh som i förre werldenes tider/ late sigh förföra ifrå Gudh/ Hans H. Ord och Sanning/ och haffua förwandladt then retta Gudz tienstena vthi Affgudedyrckan och fåfengt bedrägerij".

claims, arguing that ethics should not at all be accepted as an independent discipline in the academy.<sup>141</sup>

In the *Ethica*, which may be regarded as a practical result of this debate, Paulinus referred to Martin Luther's "Christian Admonition to the Roman Emperor and the German Nobility" when he complained that Aristotle, "the damned, ambitious and roguish Gentile", had wretchedly deceived so many Christians, even the most distinguished, "with his mendacious swaggering".<sup>142</sup> For indeed Aristotle would never teach young students to speak or preach; instead their skills would only be used "for filthy Dispute, which is full of vain labour of the mouth [Sw. *munmöda*] and twaddle".<sup>143</sup>

But the learning of Aristotle was not just merely vanity – it was even condemned as outright devilish and should be shunned like the plague by every Christian. For, as was stated by the Apostle: "What communion has Darkness and Light? Or how does Christ reconcile with Belial?"<sup>144</sup> Yet despite this deadly danger, pending over the heads of all Christian scholars, the necessary reformation of schools and academies had never been accomplished:

For where that had been done, there the typical Books of Aristotle, and especially his Ungodly Ethics, Vain Physics, Divine (Bestial or Satanical I would say) Metaphysics, etc. would have been instantly rejected, and now for a long time eaten and consumed by moth and rust<sup>145</sup>

141 Lindroth, *Svensk lärdomshistoria II* pp. 132–136; cf. L. Paulinus Gothus, *Schola Ethica, seu Animadversiones pia ac solide, in impiam Defensionem, à Practico quodam Ubsaliensi, In Causa Ethicæ Gentilis, inconsideratè susceptam*, printed by Christoffer Reusner, Stockholm 1616.

142 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Ethica christiana I* p. 180; "Christelige Förmaning til then Romerske Keysaren och Teutsche Adeln ... Thet är så stor klagan wärdt/ at then förbannade/ ähragiruge och skalckachtige Hedningen/ så monga Christne Menniskior/ ia och ibland them the förnemstel/ medh sitt lögnachtige Swatzande/ så iemmerliga haffuer bedrager"; cf. Martin Luther, *An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation: von des christlichen Standes Besserung*, Leipzig 1520 art. 25, printed in *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe* vol. 6, Böhlau, Weimar 1888 p. 457; "Was sein die Universiteten ... darynnen ein frey leben gefuret, wenig der heyligen schrift und Christlicher glaub geleret wirt, und allein der blind heydnischer meyster Aristoteles regiert ..." [italics mine].

143 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Ethica christiana I* pp. 181–182; "Men nu lärer Vngdomen ther vthaff huarken tala eller Predika; Vtan alt warder anwendt til sketne Disputatz/ som fulle äro medh fäfeng Munmödo and Tungokijff".

144 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Ethica christiana I* p. 183; "Hwad delachtighet hafwa Mörkret och Liwset? Eller huru förlijka sigh Christus och Belial?" cf. 2. Cor. 6:14–15.

145 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Ethica christiana I* p. 184; "Ty ther så skedt wore/ Så hade Aristotelis typiske Böker/ och i synderhet Hans Ogudachtige Ethical Fäfenge Physica, Acroasis, Divina (Belvina eller Sathanica skulle Jagh seya) Metaphysical etc. Strax wor-

For modern scholars, Paulinus' categorical position in the debate with Jonas Magni and in the *Ethica* has appeared bizarre. Virtually all learning of the Renaissance was in one way or another rooted in pre-Christian times, and in physics it was still nearly impossible to reject Aristotelian theories. Paulinus also seems to contradict his earlier positions. As we have seen he referred to the knowledge of God among the pagans in his prognostication for 1598. At the first ceremonial conferment of the master's degree in Uppsala in 1600 he had held a panegyric address, emphasizing the necessity of sciences and philosophy in clerical as well as in worldly affairs.<sup>146</sup> Moreover, in his focus on Aristotle as a nefarious pagan, Paulinus' seems forget that the admired Petrus Ramus, being a humanist, had based his 'Socratic' philosophy and his criticism of Aristotle on classical authorities, which were no less pagan.<sup>147</sup>

Regarding the discussion in the *Ethica*, it appears as if the issues of pagan ethics, of astrological practices and illicit magic are all inserted in an argument, resembling that which we find in *Cometoscopia*. Thus Paulinus emphasized the primacy of right evangelical theology in relation to all knowledge, including philosophy and science. In context, the harsh criticism of astrologers in the *Ethica* stands out as one of several elements in a position against all knowledge that would not be subject to the clergy – the *Lehrstand* (Sw. *läroståndet*) in Lutheran terminology, signifying its authority in both worldly and sacral learning. Indeed the truths and benefits of philosophy and science were never rejected in the argument of Paulinus. The orders of nature could still be used to demonstrate the Providence and majesty of God. But in order to make this possible, philosophy had to be subjected to, and filtered through the glasses of theology.

## The Politics of Knowledge

The arguments of Paulinus in the debate against Jonas Magni and in the discussion on astrology in the *Ethica* must therefore be seen in a broader, political context. Despite the improved relations between clerical and worldly authorities, issues of disunity still occurred on a regular basis. Among the servants of the state and in the circles around Gustavus Adolphus, the ambitions to bring the church under the control of the government had not

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det förkastade/ och nu så longan tidh aff rost/ mott och maal vpätne och förtärde”.

<sup>146</sup> L. Paulinus Gothus, *Panegyris philosophica, habita in celebri academia Ubsaliensi, renvnciatis, solenni ritu ... XI. kalend. februar. anno Christi 1600*; printed by Andreas Gutterwitz, Stockholm 1604; Sjöstrand 1940 pp 216–221.

<sup>147</sup> Erland Sellberg, *Filosofin och nyttan 1, Petrus Ramus och ramismen*, Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, Göteborg 1979 p. 30.

slackened, nor had the strivings for independence within the hierarchy of the clergy.

In the continuous debate between worldly and clerical authorities, the control of the university and the educational system reappeared as a main issue. As bishop, Paulinus had been forced to see how the number of professorial chairs had been continually increased to fit the needs and interests of the worldly authorities. As expressed by Erland Sellberg, this slowly turned “the curriculum away from the old ecclesiastical tradition of the academy”. As one of these ‘worldly’ professorships, the chair in ethics and its holder became a welcome target for Paulinus’ polemics. Much of his theoretical ammunition he found in the works of Petrus Ramus.<sup>148</sup>

Clearly the invocation of Ramus as a bulwark against Aristotle could be used in diametrically different positions. Apart from Paulinus, Johan Skytte (1577–1645), once the king’s preceptor, royal secretary and councillor, and from 1622 chancellor of the university, was the foremost advocate of Ramism within the educational system in the first half of the seventeenth century. But whereas Paulinus strived to maintain the institutions of education as an autonomous sphere under ecclesiastical control, Skytte had been one of the more energetic state servants when it came to the subjection of the church and the university to governmental authority. To him the Ramistic philosophy had primarily appeared as the most effective educational curriculum in order to support the welfare and interests of the State, focusing on the practical application of knowledge and education.<sup>149</sup>

It should also be noted that Paulinus, in his ambition to protect the ecclesiastical privileges and control over the university, did not distinguish himself from Aristotelians like Johannes Rudbeckius. In full accordance with scholastic tradition, Rudbeckius regarded philosophy as the ‘maid servant of theology’ (*Ancilla theologiae*), and like Paulinus he stressed that human reason was subjected to faith. As clergymen and scholars, Rudbeckius and Paulinus both strived to maintain the authority of the Church. As bishops they steered their dioceses in patriarchal order, anxious to see that their congregations would be taught the Catechism and good Christian morals, both by educational reforms and by harsh church discipline.<sup>150</sup>

148 Erland Sellberg, “The Usefulness of Ramism”, Mordechai Feingold, Joseph S. Freedman and Wolfgang Rother (eds.) *The influence of Petrus Ramus: studies in sixteenth and seventeenth century philosophy and sciences*, Schwabe, Basel 2001 pp. 120–122, cit. p. 123; see also Erland Sellberg, *Kyrkan och den tidigmoderna staten: En konflikt om Aristoteles, utbildning och makt*, Carlsson, Stockholm 2010, esp. pp. 351–387.

149 Sellberg 2001 pp. 125–126

150 For a survey of the endeavours of Paulinus and Rudbeckius, see Holmquist, *Svenska kyrkans historia vol. IV:I* pp. 238–321, 327–380.

The traditional view of Paulinus describes a man who had initially eulogized the sciences, but eventually became “more rigidly conservatively restrained” in his philosophical views.<sup>151</sup> The “antagonism between faith and knowledge” that was mirrored in his opposition against Aristotle was thus deepened unto the point where he regarded “all kinds of independent philosophical thinking with distrust and contempt”.<sup>152</sup> However, this view is somewhat misleading. The statements of Paulinus on the issues of theology and worldly learning must be interpreted in accordance to the polemic context in which they were uttered. Religious knowledge and theology should in accordance with Paulinus’ ambition for the educational system, function as a corrective to all other disciplines of learning. Yet even though it was hardly his intention, this ambition would result in an epistemological rift between theology and philosophy. Through the discussion in the *Ethica*, the revealed faith tended to become not only superior to, but also separated from worldly philosophy.<sup>153</sup>

However, the debate on the contents and boundaries of worldly philosophy was primarily an internal issue in the academic world. Despite Paulinus’ harsh verdict against the Aristotelians, it remains clear that his ‘Ramism’, as well as the Lutheran scholasticism of Rudbeckius, was an integral part of an orthodox discourse. Both Paulinus and Rudbeckius raised claims directed against common enemies of church and the worldly order, be they Catholic princes, insubordinate evangelical radicals or practitioners of astrology and illicit magic. In this respect, differences in philosophical preferences remained a minor issue.

Still the Ramistic controversy demonstrates that the boundaries between allowable and illicit knowledge were not absolute. As for the problematic issue of astrology, this remained a more or less open question even after the publication of the *Ethica*. In Paulinus’ discussion, astrology was placed on a slippery slope towards eternal damnation somewhere between Aristotle-

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151 Hellström, “Laurentius Paulinus Gothus” p. 371; “Medan nyaristoteliska lärde nu badade väg för en mer allsidig humanistisk forskning, blev L. med sin massiva ortodoxa biblicism alltmer stelt konservativt bunden.”

152 Lindroth, *Svensk lärdomshistoria II* pp. 133–134: “Den antagonism mellan tro och vetande, som trots all humanism fanns hos ramismen från början, kom hos Laurentius att fördjupas ända därefter, att han med misstro och förakt betraktade varje självständigt filosofiskt tänkande”.

153 It is hazardous to discuss intellectual tendencies in evolutionary terms. This separation of ‘faith’ and ‘reason’ could hardly be regarded as a step in a process of modernization. Still it is interesting to see how Paulinus’ argument seems to herald a gradual secularization of science – not in the sense that science lost its religious significance, but rather that the roles of the priest and the scientist became separated.

lian philosophy and sorcery. Despite the seemingly rigid categorization of astrology and “starry conjectures” as illicit practices, Paulinus’ discussion mainly appears as an attempt to create order and to maintain the clerical control over prophecy and worldly knowledge, as well as over the educational system.



# The Reluctant Dissident

Some of the most learned in celestial things  
 Shall be reproved by ignorant princes:  
 Punished through Edict, chased like scoundrels  
 And be killed on spot where found.

Michel Nostradamus, *Les Propheties* 1555<sup>1</sup>

## Portrait of a Scholar

Compared to Paulinus, who ended his days as Archbishop of Uppsala and primate of the Church in Sweden, Sigfridus Aronus Forsius had a rather modest career. For long periods of time he lived solely by his pen and the benevolence of his patrons. He was never officially appointed to an academic chair, and he never reached any clerical position higher than that of becoming incumbent in Ekenäs (Fin. *Tammisaari*), a rural town in Finland, only a few years before his death.<sup>2</sup>

From a Weberian perspective, emphasizing the Protestant Reformation as a key to disenchantment and the rise of modern rationality in the Western world, Paulinus and Forsius are antitheses to one another. Whereas Paulinus has come to represent the ideal type of orthodox prelate, preoccupied with confessional, intellectual and moral disciplining, Forsius has generally been described as a representative of the mystic and heterodox traditions of the sixteenth- and seventeenth centuries.<sup>3</sup> The troubles Forsius experienced with worldly and clerical authorities were related, not only to his astrological practice, but to other, potentially heretical strains in his authorship. From this perspective, the inquisition of 1619 confirmed his

1 Michel Nostradamus, *Les Propheties*, printed by Matthieu Bonhomme, Lyon 1555 sig. I2v; "Des plus lettres dessus les faits celestes/Seront par princes ignorants reprouvés:/ Punis d'Edit, chassés, comme scelestes,/Et mis à mort là où seront trouvés."; cf. Michel Nostradamus, *Profetior: anno 1555*, transl. by Anna Carlstedt & Jan Stolpe, Gidlunds förlag, Hedemora 2008 p. 281.

2 Kiiskinen p. 313; this incumbency lay under the patronage of Count Sten Axelsson Lewenhaupt (d. 1645).

3 Cf. Lindroth *Svensk lärdomshistoria II* pp. 146–152.



position as an outsider. It was before the archbishop, the dean and the priests and scholars of the cathedral chapter of Uppsala, that his scholarship was officially dismissed by the orthodox establishment.

The only preserved portrait of Forsius tells us a different story. It is a woodcut, made in order to represent the author in a couple of prognostications from the latter part of the 1610s. 'Represent' is the operative word: we cannot know for sure if there was any true resemblance. That would be beside the point in any case. The purpose of the picture was to demonstrate and display an example of venerable learning and authority.



Fig. 13: Sigfridus Aronus Forsius, representative portrait in the *Great Prognostication* for 1617.<sup>4</sup>

The picture shows an elderly, bearded man with a ruff collar sticking out from his jacket. A black robe is resting on his shoulders, signifying an academic or a clergyman. In front of him, as if he is holding it in his right hand is a common attribute of astrologers and natural philosophers: an armillary sphere (or maybe a celestial globe), symbolizing the universe and the astrologer's all-embracing knowledge of the Creation.

<sup>4</sup> Forsius, *Then stora Prognostica til thet Åår Christi MDCXVII.*, sig. Arv.

Compared to many other representations of contemporary astrologers, the portrait of Forsius is rough, both in artwork and imagery. On the frontispiece of a German *Practica* for the year 1583, another author – Wilhelm Misocacus (1511–1595), physician and astrologer in Danzig – is portrayed, surrounded by attributes of learning. He holds an armillary sphere in his right hand, while his left hand rests upon the open pages of a book. Behind him an astrolabe is displayed, framed by the sententious phrase *Fato Prudentia Maior* – ‘Wisdom’, or ‘prudence’, or ‘foresight’, ‘is greater than Fate’. Upon his head Misocacus is wearing a pleated doctoral hat, symbolizing not only his learning, but the free, venerable and ennobled status of the scholar – also symbolized by a coat of arms at his right.

P R O G N O S T I C V M  
 Oder Practica/auffs Jar nach der Geburt vnfers  
 HERRN vnd Seligmachers Jesu Christi/1583.  
 Zu Ehren der Löblichen Königlichen Statt  
 Danzig/Geprædicet durch  
 D. Wilhelmum Misocacum/Medicum vnd Astro-  
 nomum daselbst residirende.



Jupiter vnd Venus seind Herren dieses Jars/werden  
 eyne künden vnd feuchten Sommer bedeuten.

Fig. 14: Wilhelm Misocacus, representative portrait in his *Practica* for 1583.<sup>5</sup>  
 The doctor's hat is of a kind that is still in use in Sweden and Finland.

<sup>5</sup> Wilhelm Misocacus, *Prognosticum Oder Practica/auffs Jar nach der Geburt vnfers Herrn vnd Seligmachers Jesu Christi/ 1583*, Danzig 1582.

What the picture of Forsius lacks in iconographic subtlety it regains in an epigram, written by Joachim Seiler (d. c. 1617), former chaplain of the German church in Stockholm.<sup>6</sup> Characterizing Forsius as “the most skilful of astronomers”, the verse reads:

<p>Sigfridi Aroni vera est pie lector          imago, Ipsius ingenium pingere          nemo potest. Mente celer, calamo          celer, est celer ore, sed ejus          Ingenium pingunt edita scripta satis.</p>	<p>This is, pious reader, the true image of          Sigfridus Aronus/His talent no one can          depict./Agile in intellect, agile with the          quill, he is agile in speech, yet/the emitted          works sufficiently depict his talent.</p>
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In other words: as a scholar and astrologer Forsius was unmatched.

Obviously the function of this kind of complimentary lyrics was reciprocal. It confirmed the erudite competence of the receiver while its eloquent phrases would reflect upon their author, revealing his wits and literary skills. In this case Seiler’s wits were illuminated by his perhaps not too original play with the ambiguity of the words *imago* (‘image’, ‘appearance’) and *pingere* (‘depict’). Thus the poem would place both the author of the book and his congratulator within a social context of readers, colleagues, patrons and benefactors and of competitors and enemies. The portrait and the poem confirmed Forsius’ claims of being a scholar of some authority – claims not only concerning his intellectual ability or erudition. As part of the intellectual culture of Early Modern Europe, these claims also included connotations of social status and reliability, morality and religious piety.

In emphasizing his authority and his unimpeachable religious zeal, Forsius was no different from his orthodox adversaries or judges. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the difference between the comet tracts of Paulinus and Forsius was primarily an issue of method. They agreed in the presentation of their conclusions and their mission: the urgent need for Christian people to repent and do penance before the End.

In the following I will further try to nuance the traditional image of Forsius as a brooding, speculating mystic and a notoriously unorthodox scholar. Forsius’ writings and apologies, as well as the criticism directed against him and his craft will be analysed in relation to the social context of his scholarship. This examination will provide keys for a deepened understanding of the efforts among the orthodox to associate astrology with forbidden knowledge and practices, and of the categorization of Forsius as an outsider and dissident, that would reach its climax in the trial of 1619.

This chapter will be more biographical than the two previous. Paulinus’

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6 On Seiler, see Hellström, *Stockholms stads herdaminne* p. 576.

different standpoints on the issue of astrology could to some degree be related to his official positions as professor and later as bishop. Yet Forsius is a much more elusive person. Therefore it will be necessary to outline his curriculum vitae, focusing on his various roles as a priest and a scholar, and on his social network of friends, foes and patrons, insofar as it is possible to reconstruct from preserved letters, dedications and complimentary poems.

### A *Mathematicus* in the Making

As is indicated by his name, Sigfridus Aronus Forsius was probably born in Helsingfors (Fin. *Helsinki*, Lat. *Forsia* or *Helsingforsia*) in the latter part of the sixteenth century. However, this is virtually all that is known of his origins.<sup>7</sup> When his name first appears in a record from 1591, he is briefly mentioned as a preacher and schoolteacher at the cathedral of Reval (Est. *Tallinn*) in Estonia.<sup>8</sup> As he must at least have been in his twenties at the time, a qualified guess places his birth sometime in the 1560s and around 1570 at the latest. Judging from his works he must have had advanced training in Latin, natural philosophy and mathematics, as well as theology. Still nothing is known of his education. There are no preserved registers, either from Uppsala University before its closure in 1580, nor from the royal college in Stockholm to confirm that he had studied there, and his name is not to be found in any known academic register abroad.<sup>9</sup>

According to Forsius' account of a 'mantic dream' he had experienced, where "it seemed to me that I should read *Fabulas Aesopi* to the youth in the schoolhouse", he was still teaching in Reval in 1594.<sup>10</sup> However, in the following year, he was matriculated at the newly re-opened university of Uppsala. It is likely that he met Paulinus there: indeed an encounter of some kind would have been hard to avoid, as the whole academy was located in one, rather modest building.<sup>11</sup> There are also some notable names among

7 According to a note in the collections of the Swedish archivist Erik Palmiskiöld (1608–1686), Forsius' was distantly related to the influential and erudite courtier and official Henrik Mattson Huggut (c. 1540–1617); see Love Kurtén, "Gåtorna kring Sigfrid Aronus Forsius", *Genos* 63 1992 p. 39. Unfortunately the statement is from late seventeenth century and thus, highly uncertain.

8 Kiiskinen p. 30; Reval and Northern Estonia had been under Swedish rule since 1561; see Roberts *The Early Vasas* pp. 202–206.

9 Kiiskinen pp. 30–34.

10 Forsius, *Prognosticon Astro-Theologicum. Til thet Vndersamma Förändringsåret M DC XX. Af Gudsz Hemligheter och Stiernekånsten sammanhämptat/ och allom rättsinngnom Christnom/ til warning framstält*, printed by Ignatius Meurer, Stockholm 1619 sig. C3r; "migh tyckte thet iagh skulle i Scholesughun för ungdomen läsa *Fabulas Aesopi*"

11 Lindroth, *Svensk lärdomshistoria I* pp. 342–343.

Forsius' fellow students. The aforementioned Petrus Gisaeus Solimontanus, author of the Swedish almanac and practica for 1603, arrived at the same time as Forsius. The linguist, mystic and future royal antiquarian Johannes Bureus (1568–1652) has in modern times been mentioned as a friend and inspirer of Forsius – unfortunately with no support from the sources – but at least they were in Uppsala together.<sup>12</sup> Among future rivals and antagonists we also find Martinus Olavi Stenius and Forsius' countryman Olaus Elimaeus (d. 1629) who would later become vicar in Stockholm and end his career as bishop of Viborg (now Vyborg in Russia; Fin. *Viipuri*).<sup>13</sup>

The motives of Forsius' matriculation in Uppsala are not known. Like Bureus, he was probably somewhat older than most of his fellow students. He is titled 'Dominus' or 'sir' in the register, indicating that he was already ordained.<sup>14</sup> It is also uncertain how long he remained at the academy. In November 1596 he would, probably as a client and employee of Abraham Angermannus, be appointed headmaster in Narva "since he is both learned in bookish arts, as well as versed in the Estonian language".<sup>15</sup> Forsius was evidently a bit too zealous in his ambition to implement the intentions of his superiors – that is to promote Swedish interests in the region – and he displayed a conspicuous lack of diplomatic skills. Soon he had agitated the German vicar in Narva, Lambertus Kemmerling, who had opposed the plans to found a new school in the city, probably since it was intended as an institution under Swedish control, or maybe since it was supposed to accept Estonian as well as German schoolboys. Forsius also rejected the wish of high representatives of the local gentry to have German clergymen sent to the province – by reminding them that the Swedish were now their lords, and they merely the servants of the Swedish. Forsius' arrogance was not well

12 See for instance Holmquist, *Svenska kyrkans historia vol. IV*:I pp. 69–72; cf. the critical comments in Sandblad, *De eskatologiska föreställningarna* pp. 269–270. However, Forsius was verifiably acquainted to three of Bureus' cousins, see below p. 204.

13 *Uppsala universitets matrikel 1. 1595–1632*, Akademiska boktryckeriet, Uppsala 1900 pp. 1–2.

14 Even after the Reformation, Swedish priests were generally called 'Dominus' (Sw. *herr*), in Catholic times marking the clergyman's status as 'spiritual nobility', exempted from land dues; in accordance with English pre-reformatorial practice I translate the title 'sir'; cf. Eamon Duffy, *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London 2001p. XIII.

15 RA, Hertig Karls registratur (HKR) vol. 24 fol. 23v "Till Arffwedh Erichsson för Sigfridh Canuti etc", 16 November 1596; "Högwyrdeligh Herre M. Abraham Ärbiskop hafuer för gått ansedt att denne breffuisare Her Sefred Canuti, skulle blifue brukat till scholemestare Vdi Narfuen efter Han ähr både lärth Vdi Boklige Konster, såsom och Kunnigh på ded Estniske måler". The mentioning of Forsius as Sigfrid *Canuti* may be a scribal error, or an indication that Aronus was a family name, and not a patronymic as is usually assumed; see Kurtén p. 39.

taken, to put it mildly, and as he did not gain the support of the Swedish general governor, he seems to have left his post within a few months.<sup>16</sup>

## To the Arctic Sea

Back in Finland, Forsius reported how many peasants around Michaelmas of 1597 had seen two armies battling among the skies near Helsingfors. Later he would recall this and several other portents seen in Finland and Estonia in the 1590s as presages of the unrest and war that would strike the region at the turn of the century.<sup>17</sup>

Forsius would experience the war in person. In October 1599 he served in a cavalry regiment during the campaigns of Duke Karl, calling himself “the loyal servant and army chaplain of my Graceful Prince and Lord under the banners of [Rittmeister] Hans Blanck”. However, Forsius’ pastoral duties did not hinder him from accomplishing more military tasks. In August of the following year he signed a receipt on “a hairy hide to cover a barrel of Gunpowder, which was sent with me on my boat”.<sup>18</sup> In December 1600 Hans Blanck fell in battle with Polish troops in Livonia, and his squadron was badly decimated.<sup>19</sup> It is unknown whether Forsius participated in the encounter, but about this time he seems to have joined the regent’s retinue. In May 1601 a “Sigfridus Aronis, who has been here during this winter” was listed among men judged suitable as inspectors of the Estonian clergy. Estonia was recently conquered from Sigismund’s troops, and there were doubts on the loyalty of the local clergy, who had never been fully incorporated in the Swedish church. It is possible that Forsius’ previous experience as the archbishop’s man in Narva had been considered when his name turned up on the list, yet it is not known whether he was actually commissioned as inspector. Towards the end of the year he called himself court chaplain of the duke. His claim to the position is uncertain.<sup>20</sup>

16 Undated letter from Sigfridus Aronis to Lambertus Kemmerling, Rahvusarhiiv, Eestimaa rootsiaegne Kindralkubeneri Arhiiv (ERKkA) vol. A 156 fol. 79–80; Berndt Federley, *Konung, ståthållare och korporationer: Studier i Estlands förvaltning 1581–1600*, Helsingfors 1962 pp. 126–128.

17 Forsius, *Een berättelse/ Och eenfallight Judicium sig.* A3v–B1r.

18 Receipts, dated Viborg 6 October 1599 and 15 August 1600, cited in Pipping, *Historiska bidrag I* p. 18; “Min Nådige Förstes och Herres troplichtige Tienere och Feldtpredikant under Hans Blanckes Fhana”; “... een luden hudh till teckie een tunne Kruth med, som med migh på min båth till Hans Blanckes Ryttere sendt bleff.”; on the campaigns in Finland and Estonia 1599–1601, see Ylikangas pp. 371–380; Petersson pp. 162–165, 182–190.

19 On this encounter, see Petersson p. 185.

20 Memorandum to Mickel Olofsson, Reval 14 May 1601, RA, RR vol. B93 fol. 85r; “Een

At that time however, Forsius' astronomical and mathematical skills had become noticed. According to a later statement he had already calculated and compiled almanacs for some years, and it is possible that he had somehow been able to present this work to the duke.<sup>21</sup> In the winter of 1601–1602, he was commissioned to join a geographic expedition to Lapland, led by Hieronymus Birkholtz (d. 1618) from the duke's retinue “to perceive where the right boundary marks are” in the marches of Tornēå (Fin. *Tornio*) between Sweden and Norway.<sup>22</sup> The scholar Daniel Theodori Hjort (c. 1575–1615) was also engaged to assist Birkholtz and Forsius in their measurements. Becoming one of Forsius' closer friends, Hjort would eventually play a tragic and fatal part in his career.<sup>23</sup>

On their return, the members of the expedition could present geographical data with latitudes and longitudes of several locations from Umeå to the Norwegian fortress of Vardø at the Arctic coast.<sup>24</sup> At this time, the strategic and fiscal significance of the Arctic region had become a central issue in Karl's politics, and a stumbling block in the already strained relations with Denmark. One of the main purposes of the expedition was to support Swedish claims for access to the Arctic Sea, and secure tax revenue in the region.<sup>25</sup>

In this context, Forsius' commission may serve as an example of how mathematical and astronomical skills could serve the interests of the state. While the expedition was still in progress, Duke Karl had instructed Johannes Bureus – who in the meantime had become a servant in the chancellery

benemdh Sigfridus Aronis, som her nu i winther warit haffwer”; Pipping, *Historiska bidrag* I p. 19.

21 Forsius, *Een berättelse Och eenfallight Judicium* sig. A4v; Sigfridus Aronus Forsius, *Prognostica Astro-theologica. Til then ytersta Sabbatz Tilberedhelse Dags Första Wäckt som är åhr Christi M. DC. XXI. Medh flijt stält och judicerat*, printed by Ignatius Meurer, Stockholm 1620 sig. A2r–v.

22 “Fulmacht för Hieronymus Birkholz, M. Sigfridh Aronis och M. Daniel Theodori, att drage op i Torne Lappemark, att förnimme hwar rette rå Merkien ähre”, Åbo 2 December 1601, RA, RR vol. 93 fol. 249v.

23 See below pp. 207–208.

24 Pipping, *Historiska bidrag* I pp. 31–32; it has been suggested that this data was used by Anders Bureus (see below p. 201) when he compiled the first official map of the arctic areas of Scandinavia, *Lapponia*, issued in 1611; see Kiiskinen p. 37; however, the latitudes are not concordant between Forsius' measurements and *Lapponia*, and Anders Bureus has not included all places mentioned by Forsius; Arno Forsius, *Tietämisen riemu ja tuska: Sigfridus Aronus Forsiuksen elämä, n. 1560–1624*, Lahti 1996 pp. 38–51.

25 Sven Ulric Palme, *Sverige och Danmark 1596–1611*, Almquist & Wiksell, Uppsala 1942 pp. 44–46; Birger Steckzén, *Birkarlar och lappar: En studie i birkarleväsendets, lappbefolkningens och skinnhandels historia*, Almquist & Wiksell, Stockholm, Göteborg, Uppsala 1964 pp. 91–93.

– to make an astrolable and quadrant and to bring them to a meeting with the Danish representatives in April 1602. What exact purpose these instruments would serve is not known, yet it is tempting to see them in relation to Forsius' commission. The Swedish historian Sven Ulric Palme argued that they were probably used to calculate the most auspicious moment for successful negotiations. However, as an ordinary astronomical table would normally have been sufficient for such a calculation, a more plausible explanation is that they were used, somehow as a means to confirm the accuracy of the Swedish cartographic measurements in the Arctic.<sup>26</sup>

## Travels Abroad

Before his departure to Lappland, Forsius had been given the incumbency in Närpes (Fin. Närpiö) since he in "the previous years has let himself be used with Us in Livonia under our Soldiery as Army Chaplain, and looking after them well in life and faith." The income and the vicarage were to be put at the disposal of "his wife and children, while he is absent". Later Forsius also seems to have been vicar in Kimito (Fin. *Kemiö*) in Finland Proper.<sup>27</sup> Yet these appointments are all that bear witness of the regent's gratitude and benevolence. In order to find support for his mathematical and scientific interests, Forsius had to rely on patronage from lower levels. In a poem, written in honour of the wedding of Ericus Eri in 1602, Forsius seems to have courted his bishop, but it is uncertain what this move may have provided in terms of patronage or bounties.<sup>28</sup> However, in the autumn of 1605, Forsius had obtained means to travel abroad. In his first preserved

26 Palme, *Sverige och Danmark* pp. 305–306; Palme's discussion of this problem has been kindly pointed out to me by Erik Petersson; cf. the diary of Johannes Bureus 3 March and 22 June 1602, printed in GE Klemming, *Ur en samlares anteckningar*, P.A. Norstedt & söner, Stockholm 1887 pp. 17–18.

27 Cit. "Öppet bref för M. Sigfridh Aronis opå Nerpis gäldh i Biörneborgz lähn", dated Åbo 3 December 1601, RA, RR vol. 93 fol. 250r; "M. Sigfridh Aronis hafwer the framlidne åhr lathitt sigh bruke medh osz i Liflandh vnder wårt Krigzfolk för Felt Predikant, och dem medh lefwerne och läre wäll förestått ... Doch skall hans hustru och barnn, medan han frånwarandes åhr, besittie Prestebolet, och hafwe der sitt frije oppehelle"; Kiiskinen pp. 43–44.

28 Sigfridus Aronus Forsius, *Reverendo et clarissimo viro, singulari cum sapientia tum virtute excellentissimo Dn. M. Erico, Episcopo Aboënsi dignissimo; sponso: Nec non Lectissimae nobilitate generis ... Dn. Ingeburga, filiae Generosi & Nobilis viri Palnaei Eri de Raffnaes ... Nunc vero sponsae: honoris & amoris ergo in futura nuptialia sacra Hymenaeo Carmine gratulatur*, printed by Andreas Gutterwitz, Stockholm 1602; Ericus Eri was probably Forsius' ordaining bishop: Finland had only one bishop (the see of Viborg was vacant between 1578 and 1618), and it is most unlikely that Forsius was ordained before 1583, when Ericus Eri took office.



almanac and prognostication that he had printed in Lübeck, he addressed the Lieutenant of Åbo Castle, Tönne Jöresson, and two other officials, “Asking quite obliging” that they would “remain the propitious Promoters of my studies”.<sup>29</sup>

The main purpose of the journey seems to have been private studies and astrological and chronological work. Apart from Lübeck, Forsius visited the cities of Rostock and Wismar in Pomerania. Later he primarily referred to encounters with Swedish and Finnish students, merchants and seafarers, but he also seems to have made acquaintances among German scholars, for instance members of the prominent Lauremberg family in Rostock. However the most important acquaintance he made was probably David Herlitz (1557–1636), former professor, mathematician, medic, astrologer, author of almanacs and recently appointed *Stadthysicus* in Lübeck. The character of their relationship is not known, but Sandblad suggests that it may have concerned some kind of cooperation, since translations of Herlitz’ almanacs had recently been introduced on the Swedish book market.<sup>30</sup>

In any case, Herlitz wrote an epigram in Forsius’ prognostication for 1606. The text is typical for its genre, including bombastic phrases and references to classical mythology. Yet at the same time it conveys a personal illustration of Forsius’ intellectual claims and future ambitions:

Sigfrid, husbandman of Urania, who divide the times in certain intervals; may you outline in the learned Prognostication the destinies of your people, as well as storms through the air over Sweden’s soil, dreadful diseases, war and famine and the Sun’ severities and the Moon’s obscure hardships. Keep cultivating these pursuits through your talent and offer to the common people prognostications that bring words of coming disaster; may these works harness you to the King, crown your forehead with the wreath of joy, commend you to the peoples of Finland and Sweden and carry your name above the ether. Go on, I say, to instruct the Finnish tribes through learned works concerning the order of the heavens and the influence of the firmament. Thus the Creator of the Olympus

29 Sigfridus Aronus Forsius, *Prognosticon astrologicvm ...til Åår/ M. DC. VI.*, sig. Brr; “Bidiandes ganska tienstlighen/ at E[ders].W[älborehet]. och W[älaktade]. W[älberodde]. mine Studiers gunstige Befordrare bliffua wille.”

30 Sandblad, *De eskatologiska föreställningarna* p. 262 n. 3; cf. Conrad Lauremberg, “Ad Reverendum & clarissimum Dn. M. Sigfridum Aronum theologum praestantiss. et astronomum regium” in Forsius, *Prognostica Astrotheologica, Til thet åår Christi M. DC. XXII. På hwilket thet Siette Insiglet upbrutit varder/ och then siette Engelen basunar.*, printed by Ignatius Meurer, Stockholm 1621 sig. Arv; Lindroth, *Paracelsimen i Sverige* p. 392 n. 5; on Forsius’ travels and contacts in Germany, see “Sigfridi Aronis Inlagde Resolution thenn Sept. A:o 606”, printed in Pipping, *Historiska bidrag I* pp. 40–45; cf. Theodor Pyl, “Herlitz, David”, ADB vol. 12, Leipzig 1880 p. 118.

will be favourably disposed and inclined towards you, and your reputation will fill the realms and ears of Kings.<sup>31</sup>

Despite the uncertain times of famine, pestilence and war in the autumn of 1605, the auspices appeared prosperous to Forsius, and in his own words he seemed content to remain “a Prophet to the Dangerous Years (as before) and not to the good ones”. To be sure, Forsius had had his share of failure: previously his almanacs had “caused some difficulty to come to print” and there had been troubles “with Bookbinders of several cities”. The municipal authorities in Åbo – the closest city to his parish in Kimito – had been indifferent to his work, and “as is well known by many” they had for two years in a row broken their promises of financing his publications.<sup>32</sup> Moreover he could verify that the ‘starry art’ – signifying astronomy as well as astrology – “now is come in great contempt among some imprudent [people], especially since the common Almanacs often go astray concerning the weather”.<sup>33</sup> Now, however, he had powerful patrons who had financed his studies, his travels and his authorship; he had made useful contacts and gained recognition among scholarly circles in Germany. And as intimated by the good wishes of David Herlitz, that his reputation would ‘fill the realms and ears of Kings’, Forsius may even have nourished hopes of once again joining the service of his sovereign.

31 David Herlitz, “Ad Sigfridvm Aronvm finnonem astronomvm” in Forsius, *Prognosticon astrologicvm ... til Åår/ M. DC. VI. sig. F4v*; “Sigfride Vraniae cultor, qui tempora certis/Distinguis spacijs, docto Prognostico adumbrans/Fata tuae gentis; tempestatesq’. per auram/Suetici agri, & diros morbos, bellumq’. famemq’./Et tristes Solis, Lunae obscuraeq’. labores./Perge tuo ingenio excolare haec studia, & dare plebi/Nuncia venturae cladis Prognostica, quae te./Adjungant lateri Regis, frontemq’ coronent Serto hilari, & populis Finnonibus ut quoq. Suecis/Commendent, tollantq’. tuum super aethera nomen./Perge, inquam, & doctis de coelorum ordine scriptis/Influxuq’. poli Finnonas instrue gentes./Sic tibi erit facilis promptusq’. Creator Olympi./Et tua fama oras Regum complebit & aures.”

32 Forsius, *Prognosticon astrologicvm ... til Åår/ M. DC. VI. sig. B1r*; “Men at mine Almanacher i nogre Åår icke framkomne äre ... ther til haffuer wället endels oläglighet at komma til trycket/ och ther iagh nogre gångor medh Bookbindare aff åtskilielighe Städher them åstadh sendt haffuer/ haffuer iagh fått them oförfärdighet til baka igen. Sedhan och/ at iagh nw tw Åår å radh är medh fåfengt löffte bedraghen til vmkåstnaden ther til/ aff the förnämlicheste Stadz Personer j Åbo stadh/ såsom thet mongom wäl kunnogt är. ... iagh måste bliffua gement en Prophet til the Fahlighe Ååren (såsom förre) och icke til the godhe”

33 Ibid. sig. A4v; “...nw hoos enpart oförständighe j stoor föracht kommen är/ hälst ther förre/ at the gemene Almenacher om wederleken offta fara wille”.

## In Domo Carceris

However, if this was the case, these hopes were soon crushed. In the summer of 1606, Forsius was back in Finland, seemingly to arrange for a longer sojourn abroad. In June he sent an allowance to a son of his who was studying in Lübeck. Two months later he had requested that his wife, Anna Larsdotter, should send his luggage after him to Germany "where he had intended to go". Yet before he had the time to leave he was arrested. The King ordered that his belongings due for Germany should be confiscated and searched, whereas all documents and letters "of any importance" should be sent to Stockholm.<sup>34</sup>

The circumstances of Forsius' arrest are obscure. Obviously he had been dealing with subversive elements abroad. This may seem like a petty offence – indeed it would have been nearly impossible not to meet Swedish and Finnish exiles and dissidents in German ports and cities. However, according to a plea he sent to his judges, the main point of the accusation was that he had actually translated an "Oration and Invective" against Karl IX from Latin into Swedish, and thus enhanced its subversive potency by making it available to Swedish readers.<sup>35</sup>

Thus Forsius' situation was precarious. People had lost their heads on looser accusations during the previous turbulent years. Although the pursuit of potential traitors had culminated with the execution of Petrus Eri in the spring, it had not ceased by any means. For instance it is notable that Forsius' arrest coincided with the aforementioned inquisition of the professors at Uppsala, and with the suspension of Laurentius Paulinus.<sup>36</sup>

Apparently Forsius feared for his life as he begged his judges for mercy "for the sake of the holy death and suffering of Jesus Christ".<sup>37</sup> Yet even

34 Cit. letter from Karl IX, "Till Otto Mörner om Her Sigfredh Aronis Tingest", Stockholm 13 August 1606, RA, RR vol. 102 fol. 39r; the letter is rather oddly formulated and says nothing of Forsius being arrested, only that he was 'hindered to go' to Germany; for the allowances sent to Forsius' son, see Fredrik Wilhelm Pipping, *Historiska bidrag till Finlands calendografi. Andra stycket*, Helsingfors 1861 p. 65; as there was no academy in Lübeck, a qualified guess is that the son of Forsius, whose name is unknown, was still attending grammar school.

35 Pipping suggests that this refers to *Oratio ad Sigismundum III de Regno Sueciae recuperando*, written by a Nicolaus de magna Concice Mnischeck and published in Paris in 1606; Pipping, *Historiska bidrag I* p. 38; the pamphlet must anyway have been fresh from the print when Forsius translated it, since it, according to his account of the content, mentioned the wedding of Sigismund and the demise of "Boris, the Grand Prince in Russia" in 1605, and referred to False Dimitry I (r. 1605–1606) as the ruling tsar; "Sigfridi Aronis Jnlagde Resolution" pp. 38–41.

36 See above pp. 142.

37 Cit. "Sigfridi Aronis Jnlagde Resolution" p. 45.

though his plea is biased by the urge to prove his innocence, it still provides a vivid picture, both of Forsius' social contacts at the time, and of the situation Swedish students and scholars encountered abroad. There are references to exiled loyalists, Polish recruiters and Karl's agents inquiring after information and intelligence. There are also accounts of how local merchants, seafarers and authorities in Germany looked to their own interests in the insecure situation in the Baltic after the Swedish defeat at Kirchholm, "the battle before Riga" as Forsius referred to it.<sup>38</sup>

In his plea, Forsius claimed that an unnamed person had come with a "sedulous request" to have an oration translated. The individual promised under oath "that it would never come out of his hands". People Forsius consulted had also assured him that the pamphlet "was long ago sent to the King in Sweden, whereby I in my simple-mindedness (God amend me) was badly deceived". He also maintained that when he met Karl's agents in Lübeck, he told them everything he knew of "Polish deeds and their practices" and "among all other things about this Oration, which they demanded that I would get for them".<sup>39</sup> With God as his witness "who knows everything best and ransack heart and kidneys", he also referred to several Swedish students who could prove his innocence. Among those mentioned was an Åke Eriksson, probably identical with a cousin of the future Lord High Chancellor Axel Oxenstierna; Johannes Botvidi who would become bishop of Linköping; Jonas Magni, Laurentius Paulinus' future antagonist in the Ramistic controversy; and Sveno Jonae Moderus, a mathematical scholar from Helmstedt and future chaplain of Karl IX. Forsius claimed these students would confirm that he was no enemy of the new regime, and that he had always defended the king from slanderous speech in German ports and taverns, even at the risk of his own life.<sup>40</sup>

Forsius was probably released the following spring. No further penalties appear to have been imposed.<sup>41</sup> Among his biographers it is assumed that

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. p. 41.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. pp. 39–44 cit. p. 41; "...m' sin trägen begären, och eedh ther till, i th' att han för migh swoor, att hon aldrih aff hans hender komma skulle i nogen mans hender, Och att alle sadhe att hon longo sedhan war innsendt till Konungen i Sverige, ther medh iagh i min enfallighet (Gudh bättré migh) illa bedraghen wardt, Och iagh (så sant migh Gudh hielpe) hans Kong.e Maj:tt eller nogan annan, aldrih ondt ther medh meentte. Tij strax hans K. M tz: Sendebodh dijt kom, och iagh m' them taallte, gaff iagh them tillkenna, allt thet iagh om Pålске handlingar och theres practiker förstätt hadhe, Och sadhe them, om the monge skrifter som ther omkring förhdes, emoot h. K.M. och ibland allt annat om thenna Oration, huilcken the begärade att Jagh skulle skaffa them".

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. pp. 43–44.

<sup>41</sup> At least Forsius was free to sign the dedication to Gustavus Adolphus in his prognostication on 12 July 1607; Sigfridus Aronus Forsius, *Almanah eller Dagbaräkning ... til åhr*

the appearance of the comet later that year would serve as a ticket back into royal favour.<sup>42</sup> However, the tract he wrote in the autumn had no official sanction from the king and seems to have been a private initiative. According to Forsius' own words there were "many pious people" who had "requested my *judicium* upon this Comet, which I (although I am badly equipped with *Librii* in present circumstances) have not been able to refuse or deny them." Yet apparently he had presented the manuscript to the king: "as I have gladly become aware, that Y[our] R[oyal] H[ighness] have judged the mentioned Tract to be fit for the common man, I have had it printed, and in all humble subserviency dedicated it to Y.R.H., and presented it as a small New Year's gift".<sup>43</sup> However, it is quite likely that Forsius exaggerated the King's benevolence at this point: a few days before he signed the dedication, the King had ordered that Forsius should not be allowed to "climb the pulpit" and preach in Stockholm.<sup>44</sup>

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*Christi MDCVIII. Som är skottår – Prognosticon astrologicum Til thet åhret efter Christi Naderijka Födelse. M DC VIII. Aff naturlige orsakers grund stält och räknat*, printed by Anund Olofsson, Stockholm 1607 fol. 21r; in his comet tract he referred to his own examination of a "bleak fish", marked with strange characters that had been "caught here this summer at Söderström [in Stockholm] 20 July"; Forsius, *Een berättelse/ Och eenfalligh Judicium* sig. A3r; cf. Sveno Jonae Moderus, (pres.) *Disputatio de mathematicarum disciplinarum origine, sev primis inventoribus, diuisione, certitudine, item fine, & vtilitate.*, printed by Jacob Lucius, Helmstedt 1605; Moderus also seems to have been acquainted with Forsius' companion from the Lapland expedition, Daniel Hiort; cf. Daniel Hjort, *In festiuitatem nuptiarum, Domini M. Svenonis Iona Moderi*, Stockholm 1609 – a congratulatory poem written for Moderus' wedding, also including a minor elegy, "Aliud eidem elegiacum", written by Forsius; see Kiiskinen p. 482.

42 Cf. Pipping, *Historiska bidrag* I p. 46; Holmquist suggested that Forsius was released on the king's order to interpret its significance; as we have seen however, he had been free for a couple of months when the comet occurred; Holmquist, *Svenska kyrkans historia vol. IV:I* pp. 67–68; Sandblad, *De eskatologiska föreställningarna* pp. 262–263 n. 4.

43 Forsius, *Een berättelse/ Och eenfalligh Judicium* sig. B1a–v; "...haffua många frome mitt *Judicium* om thenne Cometen begärat/ thet Jagh (ändoch att Jagh medh Librij effter närwarande legenhet illa försorgt är) them icke haffuer kunnat affslå eller förwägra ... Och mädhan Jagh hugneligen förnummit haffuer/ at E.K.M. haffuer dömt förbenämde Tractat menigh man tianligh wara/ haffuer Jagh honom aff Trycket latit vthgå/ och j all ödmuik vnderdånigheet E.K.M. tilskriffuit/ *dediceret* och til en liten Nyåars gåffuo föräbrat".

44 Entry in RA, RR, B105 fol. 140r, 1 November 1607: "Till Michill Olufszon, att han icke tilstäd Sigfridum Aronum att stige opå Predikestolen der i Stocholm"; Forsius' comet tract was dated "The Day of St. Martin", 10 November.

## The Casual Academic

It is impossible to say if Forsius was ever helped by his comet tract, yet a little more than a year later he appeared to have regained the trust of his sovereign. In the spring of 1609 he was commissioned to uphold the chair of Astronomy at Uppsala for Martinus Olavi Stenius, who had been suspended from his post.<sup>45</sup> Once again the circumstances are obscure: in modern accounts it has been suggested that the appointment of Forsius was motivated by the King's personal interest in supporting the astrological sciences at the university, as they were no longer accepted among the professors.<sup>46</sup>

Clearly the King had circumvented the regulations when Forsius was appointed. Normally all candidates to professorships should be examined and acknowledged by the university council and the cathedral chapter. Moreover, Forsius was not provided with a permanent chair, and although he would use the title 'Astr. Prof. Vpsal.' in a couple of prognostications, his position was never confirmed, and compared to the other professors his salary was not paid in full.<sup>47</sup>

However, Forsius' appointment should be seen in the context of the King's ambitions for the academy as a whole, rather than as a capricious manifestation of his intellectual fancies. In 1604 a proposal of new statutes for the university was compiled at the royal chancellery and presented to the estates, with the suggestion that the chair of mathematics should be split in two. While a "*mathematicus*" should primarily attend to arithmetics and geometry, a new chair should be created, reserved for an "*astronomus*, who shall promote *astronomiam*, *astrologiam* and *geographiam*."<sup>48</sup> This formulation suggests that the main intention was not to promote astrology in particular. The idea was to separate theory from practice in the mathematical sciences, and to refine the application and practical uses of the starry arts in general. Similar examples of how worldly authorities strived to adjust academical teaching to fit the new requirements of the state can be found in contemporary Germany. Such workings are apparent in the ordinance

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45 Annerstedt, *Uppsala universitets historia* I p. 133.

46 Nordenmark, *Astronomiens historia* pp. 19–20; Kjell Lekeby, "Introduktion" in Stenius, *Disputation om de astrologiska förutsägelsernas osäkerhet* p. 41; cf. Kiiskinen pp. 125–126.

47 Annerstedt *Uppsala universitets historia* I p. 139 note 2; Forsius, *Prognosticon Astrologicum* ... M DC X; Forsius, *Almanah eller Dagharäkning* ... til thet år Christi. M DC X. – Een Liten Prognostica Til thet Ååret Christi/ M DC X; Forsius, *Prognoseis Astrologicae, eller Stjernornas och förmörkelsers betydhande i gement* ... til tiyo Åhr/ thet år ifrå Anno 1611, in til 1620., all printed by Anund Olofsson, Stockholm 1609

48 Annerstedt, *Uppsala universitets historia*. Bihang I p. 48.

of the University of Marburg, an academy where the authors of the king's proposition, Nils Chesnecopherus and Johan Skytte, had been active as students and lecturers in the 1590s.<sup>49</sup>

The proposal was rejected as a whole by the clerical estate, mainly because it was aimed at strengthening the influence of worldly authorities over the academy. However, there is no evidence suggesting that the King's intentions for the astronomical chair had been met with any objections. Neither is anything known, strictly speaking, of the circumstances of Steinius' suspension. The fact that Forsius was appointed in his stead could just as well be explained by the possibility that he was the only candidate available for the post. Paulinus was now a bishop and in any case disqualified by his clerical partisanship. Chesnecopherus – who had previously been *mathematicus* at the court of the Landgrave of Kassel and professor in astronomy in Marburg<sup>50</sup> – would scarcely have wished to leave his powerful position as head of Karl's chancellery for a low-paid academic chair. Forsius on the other hand had not expressed any particular sympathy for the clerical cause. He was a good fit for the qualifications requested for the astronomical chair because of his almanacs and astrological authorship, and his previous geographical fieldwork.

Unfortunately, nothing is known of Forsius' lecturing. However, while in Uppsala he began working on his *Physica*, a vernacular textbook on natural philosophy.<sup>51</sup> The *Physica* was probably intended to be used for lecturing, and seemingly in accordance with the 1604 proposal, the text was well fit for a curriculum focusing on the practical application of the instruction provided to the students.<sup>52</sup>

In accepting this appointment, and becoming the king's man at the academy, Forsius would step into a hornet's nest of conflicting interests between worldly and clerical authorities. To make things worse, these interests were intertwined with personal rivalry. Soon enough he would be dragged into a vendetta between Johannes Rudbeckius, who in 1610 became professor in Hebrew, and Johannes Messenius (c. 1579–1636), a former student

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49 Tor Berg, *Johan Skytte: Hans ungdom och verksamhet under Karl IX:s regering*, Bonniers, Stockholm 1920 pp. 121–122.

50 Berg, *Johan Skytte* p. 54; Tor Berg "Chesnecopherus, Nils", SBL vol. 8, Stockholm 1929 pp. 426–427.

51 At least this could be conjectured from hints in Forsius, *Prognosticon Astrologicum ... Till thet År effter Frelsermannens Jesu Chrjstj nåderijka Födhelse. M DC X* sig. D2r.

52 Cf. Kiiskinen pp. 135–137; see esp. pp. 145–152 for a discussion on *Physica* and Forsius' dependence on various sources – as for instance the *Physiologica peripatetica* by Johannes Magirus, *Astrologia, chronographia et astromanteia* by Otto Casmann, and *De Natura Dei* and *De Operibus Dei* by Girolamo Zanchi.

from the Jesuit college of Braunsberg, who had renounced his Catholicism and been appointed to the chair of *juris et politicus* at Uppsala through the patronage of Karl IX.<sup>53</sup> In this conflict, Rudbeckius had the firm support of the university consistory, not only for his role as the champion of academic and clerical independence, but since he was related to most of the other professors through bonds of kinship and friendship. As noted by Claes Annerstedt, the consistory had “a certain touch of an Upsalian family faction”. Among Rudbeckius’ supporters we find his brother Petrus Johannis (1578–1629) and his old friend and colleague Johannes Canuti Linaeus (1573–1669), who in turn was the brother-in-law to the suspended Martinus Olavi Stenius.<sup>54</sup>

It appears as if Messenius and Forsius joined forces with each other, as they were both the king’s men and thus in a similar position in relation to the other professors. The only preserved statement on Forsius’ activities at the university is that he appeared “tight and drunk” as the only advocate of Messenius at a turbulent session in the university council in January 1610. As the first indication of Forsius’ drinking habits, this statement is quite symptomatic of the rest of his career.<sup>55</sup>

According to a contemporary record, Forsius left Uppsala ‘spontaneously’ later that year, and by the autumn he seems to have resided in Finland.<sup>56</sup> It has been assumed that it was the intrigues and conflicts of the consistory that made him leave the academy. Even before his departure Forsius mentioned how he had been mistreated by “envious buffers and unfair backbiters, blamers and revilers”.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, Forsius and Messenius could no longer rely on the support from the royal court as the controversies at the university proceeded. When Nils Chesnecopherus was sent to settle the conflicts in February 1610, he had sided with Rudbeckius, seemingly driven by personal animosity and rivalry towards Messenius. He had also brought to light dangerous documents from a time when Messenius had applied for appointments in the service of King Sigismund and his ministers.<sup>58</sup> On the other hand, Forsius’ departure may just as well have been the end of a

53 Annerstedt, *Uppsala universitets historia I* pp 134–135.

54 Cit. *ibid.* p. 159.

55 *Ibid.* p. 159; the account of this meeting, clearly biased by antipathies towards Messenius, is printed in Annerstedt, *Uppsala universitets historia. Bihang I* p. 86.

56 The entry of the register is quite laconic: “Sigfridus Aronis Forsius Finno – 1610 hinc migravit sponte”; Annerstedt, *Uppsala universitets historia I* p. 148 n. 3; cit. p. 139 n 2.

57 Forsius, *Prognosticon Astrologicum ... MDCX.* sig. D2r; “... afvundzbukar och orättwijse förtalare/ lastare/ och försmädhare”; ‘avundsbuk’ is an old Swedish invective, literally meaning ‘envy belly’, but ‘envious buffer’ gives an idea of its essence.

58 Kiiskinen pp. 126–127; Berg, “Chesnecopherus” p. 432–433.



temporary arrangement. It may be noted that Stenius regained a part of his salary while Forsius was still giving lectures in Uppsala, and he was soon restored to his former post.<sup>59</sup>

Yet it appears as if Forsius actually made powerful enemies during his time in Uppsala. In October 1610 he was summoned to the presence of the king in the company of several high Finnish officers and officials – among them were Axel Kurck (1555–1630), Klas Hermansson Fleming (c. 1550–1616) and Bishop Ericus Eriki – most of whom had previously been subjected to the king's suspicions, and faced imprisonment or even death sentences for having sided with Sigismund during the civil war.<sup>60</sup>

There is no indication that any of these men were arrested on this occasion. However, in an entry in Messenius' extensive historiography *Scandia illustrata*, it is related how Forsius in the autumn of 1610 was falsely accused before the King for having dealings with a Finnish faction conspiring to restore Sigismund to the throne. According to Messenius, Forsius' foremost accusers were Nils Chesnecopherus, Erik Jöransson Tegel (1563–1636) and other royal secretaries who were "ruling while the king had been weakened" by his seizure from the previous year. Whether Forsius was the victim of court intrigues, or if there were any deeper political reasons behind his arrest is not mentioned. Nonetheless he suffered "without guilt" in the dungeons of Örebro Castle for over a year. According to Messenius he was not released until after the death of Karl IX, when the estates assembled in Nyköping in December 1611.<sup>61</sup>

59 Annerstedt, *Uppsala universitets historia I* p. 139 n. 2.

60 RA, RR vol. BIII fol. 376r; "Fullmacht för Lars Swänsson drabanthöfzman och Måns Smälennigh, at dragha till Finland och tillseije Axel Kurck, Claes Flemmingh, hans Son och hans Mågh, Bispem i Åbo och hans son, Her Sigfredh Aronum sampt Jahan Pontussons, Erich Abramhamssons och Christiern Claessons tiene, som nu på toghet Hafwe waret och nu förholle sigh i Finland, at the begifwe sigh till K.M:t", Stockholm 30 October 1610; Anthoni, "Ericus Eriki" p. 203; Eric Anthoni, "Fleming, Klas Hermansson", SBL vol. 16, Stockholm 1964–1966 pp. 135–136; Alf Åberg, "Kurck, Axel", SBL vol. 21, Stockholm 1975–1977 p. 701. The mentioned son and son-in-law of Klas Fleming were probably Herman Klasson Fleming (1579–1652) – who had previously been imprisoned together with his father – and Peder Erlandsson Bååt (1589–1654). The reference to the son of Bishop Ericus Eriki is rather conspicuous, as his only known son had fled the country and converted to Catholicism in 1603 – he was definitely not in Finland in 1610, see SBL 14 pp. 205–209; the three last mentioned men were probably Johan Pontusson De la Gardie (1582–1642), Erik Abrahamsson Leijonhufvud (1551–1616) and Christiern Claesson (Horn, 1554–1612) of which at least the two latter had been imprisoned as adherents of Sigismund; SBL 19 p. 347; SBL 22 p. 465; cf. Sandblad, *De eskatologiska föreställningarna* p. 261 n. 7; Kiiskinen p. 132.

61 Cit. Johannes Messenius, *Scandia illustrata ... Tomus VIII.*, printed by Olaus Eneaus, Stockholm 1702 p. 110; "dum Rex modò esset infirmus, dominabantur"; Johannes

Messenius' information is not always reliable, and in this particular case it is likely that the whole account is biased. Both Chesnecopherus and Tegel were Messenius' personal enemies, and in other passages of *Scondia* his antipathy against them is obvious.<sup>62</sup> It is also disturbing that the account appears to be roughly analogous to the circumstances of Forsius' arrest in 1606.

Still there are arguments for the authenticity of Messenius' account. For instance, in agreement with Messenius' statement, Forsius would later refer to Örebro as a place where he had been imprisoned.<sup>63</sup> In his *Physica* Forsius claimed that "when I have dreamt of Snakes, Scorpion or any other poisonous animal, then I have undoubtedly had calumnation upon my being, and thus been arrested and imprisoned".<sup>64</sup> Since he must have been working on *Physica* during his alleged confinement (the manuscript was completed in the early summer of 1611), the agreement with Messenius' statement of false accusations in *Scondia* appears as striking.<sup>65</sup>

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Messenius, *Scondia illustrata, tomus X*, printed by Olaus Enaeus, Stockholm, 1703 p. 39; "Sigfridus ex Finlandia Helsingforsius, incomparabilis regni Suecici Astronomus, quod ab inimicis apud Regem vocatus esset in suspicionem factionis cum Rege Sigismundo, & hujus in Finlandia occultis fautoribus, Oerebrogiae, citra culpam, fuit graviter cruciatus".

- 62 Cf. Pipping, *Historiska bidrag I* p. 37. Both Chesnecopherus and Tegel had played important roles in Messenius' arrest in July 1616, as he was accused for treacherous contacts with Sigismund and the Jesuits and imprisoned for life. *Scondia illustrata* was written during his imprisonment; Annerstedt, *Uppsala universitets historia I* p. 134; Berg, "Chesnecopherus" pp. 429–430; Bernt Olsson, "Messenius, Johannes", SBL vol. 25, Stockholm 1985–1987 p. 425.
- 63 See below p. 224; In Forsius' plea from 1606 there are no indications of where he was imprisoned, although Stockholm would be a probable guess. In later works it has been assumed that it was Örebro, probably since Forsius' accounts have been confused with Messenius'. Sometimes Forsius' arrest in 1606 has been associated with the estates meeting in May that year (and thus indirectly with the execution of Petrus Erici), yet as we have seen, Forsius' arrest took place in August; see Pipping, *Historiska bidrag I* pp. 36–38; Sten Lindroth, "Forsius, Sigfridus Aronius", SBL vol. 16, Stockholm 1964–1966 pp. 328–329; cf. Kiiskinen pp. 60–62.
- 64 Forsius, *Physica*: (*Cod. Holm. D 76*). 1, *Text, utgiven av Johan Nordström*, Uppsala 1952 pp. 345–346; "Såsom iagh af migh sielf thet achtat hafuer, att när iagh hafuer drömt om Ormar, Scorpion eller någhot annat förgiftigt diwr, tå hafuer iagh otuijfuelachtigt haft förtåall på migh, och ther igenom blifuen hächtat och fångslat";
- 65 According to a note in the text, *Physica* was completed "Saturday preceding the first Sunday after Trinity" in 1611; Forsius, *Physica* p. 372: "Finijt hoc opus Sabbatho praecedente Dominicam 1. post Trinitatis, Anno 1611."; Kiiskinen p. 131.

## Establishing a Trade

Another indication that Forsius was actually arrested a second time in 1610 is that he is difficult to trace for about two years after he had left Uppsala. During this time he published no works, and there is a gap in his series of almanacs and prognostications.<sup>66</sup> However, in 1612 he seems to have settled in Stockholm where he owned a small house in the suburbs of Norrmalm. Apparently he had made useful acquaintances: he dedicated his prognostication for 1613 to his “propitious Promoters and Friends” who were officials, mayors and councillors of Stockholm city.<sup>67</sup> He also re-established his connections at court. In a royal charter issued 5 August 1613 Forsius received a privilege, granting that:

... no one, neither within the Country nor abroad, may without his permission print the almanacs that he Calculates and figures out himself, or import into the Realm or sell those that are printed without his sanction and permission.<sup>68</sup>

The charter was signed by the secretary and cartographer Anders Bureus (1571–1646) who may indeed have been a benefactor. In any case Anders’ two brothers – the physician Olof Bureus (1578–1655) and the royal secretary Jonas Bureus (1575–1655) – knew Forsius well. Olof had written a complimentary poem in Forsius’ prognostication for 1608, and in a hand written dedication on a copy of Forsius’ comet tract from 1619, Jonas Bureus is called his “best promoter”.<sup>69</sup>

Even before he was granted his privilege, Forsius had called himself *Astronomus regius* in his works, and in the following years the title would consequently reappear on the title pages of his publications.<sup>70</sup> However,

66 See Kiiskinen’s bibliography, Kiiskinen pp. 482–483.

67 Forsius, *Almanah eller Dagharäkning ... til thet Åår effter Christi Naderijka Födelse. M. DC.XIII – Een Liten Prognostica Til thet Åhret Christi/ M DC XIII.*, printed by the widow of Anund Olofsson, Stockholm 1612 sig. Arv; cit. “Sijne gunstige Förfordrare och Wänner”.

68 “*Privilegier för Mester Siffridh att lathe tryckia Almenacker. Af Stockholm then 5 Augustj Åår etc. 1613*”, RA, RR vol. B120 fol. 196v–197r; “...att ingen anten innan eller Vthan Landz, må Vthan hans förlof och tilståndh trycke the almanacker, som han sielf Calculerer och vtreckner, eller them, som vthan Hans förlof och tilståndh trykte åhre, hitt in i Riket före eller försälie.”

69 Olof Bureus, “Ad Sigfridum Aronum Fors. Astronomum”, in Forsius, *Almanah ... MDCVIII – Prognosticon astrologicum Til thet åhret ... M DC VIII.* fol. 1r; Forsius, *En liten Vnderwijsning, och itt enfällighit Judicium, om någre Cometer, som i theenne nästföregångne ååren seedde äre*, printed by Ignatius Meurer, Stockholm 1619, UUB Obsrv. Upps. nr. 41 4:5, sig. A1r; Anders, Jonas and Olof were cousins to Johannes Bureus.

70 Forsius used the title for the first time toward the end of 1612, as he signed an introductory poem, “Programma”, in Johannes Messenius, *Specula Thet är/ Sweiges Rijkes*

what the title actually signified is unclear. Nineteen days after the charter was issued, Forsius addressed a dedication to Gustavus Adolphus, as he had “gracefully provided and seen me to the Astronomical Profession here in our beloved Fatherland, with a sufficient subsistence.”<sup>71</sup>

This may have been a free interpretation of the King’s intensions for his promotion. There are no indications that Forsius’ title of ‘royal astronomer’ was ever ratified or made official. Neither had it been Forsius’ only purpose to express his gratitude. In the dedication, the Swedish monarch is compared to such renowned patrons of the liberal arts as Alexander the Great, who had granted Aristotle “eight hundred pounds, that is 480 000 Crowns” for elaborating his natural history; and “Alphonsus, King of the Aragonians” [sic], who had spent “40 000 guilder on those learned men, who calculated the Astronomical tables, you call the Alphonsine.”<sup>72</sup>

This unabashed flattery primarily reflected back upon the author. There is a clear correspondence between the presented examples and the work Forsius claimed to perform for king and country. Thus Forsius promised to continue, not only his astronomical and chronological work, but his “Description of all nature, or of all natural things, that you call *Physica*”, which he “with great effort already have prepared in the Swedish tongue.”<sup>73</sup> The reciprocal function of the text is obvious: the King is properly honoured and at the same time Forsius rhetorically manifested his authority by comparing himself, not only with the mathematicians at the court of Alfonso X, but with the Philosopher, the great Aristotle.

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*Skådetorn (Ther vthinan thet berömlighe Swea och Götha Rijkets allehanda egentlige lägenheet/ häriligheet och tilstånd/ vthtryckeligen affmålās),* printed by Ignatius Meurer, Stockholm 1612.

- 71 Sigfridus Aronus Forsius, *Almanah Eller Dagharäkning ... til thet Åår effter Christi nåderijka Födelse M DC XIV – Prognostica, Medh the fyre åhrs delars general wäderlek/ himels liusens Förmörkelser/ oc annat ther til behörligit/ Af naturlige orsakers grund/ stält och judiceret/ til thet åhr Christi M DC XIV.*, printed by Ignatius Meurer, Stockholm 1613 fol. 2r: “J theras hoop/ som til sadanne Konster lust haffua/ bekänner iagh sannerliga E. Kon. Maj. en wara/ thet E. Kon. Maj. ther medh haffuer latit påskijna/ at E.K.M. migh til then Astronomiska Profession här i wart käre Fädernesland/ med itt nödortffigt vppehålle nådeligen försörgdt och bestält haffuer.” The dedication is dated 24 August – nineteen days after the charter.
- 72 Ibid. fol. iv–2r: “Alexander Magnus anwände ottohundrade pund/ thet är 480000. Cronor ther til/ at Aristoteles Diwrens Historie beskrieffua skulle ... Och Alphonsus the Arragoniers Konung kostade 400000. gyllen på lärde män/ som vthräknade the Astronomiske Tafflor/ som man Alphonsinas kallar.” Alfonso X (r. 1252–1284) was actually King of Castile.
- 73 Ibid. fol. 2r: “Sosom iagh och so hela Naturens/ eller the naturlige tings Beskrifwelse/ som man Physica kallar ... mz stort arbete/ på Swenskt tungomål allredo förferdighat haffuer.”

## A Troublesome Preacher

Whether it was the result of a reward for his services, or simply that there was a vacancy to fill, Forsius was eventually provided with an incumbency through royal intervention. Around the New Year of 1613 he was appointed preacher in the Cloister – the former site of Johan III's College on Gråmunkeholmen. Previously it has been argued that this appointment had something to do with the Finnish congregation in Stockholm holding their services there. However, as the Cloister had been under royal disposition ever since the dissolution of the convent in the 1530s, it is quite likely that this was some kind of special arrangement to provide for Forsius' maintenance. Forsius' arbitrary conduct towards his colleagues also gives us reason to suspect that he regarded his incumbency primarily as a royal stipend.<sup>74</sup>

Forsius soon made himself unpopular among his colleagues. In the summer of 1614 the vicar in Storkyrkan, Olaus Elimaeus, had given Forsius a sharp reprimand for having neglected his duties as recording clerk in the consistory. As pastor primarius in the city and thus formally Forsius' superior, this was indeed his right. Yet in a riposte, Forsius complained that he was despised, oppressed and snubbed by the vicar. He even compared Elimaeus with "Judas, the betrayer of Christ" in a sermon, which was a defamatory insult not to be taken lightly.<sup>75</sup> Without consulting the consistory, Forsius had also appointed a new sexton and demanded compensations when other priests held funeral services in his church. On one occasion when the headmaster had refused to pay to let the schoolboys "exercise *Musicam figuratam*" in the Cloister, Forsius had "shamefully scolded the Headmaster's wife, which may be certified by witnesses".<sup>76</sup>

In a recurring issue in the complaints against Forsius, his colleagues also mentioned "Sigfridus' unfortunate life with his Wife". This was indeed a sad chapter.<sup>77</sup> Apparently Anna Larsdotter shared her husband's unfortunate love for the drinking cup, and she was hardly the ideal virtuous and placid clergyman's wife of the time. In 1606 she had been arrested in Åbo after

74 Nils Ahnlund, "Daniel Hjort" in *Svensk sägen och hävd: kulturbilder*, Geber, Stockholm 1928 p. 227; Holmquist, *Svenska kyrkans historia vol. IV:I* p. 65; Forsius was not appointed vicar, although this is a recurrent statement in the literature; see Lindroth, "Forsius" p. 328; Hellström, *Stockholms stads herdaminne* p. 522.

75 Stockholm City Archives (SSA), Stockholms domkapitels arkiv vol. A I:3 p. 65; "Formalia verba M. Sigfridi på predikestolen emot D. pastorem att Han confererade Judam proditorem Christi och M. Olaum tilsammans".

76 Ibid. pp. 65–67, cit p. 66; "... ther D. Rectorem sina dieknar pläghar excecera Musicam figuratam ... D. Sigfridus hafwer skält Rectoris Hwstro skamlighen, thet som wittne kunna betyga".

77 Ibid. p. 66; "Ministerium klagar öfwer Sigfridi olyckligha lefwerne mz sijn Hustro."

having “forcibly abducted a little suckling from Valborg Eskilsdotter and beaten her black and blue”.<sup>78</sup> It has also been suggested that it was from personal experiences that Forsius provided a forecast for 1619, where he foresaw how:

Mars with the Dragon’s Tail in the house of wedlock, means much discord in marriage. For Xanthippe will wear the trousers and rumble much in the house, and thereafter pour out her rain over the harmless Socrates, positioned in a feminine sign.<sup>79</sup>

In the same passage he also presented a medical explanation, spiced with invectives that probably originated from his wife’s vocabulary, why women who had appeared pious and meek when unmarried, became cantankerous in wedlock.<sup>80</sup> Yet for his own part, Forsius was hardly the paragon of a placid philosopher he pretended to be. One evening in the autumn of 1615 he had “come home dead drunk, and taken a *pallasch*” – a Polish cavalry sword – “saying to his wife, ‘come here, tonight I will be your executioner as well as my own’”, whereafter he made three cuts in the bench where she lay.<sup>81</sup>

When this happened, the incumbency in the Cloister had already ended after a fatal incident. On Whitsunday 1615 the former secretary Daniel Hjort, Forsius’ old companion and ‘sworn brother’ since the Lapland expedition in 1601–1602, had arrived uninvited and “half drunk” to a feast held in Forsius’ house on Norrmalm. Hjort had been ennobled by Karl IX for his continuous services in the Lapland affairs, but he had not succeeded

78 Register of fines from Åbo city, cited in Pipping, *Historiska bidrag II* p. 65; “Then 20 Septembris Fältis Sigfridus Aronisses Hustru för thet hon hade Röfwat med gewalt uthaff Wahlborgh Eskils dotter ett litet Spenebarn och slagit henne Brun och blå, efter som th. i wijlyftigare i Doomboken skrif. ståår saak till 30 m.”

79 Forsius, *Then stora Prognostica ... M. DC. XIX* sig. B1v; “Mars med Drakastierten in domo conjugij/ betyder mykit twist och trätor i ähtenskapet. Ty Xantippe wil hafwa broken och myckit i huset dundra/ och ther effter sitt eghit regn öfwer then menlöse Socratem vthgiuta/ in signo situs foeminino [sic]; cf. Kiiskinen p. 262.

80 Forsius, *Then stora Prognostica ... M. DC. XIX* sig. B1v; the example of invectives are vivid: “phew, you rogue, you toad, you thief, dress me as you see others dress their wives, give me sugar and wine etc”; “fyff wunden/ tu skelm/ tin padda/ tin tiuff/ klädh migh såsom tu seer andre kläda sina hustror/ giff migh sucker och wijn”. About this time Forsius had attempted to declare himself divorced, but when Anna complained to the consistory, they ruled in her favour; SSA, Stockholms domkapitels arkiv vol. A I:3 p. 164.

81 Record of the municipal court of Norrmalm 30 November 1615, printed in *Stockholms stads och Norrmalms stads tänkeböcker från år 1592*, vol. VIII, 1614–1615, Stockholms stadsarkiv, Stockholm 1966 p. 219; “... kommer öffuer druckin heem, och tagit en palatz och sadhe till sin hustru, kom hijt i affton schall iagh blifua din böfuell och min egin medh, och högh trij hugh i bordet der hon lågh på bencken”.

well after the death of his high patron. However he tried his best to keep up the appearances of his court connections, and now he had come to the city to attend the festivities planned for the coming wedding of the King's sister.

In interrogations held in the consistory in the presence of Archbishop Petrus Kenicius, Forsius related how:

... Hjort began to ridicule himself, that he had been summoned hither by the king to ride the joust here at the wedding. Then I answered him: it is a pity that you should make a fool of yourself, since you are a fine Mathematicus etc. Was also begun to be spoken between us that Hjort without leave had taken an Astronomic book from me and kept it for a whole year.<sup>82</sup>

During the quarrel they began to fight and "hit each other over the mouth", but eventually Forsius overcame his troublesome guest, "took the rapier from him and heaved him out of the door". When Hjort had calmed down he was let in again, but when the night fell and the guests left, he began a new quarrel in the courtyard. In the following fight, the officer Erik Nilsson – a relative of Forsius' wife – took his rapier and stabbed Hjort "so that he instantly tumbled backwards wide open" and died on the spot.<sup>83</sup>

News of the incident spread in the city, and rumours began to circulate concerning Forsius' role. In the following interrogations he claimed that the vicar had openly told lies about him "when the funeral sermon of Hjort was held."<sup>84</sup> Forsius' position soon became indefensible as old accusations and conflicts reached the surface. According to the records he resigned voluntarily on 5 June.

It is possible that Forsius had expected to be compensated with a new appointment or stipend, and that this contributed to his decision to resign. However, this would not be the case. Eleven days later the archbishop wrote to the Chancellor Axel Oxenstierna, giving the following complaint:

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82 Records from interrogations concerning the death of Daniel Hjort 5 June 1615, SSA, Stockholms domkapitels arkiv vol. A 1:3, cit. p. 95; "Sådan begynte Hiorten narrera sigh wara hijt kallader af konungen til at rijdha sparr här i bröllopet. Tå swarade iagh honom: Dåt åhr ondt at tu skalt göra tigh til en narr, efter tu est en wacker Mathematicus etc. Begyntes och talas oss emillan om thet Hiorten hadhe taghit migh oloflighen ifrå en Astronomisk book och haft henne borto itt heelt åhr."

83 Ibid. "Tå begynte the therom slå hwar annan munslagh. På sistone wardt iagh honom öfwermechtigh, togh werian ifrå honom, och hoof honom uth genom dören tå hans weria war af wäghen jömder ... Then andra togh på werian och stötte Henne i Hiorten så at Han stalp strax baklänges widöpen."

84 Ibid. "Sadhe han att M. Olof hadhe uppenbarlighen lughit på Sigh tå Hiortens lijkpredikning höltz."

First, I am obliged to complain, that dominus Sigfridus so beyond measure insults me and dominum pastorem M[agistrum] Olaum, not only wherever he goes within the city, but also from the pulpit, in accordance to what many of the congregation here in the city can certify, and I know myself not to have merited such things from him to any degree, nor is *pastor civitatis* doing anything to him that he can complain about. Moreover he is quite annoying with his endless drunkenness, his quarrelling and squabbling with his wife, his dissension with his fellow brethren here in the city ...

Clearly the archbishop would not at any price have Forsius back in the pulpit in Stockholm:

... whereas he now *in consistorio*, in my presence, have voluntarily renounced the incumbency in the cloister, he may yet soon take back his word: wherefore I quite fondly request, that Your Highness would assist us, [that] we may be rid of the annoying and restless man, and that Your Highness would not see to that he once again enters, either the Cloister or any other incumbency here in the city. For we will never be at rest as long as that man is here, and in ministerial offices he is quite unsuitable and yields no fruit.<sup>85</sup>

Dismissed from his incumbency and deprived of his income, Forsius was forced to leave his lodgings in the cloister, and he moved out permanently to his house in Norrmalm. This development hardly promoted his matrimonial life: by the autumn, Forsius had more or less fled the household. At that time Mistress Anna had raised suspicions on her husband for adultery and he had been obliged to explain his absence from his wife's bed before the municipal court. Thus he claimed that whenever he "was busy with some work" his wife would come "as a nuisance to him in his study chamber with her spinning wheel and buzzed him in the ears". Moreover there came a

85 Cit. Letter from Petrus Kenicius to Axel Oxenstierna 16 June 1615, *Rikskansleren Axel Oxenstiernas skrifter och brevväxling. Brev från andlige och lärde, första delen* (AOSB II:12), Stockholm 1930 pp. 20–21; "Först, nödgas jagh beklagha migh, att dominus Sigfridus så öfvermåttan förolämpar mig och dominum pastorem, M. Olaum, icke allenast ehvar han vistas i staden, uthan och af predikstolen, efter som många aff församlingen här i staden kunna bära vitnesbördh, och veet jagh migh uthi ingen måtto sådant af honom hafva förskylladt, icke heller pastor civitatis gör honom något, thet han kan klaga öfver. Ther til medh är han ganska förargeligh medh sin oändelighe dryckenskap, kijff och trätto medh sin hustru, osämmia medh sina medhbrödher här i staden, hvilket är ganske förargelighit. Och efter han nu in consistorio, uthi min närvaro, haver renunciërat godvillighen tjensten i clöstre, ändoch han snart kan tagha sin ordh tillbaka igen: hvarföre begärer jagh så ganska kiärlighen, at T. M. ville vara oss behjelpeligh, vij måtte blifva aff medh then förargelighe och orolighe mannen, och at T. M. icke ville tilstådia, at han åter förer sigh in antingen i clöstre eller någon annan tjenst här i staden. Ty här blifver aldrigh roligt, så länge then mannen är här, och i ministerii embether är han plat otiënlig och skaffar ingen frucht."



“crowd of gossips that visited her, whereby he was hindered in his studying”. As he “had to go elsewhere to catch up with his work”, he rented rooms in the house of the shipmaster Mats Menlös. He also claimed that he had spent “most of the winter in Östergötland and elsewhere”.<sup>86</sup>

## Patrons and Employers

This record is informative in two aspects. First it sheds some light on the gravity of Forsius’ quarrels with his wife, and thus on the level of indignation of his clerical superiors on this part. Neither the worldly, nor the clerical authorities took adultery lightly, and Forsius’ matrimonial conduct as a whole clashed with the general ambition among Church officials to discipline the morals and behaviour of the clergy.<sup>87</sup> Secondly the remark that Forsius had been to Östergötland is revealing. Despite his personal faults and failings he apparently had good connections in the duchy. Claudius Bothvidi (1573–1646) for instance, dean in Risinge in northern Östergötland, praised Forsius in a congratulatory poem from 1618 and called him a “most Illustrious and erudite man”, whose work exposed to the reader “the unusual forces that our stars fluctuate”.<sup>88</sup> The previous year, Forsius had paid his homage to a common acquaintance, Hans Pålsson Low, a merchant and entrepreneur with literary interests from “the princely city of Norrköping”. In Low’s Swedish translation of *Harmonia evangelistarum* by the German theologian Heinrich Bünting (1545–1606), Forsius wrote:

Whereas others wield the frothing cup of Bacchus, And beguile the tedious weariness of time with jokes, And vie in hazardous dice or card games, Or

86 Record of the municipal court of Norrmalm, 8 December 1615, *Stockholms stads och Norrmalms stads tänkeböcker* vol. VIII p. 220; “vnderstudnom gich han dijt afsijdes at studera och mest hele wintheren war borthen wthj Östergötlandh, och annorstädes, och elliest hadhe han nogodt arbete förhender, det han behöfde wara endzligh, då satte hon sigh honom j förtreet j hans studere cammar medh sin råck och snorrade honom i örönnen, och kom en hop medh ralle kieringer som besöchte henne, ther af han bleff förhindrat j sin studeringh, och moste gå annorstädes till att efterkomma sit arbete ...” Mats Menlös is probably identical to a man with the same unusual surname (literally meaning ‘harmless’, ‘innocent’ or ‘meek’), mentioned as the master of a ship named ‘Andromade’ or ‘Andromeda’ in the records of the municipal court 25 and 27 November 1622, *Stockholms stads och Norrmalms stads tänkeböcker från år 1592*, vol. XIII 1622–1623, Stockholm stadsarkiv, Stockholm 1978 pp. 422–423.

87 For a discussion on this disciplinary ambition and its somewhat meagre result, see Malmstedt, *Bondetro och kyrkoro* pp. 93–100.

88 Claudius Bothvidi “Epigramma, In Prognosticon Clarissimi doctriissimq. Viri” in Forsius, *Then stora Prognostica ... M. DC. XVIII.* sig. Arv; “meritò dignus honore labor ... Quas variant vires sydera nostra novas”.

desire the bountiful price in the quick race, Glad you, Hans, completely unroll the holy Bible, Thus you beguile the tedious weariness through pious pursuit.<sup>89</sup>

However, Forsius' connections also went straight up to the ducal court, where his old acquaintance Olof Bureus had been Duke Johan's physician since 1612. Forsius had dedicated his almanac for 1610 to the duke and in 1616 he explicitly addressed the ducal couple as "my graceful patrons". Recalling an audience "at Stegeborg, Your Princely House", he also claimed that the Duke had "advised and exhorted me" to complete and publish his *Great Prognostication* for 1617.<sup>90</sup>

Once again, this remark should primarily be regarded in the light of its rhetoric function which substantiated Forsius' claims of scholarly authority. However, with its twenty-eight pages in quarto and with the representative portrait of the author, this prognostication is probably the most lavished issue he had published – exceedingly so given that he had recently been deprived of his annual income. Moreover, the *Great prognostication* was only the first in a series of three booklets with more extensive forecasts of the coming years. Forsius must have had some generous financiers, and Duke Johan is the most likely candidate. Apparently the duke's confirmed fear of witchcraft, and his harsh legislation against sorcery did not involve a hardened attitude toward astrological practice.

Outside the duchy, Forsius also tended to his connections. A preserved letter to Count Abraham Brahe (1569–1630), official and royal councillor, reveals a familiar tone and a common interest in the starry arts. Forsius expressed his gratitude for an item (or perhaps a sum of money) he had received, promising that "I will strive to do all I can to merit this com-

89 Sigfridus Aronus Forsius, "Decastichon" in Heinrich Bünting, *Harmonia evangelistarum: Thet är: Een ganska skön och endrechtigh the fyra helga ewangelisters tilsammanstämmelse, vthi hwilken är ... Jesu Christi hela lefwernes historia ... vthaff tyske tungomålet förswenskat af Hans Påwelsson Lou, borgare i then furstlige stadh Norköping.*, printed by Ignatius Meurer, Stockholm 1617 fol. 6v; "Dvm tractant alij spumantia pocula Bacchi, Temporis & fallunt taedia longa jocus,/Et dubiis certant talis, multi quoq. Chartis, Aut cursu celeri praemia larga petunt,/Biblia tu laetus pervolvis sacra, JOHANNES, Sic studio fallis taedia longa pio"; cf. the attached letter from Claudius Bothvidi to Hans Påvelsson, his "right minded good friend" fol. 10r–v.

90 Forsius, *Then stora Prognostica til thet Åår Christi MDCXVII*. sig. A4v; "Hwij iagh nu til thetta åhret thenne Prognostica förfärdigat och aff Trycket haffuer vthgå låtit/ är orsaken thenne/ at E.F.N. senest på Ståkeborg sitt Furstlige Huus/ migh ther til rådde och förmaante."; indeed this is the first and only time Forsius mentioned someone as being the more or less direct orderer of his prognostic work; cf. Forsius, *Almanah – Een Liten Prognostica Til thet Ååret Christi/ M DC X*. fol 1v; "Then Högborne Furste och Herre/ Her Johan/ Swerikes Arffurste/ Hertig til Östergöthland: Sin Nådige Furste och Herre/ dedicerer och tilskrifwer j al vnderdåniga ödmuikt thenna Almanach och Prognostica."

pliance". Yet since the count "eagerly covets my Roja" – an astronomical commentary Forsius had acquired in Reval – "I will bestow the same to Your Highness".<sup>91</sup> Thus the reciprocity of the relationship was confirmed by the exchange of gifts.

In time, Forsius would also become a client of Axel Oxenstierna. Some-time during his incumbency in Stockholm he had written to the chancellor, upset of the sacrilege of "a holy place" that also happened to be his personal lodgings. Thus he complained that "all cells and dwellings of the Cloister", in defiance of the king's decree, had been pillaged by unknown men, and that "the most inferior dregs" had settled there.<sup>92</sup> This was a plain complaint, and nothing in the letter suggests that there was any kind of relationship between the two men.

However, in September 1616 he addressed Oxenstierna as his "most honoured patron" in a report, written while he was stationed with the army in Narva during the Swedish intervention in the Russian imbroglio.<sup>93</sup>

Primarily Forsius functioned as army chaplain; later he received payment for the "readings" or services he had officiated.<sup>94</sup> However in his report, it

91 Forsius, "Illustri et Magnifico D. D. Abrahamo Brahe Comiti de Wisingzburg, Lib. Baroni ad Ridboholm et Lindholm &c.", printed in Pipping, *Historiska bidrag* I p. 89; "Pro donario mihi misso humilimas ago gratias, et omni quo possim obsequio demereri studebo. Cum cupiat Cels. V. Rojam meum possidere, eundem Cels. Vae donabo." The letter is dated "Id. 7 Novembris", but the year is not mentioned – Pipping suggests that it was written around 1610, when Forsius was leaving Uppsala; the donated book was in any case Johannes de Rojas, *Commentarium in Astrolabium, quod Planisphaerium vocant*, Paris 1551: the copy has been preserved with a hand written note of Forsius, revealing that he had acquired the book in Reval in 1600; Arne Losman, "En tåmmelig myckenhet sköna böcker". Några anteckningar från brahe-wrangelska delen av Skoklosters bibliotek", *Biblis* 1967 pp. 132–135; Kiiskinen p. 127; see also Forsius, *Prognosticon Astro-Theologicum. Til thet Vndersamma Förändringsååret M DC XX. sig. Arv*, with a dedication to Abraham Brahe and his brother Magnus (1564–1633).

92 Forsius, "Illustris, generose et prudentissime D. Cancellarie", published in Johan E. Waaranen, *Samling af urkunder rörande Finlands historia D. 5: Handlingar upplysande Finlands historia under Gustaf II Adolfs tid* vol. II 1615–1618, Helsingfors 1878 p. 57; "Videns n. abominationem desolationis in loco sancto ... Diripuerunt n. qui nescio, contra S. R:ae M:tis ... omnes Monasterij cellas et domicilia et homines infimae fecis in eas vicissem constituerunt".

93 Forsius, "Magnifico et vera nobilitate stemmatis ac virtutis jllustri D:no, D. Axelio Oxenstiernae", Narva 8 September 1616, published in Waaranen pp. 179–181; see also the dedication, in Forsius, *Almanah Til thet Åår Christi MDCXVII – Prognostica Til thet Åår Christi M DC XVII*, printed by Ignatius Meurer, Stockholm 1616 sig. Brv; "Magnifico & vera nobilitate generosiss. D. Dn. Axillo Oxenstiernae, Baroni ad Fijholm & Tydoen, Regni Sueciae Senatori ampliss. & Cancellario summo. Domino suo Mecaenati obseruanter colendo, S. Dedicat Author".

94 Receipt signed Novgorod 13 February 1617, KB, Autografsamlingen; "M: Sighfredz

becomes clear that the chancellor also used him for intelligence services. Thus Forsius set out to survey and describe the geographical circumstances of areas occupied by the Swedish army, and he promised to correct mistakes made by others "due to inconstant experience and ignorance in Maths":

Therefore, as I was permitted to come here to Russia, I have not to this point neglected the observations. Not only have I examined the Rivers, but also their brooklets and forks, small islands and fords; I have sketched drawings of Cities, Fortifications and Monasteries; I explored with indefatigable eagerness the nature of the land (for it is here variegated and remarkable), the fertility of the soil, the vegetation that prosper in the land, so that I hope I have not spent the time here entirely in vain. As soon as I turn to the region of Novgorod, I shall in a similar way diligently examine what may be bestowed from there, if only the enemy will allow it.<sup>95</sup>

For further information on "What business is here among us", Forsius referred to the despatches of his commanders and the regular couriers. He also informed the chancellor that on "the 7 September a certain monstrous goat was born here in Narva, whose depiction and description I send with the courier, so that more people may see it."<sup>96</sup>

It seems as if Forsius, after his resignation from the incumbency in the Cloister still had powerful and influential patrons on which to depend, not only for his daily bread and butter, but to support his authority as a scholar. Apparently his services were still coveted even in the highest circles: Duke Johan seems to have consulted him concerning the signs that had appeared

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Quittens lydher om – 84 Dr som han hafuer bekomit j 12 Läsningar"; this document has kindly been pointed out to me by Arno Forsius.

95 Forsius, "Magnifico et vera nobilitate", cit. p. 180; "ob incertam experientiam et Matheseos inscitiam ... Jdcirco quo hic in Russia venire mihi licuit, hactenus observationes non intemisi. Non solum fluvius, sed horum quoque rivulos et scissuras, insululas et vada consideravi: Civitatum Castellorum et Monasteriorum Effigies delineavi: Quae sit terrae natura (varia n. hic est et mira), quae soli fertilitas, quae proveniant terrae nascentia, indefesso studio explorabam, ut sperem omnino frustra me hic non trivisse tempus, Quamprimum ad Novogorodensem tractum me vertam, et ibi similiter quantum datur, modo per hostem liceat, diligenter expiscabo." The assignment of Forsius coincided with peace negotiations with the new Romanov regime in Moscow, and as has been pointed out by Michael Roberts, the Swedish government would try to make the most of the temporary weakness of Russian power in the region. Virtually any kind of intelligence would therefore be regarded as useful for the Swedish interests; Roberts, *Gustavus Adolphus* pp. 85–91.

96 Forsius, "Magnifico et vera nobilitate", cit. p. 181; "Quae hic apud nos sunt gesta ... die 7 Septemb. monstrosus [sic] quidam partus hic Narvae sit aeditus, quem depictum et descriptum, ut plures videant, cum tabellario mitto."

before the death of his father, King Johan III.<sup>97</sup> Moreover, his patronage of Forsius' work served as a manifestation and enhancement of his princely status. And as becomes clear from the report to Axel Oxenstierna, Forsius' competence as astronomer and mathematician would also serve the ends of the military state. For a modern reader it is easy to see the issues reported – the charting of occupied territory and the birth of a monstrous goat – as completely separate from each other. However, Forsius regarded his expertise concerning ominous signs as a significant part of his assignment, and it was an issue that would not be neglected by the authorities. A few years later the state withdrew its previous support from Forsius, precisely on account of a statement on portents and prophecies in his *Great Prognostication* for 1619.

### The Trial of Uppsala 1619

Set in the narrative of astrology in Sweden, and in the narrative of his own career, the trial of Forsius before the Uppsala chapter in 1619 appears as a dividing line. For the first time we seem to have a formal and unequivocal verdict which separates astrology from astronomy and from true Christian philosophy. At the same time it deprived Forsius of his scholarly authority and placed him among quacks and charlatans.

But a closer look shows that the origin of the trial had virtually nothing to do with astrology. In his *Great Prognostication*, Forsius had referred to the visions and prophetic statements of an – according to the worldly authorities – “insubordinate and fanciful peasant who with lies and trickery has run around the realm and fascinated the Subjects with several delusions, to the greatest prejudice of the catholic Christian Religion”.<sup>98</sup>

Clearly the peasant in question – Jon Olofsson or Djäkne Jon as he was called – had instigated some commotion. He had roamed the countryside for some time, preaching repentance under no other pretensions than of being ‘God’s wonderman’ and a prophet in the End Time. Jon had even sent a manuscript to the king, containing a collection of (as far as can be judged from contemporary reports) rather confused prophecies and reve-

97 Quotation from the correspondence between Duke Johan and Elaus Terserus (1554–1617), reported by Johan Nordström; UUB hs Johan Nordström okat. 495 g:1.

98 Gustavus Adolphus to Archbishop Petrus Kenicius, Stockholm 8 May 1619, RA, RR vol. 132, cit. fol. 143r–v; “i dedh att han vthi närwarandes åhrs *prognostico in calce operis* en vporisk och phantastikz bonde, hwilken medh lögn och fijnantzerij i Rijket haar omkring lupitt, och vndersäterne medh åtskillige *praestigiis fascinerat* den allmenne-lige Christelige *Religionen* till altsom största *praeiuditz*”. Sandblad suggests that Jon’s nickname ‘djäkne’ may have referred to his vagrant character, as he probably roamed the country like the schoolboys in their pilgrimage for alms during the vacations; cf. Sandblad, *De eskatologiska föreställningarna* p. 272 n. 4.

lations. Consequently he had been arrested in the autumn of 1618. He was examined by clerical authorities at least twice to determine the nature of his revelations, what he had preached and with what authority.<sup>99</sup>

Thus it was hardly surprising that Forsius' quotations did not pass unnoticed. On 6 January 1619 he was summoned to the royal court in order to explain "with what reason he has inserted the Djäkne Jon for a Prophet in his Great Prognostication".<sup>100</sup> After the first interrogations, the king had Forsius confined for a couple of days "so that he may recognize his error, and not proceed further in this madness and (which is to be feared) instigate some more disturbances." However in the beginning of May, Forsius was remitted to the archbishop and diocese chapter of Uppsala for further examination since he "on account of his office [as a priest] is subjected to clerical jurisdiction".<sup>101</sup>

When Forsius appeared in Uppsala with the king's letter in his hand, his sanction of a self-acclaimed prophet would remain a main charge. However, the king had also emphasized that whereas Forsius "in many previous cases, contrary to the state and decency of his office, has allowed himself to appear restless, unruly and irresponsible", he should also reply to charges concerning what he "time and again with great aggravation" had accomplished "in chiromancy and other superstitious actions, which neither are founded in the Holy Scriptures, nor in the secular Philosophy, and diametrically oppose his office".<sup>102</sup> However, although the king did not explicitly mention

99 Interrogations with Jon Olofsson were held by Rudbeckius during a meeting with the bishops in Linköping, January 1619; Johannes Rudbeckius, "Itt kort extract aff then book, som then bonden Jon Oluffson hafuer skriffuit ifrån Michaelis Dagh til jul A. 1618", UUB K 23; see also Lindroth, *Paracelsismen i Sverige* p. 152; further examinations were held in Västerås towards the end of the year, see the minutes from the chapter of Västerås 22 Dec. 1619, printed in B. Rudolf Hall, "Kyrkliga och kulturella interiörer från storhetstidens uppryckningsarbete: Utdrag ur Joh. Rudbeckii Domkapitels- och visitationsprotokoller 1619–1628", KhÅ 1915 pp. 352–353; Jon seems to have been kept in custody in Västerås, at least until August 1623, cf. B. Rudolf Hall, "Kyrkliga och kulturella interiörer från storhetstidens uppryckningsarbete: Utdrag ur Joh. Rudbeckii Domkapitels- och visitationsprotokoller 1619–1628 II", KhÅ 1916 p. 250.

100 Entry in RA, RR vol. 132 fol. 4r, 6 January 1619; "Till M. Sigfridh, att han skall begifua sigh till H.K.M:tt och bewijsa medh hwad skääl han den Diekne Joen han i sin store *Prognostico* före en Prophetam infördt hafuer".

101 Gustavus Adolphus to Petrus Kenicius 8 May 1619, RA, RR vol. 132, cit. fol. 143v–144r; "...vppå dedh han sin *Culpam* må *agnoscere* och icke wijdere vthi Galenskapen fordt fahra och (hwilket befruchtendes) någon förne oroligheet anstifte ... Men efter dedh att han *ratione officij ecclesiastica iurisdictioni* är *subiectus* och denne saken *proprie specteter* till *forum consistoriale* ... edert sampt de andre *Consistorials* Personers *Judicio* till att derom *inquirere* och ransaka, och sedan en entlig *decisivam* derpå gifwe."

102 Ibid; "... såsom Sigfridus Aronus, vthi många fall tilförende, emot sins Embetetz *Stat*

astrology in his letter, it was this issue that was put in the main focus of the following inquiry.

## A Formal Rejection

The arguments of the capitulars were based on sources of venerable age. The normative authority of the Scriptures was prominent, but the capitulars also made a point of astrology being rejected by the classical philosophers, Roman law and the tradition of the Church Fathers.<sup>103</sup>

In the quotations used in support of their argument – which take up more than half of the text – the capitulars depended on the systematic compilations of authoritative statements on the astronomical sciences in *Astrologia, chronographia et astromanteia* by the German humanist Otto Casmann (1562–1607), first printed in 1599. The same dependence on Casmann (revealed in verbatim quotations), can also be seen in Martinus Stenius' dissertation from 1611. This is not coincidental: Stenius, like all the professors, had a permanent seat in the chapter, and it is quite likely that it was he who had been entrusted with the task of outlining the arguments.<sup>104</sup>

Although philosophical and methodological objections were discussed in the verdict, the main argument could be distilled down to the point that astrology was idolatry and an offence against the first commandment of the Law of God. Resolutions from ecumenical councils were cited to prove that the act of putting your trust in the 'mathematicians' had been openly declared anathema by the early Church. Through quotations from the third book of Lactantius' (c. 240–320) *Divinae institutiones*, the capitulars showed how this early Christian scholar had called astrology an invention of the devil, comparing it with soothsaying, augury "and that which is called oracular sayings, and necromancy, and magic art".<sup>105</sup> According to a quotation

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och decentz sig orolig, bullersam och lättferdig hafuer finna låthet: Så hafwer han i synnerheet nu sådan sins oroligheetz, bullersamheetz och Lättfärdigheetz ett Klart *Specimen* teedt och påskina låtthet ... Derföre sende wij bete Sigfridum eder tilhanda, *committerandes* och hemstellandes både berörde sak, såsom och dedh han sigh *in chiromanticis* och andre supersticiosiske handlingar, Hwilke hwarken i den helge schrifft, eller den werldzlige *Philosophia* någon grundh hafwe, och hans Embetedh *e diametro repugnere*, tijdt och ofta med stor förägelse, bruka later".

103 "Upsala Capitels Dom öfver D. Sigfrido Arono Forsio" pp. 129–137.

104 Stenius' dependence on Casmann has been demonstrated by Lekeby, "Introduktion" pp. 44–50; Kiiskinen p. 272. For the intertwining between the chapter and the university consistory before 1624, see Annerstedt, *Uppsala universitets historia I* p. 106; cf. Montgomery, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria* 4 p. 42.

105 "Upsala Capitels Dom öfver D. Sigfrido Arono Forsio" pp. 132–133; "Diabolorum inventa sunt Astrologia et Auruspicia et Auguratio et ipsa quae dicuntur Oracula et

from the second book of Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*, the art of the 'genethliaci' induced ignorant people to worship creation instead of their Creator and turning them into miserable slaves of the planets. While excluding the well-known paradox of the twins, the chapter also cited Augustine's condemnation of the belief that one could "predict the character, conduct or occurrences of newborns" from astrological observations. According to Augustine this was a "great deception and great folly", revealing astrology as a delusion for which sake "pitiable people are being consulted by those who are even more pitiable". Consequently these beliefs, founded as they were on signs of human presumption, had to be regarded "among those pacts and designs that have been made with demons."<sup>106</sup>

As a prime authority on issues concerning knowledge and faith, the chapter thus stated that a sharp distinction should be made between *Astronomia* and *Astrologia*. The art of calculating and predicting the revolutions of the spheres was qualitatively separated from the art of interpreting the aspects of the celestial bodies, in order to gain knowledge of things being and things coming. Still this distinction was not absolute. To be sure, in contrast to astronomy which was faultless in its calculations, the capitulars maintained that astrology had no fixed principles as it was founded merely on conjectures. However, although these conjectures had to be used with discernment and care, they could not be rejected a priori:

Thus, although there is something herein, that could very well be tolerated, as when one from new or full moon, of eclipses or the Aspects of the great Planets generally present some guesses or plausible conjectures, on changes in the weather, whereof some shifts in compound bodies occur. However, since these Aspects are often prevented by particular causes, and as experience indicates that this also often fails, one cannot determine anything certain hereof.<sup>107</sup>

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Necromantia et Ars Magica..."

106 Augustine *De doctrina christiana* II:20–22; cited in "Upsala Capitels Dom öfver D. Sigfrido Arono Forsio" p. 133; "Sed ex ea notatione vel nascentium mores, actus, eventa praedicere, magnus error et magna dementia est ... de quo isti miseri a miserioribus consuluntur. Quare istae quoque opiniones quibusdam rerum signis human praesumptione institutis ad eadem illa quasi quaedam cum daemonibus pacta et conata referenda sunt."

107 "Upsala Capitels Dom öfver D. Sigfrido Arono Forsio" p. 130; "Så ändock herutinnan något finnes, som väl vore till att lijda, såsom är, när man af nij eller fullmåne, af förmörkelser eller de store Planeters Aspecter föregifver någre gissningar eller *probabiles conjecturas universaliter*, om väderlekens förändringar, hvaraf sig under tiden orsaka någre omskiftningar in *corporibus mixtis*. Dock efter desse Aspecter ofta varda förhindrade aff *particularibus causis*, och förfarenheten gifver tillkänna, att ock thetta ofta fehler, kan man icke heller här af något visst besluta."



In contrast, the astrologers' habit of predicting particular events, such as the fortunes of individuals and religious and political change, was uncertain, deceptive and even prejudicial to body and soul:

For with such prediction, *Fatum Stoicum* is established, God's providence depreciated, and so even the free will of Men; the evil ones be strengthened in their evilness, assuredness and mischief, and [kept] in such an opinion, that all such things are set before them and occurring through the influence of Nature. Furthermore such prediction deprives God from his honour, who is solely aware of such things to come; it also turns Man from God his Creator, gives the Devil opportunity of multifarious temptations, and is a cause of superstition, of despair and much other evil. Wherefore this *Astrologia Judiciaria* is forbidden according to God's word, rejected by *Orthodoxa Antiquitate et purioribus reformatis Ecclesiis*, so even repudiated by *Sanioribus Ethnicis*.<sup>108</sup>

Thus the capitulars rejected what they designated 'astrologia judiciaria' or judicial astrology as a forbidden, gentile practice with deficient methodology. With a combination of theological and philosophical arguments they maintained that their verdict was in accordance with the Bible, with statements of "wiser pagans" and the "orthodox ancients" – which referred to the legacy of the Apostles and the Church Fathers. The concord with Evangelical communions abroad was also emphasized through the reference to the "more pure reformed churches". However, for this last statement no particular authority was quoted – not even Luther.

But what they rejected was not primarily a certain kind of astrology, but a way of handling astrological knowledge. Apart from all other 'superstitious' deeds and irresponsible behaviour that he was accused of, Forsius was not just declared guilty of pursuing "Astrologia Judiciaria or this Chaldean

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108 "Upsala Capitels Dom öfver D. Sigfrido Arono Forsio" pp. 129–131, cit. p. 131; "Ty med sådan spådom varder stadfast *Fatum Stoicum*, Guds försyn förringat så och Meniskiones fria vilja; the onda blifva styrckte i sin ondsko, säkerhet och odygder, och i sådana mening att thetta alt är them förelagt och af Naturens värkan påkommit. Tager och sådann spådom Gud sin ähra ifrån, hvilken allena kunnogt är om sådana tillkommande ting, vänder och Människian ifrån Gud sin Skapare, gifver Djefvulen tillfälle till mångahanda frestelse och är en orsak till vidskepelse, till förtvifvan och mycket annat ondt. Hvarföre är denna *Astrologia Judiciaria* förbuden i Guds ord, ogillat af *Orthodoxa Antiquitate et purioribus reformatis Ecclesiis*, så och förkastad af *Sanioribus Ethnicis*."; *Fatum stoicum*, Stoic destiny, i.e., here a pejorative reference to what was apprehended as the fatalism of 'Stoic' philosophy; *Orthodoxa Antiquitas*: the orthodox antiquity, which is probably understood as the legacy of the Apostles and the Church Fathers in the early Church; *purior reformatae Ecclesiae*: the more pure reformed churches; *saniores ethnici*: verbatim *the wiser pagans*, i.e., the Greek and Roman philosophers.

art” but of pursuing astrology further than could be accepted.<sup>109</sup> Moreover, he had not heeded reprimands of his superiors, and the pleas he had written in his defence had not convinced his judges. Therefore it was recommended to the worldly authorities that he should be prohibited from using “such illicit *praedictionibus* and *Prognosticationibus*”, and that he should not be allowed into ministry again, “until he with a public confession of sins, issued in print condemn and renounce such unbearable *Superstitiones* and with right-minded penance make amends to those he has annoyed.”<sup>110</sup>

## Parallel Arguments

In their verdict, the capitulars never denied what had also been emphasized in Stenius’ dissertation – that “these celestial bodies do conduct somewhat in the elementary region and in these lower bodies”. In fact their conceptions of the natural influence of the stars appeared largely compatible with those stressed by most astrologers.<sup>111</sup> The verdict was in other words not an indication that a new ‘paradigm’ was about to replace an older one in the view of astrology. The ambition to discern between allowable and illicit practices of astrology had been a recurrent theme since late Antiquity. Throughout the renaissance, astrologers and scholars had attempted to reform astrological practice in order to cleanse the market from what they regarded as inadequate and degraded works written by quacks and dilettantes. Otto Casmann, on which both Stenius and the Uppsala chapter had based much of their argumentation, was a scholar with a clear ambition, conscientiously to weigh the arguments on the issue, pro et contra. In his works, Casmann actually maintained an apologetic approach towards astrological divination or *astromanteia* as he designated it.<sup>112</sup>

Thus criticism and apology of astrology were housed under the same discursive roof. In the *Great Prognostication* for 1618, Forsius described how members of the clergy had begun to openly proclaim astrology’s illicit character from the pulpits. Although he maintained that their arguments

109 Cit. *ibid* p. 136; “Astrologia Judiciaria sive ars illa Chaldaica”.

110 Cit. *ibid* p. 137; “...warder förbuditt att bruka sådana oloffliga *praedictionibus* och *Prognosticationibus* ... icke warder tillstadd att bruka Prestembetet eller någhon deel theraf, intill thess han med en oppenbar schriffth af trycket utgången fördömmet och förkastar sådane oljdelige *Superstitiones* och med en rättsinnig bättring gör dem fyllest, them han förargat hafver.”

111 Stenius, *Disputatio de incertitudine et vanitate praedictionum astrologicarum*, thesis 5; “Deinde corpora haec caelestia agere aliquid in elementarem regionem atq; in haec corpora inferiora non negamus”.

112 Some of the critical arguments presented by Casmann were indeed accentuated, both in the dissertation of 1611 and in the verdict of 1619; see Lekeby, “Introduktion” p. 48.

were founded on a careful selection from the Scriptures, where they only chose quotations “through which they seem themselves able to condemn the noble and liberal Art”, he agreed on the fundamental condition of the critics: if astrology was inconsistent with the Scriptures, it would be right to reject it.<sup>113</sup> Thus Forsius argued that when augurs and soothsayers were condemned in the Scriptures, this did not concern astrology:

... but the abuse of the Art among the superstitious Jewish people, who with the gentiles living around them have worshipped the Stars of the Heavens, and followed their influence rather than God, for which St. Stephen reproach the Jews, Acts 7. And there the aforementioned Christian Martyr also certifies, that Moses, being a man of God, was learned in all wisdom of the Egyptians, of which *Astronomia* among them was the most dignified, as is made clear from all histories.<sup>114</sup>

In other words, as Moses himself practiced the wisdom of the Egyptians it could not be rejected as originally gentile or illicit. Forsius confirmed this through a statement by “Josephus the Jew in his Antiquities”, claiming that “Seth [the son of Adam] has recorded the Celestial Art on pillars of stone, and Abraham has taught her to the Egyptians, together with the Art of Calculation, who serve her.”<sup>115</sup>

Obviously Forsius was not inclined to separate astrology from astronomy as the chapter had done in their verdict. This may be seen as an indication of different approaches to the issue. Yet it remains clear that the capitulars had not singled out astrological conjectures as such from the liberal arts. They were still acceptable up to a certain limit. Thus Forsius and his judges agreed that astrology could not be rejected outright, but only to the point where it was ‘superstitiously’ abused. The main issue was to determine when

113 Forsius, *Then stora Prognostica* ... M. DC. XVIII sig. A2v: “Skola the i en almänneligh samqwämd göra en Predikan/ så vthwälia the sigh then Material/ igenom hwilken the synas sigh kunna fördöma then ädle och frije Kånsten.”

114 Ibid. sig. A3r: “Thetta alt til beslwt swarar iagh medh fåå ord til theas objection aff Moysen och Propheterna/ at thet the tala om Teknetydhare/ fördömma the icke ther medh Kånsten/ vthan Kånstennes missbruuk hoos thet wijskepeligha Judafolcket/ som medh the omliggande Hedhningar hafwa dyrkat Himmelen Stiernor/ och mera hållit sigh til theas wärckande än til Gudh/ thet S. Stephanus förbrår Judarna/ Actor. 7. Och ther sammastädes betyghar förbenämde Christi Martyr/ at Moyses then Gudsmannen hafwer warit lärd i all the Egyptiers wijsheet/ ibland huilken *Astronomia* hoos them war then förnämligeste/ såsom thet aff alle historier klart är.”

115 Ibid. sig. A3r; “Sågher ock Josephus then Juden i sine Antiquitetet/ at Seth hafwer Himmelskånsten i Stenpelare vpptecknat/ och Abraham henne medh Räknekånsten/ som henne tienar/ lärddt the Egyptier.”; cf. Acts 7 v. 22, 42–43; Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, Books I–IV, Loeb classical library, Heinemann London/ Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA 1961 p. 33; cf. Capp p. 133.

this point was overstepped, and why it was judged that Forsius had done so through his predictions.

## The Heresies of Forsius

Earlier studies on the authorship of Forsius have emphasized that the 'orthodox' view on astrology maintained by the capitulars was in no way unproblematic or absolute. Therefore it could not be used as a single explanation why Forsius' would become a dissident. Thus Henrik Sandblad described how Forsius' dealings with mysticism, Kabbalah, spiritualism and radical apocalypticism would eventually become his misfortune. Previously incorporated in late medieval and Renaissance intellectual life, Sandblad argued that the heterodox character of these traditions and practices was primarily crystallized in the wake of the Reformation and the rise of orthodoxy in the Lutheran world. In his astrological prognostications, Forsius gave voice to a "heterodox conception of Nature"; his *Physica* contained several "oppositional, Paracelsian modes of thought, that still after the death of Forsius would make the orthodox zeal prevent the printing of the work".<sup>116</sup>

Hereby Sandblad tried to relate Forsius' works to the legacy of the Swiss physician and natural philosopher Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim – commonly known as Paracelsus (1493–1541). In Sweden, the writings and pseudo writings of Paracelsus became "a source of continuous anxiety among the predominant orthodoxy", which resulted in "repeated interferences of its clerical authority".<sup>117</sup> Sandblad also argued that in later prognostications, published after the 1619 trial, Forsius seemed to adopt elements from "the current mystic-apocalyptic literature" as he developed "a spiritualizing astrological speculation" in the tradition of the Lutheran clergyman, mystic and spiritualist Valentin Weigel (1533–1588), and of the manifestoes published in the 1610s, ascribed to the mystic fraternity of the Rosicrucians.<sup>118</sup>

116 Sandblad, *De eskatologiska föreställningarna* pp. 265–266; "[*Physica*] ansluter sig i mycket till den traditionella skolfilosofien men hävdar på åtskilliga punkter oppositionella, paracelsistiska tankegångar, som ännu efter Forsius' död kommo det ortodoxa nitet att hindra arbetets tryckning ... [Forsius prognostika] visa alltfört hans dragning till en heterodox naturuppfattning".

117 Ibid. p. 259: "I Sverige kommer [Paracelsismen] tydligt till synes vid det nya seklets början och blir sedan under det följande tidevarvet en källa till standing oro hos den härskande ortodoxien och föranleder upprepade ingrepp av dess kyrkliga myndighet."

118 Ibid. p. 269; "[Forsius tankegångar] synas väsentligen återgå på den aktuella mystisk-apokalyptiska litteraturen: de tillhöra föreställningskretsen kring Weigel och rosenkreutzarnas mystiska brödraskap, med dess anknytning till den medeltida joachitiska historieteologin – Faderns, Sonens och Andens åldrar – i förening med en spiritualiserande astrologisk spekulation."

Despite the fact that the 1619 trial had focused on the practice of astrology, Sandblad regarded this as an issue of subordinate significance in Forsius' conflict with the authorities. It was his philosophical and religious preferences that were problematic. A similar standpoint was formulated by Sten Lindroth, who concluded a short biographical essay on Forsius writing: "During a time of increasing orthodox intolerance in religious and philosophical issues ... he joined the discontented, who walked their own ways in order to find an answer to the questions of the existence in the apocalyptical dreams and in the Paracelsian view of nature."<sup>119</sup>

There are elements in Forsius' authorship that would have been problematic, if the conflict between 'orthodox' and 'heterodox' standpoints was as unambiguous as is generally suggested. As noted by Terhi Kiiskinen, Forsius was inspired by Stoic philosophy when he developed conceptions of a world soul – a conception that in some passages of *Physica* approached pantheism.<sup>120</sup> Here and there in Forsius' forecasts, there are also conspicuous references to planetary angels or intelligences. In the prognostication for 1609 he states that God has given Saturn's "ravaging Angel Caphiel or Zaphchiel" the birch of his wrath, while "Mars will rampage and pound; strike and plague through his angel Camael". Anael, the angel of Venus, will be benevolent to venereal people and "The good Gabriel" will be mild "to his Lunarian, and give them luck and prosperity."<sup>121</sup> If not interpreted as merely symbolical statements like these might have been taken as instances of idolatry, or as invocations of what in the worst case could be regarded as demonic spirits or "spiritual wickedness in high places" in the words of the Apostle.<sup>122</sup>

On the other hand, such speculations had appeared in other works wit-

119 Lindroth, "Forsius" p. 331: "Under en tid av tilltagande ortodox ofördragsamhet i religiösa och filosofiska frågor sällade han sig till de missnöjda, som gick sina egna vägar för att i de apokalyptiska drömmarna och den paracelsistiska naturåskådningen finna ett svar på tillvarons gåtor."

120 Kiiskinen pp. 230–234.

121 Sigfridus Aronus Forsius, *Prognostica Til thet åhret efter Christi Näderijka Födelse. M DC IX.*, printed by Anund Olufsson, Stockholm [1608] sig. A2v–A3r; sig "Mars wil rasa och bulta/ slå och plågha genom sin Engel Camael: Månge förskräckelighe tijdhender/ medh hwar mans fruchtan/ skola sigh höra latha/ skola och många Land få see sine fiender medh förskräckelse/ oc många på begynte ärender skola falla och bliffua om intet/ och the resande til siöosz skola stå j stoor fahra/ igenom then förhåriande Engelen Caphiel/ eller Zaphchiel/ som Gudh haffuer rijset j händer fått at straffa somlighe Land/ doch är han sine egne Saturnineske godh/ och Anael sine Veneriske/ och hjælper them tilfaste äghor: Men twärt emoot the arme Mercurialister bliffua plåghade/ och theres äghor warda confiscerede: Then godhe Gabriel är sine Lunariske godh och blijdh/ och giffuer them lycko/ och framgång."

122 Ephesians 6:12.

hout any kind of reaction from the clergy. In *Calendarium duplex*, Georgius Olai had emphasized the notion of how the seven Archangels corresponded to and ruled the seven ages of the world. Thus the last age of the world was ruled by Orphiel, which in Georgius Olai's version was the angelical intelligence of Saturn, and would come to an end during the reign of Emperor Rudolph II.<sup>123</sup>

However, Forsius also inserted other dubious references and statements in his first plea to the chapter. For instance he designated Valentin Weigel to be the "best of Theologians", while he heedlessly referred to the "kabbalists of the more secret philosophy" as unquestionable authorities of true learning.<sup>124</sup> Yet in context of his argument, these references were quite harmless: primarily they were used as authoritative support for the Neoplatonic conception of the firmament as the form and essence of the world. With Girolamo Cardano as intermediary, Forsius combined this conception (which was hardly controversial in itself) with theories firmly rooted among generally accepted authorities like Aristotle and Ptolemy. More than a heretic or philosophical iconoclast, Forsius thus appeared as an intellectual eclectic.

What could be regarded as more problematic was that Forsius with an ironical touch questioned and criticised the tendency of theologians to claim authority of divine revelation over philosophy, instead of heeding both as sources of the knowledge of God and the Creation. In sarcastic terms he maintained that all true philosophy was confirmed "Through reasoning and experience", whereas "only the Holy Theology is committed to divine authority and spurn reasonings, and hereby this great Elephant is forced to swim."<sup>125</sup> Forsius would also claim that, "endorsed by truth", he could refute

123 The notion of the Archangels as the intelligences of the planets was derived from Neoplatonic theories of how the celestial spheres were steered by intrinsic intelligences, emanating from the divine Reason. In his discussion on the subject, Georgius Olai referred to the former municipal physician of Riga, Zacharias Stopius – yet without mentioning any particular work – and to Cornelius Agrippa's *De occulta philosophia*; *Calendarium duplex* sig. Cc4v; Sandblad, *De eskatologiska föreställningarna* pp. 166–167; on Stopius, see Isidorus Brennohn, *Die Aerzte Livlands von den ältesten Zeiten bis zur Gegenwart: ein biographisches Lexikon nebst einer historischen Einleitung über das Medizinalwesen Livlands*, Mitau 1905 pp. 384–385.

124 Sigfridus Aronus Forsius, "Scriptum apologeticum: Professoris Physices Sigfridi Aroni Forsii förklaring in för Consistorium Theologicum", copy in UUB K 28 & UUB Palmsk. 336; here I follow the transcript, printed in Pipping, *Historiska bidrag* I pp. 115–129.

125 Forsius, "Scriptum apologeticum" p. 116; "Rationibus enim et experientia tota firmatur Philosophia, sola Sacra Theologia divina commendatur autoritate, rationes respuat; et in hac grandis ille Elephas natare cogitur."

the arguments of those who rejected astrology as heresy. With quotations from Ptolemy and Cardano he showed that the main principle of astrology – that the passive, elementary matter was activated by the ether – was a basic assumption in virtually all other liberal arts. The one who rejected astrology had to reject, not only chiromancy and physiognomy, but all meteorology, all anthropology – which in this context signified knowledge of the physical nature of man – as well as all knowledge of “nobilis illa Chimia” – this noble art of alchemy.<sup>126</sup>

It is easy to imagine how Forsius’ self-confident statements and stubborn approach stirred up agitated controversies with his judges. However, in their verdict the capitulars appear quite unwilling to confront him. Although it is asserted that his pleas had been studied in good order, they are hardly referred to in the verdict. If Forsius’ ‘heretical’ standpoints, his ‘Paracelsism’ or his attack against the orthodox theologians had been a significant problem for his judges, it is not indicated in their arguments.<sup>127</sup>

As for Forsius’ dealings with chiromancy, he seems to have realised the problematic character of the issue himself. In his second plea he admitted that he had “read the rules and interpretations of highly learned Men on signatures of all lines in the hands”, but had hardly practiced the art. Yet he recalled one occasion

... when the maidens and servant girls of Her Majesty the Queen visited me when I was imprisoned in Örebro, and of carefulness sent me food and money and asked of me that I would have a look at their hands, which I then did, as far as I could remember from what I had read before in my youth...<sup>128</sup>

126 Forsius, “Scriptum apologeticum” p. 115, cit. p. 116; “Hac ratione recte considerata natura elementorum, melius innotescet tota physica scientia, et quae ab ea inventae sunt artes, ut est, Astrologia, Meteorologia, Anthropologia, Physiognomia, Chiromantia et nobilis illa Chimia. Cum vero Astrologia praesertim Physiognomia et Chiromantia a Theologis quibusdam impugnetur, mihiq. harum professio tamquam haeresis objiciatur, rationes eorum quibus Certitudo fulciatur in medium ponam.” Here “meteorology” (Greek *μετέωρα* – “rising” or “hovering”), refers to phenomena in the air that, in accordance with Aristotelian theory were assumed to emerge from various, moist and arid expulsions from the earth; thus classical meteorology was not only engaged in what today would be called atmospheric phenomena, but with everything that could be categorized as ‘meteors’ in accordance with Aristotle’s definition – comets, meteors and shooting stars, lightnings, hailstorms and blizzards etc.; see Aristotle, *Meteorologica* I:IV, 341b–342a.

127 “Upsala Capitels Dom öfver D. Sigfrido Arono Forsio” p. 130; a discussion on the relation between the documents preserved from the trial can be found in Kiiskinen pp. 294–295.

128 Sigfridus Aronus Forsius, “Reverendissime Dne Archi Episcopo et Vos Reverendi et Clarissimi Dni Capitulares”, copy in UUB K 28 & UUB Palmsh. 336; here I follow

In other words, while playing down his own achievements, he characterized chiromancy as a harmless game and pastime for unlearned women. However he had previously presented arguments for the theoretical validity of the art to the chapter. Referring to “Hermes Trismegistus, Plato and other philosophers” he described the correspondences between celestial and earthly matter, and between the configurations of the stars and the lines in the hands. Yet while he claimed that chiromancy was an art that “interpreters of hieroglyphs and natural Magicians understand better” than any ordinary scholar, he also cited the book of Job for the quotation where God shall “put his seal in the hand of every man”. It is as if Forsius tried to show that chiromancy could not be easily rejected without censoring the Scriptures.<sup>129</sup> However, Forsius’ judges took no heed of his philosophical and religious arguments, and as a whole they appeared uninterested in the theoretical content of chiromancy. Indeed Forsius dealings with the art were only mentioned in a few sentences of the verdict.

The simplest explanation is that Forsius’ ‘heterodox view of nature’ was not a key issue for the chapter. His primary offence was to have “further utilized *Arte Chaldaica*, than what is appropriate, which is made clear by his *Prognosticis* and also by his own confession.”<sup>130</sup> In other words, he had gone too far in his predictions and his astrological practice. For the rest, Forsius was not convicted of anything, apart from what had already been pointed out by the king: his practice of chiromancy and the fact that he, “out of irresponsibility, that do not become a learned and right-minded Clergyman well”, had “justified that peasant who gives himself out to be a great Prophet”<sup>131</sup>

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the transcript, printed in Pipping, *Historiska bidrag I* pp. 138–140, cit. p. 139; “Hvad *Chiromantia* anlangar, så hafver jag väll höglärde Mäns reglor och uttydningar på alla *liniers signaturer* i händerna läsit, dock henne icke synnerligen brukat, uthan tå jag i Örebro satt fången besökte mig Hennes Mts Drottningens Jungfrur och Pijgor och af varkundsamhet sände mig maat och penningar och bådo mig att jagh theas händer besee ville, thet jag tå gjorde, effter som jagh, af thet jagh förr i ungdomen läsit hade, minnas kunde och thet alt til nödhjelp.”

129 Forsius, “Scriptum apologeticum” pp. 127–128; for the quotation of Job 37:7, Forsius refers to three different versions of the text – the Hebrew original, the Greek Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate; cf. KJV: “He sealeth up the hand of every man; that all men may know his work.”

130 “Upsala Capitels Dom öfver D. Sigfrido Arono Forsio” p. 137; “Och aldenstund D. Sigfridus i alla thesse förbemälte stycker finns brottslig, synnerligen i thet att han hafver vidare brukat *Arte Chaldaica*, än vad som tillbörligt är, hvilket klart är af hans *Prognosticis*, så ock af hans egen bekänneelse.”

131 “Upsala Capitels Dom öfver D. Sigfrido Arono Forsio” p. 136; “...att D. Sigfridus hafver uthropat och justifierat then bonden, som gifver sig uth för en stor Prophet ...



## The Challenge of the Prophets

Thus, the Chapter ended with the issue that had instigated the whole process against Forsius – his authorization of the prophetic statements of Jon Olofsson.

There is no doubt that Jon had embraced several grave heresies in his preaching. For instance he had maintained the old notion that the souls of men had eternal pre-existence. While claiming that the apostles had not written anything in the Scriptures – and thus that the entire New Testament was a fraud – he had attacked not only the apostolic office and clerical hierarchy, but the very foundations of the Christian community.<sup>132</sup>

The appearance of Jon Olofsson was accentuated by the fact that he was not the only dissenter ‘agitating the peasantry’ with boisterous speech and doomsday preaching at the time. According to Sten Lindroth the years after the Ordinance in Örebro 1617 were “particularly abounding with heretical phenomena of various kinds”.<sup>133</sup> It was more than plain coincidence that on 6 January 1619, the very same day as Forsius was first summoned to court, orders had been sent that three imprisoned “blasphemers of God” and alleged Judaic believers – Per på Hyttan, who was later executed, Olof Skrivare and Erik Hansson – should be brought to a meeting with the bishops in Linköping in order to be interrogated together with Jon Olofsson. The very same day a note was sent to the archbishop who was also attending the meeting, urging him “to bring that Letter to H.M. that is said to have come down from heaven”. This letter – primarily containing extracts of the Brigittine revelations – had been found on the high altar in Uppsala Cathedral the previous summer. In interrogations Jon Olofsson would refer to it as a testimony of his own calling.<sup>134</sup>

Forsius realized that his reference to Jon’s prophecies was a delicate issue when he wrote his prognostication. His excursus ‘on some portents’ was congenial to contemporary relations of ominous events, and apart from Jon Olofsson, Forsius had mentioned two unnamed persons – the wife

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Synes ock ... honom thet hafva gjordt af lättfärdighet, thet enom lärd och rättsinnig Prestman icke väl anstår”; cf. Forsius, “Scriptum apologeticum” pp. 127–128.

132 Rudbeckius, “Itt kort extract” UUB K 23 fol. 2.

133 Lindroth, *Paracelsismen i Sverige* p. 421; “Tiden närmast efter Örebro stadga var särskilt rik på kätterska företeelser av skilda slag.”

134 Entry in RA, RR vol. 132 fol. 4r, 6 January 1619; “Till Erchiebispen, att han hafuer dett Breff medh sigh till H.K.M.tt som säies wara kommit nidh af himmelen och på Upsala Domkyrkias altar”; Johannes Rudbeckius, “Itt kort extract” UUB K23 fol 1; T.H. Norlin, “Fyra svenska judaister på Gustaf II Adolfs tid”, *Teologisk tidskrift*, Uppsala 1869 pp. 306–311; Hugo Valentin, *Judarnas historia i Sverige*, Albert Bonniers förlag, Stockholm 1924 pp. 32–35; Lindroth, *Paracelsismen i Sverige* p. 153.

of a deputy bailiff at the ironworks in Hällestad in northern Östergötland and the manservant of a customs officer in Norrköping – who had also experienced wondrous visions and been spoken to by angels.<sup>135</sup> In the case of Jon Olofsson however, Forsius had made some distinct reservations, as only God knew “Of what spirit he is impelled”. Yet even though some people considered Jon to be raging mad, this was just how “the Jews in Jerusalem had considered Jesus, son of Ananias”, another ‘unlearned peasant’ who had warned the people for the coming fall. In the end Jon could not be dismissed outright, since “Such warnings you should not wave aside, as they are all about penance and repentance”.<sup>136</sup>

The fate of the Jewish people had been a central motive in the apocalyptic narrative of Paulinus’ *Cometosopia* and obviously the worldly authorities also regarded the fall of Jerusalem as an example far too important to be dealt with lightly. In his letter to the archbishop concerning Forsius lapse, the king emphasized that it had been “agitating to the common man” that Forsius, by referring to Jon Olofsson had “so improperly commended, and not only ascribed him the gift of prophecy”, but even had “conferred him with veritable, and by God awakened preachers of penitence”.<sup>137</sup>

The comparison between Jon Olofsson and Jesus Ben Ananias was problematic because it confirmed the prophetic claims of a man generally characterized by his unsubordinate attitude – particularly when compared with the other two visionaries mentioned in Forsius’ excursus. In contrast to Jon, the bailiff’s wife and the manservant had submitted to their respective vicar and accepted his interpretations of the visions. For her part, the wife

135 Forsius, *Then stora Prognostica Til thet Åår Christi M. DC. XIX.* sig. D3r.

136 Ibid. sig. D4r; “Aff hwadh ande han drijfwes/ må Gudh weta. En part hålla honom för en vrsinnigh och förbijstrat/ lijka som Judarna höllo i Jerusalem Jesum Ananioe Son/ men han säger/ The hålla migh för en Narre och vrsinnigh/ iagh är thet icke/ hwad anden migh säger/ thet talar iagh. Sådana warningar bör man icke slå i wädret/ the gå jw alt vth på boot och bättring. Gvdh förläne oss bootfärdigheet til itt Christeligit lefwerne/ Amen.” The prophet Jesus Ben Ananias is mentioned as an unlearned peasant – *ἰδιωτῶν ἀγροικος* – in Flavius Josephus’ *De bello Judaico* VI:300–309; cf. Flavius Josephus, *The Jewish war, books IV–VII. With an English translation by H. St. J. Thackeray*, Loeb classical library, William Heinemann LTD, London/G.P. Putnam’s Sons, NY 1928 pp. 462–467.

137 Gustavus Adolphus to Petrus Kenicius, 8 Maj 1619, RA, RR vol. 132 fol. 143v; “... gemeene Man till förargelse, så otilbörligen haar *Commenderat*, och honom icke allenast *donum prophetandi* tillmätt, Vtan och med sanskyllige och af Gud vpwechte boot Predikanter *confererat*”; see Flavius Josephus, *De bello Judaico* VI:300–309; that it is undoubtedly the comparison between Jon Olofsson and Jesus ben Ananias that Gustavus Adolphus was referring to in his letter has kindly been pointed out to me by Jürgen Beyer; cf. Jürgen Beyer, *Lutheran Lay Prophets, ca. 1550–1700*, Brill, Leiden 2008.

of Hällestad had got her vision on the same day as the King was crowned in Uppsala. Forsius related how “the bishop in Linköping, Master Jonas Kylander” had come to the village on his way from the coronation, and as the vicar had told him about the incident, “he let summon the aforesaid wife there to the vicarage, and interrogated her thereabout, which she as an earnest Woman firmly confessed. And this the reverend Man [the vicar Ericus Johannis] has told me himself.”<sup>138</sup>

Thus the social and spiritual superiors of these two visionaries confirmed the credibility and the gravity of their testimonies. In contrast, Jon Olofsson had raised unauthorized claims of being God’s prophet and wonderman, speaking “boldly out to high and low, what he says that he has been given a command about” by an angel of the Lord.<sup>139</sup> Therefore his preaching, and Forsius’ authorization of it was a problem for any public authority, irrespective of the character of his sayings.

The official reaction to Forsius’ text demonstrates that the limits between the religiously illicit, and the socially questionable were fluid. In the case of Jon Olofsson, it was clearly his prophetic claims that challenged the authority of royal power and of the church. The fact that many of his ideas were outright heretical seems to have been of minor importance. In the interrogations held by Johannes Rudbeckius, these false teachings were primarily referred to in order to refute his claims and to prove him an impostor.<sup>140</sup> Similarly it was not Forsius’ ambition to try the spirits in Jon’s preachings, instead of rejecting them outright that had been irresponsible in the eyes of the authorities, but instead his obstinate way of trying them in public, in a medium available to the ‘common man’. However, although Forsius was apt to be chastised by his superiors for his lapse, this does not explain why the capitulars put the issue of Jon Olofsson aside in their inquisition, in order to focus on the fairly well-known and thoroughly studied problems of astrology.

138 Forsius, *Then stora Prognostica Til thet Åår Christi M. DC. XIX.* sig. D3r; “Thetta berättade hon strax sin Soknepräst/ och när Biskopen i Linköping M. Jonas Kylander kom ifrå Cröningen/ kom han till thenne Kyrkioherden at gästa/ tå berättade han honom thetta/ och han lät kalla förnämde hustru tijt til Prästegården/ och förhörde henne ther om/ thet hon som en alfvarsam Qwinna stadeliga bekende. Och thetta hafwer then ährewärdige Mannen migh sielff berättat.” Ericus Johannis was brother in law to Claudius and Ericus Johannis Prytz and had been involved in the pursuit of witches, instigated by Duke Johan in the 1610s; see Ankarloo p. 71; ; *Westerlund & Setterdahl* p. 710.

139 Forsius, *Then stora Prognostica Til thet Åår Christi M. DC. XIX.* sig. D3v, cit sig. D4r.

140 During interrogations with Anders Knutsson, another unauthorized preacher and self-acclaimed prophet, Johannes Rudbeckius referred to Jon’s statements in order to convince him that even if a person was speaking the truth in some cases, he did not necessarily have to be a prophet; Hall, “Kyrkliga och kulturella interiörer I” pp. 352–253, 369.

One reason for this probably lay in the instructions given to the Chapter by the king. It was neither necessary to refute Forsius for his inconsiderate authorization of Jon Olofsson, nor for his alleged dabbling with chiromancy. His errors in these respects were already defined as acts of restlessness, unruliness and irresponsibility, and could be rejected primarily by repeating what had been said in the letter of the king. In other words it was only the illicit nature of astrology or the “other superstitious actions” that was left for the capitulars to examine.

However, the focus on astrology could also be seen as an indication of the chapter’s priorities: even though the authorization of Jon Olofsson had been a serious incident, and although the trial was carried out through a formal commission from the king, Forsius’ judges had to consider that his statements were delivered with some authority, empowered not only by his mathematical skills and insights in natural philosophy. Apart from his indubitable learning, Forsius relied on a broad social network. He enjoyed an unmatched position on the literary market, and close connections with high representatives of worldly and clerical authorities. Thus, as Forsius’ judges recommended the worldly authorities to prohibit him from continuing his business unless he publicly repented – in other words to limit his physical possibility to go on with his authorship as before and to censor his writings – the focus on Forsius’ astrological practice appears to be an attempt to silence him. It was primarily in order to motivate and legitimate these measures that they attempted to deconstruct the theoretical and moral base of his authority. This was all in accordance with a given template of arguments that Forsius as a good Christian and clergyman could hardly refute, since his own apology mainly emanated, by necessity, from the same ethical and epistemological template.

For Forsius as well as for his judges, there were limits to the astrological art. The problem was to determine where these limits should be drawn, and who would have the authority to draw them. The demarcation between allowable and illicit knowledge and practices, in this as in other issues, was a problem framed by social boundaries. To formulate the correct, ‘orthodox’ standpoint on the issue was a privilege granted to and maintained by a certain group of men who dominated the clerical estate as well as the institutions of learning. However, in this case the commission of the capitulars was backed up by the very highest instance of worldly power – the king.

## The Astrologer's Hardships

Despite the efforts of the capitulars of Uppsala to clamp down on Forsius however, it appears as if his astrological practice had already been called in question. From the beginning his authorship had been characterized by his tendency to defend both the art itself and 'the poor astronomer' from the undue criticism of ignorant and envious people. For instance, in his prognostication for 1610 – written while he lectured astronomy in Uppsala – he reported how he had experienced the veracity of the proverb "*Ars non habet inimicum nisi ignorantem*" – 'science has no enemy besides ignorance':

Like all great and precious Treasures and worldly dignities, that generally have coveters, who, when they cannot obtain them, rather saw that another had them not; Thus it goes also with high bookish arts, that they to the same extent have their haters and malefactors. Among them the noble Starry art is not the most insignificant, which, as she is beauteous and commendable, thus have the more haters and calumniators.<sup>141</sup>

Even among his fellow scholars there were men who rejected astrology. Obviously some "like *Theologi* and Jurists" attacked the art "*respectu propriae facultatis & professionis*" – 'due to the characteristic of faculty and profession'. But there were also critics who had previously shown some astrological skill and inclination:

Some do not despise the art in itself, but cherish her much to themselves when they practise her; But when someone else practise her, and peradventure with better diligence, fortune and renown than themselves, then the confounded jealousy, the servant maid of calumnation begins to approach them, and teach them to look sour with feigned gravity, so that they yet come to calumnation and slander through her excitation, vilifying the poor *Astrologum*, not only among their fellow brothers, but among high worldly persons, and say, that he thus write with high assumptions without reason and grounds, or whenever he gets something right in his *praedictionibus*, they say that he has a particularly evil demon, by whose inspiration he does it write.<sup>142</sup>

141 Forsius, *Prognosticon Astrologicum* ... Till thet Åår efter Freksermannens Jesu Chrjstj nåderijka Födhelse. M DC X sig. A2r; "Såsom alle store och dyrbare Skattar och werldzlige digniteter gement hafwa sine efterståndare/ hwilke mädhan the them icke bekomma kunna/ gerna såghe at och en annar them icke hadhe: Altså går och medh höghe bökerlighe konster/ at the och j lika mätto hafwa sine hatare och missgynnare. Jbland them är then edle Stiernekonsten icke then ringaste/ hwilken såsom hon skön och berömligh är/ så hafwer hon och thes fler hatare och förtalare."

142 Forsius, *Prognosticon Astrologicum* ... M DC X, sig. A2r–v; "Endeel förachta wäl icke konsten sielff/ vthan hålla myckit aff henne widh sigh sielffwa, när the henne bruka, Men när en annan henne brukar, och tiläwentyrts medh bättre flijt, lycko och berömelse, än the, tå begynnar strax *sacra invidia calumniae* pijsa tråda til them, och

Judging from other sources, it appears as if Forsius' description of the critical arguments against the astrologer's trade is fairly authentic. The vanity and inadequate methodology of astrology is emphasized in Stenius' dissertation. The *pacta* with demonic forces – which since the times of the early Church was the general prerequisite for all kinds of illicit magic<sup>143</sup> – had been touched upon by the Uppsala chapter as one possible aspect of *astrologia judiciaria*. In 1632 – eight years after Forsius' death – the Professor of Logic, Laurentius Stigzelius (1598–1676), wrote a dissertation where he emphasized the notion that astrological conjectures, when turning out correct could be attributed only to chance, or to *pacta* with the devil.<sup>144</sup> Now this particular passage was explicitly censored by the university council for various reasons, but even if the demonic aspect was generally toned down in the academic debate, it was present in the contemporary conceptions of astrology and astral magic, and could probably occur in private colloquia and disputes. All in all, Forsius comment intimated that the critics of his craft – even those who in his view were ignorant botchers – could still grasp its magical and potentially dangerous connotations.

There are reasons to believe that Forsius was beset by critics during his time in Uppsala. Considering how he got his appointment – replacing the permanent professor, who had been suspended by the king – it would be peculiar if he had *not* been giped at by the colleagues, especially since the dismissed Stenius appears to have remained at the university with his salary reduced. To make things worse Stenius was personally related by marriage and friendship to a majority of the other professors, including the vice-chancellor.<sup>145</sup> Thus it is not too far-fetched to assume that the arguments of Stenius' dissertation from 1611 were directed at Forsius, and his previous

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lära them see swrt vth *gravitate ficta*, så at the och komma igenom hennes vpretande til *calumnias* och bakdantan/ hafwa then fattighe *Astrologum* för sigh icke allenast hoos sine medhbrödher/ vthan och höghe werldzlighe personet/ och säya/ at han skrifwer så på högt vthan skäl och grund/ eller ther han någhot rätt drabbar j sine *predictionibus*, säya the at han hafwer en synnerligh ond *daemonem*, igenom hwilkens ingifwelse han thet skrifwer." Kiiskinen suggests that the explicit mentioning of 'theologians' and 'jurists' among the enemies of astrology was intended as an address to Paulinus and Chesnecopherus, who had both been 'mathematicians' during their early careers; see Kiiskinen pp. 129–131; unfortunately, although being a thought-provoking hypothesis, it is virtually impossible to substantiate.

143 Cf. Ankarloo p. 48; for a discussion on the rather complex conceptions of, and distinctions between natural and demonic magic among early modern scholars, see Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: the Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*, Clarendon, Oxford 1997 pp. 233–250.

144 Annerstedt, *Uppsala universitets historia I* p. 250.

145 See above p. 201.

instruction of students. Laurentius Paulinus Gothus indicated something in this direction, when in a libel against Jonas Magni from 1616 he claimed that Stenius had not only criticized the ‘vain and uncertain’ art of *astrologia judiciaria*, but virtually expelled it from the curriculum of the university. However, in the context of Paulinus’ arguments in the Ramistic controversy, it was hardly worse to teach astrology than to make Aristotle an authority in Christian ethics: “To us, gentile ethics are no less vain and uncertain”.<sup>146</sup>

Seen as a part of the conflicts at the university the arguments against astrology related by Forsius had a social aspect. The mutual animosity between the involved was characterized by personal conflicts and rivalry – something that is also indicated in Forsius’ text. In Forsius’ view, the accusations against “the poor astrologer” appeared only as hypocritical, since “where at length some pious worldly person defend his cause” the accusers would “spew the very poison openly out, and announce the basis of the hatred, namely, that he has not laid out as much on his study as they have”.<sup>147</sup> In another passage, Forsius emphasized the significance of natural inclination and diligence to explain why some astrologers were more successful than others, despite having less formal education: “for the Work is hard, and the causes are hidden and obscure, and the reward for the ungreatfulness and niggardliness of the world, will never pay the bother.”<sup>148</sup>

These quotations indicate that Forsius’ critics tried to reject him from the community of scholars – the *respublica literaria* – not because he was unlearned or incompetent, or because his astrological knowledge was categorically rejected out of scientific or theological reasoning, but since he had not taken the proper route in his quest for learning. He had been studying, but not in the right circles at the right universities – at least not for any lengthy periods of time – and he probably never gained an academic title. Thus he stood isolated from the social spaces where the accepted learning was defined and pursued.

However, there was another side of Forsius’ exclusion from the right circles. Few of his biographers have been able to ignore the fact that he was

146 Laurentius Paulinus Gothus, *Scholæ Ethicæ, seu Animadversiones piæ ac solidæ, in impiam Defensionem, à Practico quodam Ubsaliensi, In Causa Ethicæ Gentilis, inconsideratè susceptam*, printed by Christoffer Reusner, Stockholm 1616, sig. Niv; “Nos Ethicam gentilem, non modò vanam & incertam”.

147 Forsius, *Prognosticon Astrologicum* ... MDCX sig. Azv, “... omsidher ther någon from werldzlig person förswarar hans saak, spyä the sielfwa förgiftet vppenbarligha vth, och gifwa tilkänna grunden till hatet, Nemligha, at han hafwer icke så myckit kostat på sine studia som the, ty må han icke skrifwa.”

148 Ibid. sig. Div; “... ty Arbetet är swort/ och orsakerne förborgadhe och mörke/ och lönen för werldennes otacksamheet och sparheet/ betalar aldrigh omaket.”

a notorious drunkard and troublemaker. Despite his vast, and in some cases powerful social connections and commissions in the service of the state, he constantly ended up in conflict with the people around him, something that contributed to his fall in 1619. Lindroth even stated that Forsius' "destinies as well as his mystical brooding and philosophical orientation were closely connected with his personal failings". They all characterized a person who would not "conform to society; an exemplary clergy life was nothing for him".<sup>149</sup> The church historian Hjalmar Holmquist has stated that "in reality it would not be the 'heresy' of Forsius that caused his fall", as he was still protected by powerful and influential friends and patrons. "Forsius' personal failings became his misfortune."<sup>150</sup>

Indeed, considering the many complaints directed against Forsius during and after his incumbency in the Cloister, there is no mention whatsoever of his astrological activities. The only evidence that he had been criticized on this point before the 1619 trial comes from his own testimonies and apologies. Up to this point the main picture remains intact: he appears as a troublesome character, who did not fit in socially with the leading intellectual



Fig. 17: The astrologer at work, charting a horoscope for his client; Robert Fludd, *Utriusque Cosmi Historia*, Oppenheim 1619, vol. II, Tract. I, sect. II, port. IV p. 71.

149 Lindroth, "Forsius" p. 331; "Hans levnadsöde liksom hans filosofiska grubblerier och filosofiska orientering hängde nära samman med hans personliga skavanker. F hade svårt att inordna sig i samhället; ett exemplariskt prästerligt leverne var ingenting för honom."

150 Hjalmar Holmquist, "Sigfrid Aron Forsius. Astrolog, präst och psalmförfattare", *Nordiska familjeboks månadskronika* 1938 vol. 1:2 p. 792; "I verkligheten blev det icke Forsius' 'kätter' som orsakade hans fall ... Forsius' olycka blev hans personliga brister."



and clerical circles of the realm. This does not necessarily indicate that he was never criticized for his astrological writings and prognostications, only that such criticism did not reach an official level. His astrological business was not of the character or dignity to induce any actions or commentaries made public – at least not until he had used his scholarly authority to legitimize and authorize a popular prophet.

## Contextualized Laments

However, Forsius' testimonies of narrowminded resistance against astrology among his contemporaries should perhaps not be interpreted too literally. His woes over the ignorant world appear to follow a given rhetorical pattern. As we have seen, apologies and justifications of the art were commonplace features in astrological literature. Pointing out iniquitous and morally dubitable criticism was a method – used by Paulinus in his prognostication for 1598. In a prognostication for 1603 the future municipal physician in Stockholm, Harald Olai Thunemontanus maintained that serious mistakes made by astrologers, exemplified by the notorious failure of the deluge predictions in 1524, had tended to discredit the art. Hence astrology, "that yet for so long time have been prevalent and customary" had become "very despised, and denied to be studied and learned by the youth".<sup>151</sup>

In Forsius' case, it is clear that he defended his craft in order to secure his livelihood. He had no permanent employment or incumbency between his resignation from the Cloister in 1615 and his appointment as vicar in Ekenäs in 1621. Apart from some translations of popular moral and religious literature, probably executed at the request of his printer, he seems to have cast horoscopes for a small circle of customers. However, when this business was scrutinized during the trial in 1619, he claimed that "Nativities have I not cast many, but only a few, especially now in these 4 years, out of necessity, since I have not had any maintenance."<sup>152</sup> Instead

151 Harald Olai Thunemontanus, *Prognosticon astrologicum På thett Åhr effther vår Herres och Frälsares Jesu Christi Nådherijke Mandoms anammelse M. D. CIII.*, printed by Stephan Möllmann, Rostock 1602 sig. B3v–B4r, cit. sig. B4v; "för then skuld warder mijkit förachtet/ och aff vngdomenom at studeras och läras förment/ then doch i så längan tijdh haffwer varit gengse och brukeligin".

152 Forsius, "Reverendissime Dne Archi Episcopo" p. 138; "*Nativiteter* hafver iagh icke många stält, uthan någre fåå, hilst nu i the 4 åhr, för nödh skull, thär jag intet uppehålle haft hafver."; cf. Forsius' translation (from Low German) of Reynard the Fox – *Reyncke Fosz. Thet är: En skön och nyttigh Dicht/ full medh Wijszheet, godh Läro/ och lustige Exempel: Vthi hwilken alle Menniskiors wäsende/ Handel/ Otrool/ List och Snillheet affmålet warder*, printed by Ignatius Meurer, Stockholm 1621; according to the colophon, it was "Printed by Ignatio Meurer at his own expense, and are to be sold by him"; for the

his chronological and astrological authorship remained his main source of income. In his *Prognostica Astro-theologica* for 1621 he complained that this work “to me is no liberal art, belonging to free scholars, but more a servile art, and a thrall’s craft, to earn daily Bread with.”<sup>153</sup> It was through his almanacs and prognostications that Forsius ensured continuous support and maintenance from his patrons.

It appears as if Forsius’ financial worries worsened around 1618. Duke Johan passed away in the spring and thereby he lost one of his more important benefactors. In the unfortunate prognostication for 1619 he foresaw that Saturn, who was in retrograde during the winter, would impel kings to dissipate their rents and imposts. With a poorly disguised reference to his own financial worries he beseeched that

God give that it will be done with less liberality on them, who have enough before, or on foreigners, and that poor native *Emeriti* and old servants would also have at least their food to daily maintenance, and that good bookish arts and the Word of God would be promoted in those lands where it is faint, and its servants provided for.<sup>154</sup>

The prognostication had been dedicated to Bishop Ericus Eri and Joachimus Matthiae and Gabriel Petri, who were respectively vicar and headmaster in Åbo. As he turned to his Finnish countrymen, Forsius made a point of emphasizing the miserable state of the bookish arts in Sweden, and in Stockholm in particular.<sup>155</sup> Thus Forsius flattered the learned virtues and patriotic sentiments of the addressees, especially their intellectual and moral capability as “reverend and honest good men” of the Finnish nation for promoting true scholarship. The dedication is concluded with a pious

attribution of the translation, see S. Belfrage, “Översättningen av Reyncke Fosz 1621” & C. A. Dymling, “Reyncke Fosz och Forsius”, both in *Nysvenska studier* 1924.

153 Sigfridus Aronus Forsius, *Prognostica Astro-theologica ... M. DC. XXI*. sig. A2r; “...hoos migh icke är en *Ars Liberalis*/ som frije *Ingenia* tilhöret/ vthan mera *Servilis*/ och en Trälekonst/ til at förtiena daghlighit Brödh medh.”

154 Forsius, *Then stora Prognostica ... M. DC. XIX*. sig. B2r; “Gudh gifwe at thet med mindre liberalitet skedde på them/ som förre nogh hafwa/ och på vthlänningar/ at ock fattige inländske *Emeriti* och gamble tienare allenast maaten finge til daghligt vppehälle/ och at gode booklige konstler och Gudz ord i the land/ som thet swagt är/ blefwe förfordrat/ och thess tjänare försörgde.”

155 Ibid., sig. A2r; “Then Edle och Wälb: Joachim Berndes til Strömsberg/ Cammarrådth/ min tilförseendes gode Befordrare och Landzman: Sampt the ährewyrdige och hederlige gode män/ M. Erico Eri, Biscop i Åbo/ M. Joachimo, Pastori, och M. Gabrieli, Rectori Scholæ ibidem”. Gabriel Petri had recently succeeded to the headmaster’s office from Joachimus Matthiae at his advancement to vicar; see K.G. Leinberg, *Åbo stifts herdaminne 1554–1640*, Hufvudstadsbladets nya tryckeri, Helsingfors 1903 pp. 5–9, 24, 239.

prayer: "May not God almighty deprive us from good bookish Arts for our ingratitude, but uphold and preserve them and houses of schooling, with those who teach".<sup>156</sup> This formulation appealed directly to the addressees, as the care for schools and education could be regarded as a common interest between them. Gabriel Petri had recently succeeded Joachimus Matthiae as headmaster in Åbo, and the bishop had been personally involved with the new School Ordinance for the realm outlined in 1611.<sup>157</sup>

Forsius' complaints, whether they emphasize his poverty or his work being held in contempt, have to be regarded as biased, rhetorical pieces. Only the fact that he had the possibility to finance the publication of his almanacs and prognostications year after year, clearly demonstrates that the picture of total misery that generally appears in modern literature on Forsius should be nuanced. It is a picture largely based upon his own accounts of the hardships of the 'poor astrologer', written in order to emphasize his destitution to his potential benefactors.

Scholars have also tended to interpret Forsius' testimonies of hardening attitudes against his trade in the light of the 1619 trial. In a dedication to the Dowager Queen Kristina, dated in October 1617, he claimed that he "with good reasons" could refute the taunts of his adversaries "that they do on some of the words of Moses and the Prophets against *Astronomiam*" – provided that

... God and the high Authorities would support me with an annual subsistence, so that I may sit in peace and practice my *Studia*, would they only cancel the verdict and sentence of their Chapter, wherewith they want to take the poor *Astronomiam* [sic] to Pontius Pilate.<sup>158</sup>

This statement has been interpreted as if Forsius had been persecuted by the clerical authorities for some time, and that he had even stood trial once

156 Forsius, *Then stora Prognostica* ... M. DC. XIX, sig. A4r; "Gvdh alzmächtigh taghe icke för vår otacksamheet godhe booklige Konster ifrå oss, vthan them och Scholestughur, medh them som lära wedh macht hälle och beware".

157 Cf. Leinberg, *Åbo stifts herdaminne* pp. 5–9.

158 Forsius, *Then stora Prognostica* ... M. DC. XVIII sig. A2v; "Här kunde man wäl medh godh skääl refutera theras Glosser/ som the göra på någre Mosis och Propheternes ord emoot *Astronomiam* ... om Gudh och högga Öfwerheten migh försörjer medh itt åhrligit vppehälle/ at iagh får sittia i roo och ööfwa mine *Studia*/ allenast låte the först vthgå theras Capitels Doom och Sententz/ medh hwilken the then fattige *Astronomiam* wilia föra in för Pontium Pilatum." The accusative form "*Astronomiam*" is probably a lapse, as it signifies the art of astronomy, while in context the sentence seems to refer to Forsius as being accused in person; the correct form would have been "*Astronomum*".

before in Uppsala for his heresies and astrological predictions.<sup>159</sup> However it is clear that what was actually hindering Forsius from refuting his critics was not clerical censorship or a public ban, but his own lack of economical maintenance. The “Chapter” that had deprived him of his livelihood was not the Diocese Chapter in Uppsala, but the consistory in Stockholm; the “verdict and sentence” referred to the occasion when Forsius was forced to resign from his incumbency in the Cloister – a decision that had nothing to do with his astrological practice or his supposed heresies.

The statement also confirms the suspicion that Forsius had regarded his incumbency in the Cloister as a stipend for his services as ‘Royal astronomer’. From his point of view, the consistory had dispossessed him of benefits he had been given by the king, and the dedication may in other words be regarded as a plea to the king’s mother to rectify this injustice. But this also means that the hardening attitudes against astrology, which modern scholars have traced in Forsius’ works, must be nuanced or even toned down.

### Becoming a Dissident

Indeed the clash of worldviews and ideas that has previously been emphasized in studies on Forsius’ conflict with the clergy was not very clear. Before the trial in Uppsala, virtually all complaints directed against his person were related to his social conduct. The periods he spent in jail between 1606 and 1611 were obviously due to political reasons, and should be seen in relation to the deposition of Sigismund and the following turmoil at the turn of the century. Moreover, Forsius continuous lamentations over his hardships should be seen in relation to his specific situation as a freelance writer which he got himself into, whereas the final intervention against his authorship by worldly and clerical authorities in 1619, provoked by his quoting Jon Olofsson, cannot be separated from prevailing social and political circumstances.

However, judging from Forsius’ own words it appears as if astrology may have become a point of attack for his personal enemies. When he in the *Great Prognostication* for 1618 characterized the motives of those who attacked him, he maintained that “they do it not by heart for the sake of the Art, but for my Person, who they once have begun to hate and persecute. God may judge between them and myself.”<sup>160</sup>

159 Cf. Pipping, *Historiska bidrag I* p. 53; Richard Hedmark, *Kyrkohistoriska notiser*, Gefleborgs tryckeriaktiebolag, Gävle 1953 pp. 22–23; this mistake is due to the fact that the word ‘vthgå’ (modern sp. ‘utgå’) – ‘cancel’ – in Swedish also may be interpreted as the verb phrase “make public” or “issue”.

160 Forsius, *Then stora Prognostica ... M. DC. XVIII* sig. A2v–A3r; “Doch (at iagh rätt

Yet this should still be considered as a rhetorical statement. From Forsius' point of view it was better to refer to jealousy and inimical ignorance of astrological learning as the cause of his sorrowful state, rather than to his drinking habits and troublesome character. He would no longer be accepted among the academics or in the inner circles of the republic of letters, and his scholarly authority was called into question. In his quest for new benefactors it was therefore vital to point out that these circumstances were not of his own doing. Thus he emphasized the astrological issue, as this was a point where the astrologer was most likely to be attacked.

However this involves problematizing the seemingly unequivocal orthodox doctrine on astrology, formulated by the chapter of Uppsala during the trial of 1619. As we have seen, the arguments against astrology in the trial were not new. However, they were used in a new context, which provided them with new connotations. Obviously it could be regarded as a traditional argument in favour of providence, free will and the omnipotence of God, when the chapter condemned predictions

... on men's fortune and misfortune, wisdom, prudence and imprudence in miscellaneous designs, advice and feats, on happy or unhappy marriage, inclination to virtues or vices, theft, manslaughter, treason etc. On men's exaltation and degradation, death and departure. *Item* on the beginnings, prosperity and fall of Religions, Realms and Regimes, designs of Kings and Regents, on war, rebellion, peace, the outcome of wars ... and other such things, having their origin in the divine providence of God, in the free will of Men or in Satan's instigation, whereas they do not have any natural causes from the courses of the stars<sup>161</sup>

But what becomes just as obvious, is that the issues mentioned in the quotation were of particular interest to worldly and clerical authorities, as they concerned moral discipline, faith, religious and political order and warfare. In the context of a renewed cooperation between king and clergy, with their respective sphere of authority more well defined than at the turn of

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sanningen säija må) göra thet icke aff hiertat för Kånsten skull, vthan för min Person, then the en gång hafwa begynt at hata och förfölia. Gudh emellan them och migh döme."

- 161 "Upsala Capitels Dom öfver D. Sigfrido Arono Forsio" p. 130; "... om menniskionnes lycka och olycka, wisdom, förstånd och oförstånd i allehanda anslag, råd och gerningar, om lycksam och olycksam giftermål, benägenhet till dygd eller odygd, tjufveri, dråp, förräderi etc. Om menniskiones upphöjelse och förnedring, död och afgång. *Item* om Religions, Rikers och Regementers begynnelser, välstånd och undergång, Konungars och Regenters anslag, om krig upror, frid, *bellorum eventu* ... och annat sådant, som hafver sitt ursprung af Guds gudomeliga försyn, af Menniskiors fria vilja eller af Satans tillskyndan, medan thet icke hafver sine naturlige orsaker utaf stiernornes lopp".

the century, the impact of these interests became more accentuated in the verdict.

If we look at the trial of Forsius as a whole, from the time he was summoned to the king, to the issuing of the verdict, it was a process characterized by the mutual interests of the worldly and the clerical authorities. From the beginning the king's interference appeared in accordance to his role as *custos ecclesiae* and protector of the true faith. However, as the case was submitted to the Chapter, it becomes clear that the king would acknowledge not only the authority of the clergy in religious issues, but also in its jurisdiction over the disciplinary correction of an improvident clergyman.

However, we may also see how the archbishop and the chapter, representing the *Lehrstand*, used the case of Forsius and the issue of astrology to strengthen their position in relation to the king. Their verdict took place in a context where the orthodox character and the catholic or universal applicability of the chapter's conclusions were emphasized. Therefore the capitulars rhetorically claimed support for their argument on the issue at stake, as well as for their own authority as the heralds and upholders of God's Law, and as the eschatological inheritors of the Prophets of the Old Testament, the Apostles and the Church Fathers.

But at the same time they also made a statement with political connotations, concerning the role of the clergy in relation to the worldly authorities. The odd and seemingly insignificant reference to the opinion of *purior reformatae Ecclesiae* ('the more pure reformed churches') linked the argumentation of the verdict to the issue of orthodox faith and confessional unity in the Lutheran communion as a whole. The reference may even be regarded as an allusion to those church communions on the continent that had adopted the Book of Concord – the authoritative compilation of confessional documents for the Lutheran movement, issued in 1580.

Obviously the emphasis on the 'more pure' (or 'more orthodox') character of the evangelical churches may have been a random choice of word. But it is conspicuous that it appears in the argument of the verdict, especially since no recent statements of Lutheran scholars, theologians or synodal resolutions are being quoted. And in context of the continuous ambitions of the higher clergy in Sweden to secure the independence of the church, the issue of confessional unity outside the Swedish border had also gained renewed topicality at the time of Forsius' trial.

Despite promptings from the clergy, both at the succession of Gustavus Adolphus in 1611 and during the coronation diet in 1617, the Book of Concord had never been approved in Sweden. The same demand would occur in the proposal for a new church ordinance, which was prepared by the

bishops during the spring of 1619 and presented to the king in June. There were several interacting reasons for this emphasis among the clergy. First, there was a genuine engagement in what was regarded as the final, literally apocalyptic struggle of evangelical Christianity on the continent. Secondly, as a part of this struggle, there was a wish to create distinct confessional boundaries, and to fight any kind of Calvinist influence in the Swedish realm. Thirdly, there was an explicit ambition to strengthen the authority of the clerical estate, both in confessional issues, and in relation to society as a whole. In this context, the proposal for the church ordinance was aimed to strengthen episcopal authority within the clerical hierarchy. Yet for their part, the worldly authorities would remain disinclined to codify the confession further, just as they opposed every attempt to promote clerical independence. Consequently the bishops' proposal was left without comment by the king and his counsellors.<sup>162</sup>

Thus, while Forsius was charged before a clerical court in Uppsala, the issue of clerical authority had once again appeared on the agenda. The whole issue of Forsius' dissident character and his dealings with astrology could therefore be regarded as bad timing on his part. His was indeed a serious lapse in the case of Jon Olofsson. Several objections, firmly rooted in contemporary thought and prevailing Christian ethics, could be raised against his astrological practice, and there was apparently much to be desired with regard to his social conduct. Yet what from the king's point of view appeared as a minor disciplinary measure, actually became an issue of general significance through the verdict of the Chapter. The case of Forsius could subtly serve to emphasize the need of clerical authority in dogmatic and religious issues, as well as in issues on spiritual and worldly learning, and of the clergy as an independent hierarchical corporation. More than being a central or topical issue of the day, the trial of Forsius and the rejection of astrology came in handy to fulfil this purpose.

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162 Holmquist, *Svenska kyrkans historia vol. IV:I* pp. 182–184; Montgomery, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria* 4 p. 71.

# Ruling the Last Days

For it is the highest solace in life, firmly to know what is hidden and withdrawn from the common herd ...

Conrad Lauremberg, congratulatory poem to Forsius, 1621<sup>1</sup>

## Calculating the End

According to the previous chapter, the verdict against Sigfridus Forsius in 1619 and its unambiguous statements against astrology cannot be seen as separated from the specific context in which it was written. There was an evident threat of unauthorized preachers, prophets and sectarians roaming the countryside. The king himself had emphasized the possibility that Forsius' would 'instigate some more disturbances' with his writings.

Judging from the sources, the verdict was never made public, and it probably never gained legal force. Yet in one respect it still marked an accentuation of the orthodox discourse on astrology. According to the charter of 1613, Forsius had a virtual monopoly of almanacs and prognostications. Thus the recommendation that he should be prohibited from continuing his business would not only hinder Forsius' own writings, but also restrain the spread of astrological literature on the book market.

Inserted in a long, authoritative tradition, the verdict appeared as a warning not to trespass the thin line between a good, allowable pursuit of true wisdom, and against the illicit ambition to acquire knowledge not meant for man. Apart from the pure ethical objections, this distinction was important to maintain. Practitioners of astrology tended to move in a field where it was crucial for the higher clergy to keep its authority. Once again the matter concerned the Apocalypse and the visions of the final days.

Three years after the trial in Uppsala, Forsius' writings would once more attract the attention of the clergy. In a sermon from 1622, Johannes Rudbeckius attacked such misled astrologers and scholars who "of self-righteous sagacity have wanted to calculate year or moment when Christ would come

<sup>1</sup> Lauremberg, "Ad Reverendum & clarissimum Dn. M. Sigfridum Aronum"; "Nam maximum vitae levamen, abdita & vulgo remota posse certa noscere".



again”.<sup>2</sup> Thus they coveted forbidden knowledge, meant to remain hidden and kept out of reach of the cunning minds of men. “Non est vestrum scire tempora” – ‘It is not for you to know the times’ or the moment that God had decreed for the final judgement, as Christ himself had stated according to the Scriptures.<sup>3</sup> Yet even though this biblical statement should have been enough to deter any true Christian, it was not necessary to go to the Scriptures to realize the full vanity of the pursuit. According to Rudbeckius you could just as well study the manifold examples of erroneous conjectures of the star-gazers, “As Arnaldus de Villa Nova some hundred years ago has meant the judgement to recur [sic] anno 1345; Abraham Judaeus Astrologus has meant anno 1465; Johannes Regiomontanus anno 1588; Sigfridus this very year.”<sup>4</sup>

Rudbeckius found Forsius in fine company: although the Catalan physician and alchemist Arnaldus de Villanova (c. 1235–1313) had never tried to foresee the actual moment of the second coming or the final judgement, he had mentioned a probable time of the emergence of the Antichrist, and thus for the beginning of the final age.<sup>5</sup> For obvious reasons, the Jewish astrologer Abraham – referring to the Sephardic philosopher and mathematician Abraham bar Hiyya Ha-Nasi (d. c. 1136) – had never tried to divine the Second Advent of Christ. Yet in his apocalyptical tract *Megillat ha-megalleh* – ‘The Scroll of Him Who Unveils’ – he had calculated from the planetary conjunctions that the coming Messianic era and the redemption of Israel would begin in 1383. He also concluded that this era would be fulfilled in mid-fifteenth century: then the dead would rise and a Jewish Millennium would be instated on earth.<sup>6</sup> Finally, the reference to the ominous year of

2 Johannes Rudbeckius, *Warningz Predikan/ Öffuer Thet Evangelium som pläghar förkunnas på then Andre Söndaghen i Adventet. Hällin Vthi Westenås Domkyrkio samma Söndag och efterföljande Predikodaghar A. 1622*, printed by Peder Erickson Wald, Västerås 1637 sig. D4v, “Haffua förthenskuld farit wil alle the som aff förwetenheet haffua welat vthrekna åhr eller tijdh när Christus skulle komma igen”.

3 Johannes Rudbeckius, *Warningz Predikan* sig. D4v; cf. Acts 1:7.

4 Johannes Rudbeckius, *Warningz Predikan* sig. D4v, “Så som för någhre hundrade år sedhan Arnoldus de villa nova haffuer meent domen skulle komma igen A. 1345. Abraham Judaeus Astrologus haffuer meent A. 1465. Johannes Regiomontanus A. 1588. Sigfridus hoc anno.”

5 Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages*, Columbia University Press, NY 1979 pp. 222–225. The year for the advent of Antichrist actually mentioned by Villanova was 1378; Smoller p. 90.

6 Abraham Bar-Hiyya, *Sefer Megilat ha-megaleh*, revised by Julius Guttmann and published by Adolf Poznanski, Berlin 1924 pp. 143–152. Hannu Töyrylä, Åbo Akademi (Institutum Judaicum Aboense), has kindly presented this Hebraic passage to me and explained its content; cf. Martin Levey, “Abraham bar Hiyya Ha-Nasi”, *Dictionary of Scientific Biography* 1 pp. 22–23, Charles Scribner’s Sons New York 1970; Geoffrey Wigoder, “Abraham bar Hiyya”, *Encyclopaedia Judaica* vol. 2, Jerusalem 1971 col. 130–133.

1588 alluded to a famous prediction, ascribed to the Bavarian astronomer Johann Müller Regiomontanus (1436–1476):<sup>7</sup>

Post mille expletos á partu uirginis annos, Et post  
quingentos rursus ab orbe datos: Octogesimus  
octauus mirabilis annus  
Ingruet, is secum tristia fata feret.  
Si non hoc anno totus malus occidet orbis,  
Si non in nihilum terra fretunq̃ue ruet:  
Cuncta tamen mundi sursum ibunt atque retrorsum  
Imperia, & luctus undique grandis erit.

When from the Virgin Birth a thousand yeares  
With full five hundred be compleat an told,  
The Eightie Eighth a famous yeare appears,  
Which brings distresse more fatal then of old.  
If not in this yeare all the wicked world  
Do fall, and land with sea to nothing come;  
Yet Empires must be topsie turvie hurl'd  
And extreame grief shall be the common summe.

This verse likely included both oral and literary tradition, as it appeared in various and divergent versions in Latin, German, French, English and even in Danish and Swedish literature. When cited, the prophecy was sometimes attributed to other famous astrologers, or to authors renowned for their prophetic gifts, such as the Franciscan seer Johann Hilten.<sup>8</sup> In some cases the verse was ascribed to Philipp Melanchthon, and even Martin Luther himself was reported to have approved of its content. However, Regiomontanus was generally presented as its originator. The first known printed version was published in 1553 by the humanist Kaspar Brusch (1518–1559), who claimed to have found the verse among Regiomontanus' papers. However, it was Cyprian Leowitz who presented it to a wider public in his *Ephemerides* (1557), and in *De coniunctionibus magnis* he discussed the verse in relation to the great conjunction of 1583, thus emphasizing its apocalyptic significance.<sup>9</sup>

Obviously the prophecy had caused some commotion, and as we have seen, the notion of 1588 as a year of destiny for Christianity had played an essential part in Lutheran scholarship and preaching in the latter part of the sixteenth century. Rudbeckius' critical comment in the sermon of 1622 indicates that similar prophecies had once again become frequent.

## Orthodox Objections

Rudbeckius was by no means unique in his criticism. To calculate a time for the Second Advent of Christ was a delicate issue, not only since such pre-

7 The Latin version is cited in Leowitz, *De coniunctionibus magnis*, sig. N3v.; the English in Dixon p. 404; for a variant English version, see Aston, "The Fiery Trigon" p. 177 n. 67; for contemporary Swedish versions, see Nicolaus Ringius, *Prognosticon Theologicum* sig. G1v; and Georgius Olai, *Calendarium duplex* fol. Y2r-v.

8 Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis* pp. 1, 43, 98; Sandblad, *De eskatologiska föreställningarna* pp. 140–142.

9 Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis* pp. 163–164; Dixon p. 404.

dictions infringed upon an explicit biblical commandment, but since there were evident theological and ethical objections. Statements concerning the precise moment of the end could be argued to bind the will of God, restrain his omnipotence and to limit the significance of divine providence. Yet there were also personal morals to be considered.

In a collection of funeral sermons from 1623 the bishop of Växjö, Petrus Jonae Angermannus, discussed the eschatological issues – not only in relation to the destiny of the world, but in relation to every Christian, facing the mortality of Man. Knowledge of the end of the world would, just like knowledge of the final hour of the individual, only lead to recklessness and godless living if the time was long; to despair if it was short. The one who consulted the soothsayers to know his moment of death or when the world would perish would find no consolation. On the contrary, he would only share the grim destiny of Saul, the first king of Israel, who consulted a woman in Endor who had a familiar spirit: “When Saul wanted to know from the Witch what God denied him, he had the benefit thereof that he became as two times dead.”<sup>10</sup> Thus, as the time was uncertain and “we never know before the net is over our head”, the true Christian should flee from the vain promises of certainty and “take the advice of Christ: *Vigilare & orare*; watch and pray”.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, despite the assuredness that the last times approached, the uncertainty of when the end would actually come appeared as a part of God’s divine plan to keep the faithful ever watchful and never slacking in their prayers and daily penitence. For its own sake, Christianity and the fallen world would be taken by surprise by the return of its Master and Saviour. Ignorance of the time would avert sin and apostasy.

Similar themes can be studied in Lutheran literature from contemporary Germany. The preacher Andreas Schoppe (1538–1614) had complained over the unchecked proliferation of attempts to predict the day and the moment of the end. According to Schoppe, the false and hot-headed prophets of his time were far too proud and believed that they had all answers, ignoring that all knowledge of the end had to be firmly rooted in the Scriptures. Moreover, they were heedless to the risk that people would stop listen to Christian

10 Petrus Jonae Angermannus, *En Christeligh/och then H Skriffitz lijkmätigh vthlägningh öffuer G. och N. Testamentzsens Textier*, printed by Jochim Fuess, Rostock 1623 pp. 423–426, cit. p. 430; “När Saul wille weta aff Trolquinnan thet honom Gudh nekade/ fick han then nyttan ther aff/ at han bleff lijka som två gånger död.” Cf. 1 Sam. 28.

11 P. Jonae Angermannus, *En Christeligh/och then H Skriffitz lijkmätigh vthlägningh* pp. 432–433, “Mädan vår tidh är oss så owiss/ at wij aldrig weta för än näter är oss öffuer huffwudet/ hwad skole wij taga oss före? Först skole wij fly säkerheet/ Sedan taga widh Christi råd: *Vigilare & orare*; waka och bidia.”

teachings of repentance if their predictions turned out to be erroneous.<sup>12</sup>

Nor was Rudbeckius unique in his choice of examples. Lists of well-known astrologers and sages, who had tried to predict the end of the world, are found in learned tracts and sermons since Giovanni Pico della Mirandola compiled the *Disputationes in astrologiam* at the close of the fifteenth century. A hundred years later such lists had become commonplace features in Lutheran tracts on apocalyptic issues. Thus, for his statements on Abrahamus Judaeus and Villanova, Rudbeckius was quoting Georgius Olai and his *Calendarium duplex*, who in turn quoted Pico.<sup>13</sup> The reference to Regiomontanus and the previous uproar concerning 'the wondrous year' of 1588 had been used by Schoppe and other Lutheran authors as a fairly recent example of an abortive and potentially dangerous prophecy.<sup>14</sup>

### Criteria of True Prophecy

By the time Rudbeckius wrote his sermon, the authors he mentioned had already become rhetorical *exempla*, widely used among Lutheran scholars to criticize vain efforts to foresee the return of Christ or the end of the world. The listed names of the astrologers differed, but the meaning of the lists was practically the same. Apart from being a grave sin in itself, the attempts to predict the exact time of the final judgement were all in vain – and there was also a constant risk that they would stir up the simple and cause commotion and uproar.

Yet despite the critical outlook, the arguments in these works should be regarded as absolute rejections, neither of astrology, nor of the apocalyptic standpoint. For instance, in his tract from 1596, Schoppe had presented clear evidence that the times were closing and that the end was near: the Papal Antichrist had been revealed; the Roman Empire, being the last of the four world monarchies had been laid to waste, and Gog and Magog – the Turks – lay siege to Germany, 'the new Mount Zion'.<sup>15</sup>

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12 Andreas Schoppe, *Christliche und nöthige Warnung für dem erdichteten Lügengeist der falschen Propheten*, Wittenberg 1596, cited in Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis* pp. 232–233.

13 Georgius Olai, *Calendarium duplex* fol. Y2r-v, Z2v-Z3r; cf. Pico della Mirandola, *Disputationes in astrologiam*, lib. V, cap. XVI, *Opera omnia*, Basel 1572 p. 577; Rudbeckius' dependence on Pico via Georgius Olai has been established by Sandblad, *De eskatologiska föreställningarna* p. 156 n. 1: both Rudbeckius and Georgius are namely making the same mistake, claiming that 'Abraham Judaeus' had divined the final judgement to occur in 1465. This statement has no correspondence in bar Hiyyas original text, although it was determined that a significant conjunction would occur in Pisces in the year 5224, which in Pico's account is settled to AD 1464.

14 Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis* pp. 161–162, 241–243.

15 Ibid. pp. 232–233.

Moreover, despite the critical account of erroneous astrologers and doomsday prophets in his *Calendarium duplex*, Georgius Olai had not tried to deny the eschatological significance of the year in which he published his work. On the contrary: one of the main purposes of his treatise had been to prove that 1688 – an even century after its publication – was a probable time for the final judgement. Still Georgius Olai had listed Villanova and Abrahamus Judaeus, together with such famous astrologers as Johannes Lichtenberger (c. 1440–1503) and Johannes Stöffler (1452–1531), as examples of how astrological calculations were useful tools, but not strong enough to divine the eschatological truths hidden in the Scriptures.

This could be regarded as an attempt to avoid potential criticism from orthodox scholars. Yet in context it is more likely intended to emphasize the achievement of the author. While pointing at the Bible and divine revelation as the primal source of all wisdom, Georgius' method to combine astrology, chronological calculations and interpretations of portents with exegetic studies of the biblical texts would appear as the true road to reliable knowledge of the last things. Eventually, Georgius would claim that the time of the final judgement lay in the hands of the Almighty: "And therefore shall no one undertake the boldness that he judges of Heavenly and supernatural things by natural causes".<sup>16</sup> More than thirty years later a similar statement was pronounced with a harsh twist by Petrus Jonae Angermannus: "They who calculate after the revolutions of the heavens what will happen that is not natural (like seasons and such things), them God reckons as straw, which the Fire will consume."<sup>17</sup>

In the 'Homily of Warning', Johannes Rudbeckius emphasized that the prophecies of Christ, describing the tokens of the final days, had been inspired directly by God, and not by any other kind of divinatory practice. Using the same example as Petrus Jonae Angermannus, Rudbeckius stated that it would be clear to anyone that Christ had not foreseen the end of the world by the invocation of divinatory spirits like "that Woman in Endor" who had predicted the death of King Saul. Apart from the ridiculous thought that the Son of God should use such means and channels, Rudbeckius maintained that "such augurs usually speak mighty obscurely". Their presages were intelligible only after the event allegedly foreseen, when "one can make it

16 Georgius Olai, *Calendarium duplex* sig. Z3r; "Och therföre skal ingen then drijstigheten sigh företagha, at han om the Himmelske och öffuernaturlighe ting aff naturlighe vrsaker dömer".

17 P. Jonae Angermannus, *En Christeligh/och then H Skriffitz lijkmätigh vthlägningh* p. 431; "The som räknä efter Himmelens lopp/ hwadh skee skal som icke naturligit är (som åhrs tider och sådant) them räknar Gudh för strå/ hwilka Eelden skal vpbrenna."

out, just as it then happened". In contrast, "the speech of Christ is so clear, as if he had himself stood and watched how it would befall in the world".<sup>18</sup>

Nor had Christ exploited the 'astronomical arts' to prophesy through the constitution of the heavens, as he not studied any such art "in no lofty School or University".<sup>19</sup> And even if he had,

... there are no *Astronomi* able to proclaim such tokens like these, with the sole exception of solar and lunar eclipses: but what comes to the other, such as earthquakes, comets, floods, hunger and pestilence, they know as much as a peasant, who goes out with his plough; even less any *Astronomus* have known to prophesy about the fall of Jerusalem and the final fall of the Judaic peoples, and yet even less of the preaching and the acceptance of the Gospel of Christ in all the world. Therefore, for all their efforts, *Prognostica* and such deserve indeed to be called liar books.<sup>20</sup>

Led by the Lord's commandment to banish diviners and wizards, Rudbeckius concluded that God, through Christ fulfilled the words of the prophet Isaiah, when he thwarted the signs of the soothsayers, drove the augurs mad, compelled the sages and turned their art into utmost folly.<sup>21</sup>

Thus Rudbeckius' criticism of the vain efforts of Forsius and other astrologers could be related to his statements, comparing astrology with pagan, idolatrous divination, sorcery and illicit magic, expressed in the 'Homily of Penitence' from 1615.<sup>22</sup> Like all arts of divination astrology appeared as an ungodly pursuit for forbidden knowledge. The same associations also

18 Rudbeckius, *Warningz Predikan* sig. sig. D2r; "Christus Gudz Son haffuer icke aff någhon Spådoms anda thetta Propheterat, såsom then Qwinnan i Endor om Sauls dödh/ etc. ... För ty/ först så plägha sådana Spåmän/ tala mechta mörkt/ så at man thet neppeligha kan förstå/ och at man thet så kan vthyda/ som thet sedhan hende sigh: Men nw är Christi taal så klart/ såsom han sielff hadhe stå och seedt vppå/ hurv thet i Werldenne gånget woro".

19 Rudbeckius, *Warningz Predikan* sig. sig. D2r-v; "vthaff Himmelens Constitution ... Christus haffuer sådana konst inthet Studerat ... på ingen högh Schola eller Universitet".

20 Ibid. sig. sig. D2v; "Och så fast han än Astronomiam till pricka hadhe Studerat, så äro doch inge Astronomi som kunna förkunna sådana tekn som thesse äro/ Solennes och Månens förmörkelser allena vndantaghande: Men hwadh the andra widkommer/ såsom jordbäffningar/ cometer/ Wartuflodher/ hunger och Pestilientien/ weta the så myckit aff som en Bonde/ som går widh ploghen/ myckit mindre haffuer någhon Astronomus kunnat weta prophetera om Jerusalems förstöring och Juda folksens endtligha vndergång/ och än fast mindre om Christi Evangelij Predikan och wedertagelse i hela werlden. *Ideoq., cum talia conentur, Prognostica & quidem merito Liugare böker vocantur.*"

21 Ibid. sig. sig. D2r; cf. Isaiah 44:25: "[I am the LORD] That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish".

22 See above pp. 15, 130.

occur in the sermons of Petrus Jonae Angermannus. Here the astrologers' efforts to predict the end of the world and the lifespan of the individual were directly compared to the ambition of the practitioners of the dark arts:

Thus we should not dare to run here and there, to tinkers, sorceresses, witches, augurs, chiromancers, *Astrologos*, *Genethiacos*, planet books et cetera so that we may know our lifetime and other things. How should they know to tell us what is revealed to no man? Is it not great folly both against God and his holy word [to] ask people of such things? For we should rely upon this, that what God would not let us know, that is of no benefit to know.<sup>23</sup>

In 1588 Georgius Olai had clearly maintained the possibility of conjecturing an approximate time for the last judgement. He had certainly argued for astrology as a useful method for this purpose. In contrast, Rudbeckius reaction against the writings of Forsius, and Angermannus general criticism of the efforts of the astrologers once again appeared as an accentuation of the discourse.

## Postponement of the End

At one point the criticism of the apocalyptic ambitions of astrologers should be regarded in context of what appears as a tendency of toning down apocalyptic expectations and their application to contemporary conflicts in the social, religious and political fields.

In the Lutheran world the apocalyptic beliefs had been generally shared, emphasized and promoted by the clergy since the beginning of the evangelical Reformation. In a Swedish context we have previously seen how apocalyptic motives appeared in warnings and criticism of the sinful conduct of Christian people, as well as in the struggle against 'popish' designs or worldly authorities, trying to restrain the freedom of the church.

Intrinsic in virtually all apocalyptic visions and expressions is a general criticism of authorities and of the state of the world. Consequently the kings of the Vasa dynasty were never entirely happy with the apocalyptic obsession among clergymen whom they rather would see as docile servants of the state. During the trial against Olaus Petri and Laurentius Andreae in 1540 it was maintained that preachers in general "stand in the pulpit

23 P. Jonae Angermannus, *En Christeligh och then H Skriffiz lijkmätigh vthlägningh* pp. 429–430: "Ty skole wij inthet vnderstå oss at löpa hijt och tijt/ till Tattara/ Signerskor/ Trulbackor/ Tecknetydare/ Handskodare/ Astrologos, Genethiacos, Planetzböcker etc. På thet man aff them må weeta sin lijfz längd och annat. Huru skola the weta säya oss thet ingen menniskia är uppenbarat? Är icke stor galenskap både emoot Gudh och hans helga ordh fråga menniskior om sådant? Ty wij må lijta ther på/ at thet Gudh oss icke wil låta weta/ thet gagnar inthet weta."

and prattle”, unwilling to teach the catechism and preach obedience to the lawful king. Instead

... they will in a yet higher spirit than St. Paul or other saints, get the Scriptures all wrong, and exhibit and parade among the Christians (just as the well-armed in full cuirass upon the greatest steeds unto the tournament) with the Apocalypse of St. John, which they do not understand themselves.<sup>24</sup>

However, according to Henrik Sandblad’s study of eschatological conceptions during the Reformation era, the apocalyptic motives successively lost a great deal of their attraction in the first decades of the seventeenth century. A primary reason for this was that the clerical authorities could now focus on inner consolidation concerning dogmatic issues and catechism teaching, “practical details” and everyday pastoral care. With the establishment of the clerical organization in cooperation with the state, the ‘popish’ influence was no longer experienced as an immediate threat. Instead focus could be put on internal problems and enemies within. Thus the clergy sharpened their attitudes, and in their orthodox zeal they confronted new threats of heterodoxy, emerging from mysticists, spiritualists and reformatory radicals. In this struggle, the eschatological and apocalyptic expressions appear to have become both a problematic issue and a dogmatic burden.<sup>25</sup>

More recently than Sandblad, the apocalyptic traditions in the Lutheran parts of the Holy Roman Empire have been analysed by Robin Barnes, who claimed that considerable parts of the Lutheran movement underwent a radicalisation during the decades around the turn of the seventeenth century. Primarily this process originated in the same mood of failure in face of inner dissension and threats from Catholic and Calvinist factions that had characterized the previous decades. It would continue to affect the religious, political and military mobilization that reached its climax with the outbreak of rebellion and open war in Bohemia in 1618.

Principally, the common Lutheran worldview was still prophetic and apocalyptic in its essence, as it had been from its beginning. At least until the 1630s, Lutheran confessors of all imaginable shades and factions – from the orthodox establishment to enthusiasts and self-acclaimed prophets and their joint audience – generally described the wars and the diversified

24 “Handlingar från rätttegången med Olaus Petri och Laurentius Andreae” p. 73; “Predikerne, dhe stå opå predikestolen och bladra ... dhe wele vti en fast högre ande, än Paulus eller andre hellgon giordtt hafwe, tage skriften widh baakfoten och medh S. Johannis Appocalipsim (lijke som the wälberustede vti heele köritzen opå dhe störste hingster til tornier plätzen) i christendomen här förekomme och pråle, hwilcke the selfue då icke förstå.”; cf. Sandblad, *De eskatologiska föreställningarna* p. 67.

25 Sandblad, *De eskatologiska föreställningarna* p. 258.



conflicts and outbursts of rebellion that lay waste to the German countries as apocalyptic in all aspects. What would later be designated the Thirty Years' War was in other words seen by its Lutheran contemporaries as a part of the last struggle between the adherents of the papal Antichrist and the faithful and righteous. However, the general attitudes towards prophecy and apocalypticism would change during the war – not only among the Lutheran clergy, but among the population as a whole.<sup>26</sup>

Concurrent with the consolidation of Lutheran communions, it became more important to the higher clergy to separate the legitimate expressions of prophecy and apocalypticism from the illicit. According to Barnes, this issue became even more important as some Lutheran authors and preachers tended to use bolder and more speculative means while conjuring their visions of the trials of the last time. Several Lutheran prelates reacted, maintaining that the escalating proliferation of prophetic and apocalyptic literature, combined with eclectic tendencies among pastors and preachers, made the faith vulnerable. Especially they feared attacks from the Jesuits who (not without reason) indicated that all the most extreme and ridiculous prophetic expressions appeared to originate from 'Lutherland'.<sup>27</sup> Even astrologers reacted: in a comet tract from 1582 for instance, the Catholic priest and mathematician Johann Rasch (c. 1540–1612) stated that the common, and from his point of view fairly ridiculous, woes of coming catastrophes and prophesies of the imminent last Judgement that filled other comet tracts, could not originate from anywhere else than from the prophets of "Wittenbergian simplicity", who preferred the Scriptures and prophetic spirits to Ptolemy and serious astrological calculations.<sup>28</sup>

This was not necessarily a new trend. Prophetic and apocalyptic ideas were obviously cultivated among radicalized Lutheran preachers who in the views of the clerical establishment had already crossed the line to heterodoxy. But Barnes' study also suggests that a fairly swift polarization occurred between different ways of approaching and handling prophecy within the already disunited Lutheran movement. A renewed ambition to go *ad fontes*, and to focus on 'biblical' prophecy came at the cost of divining from natural signs and supernatural portents. This was expressed primarily by the ambition to limit the scope of what was regarded as false prophets

<sup>26</sup> Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis* p. 249.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. pp. 235–236.

<sup>28</sup> Johannes Rasch, *Cometen Buech. Von dem neuen Stern des 73. unnd von den Cometen des 77. unnd 81. Jars, auch von allen anderen Cometen unnd neuen Stern erscheinungen geschicklicher erforschung zu urtheilen*, München 1582 sig. F3, cited in Heribert Smolinsky, *Deutungen der Zeit im Streit der Konfessionen. Kontroverstheologie, Apokalyptik und Astrologie im 16. Jahrhundert*, Heidelberg 2000 p. 1

and, secondly, by a diminishment of the need to regard the contemporary world in a universal context of apocalyptic conflict. This polarization did not necessarily follow the traditional lines between the defined dogmatic factions of the Lutheran movement, but ran straight through them. Rather the new conflicts reflected the new socio-political and intellectual conditions in the Holy Roman Empire in the early seventeenth century.<sup>29</sup>

In Barnes analysis, the social, political, cultural and medial changes that occurred as the result of the wars in Germany 1618–1648 are used as explanations for this development. The realist politics that characterized the war efforts stood in sharp contrast to the affected apocalyptic rhetoric. After the 1630s the genres of prophecy and apocalypticism tended to be politicised or even replaced with more downright political propaganda and newsletters. Barnes discussed this change in terms of a shift from a prophetic, to what Peter Burke described as an increasing political consciousness among the population as a whole.<sup>30</sup>

According to Barnes, the consolidation of the Lutheran Reformation is a main key to understand the change of attitudes towards apocalypticism. Throughout the sixteenth century, the outcome of the Evangelic struggle against the Roman church had been unsure. The cooperation that was established with princes and worldly authorities in large parts of Germany and Scandinavia had been unstable and charged with conflict. But by the beginning of the seventeenth century, the mutual relation had become more settled. Formerly opposed interests were jointed and backed by the rising political and military power of the early modern state. The role of the clergy became more accentuated, and the authority of the ‘nationalized’ church further strengthened. Roughly speaking, the overall goal of the Lutheran fathers during the sixteenth century had been to reform the consciousness of individual Christians as the world was facing the judgement. The important task had been to save souls, not to better or reform society. The seventeenth century came with a turn: in the following, the main task was to organize a Christian, monoconfessional society.<sup>31</sup>

Thus, when apocalyptic warnings could no longer be used to explain potential conflicts in relation to the princes, and since the renewed alliances with the institutions of worldly power reduced the threatening influence of Catholics and Calvinists, the questions of the last days lost their immediate urgency. As long as the church encouraged the congregation with the assurance that the Day of the Lord would eventually come, there was no need to

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29 Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis* p. 231.

30 Ibid. pp. 249–253; cf. Burke pp. 262–263.

31 Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis* p. 258.

conjecture when this would be. In this context, the eschatological perspectives turned from questions of contemporary political and religious realities to the issues of the salvation of the individual. Eschatology, and the decipherment of the Apocalypse, tended to become spiritualized and individualized, while the importance of the coming Kingdom of God as a collective reality lessened.<sup>32</sup> In turn, this weakened the need to refine the prophetic methods and to consult the book of nature as an authoritative source of knowledge. Instead, the prophetic use of divinatory techniques, including astrology, already loaded with religious and political undertones, began to be regarded as potentially subversive by the political and clerical establishment.

## An Orthodox Apocalypse

Although the methods and the ambition to gain certain knowledge of the eschatological issues were met with harder opposition by the orthodox clergy, the Apocalypse and the imminent judgement did not lose anything of its urgency. On the contrary: if we study the examples from the Swedish context, the eschatological expectations in the 1620s brought all other issues to a head. Religion, politics, history, weather and crops, sickness and health; everything could be seen in an eschatological perspective. Yet once again we can see how a discussion of method – in this case to gain knowledge of the Apocalypse – also concerned the issue of who was the true interpreter of the divine Word and thus possessed the keys of true knowledge.

Obviously the orthodox clergy did sharpen their tone against the proliferation of apocalyptic prophecies in response to ‘spiritual competition’ from preaching laypersons, astrologers and augurs. But it would be a mistake to reduce their criticism to a rhetoric device to quell the opposition, or to neglect the gravity of their concern. The risk that failing predictions would make people lose their faith in the imminence of the judgement was regarded as a real threat. Or, as expressed by Andreas Schoppe: “For then the simple folk say that the learned are all mixed up [...] they say much but nothing follows from it, so who wants to believe them anymore?”<sup>33</sup> This is the same kind of concerns that Laurentius Paulinus expressed in *Cometoscopia* as he claimed that the ominous significance of comets was being rejected as devices of ‘priestly fabrication’ by scoffers and ‘Epicureans’.<sup>34</sup>

For his part, Johannes Rudbeckius did not deliver a rejection of eschatological and apocalyptic statements. Nor was his purpose to repudiate the

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. p. 257.

<sup>33</sup> Andreas Schoppe, *Christliche und nöthige Warnung für dem erdichteten Lügengeist der falschen Propheten*, Wittenberg 1596, cited in Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis* p. 232

<sup>34</sup> See above p. 154–157.

possibility of extracting prophetic knowledge from natural signs – on the contrary. His criticism appeared in his homily for the second Sunday of Advent of 1622, a Sunday traditionally devoted to the signs of the last days. The subject and the primary purpose of Rudbeckius' sermon stood on common ground with the writings and statements he criticized. Although he condemned any attempt to settle a precise date, he focused his exegesis on the tokens of the Second Coming that Christ himself foretold in the gospels. Thus Rudbeckius referred to the quotations where it was stated that signs will be seen "in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars" before the Son of Man shall come "in the clouds with great power and glory". False prophets will occur on earth, as will war and insurrection, earthquakes, hunger and pestilence: "the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken." And finally, to prove to the faithful that the Day of the Lord is nigh, "shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven".<sup>35</sup>

According to Rudbeckius, it was not certain what this particular sign would be like. Whereas some people thought that a cross would appear in the skies in the last days, many learned men had agreed that a new star would be lightened on the firmament, as once happened in Bethlehem. In context this appeared more or less as a direct reference to the great nova of 1572. Rudbeckius did not settle whether this had indeed been a token of that dignity, but he claimed that it had caused many learned men to wonder as it was observed among the celestial spheres and not in "the Air under the Moon".<sup>36</sup> With direct reference to Forsius, he also discussed the star as an unquestionable sign of apocalyptic significance – just as he did with several other novas, comets and eclipses "of which Sigf. Aronis has written".<sup>37</sup> So, even if it was utmost folly and vanity, trying to settle when, Forsius and other astrologers were indeed right in their presumption that the end was nigh. Their obvious knowledge of natural philosophy could not be totally dismissed when it came to interpreting the omens.

35 Rudbeckius, *Warningz Predikan* sig. Biv-C4r.; cit. Luke 21:25; Mark 13:24–26; Matthew 24:30.

36 Rudbeckius, *Warningz Predikan* sig. D1r; cit. sig. Div.

37 Ibid. sig. C2v-C3v, cit. sig. C4r; cf. Forsius, *Een berättelse/ Och eenfallighit Judicium, Om then Cometen ... M DCVII*, sig. Div. Rudbeckius may also refer to Forsius' comet tract from 1619, see Forsius, *En liten Vnderwijsning, och itt enfallighit Judicium, om någre Cometer*.

## The Apocalypse According to Forsius

Considering the rhetorical function of the other authors named by Rudbeckius, who were mistaken in their calculations and apocalyptic speculations, it is not surprising to find that his remarks on Forsius served the same purpose. When Rudbeckius inserted Forsius among the famous astrologers of old, using only his forename, it was undoubtedly in recognition of his authority. The congregation was assumed to know of him and his almanacs and prognostications – and of his reputation as a man with insights into the apocalyptic issues.

However, Rudbeckius' statement on Forsius is somewhat unfair. Clearly Forsius had never declared 1622, 'hoc anno', as the year of the judgement. Despite his bold assurances that his craft confirmed the biblical prophecies of the coming judgement, Forsius put forth a frank unwillingness to reveal a definite time when this would occur. In this as in other cases, he stuck to the rules of the genre: astrological authors were generally careful enough to make their statements fairly well executed conjectures, and not categorically stipulated facts, irrespective of whether they concerned the tribulations of the final days or the weather for the coming year.

What Rudbeckius referred to in his criticism, was more likely the apocalyptic connotations of the subtitles of Forsius' *Prognosticon Astro-Theologicum* for the current year "In which the Sixth Seal will be opened, and the sixth Angel sounds his trumpet". Two years previously, probably shortly after the trial in Uppsala, Forsius had written a prognostication for "the Wondrous Year of Change" 1620 – a work "Derived from God's Secrets and the Starry Art, and produced, all right-minded Christians to warning".<sup>38</sup> With their apocalyptic and mystifying titles, both of these booklets were filled with references to planetary intelligences, astrological and chronological calculations and speculative interpretations of various numbers and figures to prove the validity of the biblical prophecies of the last days. Forsius had himself admitted that the claim of his prognostications as being 'astro-theological' "may well seem to be wondersome to many, which indeed it is". Still he had good reasons to raise this claim "through the

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38 Forsius, *Prognosticon Astro-Theologicum. Til thet Vndersamma Förändringsåret M DC XX*; Forsius, *Prognostica Astrotheologica, Til thet år Christi M. DC. XXII. På hwilket thet Siette Insiglet upbrutit varden/ och then siette Engelen basunar.*; cf. Sandblad, *De eskatologiska föreställningarna* p. 272 n. 5; Lindroth, *Paracelsismen i Sverige* pp. 154, 424; Forsius also issued an "astro-theological" prognostication for 1621, or "the first Watch of the Preparation Day of the ultimate Sabbath", but this work is not as explicit in its apocalyptic approach as the other two; cf. Forsius, *Prognostica Astro-Theologica ... M. DC. XXI.*

hidden Prophecies of the Word of God". Moreover he maintained that he "with greater assiduity in my distress and sorrow have ransacked" a previous decision to use the title "inasmuch that I find more meanings of Pious men and even recently issued works of highly learned men and not disdaining verdicts thereabout."<sup>39</sup>

In other words he emphasized that his argument rested on firm and reliable authorities when recommending that one "in a new mode" had to take the astrological auspices "to Theology, and Spiritually contemplate and interpret them". This approach seems to converge with the discussion on the complementary relation between philosophy and theology in his Latin plea or *Scriptum apologeticum* from the 1619 trial.<sup>40</sup>

Obviously it was alarming that Cancer was in the ascendant at the beginning of the winter of 1620. Since the Crab was armed and in harness and "her shell with its links resemble a cuirass" this would, in combination with the current positions of Gemini and the 'armed' Orion, mean that peoples and nations were making alliances and preparing for war. Even the simplest phenomenon could be interpreted in these grave terms. As the winter of 1620 would be cold with much snow and moist according to the planetary aspects "so you should expect much tribulation in politics, whereof it is written in the forth book of Esdrae". Misery and a severe political winter will endure for three years "for floods of water signifies floods of the peoples, in mystical history and in politics."<sup>41</sup>

Clearly these interpretations were presented with a certain apocalyptic twist. Since Mars would be the ruler of the year, he would spread turmoil through his angel Samael "who is sent to pour out the vial of God's wrath, and harm the Earth". War was brewing among "the Turk, Tartars and several lands in the north, which are understood as Gog and Magog". As these

39 Forsius, *Prognosticon Astro-Theologicum*. ... M DC XX, sig. A2r; "... thenne min salsamma Titel på thenna Prognostica/ then iagh allreda för 11. år sedhan aff Trycket haffuer vthgå låtit/ kan wäl mångom synas at wara vndersam/ såsom han och är. Men ther til hadhe iagh allredo tå godh skäl aff Gudz ordz förborgada Prophetier/ såsom mitt wedhängiande Besluth thet vthwijsat/ thet iagh nu sedan medh större flijt i mitt förtryck och bedröfwelse ransakat och öfwerwäghat hafwer/ Allthenstund at iagh finner flere Gudhfruchtige mäns meningar/ och än nyys vthgångne höghlärde mäns skriffter och icke förachtande judicia ther om."

40 Ibid. sig. A3r; "Thenne judicia wil man efter itt nytt sätte föra til *Theologiam*, och them Andeligen öfwerwäga och vthtyda".

41 Ibid. sig. A3r-v; "... at hennes skaal medh sina länkiar lijkas medh itt köresz ... så skal man ock förwänta *politice* myckin *tribulation*, ther om i then 4. Boken Esdrae skrifwit står/ cap. 14. 15. 16. etc. eländigheet och en bijster politisk winter/ som nu begynner/ och warar i 3 år/ jw längre jw wärre/ *Inundationes n. aquarum significant inundationes populorum, mystice historicè & politice*." Cf. 2. Esdras 14–16.

aspects threatened the Moon which “signifies verily the Church in the Apocalypse”, this sign also revealed the final tribulations of Christianity.<sup>42</sup>

Forsius even presented central apocalyptic figures according to the book of Revelation in astrological disguise:

So too, the Heavenly Jupiter and the Lamb, who have been given power and domination, thrust away Saturn, the paralysed, envious accuser of the brothers and his thrice crowned governor into the deep prison, and the spiritual Mars, the evil Dragon shall be thrust down with all Tyrants and Assailants, in that Lake, that is burning with fire and sulphur.<sup>43</sup>

Representing the Dragon in the Book of Revelation, “that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan”, Mars was given a central role in the eschatological drama. Saturn, in the traditional iconographic representation of an old man with a scythe and a crutch, represented another satanic apparition as “the accuser of our brethren”. His ‘governor’ clearly referred to the Pope as the Antichrist with the *Triregnum*, the trice tiered papal crown upon his head. Even the triumphant Christ, the Lamb of God would appear, disguised as the planet Jupiter.

The explicit purpose of Forsius’ astrological interpretations was to show that “truly that time has come, which is *Dies Irae* and *tribulationis*, of which the Lord himself and his holy Prophets, especially Esdras and the Servant of the Revelation has prophesied.” Indeed the final tribulations had already begun, although “Epicureans and scoffers, being men of the Firmament and of the world, whose belly is their God, cannot believe that this world will have an end”.<sup>44</sup>

In his overall ambition, Forsius does not seem to differ much from the orthodox preachers. As we have seen, Laurentius Paulinus had discus-

42 Forsius, *Prognosticon Astro-Theologicum*. ... *M DC XX*, sig. A3r; “... aff Turcken/ Tatare och flere land i norr/ som medh Gog och Magog förståtz ... , *n. significat etiam in Apocalypsi Ecclesiam*.”; *ibid.* A4v; “som är sänd at vthgiuta Gudz wredes skål/ och göra jordenne skadha”.

43 *Ibid.* sig. A3v–A4r: “Så skal och then Himmelske Jupiter och Lambet/ som macht och wälle fått hafwer/ förstöta then förlammade/ afwundzfulla brödhernas åklaghare *Saturnum* och hans trekrönte Ståthållare i thz diupa fångelset/ och then Andelighe Mars/ then ledhe Draken skal warda nedhkastat medh alle Tyranner och [sig. A4r:] Wäldzwärkare/ i then Siön/ som brinner aff eeld och swafwel.” cf. Revelation 19.

44 Forsius, *Prognosticon Astro-Theologicum* ... *MDCXX*, cit. sig. A4v, B4v; “Nu är san- nerliga then tijdhen kommen/ som är *dies irae & tribulationis*, om hwilken Herren sielff och hans helighe Propheter/ i synnerheet Esdras och vppenbarelsens Tienare/ förespådtt hafwer ... Ändoch at Epicurer och bespåttare/ som äre Firmamentz och werldsmenniskior/ hwilkas bwk är theras Gudh/ icke kunna troo/ at thenne werlden skal få en enda”.

sed the scoffers of the preachers' warnings in similar pejorative terms in *Cometoscopia*. As Petrus Jonae Angermannus had urged his congregation to 'watch and pray', the ambition of Forsius was to encourage the readers of his tracts to keep watch and remain true to the faith, as their redemption was near. The astrological references and formulations, which were parts of the genre, were not essentially different from the ones Paulinus had used in his prognostication for 1598. And as we have seen, Johannes Rudbeckius had with the same certainty as Forsius maintained that Nature and the heavens actually proclaimed the coming judgement in his Homily of Warning.

Thus it appears as if Forsius was theologically as well as philosophically closer to his adversaries, than is to be understood if we only focus on the different standpoints that are fixed and settled in the rhetoric figures, directed against the astrologers by Rudbeckius. Instead the arguments of the three bishops mentioned above are expressions of a struggle to maintain their authority and to keep their preferential right of interpretation in a complex web of notions, conceptions and ideas. This also means that there is no apparent theological, philosophical or epistemological shift in the new attitudes. There are no new arguments raised against astrology, only a new inclination to define the efforts of the astrologers as being illicit. In marking out Forsius as an erroneous and potentially heretic thinker there are no opposing paradigms on the issue of astrology – only one paradigm with two different edges.

## The Challenge of Mysticism

In the 'Homily of Warning' Rudbeckius had not only associated Forsius with erroneous astrologers and scholars of old, but with "Nagelius, Djäkne Jon and others [of] their Cronies." While making a rhetorical example of alleged statements of well known, fairly accepted authorities of old, he thus included Forsius together with heretics and dissentients of his own time: the contemporary, notoriously known apocalyptic, chiliast and alleged Rosicrucian Paul Nagel (d. 1624), and, oddly enough, the unlearned peasant and self-acclaimed prophet Jon Olofsson – the same 'Djäkne Jon' who had caused the commotion which involved the trial of Forsius a couple of years before.<sup>45</sup> In the account of Rudbeckius, the apocalyptic speculations of the astrologers were in other words indiscriminately associated with ideas advocated by mystics, sectarians and self-proclaimed prophets like Jon

45 Rudbeckius, *Warningz Predikan* sig. D4v, "Nagelius, Diekne Jon och flere theres Stalbröder." Cf. Leigh T. I. Penman, "Climbing Jacob's Ladder: Crisis, Chiliasm, and Transcendence in the Thought of Paul Nagel (†1624), a Lutheran Dissident during the Time of the Thirty Years' War", *Intellectual History Review*, 2012 2010 pp. 201–226.



Olofsson. Consequently Forsius was in the risk of becoming more than just an advocate of Jon's prophecies. In the eyes of the episcopate he had become a troublesome prophet in his own right.

Judging from the amount of preserved writings – tracts, pamphlets, sermons, prognostications and prophecies in various forms – the decades around the turn of the seventeenth century appeared to be the heyday of mysticism, philosophical speculation and apocalyptic visions. Religious thinkers, theologians, astrologers and natural philosophers, intellectually rooted in the reform movements and traditions of late medieval mysticism, preached the necessity of continuous reform of organized religion, of natural philosophy, and of society as a whole. Hereby they presented serious challenges to those churches – Roman, Lutheran and Calvinist – that had become established and managed to maintain themselves as confessional communions through the turmoil of the Reformation.

To give a general description of the mystical traditions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries can hardly be done with any claims of accuracy. Yet the mystics – be they chiliasts, cabbalists, alchemists, astrologers, Paracelsians, theosophists or pansophists or any of these in a joint mixture – shared an ambition to reveal and behold the mysteries of the Creation and of the spiritual world, and to reach knowledge and insight – *gnosis* – of the divine Word. This was a quest inseparable from the ever-present eschatological issues and the question of personal salvation. As a passage to the divine mind, and to the will and wisdom of God, mystical enlightenment and insight were a way to ennoble, transform and reform the body, mind and soul, and thus lead to salvation – or even ‘divinization’ – of the believer. In this context the Reformation of the Church and Christian society was a process where central Christian dogmas were related to notions of the correspondence between man and the whole creation – between the microcosm and the macrocosm. As the fall of Adam and Eve had brought about the fall of all creation, the redemption and reformation, or in alchemical terms the transformation of man, would restore the harmony of the whole world.<sup>46</sup>

In the intellectual and religious context of this ‘magical’ reformism, salvation was seen not only as a spiritual, but also as a corporeal process, a notion that among other things characterized the ambition of Paracelsian medics to find the elixir of life. When the writings of the Lutheran priest and theosophian Valentin Weigel were first issued in print in 1609, they “served to intensify the spiritual element in Paracelsian nature mysticism, deepening the seekers’ desire to discover the divine in both nature and the human soul.”<sup>47</sup>

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46 Evans pp. 196–201, 276; Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis* pp. 175–187.

47 Cit. Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis* p. 219.

Apart from the obvious dogmatic problems in relation to the clergy – for instance the emphasis on the Word of God as more or less separated from the traditional, orthodox identification of the Word with Christ – this meant that mysticism in its most radical forms ran the risk of becoming a school of esoteric teachings of salvation. In the view of the clergy, the mystics appeared as the potential basis for new religious communions, independent of the established churches.

In practice, the mystical traditions would also become important sources for the chiliast or millenarian visions that would reach a peak in early seventeenth century literature. Inspired by the Book of Revelation, the chiliasts claimed that the Kingdom of God and the Messianic age of the Millennium would soon be realized on Earth. There the faithful would be transformed and ennobled to body and soul in awaiting the final judgement.<sup>48</sup> It was in this context of Lutheran mysticism and piety that the anonymous manifestoes of the mystic (and originally purely fictional) fraternity of the Rosicrucians appeared, calling for a new Reformation of religion, of philosophy and of society, and for a new golden, Messianic age of Man.<sup>49</sup>

Given the subversive tendencies and the dubious theology associated with radical mysticism, it is not surprising that these traditions and movements could be seen as problematic and suspect to the clergy. A person like Rudbeckius, who as a bishop had to regard himself as a guardian of true faith and a guarantee for social order within the Christian congregation, was more or less bound to react. But in his argument, Rudbeckius has an interesting tendency to compound undisputable philosophical authorities and formerly accepted prophetic methods, with persons of notorious reputation as radicals, enthusiasts and heretics. Thus he makes a rhetorical point through his disposition, where the efforts of natural philosophers and astrologers of old, and of radicals and enthusiasts of his own days, appeared as expressions of the same religious, ethical and epistemological error.

48 Chiliasm or millenarianism, respectively from the Greek the Latin numerals for 1000; both notions refer to a statement in the Book of Revelation 20:6: "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." This is traditionally seen, either as a prophecy of the Messianic age before the last Judgement, when the Devil is chained, and the Son of Man will rule; or as a prophecy of the rule of the church; see Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages*, London 1984 (1957) p. 13.

49 For a discussion on the origin and the intellectual context of the three main Rosicrucian manifests, *Fama Fraternitatis Roseae Crucis* (printed in 1614), *Confessio Fraternitatis* (1615), and *Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosencreutz anno 1459* (1616), see Donald R. Dickson, "Johann Valentin Andreae's Utopian Brotherhoods", *Renaissance Quarterly* vol. 49, no. 4 1996, 760–802.

## Pursuing the Millennium

This inclination becomes even clearer in the discussion of Petrus Jonae Angermannus concerning the Rosicrucian movement, or “the new sect, the Cross-brothers” as he calls them,

... who now with might begin to spread books, and in all Kingdoms and Principalities through secret conspiracies do have some [adherents] who lure People to their opinion, that the Millennium, that St. John speaks of, shall be a golden age, all Sin shall then be gone, not evil people, but the Priests and Kings of Christ shall come again, [and] nothing but pleasures go on for a thousand years<sup>50</sup>

Even though very few people had read them, the very emergence of the Rosicrucian manifestoes, combined with the notion of an underground reformistic secret society caused commotion among authors and authorities in many parts of Europe. The widespread talk of the Rosicrucian ‘furore’ indicates that the critics tended to conceive the movement as a more widespread, influential and dangerous phenomenon than it actually was. Moreover it caused priests, pastors and theologians to see Rosicrucian ideas everywhere. Every scatterbrain, insubordinate thinker or apocalyptic prophet they came across appeared as a suspect Rosicrucian, although many clergymen only had vague conceptions of what tenets the ‘fratres crucii’ actually preached. For instance, when the chaplain Ericus Jonae in Västerås accused a suspect heretic – Jesper Nilsson på Frösåker – for being “one of the fratribus Roseae Crucii”, nothing is said of what ideas this particular peasant actually embraced.<sup>51</sup> It is merely an indication of how Swedish clergymen, in their panic and concerns tended to invent a common enemy out of “Rosicrucian brothers, Calvinists and Enthusiasts” and of Evangelical radicals in general.<sup>52</sup> According to Angermannus, the Rosicrucians were

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50 P. Jonae Angermannus, *En Christeligh och then H Skriffiz lijmätigh vthlägningh* p. 623; “Hwad skal man mena om then nya Secten Crusbröderna/ som nu medh macht begynna vthsprida Bööcker/ och i alla Konunga Rijker och Förstendömmen genom hemlige stemplingar haffua ju någre som locka Folck i theas mening/ at then 1000 åhrs tiden/ som S. Johannes omtalar/ skal bliffua en gyllene tidh/ all Synd skal tå wara sin koos/ inte ondt Folk igen/ vthan Christi Prester och Konungar/ ijdel wällust gåå an i tusend åhr”; cf. Revelation 20:1–8.

51 Cit. minutes from the chapter of Västerås 21 July 1620, printed in Hall, “Kyrkliga och kulturella interiörer från storhetstidens upprykningsarbete I” p. 359.

52 Cit. minutes from the Chapter of Västerås, August 1621, printed in Hall, “Kyrkliga och kulturella interiörer från storhetstidens upprykningsarbete II” p. 250 n. 1; “rosenkreutzbröder, kalvinister och hwisper etc.”; I have not seen the term ‘hwisper’ or possibly ‘visper’ anywhere else, but in context it seems to be more or less equivalent with ‘enthusiasts’; cf. Lindroth, *Paracelsismen i Sverige* pp. 423–424.

... no new, but an old Sect, and no more new but to the name. In Luther's time they were called Enthusiasts: in our time Anabaptists: In the time of Augustine they were called *Chiliastae*, [which] is a Greek word and signifies *millenarios*; thousand years' Brothers, so they should call themselves.<sup>53</sup>

As before, the issue at stake was the attempts to predict the time of the final judgement, and as in the discussion of Rudbeckius, the focus was laid on abortive efforts to determine the time with the help of astrological calculations. "And is peculiar with the Cross brothers", Angermannus wrote, "those among them who are the most distinguished, are mostly *Astronomi*, and have in many years practiced on certain years when the Judgement will come. For long they prophesied on -88, from there unto 1620." When these years had passed and the words of Christ had been confirmed that no one except God would know the time, "they yield too much and begin to promise us 1000 years, and when these are up, the Judgement will still not come. For Satan will then be loose, and will have power to deceive the Pagans."<sup>54</sup>

According to the critics, the chiliastic standpoint, with its literal understanding of the prophecy of the Millennium as an earthly kingdom, becomes an example of the problems involving the interpretation of the apocalyptic tradition. Angermannus stressed that the Book of Revelation was in itself "mighty profound". Several passages were disputed, although many "remarkable Doctors" had tried to reveal its meaning.<sup>55</sup> Even Augustine had been forced to admit that the apocalyptic prophecies were dubious on several points, and that they could be interpreted in various ways. Yet according to Angermannus, the prophecy of the Millennium had proved especially obscure since "God Almighty, of his wonderful counsel, will have something that we should ponder, and long for the Heavenly School, where the Schoolmaster will be Christ, and the disciples will come to perfect

53 P. Jonae Angermannus, *En Christelighloch then H Skrifftz lijkmätigh vthlägningh* p. 624; "Är thetta ingen ny vthan gammal Sect, och inte mera nytt än bara nampnet. Vthi *Lutheri* tidh kallades the Enthusiaster: i vår tidh Anabaptister: Vthi *Augustini* tidh kallades the *Chiliastæ*, är ett Graekest ord och merker *millenarios*; tusend åhrs Bröder/ så skulle the kalla sig."; cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* XX:VII

54 P. Jonae Angermannus, *En Christelighloch then H Skrifftz lijkmätigh vthlägningh* p. 624; "Och är vnderlig medh the *Crusbröderna*/ the äre mäst *Astronomi*, som ibland them äre förnemste/ och haffua i mångh åhr *practicerat* på wisse åhr när Dommen skal komma. The lenge *propheterade* på 88. ther ifrå in på 1620. Nu the åhren äre framfarne och Christi ordh äro sanne/ att ingen vthan Gudh weet när ytersta dagen komma skal/ giffua the förmykit effter/ och begynna loffua oss 1000 åhr/ och när the äro vthe/ så kommer än tå icke Dommen. Ty Satanas bliffuer tå löss/ och får macht at bedraga Hedningarna."

55 Ibid. p. 605; "mechta diupsinnig ... merckelige Lärare".

understanding.”<sup>56</sup> Thus Angermannus stressed that the mystical ambition to acquire full knowledge was futile, conceited and in vain on this side of the Judgement. But he did not reject the idea totally. From an eschatological perspective, the dream of perfect knowledge was kept intact, although as a result of, and not as a way to salvation.

For his part, Forsius had actually approached the chiliastic visions of the Messianic age in some passages of his ‘astro-theological’ prognostications. In the tradition of Joachim of Fiore he divided the ages of the world into three, each corresponding to one of the persons of the Trinity. The first, spanning from the creation to the birth of Christ was the age of the Father and the divine law; the second was the age of the Son and of Grace, an age that according to Forsius now approached its end. Now it was the ‘Parasceve’, the day of Preparation before the final Sabbath – the spiritual age of the Holy Ghost, when the flock of Christ would be led to pasture on Mount Zion.<sup>57</sup>

To some extent, Rudbeckius’ reaction to the writings of Forsius is therefore understandable. Forsius had approached sensitive issues in a manner that was suspect in the eyes of the orthodox clergy. However, a closer look reveals Forsius’ chiliastic wordings more as symbolical adjustments to the present fashion of the genre, rather than as a chiliastic credo. He did not express a literal understanding of the Millennium or the kingdom of the righteous as an earthly reality. The line between the chiliastic dream of an earthly paradise, and the ‘orthodox’ view of the world approaching its final end, never becomes clear in Forsius’ works. Presumably, he would not have understood the point of making such a distinction. But he persistently tried to maintain his ideas with the support of the Church Fathers:

It is generally known to us through the Word of God, that this world [will have] a certain year’s and time’s *periodum*, and will have an end, and as the house-prophecy [sic] of Elijah, which the holy fathers have approved, reads that the world would stand in 6000 years, which Irenaeus have compared to the six days of the week, and the 7000 shall be as the Sabbath of eternal rest”<sup>58</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Ibid. pp. 619–620; “Ty Gudh Alzmechtig aff sitt vnderlig råd/ wil något haffua thet wij skulle förundra på/ och längta til then Himmelska Scholan/ ther Scholaemestaren bliffuer Christus/ och Lärjungarna komma til fulkomligt förstånd.”; cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* XX:IX.

<sup>57</sup> Forsius, *Prognosticon Astro-Theologicum* ... M DC XX, sig. B4v.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. sig. B4v, cit. sig. B4r; “Oss är thet allom aff Gudz ord wäl kunnigt/ at thenne werld en wiss åhrs och tijdz *periodum*, och en enda hafwa skal/ och såsom Eliæ hwsprophetiæ/ then alle helighe Fäder gilat hafwa/ lyder att werlden skulle stå i 6000. åår/ huilket Irenaeus widh the 6. daghar i wekone lijknat hafuer/ och thet 7000. skal blifwa then ewige Roos hwijlodagh.”

Forsius was anxious to show the reader that the astrological proofs he presented were in accordance to the Scriptures. The signs he discussed were the same signs that Christ had already pointed out in the Gospel. Or, as put it in an allusion to the eschatological parable of the fig tree in the gospels: "And so I myself use this as a comfort to the heart, and lift up my head, and perceive of the portents and the buds on the trees, that the Summer of Redemption is nigh."<sup>59</sup>



Fig. 18: Jesus prophesying the Second Advent according to Luke 21:25, 29–31: "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars [...] Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand." Woodcut illustrating the readings for Second Sunday of Advent, from Johann Eck, *Christenliche Ausslegung der Evangelien von der Zeyt, durch das gantz Jar, nach gemainem verstand der Kirchen vnnnd heiligen Vätter von derselbigen angenommen*, Ingolstadt, 1532 edition.

Moreover, he expressed his concern about the sceptics and the unbelieving scoffers, who – in accordance of what had been prophesied by St. Peter in

59 Ibid. sig. A2r: "Och bruker iagh migh sielfwan thetta til en hiertans tröst/ och lyffter mitt hufwud vp/ och märcker aff förebodhen och knåpparna på Trän/ at Förlåszningennes Sommar är när."; cf. Luke 21:29–31: "Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand".

his second letter – would emerge in the final days and say: ‘Where is now the promise of his coming?’<sup>60</sup>

...indeed some Epicureans would use this Prognostication to flout and derision, as some use to ignore all God’s wonders and warnings, just as if they were not new, or had anything in particular to signify, as has happened with the latest dreadful Comet, which is a certain portent to the greatest change of the world, the end of the second world, and the beginning of the third. But those who do that, they will experience it for themselves, and taste the dregs of his winepress. God give they would consider, and divert the vehement wrath of God.<sup>61</sup>

Forsius’ reference reveals that the chiliastic focus on the prophecy of the Millennium could not be rejected outright. The chiliasts’ interpretation may have been too literal, but it was undoubtedly based on a significant passage in the Scriptures.

According to Angermannus, some of the Church Fathers like Lactantius, Hilary of Poitiers and Justin the Martyr had seriously pondered the possibility that the prophecy indicated a coming ‘aureum seculum’, a Golden Age when Christ would rule on earth. Yet they never denied the divinity of Christ, as Angermannus indicated was the case among the chiliasts. Moreover, when these pious teachers of the church realized that the chiliastic view was “altogether on Jewish mode” and expressed the wish to have “a *Messiam* who would gain a Worldly Kingdom”, they finally rejected the whole idea. For Angermannus, the literal interpretation of the millennium eventually had to be weighed against the words of Christ and of the Apostles when they testified that the “Kingdom of Christ was not of this world, but spiritual, and that the Children of God in this World do not dance on Roses, or may live in pleasure.”<sup>62</sup>

60 Forsius, *Prognosticon Astro-Theologicum* ... M DC XX. sig. Azr: “Men iagh weet thet wäl/ at thet förespådt hafwer S. Ptrrus [sic] 2. Pet. 3. at i ytersta dagharna warda bespättare kommande/ som wandra effter sin egen lusta/ och säija: Hwar är nw thet löffte om hans tillkommelse.”; cf. 2 Pet. 3:3–4; “Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming?”

61 Forsius, *Prognosticon Astro-Theologicum* ... M DC XX sig. Azr-v; “At och en part Epicurer warda sigh thenna Prognostica brukande til spått och åthlöye/ såsom en part alle Gudz vnderwärc och warningar plägha förachta och slå i Wädret/ lijka som the icke wore nyie/ eller någhot synnelighit hadhe at betydha/ såsom skeedt är medh then senesta förfärliga Cometen/ then itt wist förebodh är til then alrastörsta werldennes forandring/ then andra Werldennes enda/ och then Tridies begynnelse. Men the som thet göra/ the skola sielfwe förfarat/ och smaka dräggarna aff hans Präsz. Gudh gifwe the wille sigh besinna/ och affbidhia Gudz häfftiga wredhe.”

62 P. Jonae Angermannus, *En Christeligh/och then H Skriffiz lijkmätigh vthlägningh* p. 624, cit. p. 626; “Aff thessa och andra witnes byrd är nogsampt kunnogt/ at Christi Rijke är

Thus the Millennium could not be interpreted as an earthly, blissful kingdom. Instead Angermannus claimed that the orthodox or “pure Evangelical Doctors” interpreted the prophecy as a statement on an indefinite amount of time: “for it is the nature of the Holy Scriptures to speak of a certain time as uncertain”. It would be a time in this world when the Church would be triumphant, corresponding to the eternity of the Kingdom of Christ. The Millennium would serve as a promise of eternal bliss for the faithful after death, and after the end of this world.<sup>63</sup>

Still, in a certain context the thousand years could be given a literal interpretation, acceptable for true believers. According to Angermannus the part of the prophecy, where it was stated that the Devil would be chained for a thousand years was interpreted as a time already passed among evangelical teachers. The revelation of the Papacy as the Antichrist had proven that Satan was again loose and persecuted the congregation of Christ in the final days. As made clear by several examples from Christian authors – such as Luther and the Swiss Calvinist reformers Heinrich Bullinger (1504–1575) and Theodorus Bibliander (1506–1564) – one could ponder when these thousand years had expired. Was it a thousand years after the birth of Christ; after the resurrection; after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70, or after Constantine the Great put an end to the prosecutions of Christians in the Roman empire in the fourth century? There were many alternatives. The conclusion must be that it was in no way forbidden to calculate – but the result would in this case be unavailing and unsure.<sup>64</sup>

## Chiliasm and Heresy

However, from an orthodox point of view there were dogmatic problems with chiliasm, millennialism and radical apocalypticism. In the legacy of Augustine, the church could be regarded as *civitas Dei*, the city of God on earth existing in itself as the fulfilment of the prophecy of the Millennium – the spiritual kingdom of peace. However, in Lutheran historiography and eschatology, this was mainly seen as a stage already passed. Now it was the *aetas ferrea*, the Iron Age ruled by the Antichrist, either seen as an individual, an institution like the Papacy, or as a state of total godlessness

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inte aff thenna Werlden/ vthan Andeligit/ och att Gudz Barn i thenna Werlden icke dansa på Roser/ eller må leffua i wällust.”; cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* XX:VII.

63 P. Jonae Angermannus, *En Christeligh/och then H Skriffiz lijkmätigh vthlägningh* pp. 620–621, cit. p. 620; “rena Evangeliske Lärare ... Ty thet är then helga Skriffitz art at tala om en wiss tidh för owiss”.

64 P. Jonae Angermannus, *En Christeligh/och then H Skriffiz lijkmätigh vthlägningh* pp. 626–629.



among men. The Devil had been released from his prison to persecute the faithful and the true Church, which in turn could be seen as a certain sign that the final judgement was near.

In this context the Rosicrucian claim that the *aetas aurea*, the golden, Messianic age of the Millennium still lay in the future as an earthly Sabbath before the end, together with calls for renewed reform of Church and society as a means to fulfil this end, became a challenge to established churches of virtually all denominations.<sup>65</sup> However, it was not merely the chiliastic visions that became a problem. As we have seen, apocalypticism was problematic in itself.

The Swedish church historian and clergyman David Lindquist once suggested in a critical comment on Sandblad's usage of concepts, that 'eschatology' should be seen "as an expression for the 'normal' faith through all times", while 'apocalypticism' was "a more apocryphal phenomenon".<sup>66</sup> This may be the remark of a meticulous theologian, yet the notion of apocalypticism in general – and chiliasm in particular – as something extraordinary, or as an underground phenomenon in the history of Christianity is widespread. On an international level, especially when studying research in the legacy of Norman Cohn's classical study *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, apocalyptic expressions have mainly been regarded as phenomena cultivated by oppositional, revolutionary, egalitarian and anticlerical groups in late medieval and early modern Europe.<sup>67</sup> Yet as has been shown by scholars like Robert Lerner, Marjorie Reeves and Bernard McGinn, apocalyptic expressions, including chiliastic visions and millenarian prophecy, have been part of the conceptual mainstream of the Christian church, ever since its early beginnings.<sup>68</sup> Apocalypticism was a heterogeneous world of conceptions with which the world and its history could be understood, and through which its deepest,

65 Sandblad, *De eskatologiska föreställningarna* pp. 13–16.

66 David Lindquist, "Om verdennes yttersta tidh", *Svensk teologisk kvartalskrift, nittonde årg.*, C.W.K. Gleerups förlag, Lund 1943 p. 41.

67 Cohn's book is brilliant in many respects, yet, as shown by Lerner, somewhat biased in its focus on 'revolutionary millenarians' – a focus adapted and brought even further by later scholars; see Robert E. Lerner, "The Black Death and Western European Eschatological Mentalities", *The American Historical Review* vol. 86 no. 3 1981 pp. 535–538.

68 McGinn, *Visions of the End* pp. 28–36; McGinn's book is primarily an anthology of apocalyptic texts from c. 400 to 1500 AD; yet with his empirical substance he demonstrated that apocalypticism in all its varieties was not to be regarded as a 'revolutionary' complex of ideas; for a discussion on the motive of the Millennium in medieval debate, see Robert E. Lerner, "The Return to the Thousand-Year Sabbath" in Richard K. Emmerson & Bernard McGinn (eds.), *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca & London 1992 pp. 51–71.

fundamental meaning could be revealed. In context of the crises of late medieval Europe – the Black Death, war, insurrections, religious strife and social conflict – it was the universal applicability of the apocalyptic expressions that turned them to a conceptual frame of thinking among preservers as well as among critics of societal order. Despite Lindquist's later remark, Sandblad had shown that apocalyptic prophecy was inseparable from eschatological thinking at the eve of the Reformation. This circumstance merely increased the presence of apocalyptic concepts and expressions in the religious and social criticism proclaimed by the "heretical and reformatorial movements" of late medieval Europe, Lutheranism included.<sup>69</sup> The heresy of millenarian Franciscans, of Flagellants, Lollards, Hussites, Taborites and Lutherans lay not in their apocalyptic views and dogmas, but in their dogmatic opposition to the Papacy. The heresy of chiliasm was in other words not a question of the very idea as being unacceptable, but how the idea was propagated and turned into practice.

If we return to Augustine's rejection of the chiliasts, this had focused on the idle vanity of the vision of the Millennium as a state of earthly bliss, leisure and pleasures. His remarks, which to some extent can be regarded as "the standard of orthodoxy", were moral and commonplace objections and warnings against a simplified, and all too literal interpretation of a minor issue.<sup>70</sup> However, the moral objections of the orthodox scholars, easily recognized in the arguments of Angermannus, missed the point when confronting the chiliasts of the early seventeenth century. Literal beliefs in an earthly Millennium were exceptions among the prophets of Rosicrucianism and of 'the new Reform'. The main point of the visions of the Millennium was not to proclaim the earthly kingdom itself, but an era when Christ would rule in the hearts of Men.<sup>71</sup>

## Mutual Worldviews

Thus, what we see here is not a shift between irreconcilable 'paradigms', 'worldviews' or 'frames of mind'. The ideological conflict between the orthodox establishment and the heterodox 'mystics' or the chiliasts never occurred *a priori*. It is not easy to separate the 'mystical' ideas from the religious or epistemological 'mainstream' during the Reformation. The concept of *reformatio*, containing worldly as well as spiritual aspects with which many mystic believers and practitioners described their ambition, had been

69 Sandblad, *De eskatologiska föreställningarna* pp. 27–39, cit. p. 15.

70 Augustine, *De civitate Dei* XX:VII; cf. Paula Fredriksen, "Tyconius and Augustine on the Apocalypse" in Emerson & McGinn (eds.) pp. 29–35, cit. p. 30.

71 Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis* pp. 222–223.

an intrinsic element in religious and social debate since the Great Schism in the Latin church at the turn of the fifteenth century. The Reformation of the church and of Christian society was expected in all parties and factions ever since. Similarly people of the Reformation era indiscriminately expected imminent, eschatological change or the end of the world.<sup>72</sup>

Nor was the occult or mystical understanding of the creation something that separated the orthodox from heterodox mystics. The theoretical principles of 'occultism' and magic were primarily founded on a conventional philosophical base. They were derived from authors like Plato, Aristotle, Galen, Ptolemy, Plotinus, Avicenna and Thomas Aquinas, as well as from 'magicians' such as Johannes Trithemius (1462–1516), Cornelius Agrippa (1486–1535), Giambattista della Porta (c. 1535–1615) and the often decried Paracelsus. Despite theoretical differences and conflicts between separate philosophical systems, there were no epistemological dividing lines between 'Aristotelian', 'Neoplatonic' or 'Occult' perceptions of nature. They were all parts of a mutual world of conceptions, with the same cultural framework.<sup>73</sup>

From a Scandinavian perspective, Morten Fink-Jensen has argued that orthodox theologians during the Danish Reformation were not adverse from using various 'occult sciences' or 'Neoplatonic speculations' in their efforts to acquire knowledge of God's plan for his creation, through their study of the Book of Nature.<sup>74</sup> The picture is virtually the same throughout the Lutheran world, where astrology had become an intrinsic part of apocalyptical literature and inquiry. For instance it is worth noting how Philipp Melanchthon, even outside the strict eschatological context, used astrology and the natural influences of the heavens as a perceptible token of the Providence of God.<sup>75</sup>

Melanchthon's approach demonstrates a significant difference compared to the 1619 verdict against Forsius, where it was argued that astrological predictions heightened fatalism and threatened people's confidence in divine

72 Cf. Robert W. Scribner, *The German Reformation*, Macmillan, London 1986 p. 4.

73 Brian P. Copenhaver, "Did Science Have a Renaissance?", *Isis* vol. 83 1992 pp. 401–403; idem, "Scholastic Philosophy and Renaissance Magic" pp. 549–554; for a discussion on tangible theoretical differences concerning the conception of occult qualities in medieval and early modern natural philosophy, see Keith Hutchison, "What Happened to Occult Qualities in the Scientific Revolution", *Isis* vol. 73:2, 1982; Evans p. 197.

74 Fink-Jensen p. 356; cf. Copenhaver "Natural Magic, Hermetism and Occultism" p. 281.

75 Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis* pp. 7–8, 175–178, 205; Sachiko Kusukawa, "Aspectio divinorum operum: Melanchthon and Astrology for Lutheran Medics" in Ole Peter Grell & Andrew Cunningham (eds.), *Medicine and the Reformation*, The Wellcome Institute Series in the History of Medicine, Routledge, London 1993 pp. 35–46; Kusukawa, *The Transformation of Natural Philosophy* pp. 127–130; cf. Caroti pp. 109, 120; Fink-Jensen pp. 196–199.

providence. Still this was primarily a difference in detail. Apart from the fact that planetary movements could be predicted, and thus appeared as predestined, the argumentation of Melanchthon in favour of astrology were directly related to his argument for a prophetic approach to natural studies. In this respect, Melanchthon's approach did not differ from the arguments of the Swedish theologians of the seventeenth century. Both emphasized how portents, natural as well as supernatural, could be regarded as signs of prophetic dignity that appeared before Man through the providence of God.

Older Swedish research has emphasized that the dividing lines were never absolute or God-given. Thus Sandblad stressed the salient role of astrology in Lutheran apocalypticism during the second half of the sixteenth century. Concurrently, Lindroth strived to demonstrate how Laurentius Paulinus, while maintaining his Ramism in opposition to the scholastic influence over the dogmatic issues, by the very virtue of his orthodox zeal also shared interests and basic theoretical conceptions with the 'Paracelsians' – even though "Paracelsism and Ramism represent two disparate views."<sup>76</sup> Thus Lindroth described how Paulinus, in his account of how the world was created in his historiography *Historia arctoa* from 1636, was forced to accept "Hermetic-Mosaic modes of thought" in his efforts to find a Christian alternative to the 'pagan' Aristotle in natural philosophy – a field of knowledge of which Ramus had virtually nothing to say.<sup>77</sup> And if we go to his plague tract, *Loimosopia* from 1623, Paulinus referred directly to Paracelsian principles when he discussed those properties of arsenic that would be of benefit for the treatment of the plague, since "the one Poison (says Theophrastus) expels the other".<sup>78</sup>

As has been more recently discussed by Jole Schackelford, it was not the philosophical or medical ideas of Paracelsism that were met by opposition from the orthodox in the first decades of the seventeenth century. Rather the issue at stake was the heretical and subversive ideas that could emerge as a consequence of Paracelsian studies, if exercised for the wrong purpose among the wrong circles.<sup>79</sup>

76 Lindroth, *Paracelsismen i Sverige* p. 63; "Det är tydligt, att paracelsismen och ramismen företräda två olikartade betraktelsesätt."

77 Cit. Lindroth, *Paracelsismen i Sverige* p. 78; "Laurentius Paulinus tvingades alltså av sin ramistiska övertygelse ut i hermetisk-mosaiska tankegångar." Cf. L. Paulinus Gothus, *Historia arctoa libri tres* printed by Johannes Barkenius, Strängnäs 1636 pp. 7–12.

78 Cit. L. Paulinus Gothus, *Loimosopia Eller Pestilentz speghel: thet är: andeligh och naturligh vnderwijsning, om pestilentzies beskriffwelse, orsaker, praeserwatijff, läkedomar och befrijelser*, printed by Olof Olofsson Enaeus, Strängnäs 1623 fol. 76r; cf. Lindroth, *Paracelsismen i Sverige* pp. 78–79.

79 Jole Shackelford, *A Philosophical Path for Paracelsian Medicine: The Ideas, Intellectual*

## The Origins of Wisdom

Neither astrological theory, nor the 'occult' basis of certain philosophical, scientific or religious knowledge was in other words questioned by the orthodox theologians. What fell under critic was primarily the practice and potentially subversive application of this knowledge. Indeed the principal problem was not the points where 'mystics', 'enthusiasts', 'chiliasts' or the 'fratres crucii' were theoretically divergent from the orthodox, but the points where they stood on common ground. What was challenged was not primarily the orthodox dogma concerning the last things, but the socially conditioned authority of the clergy. The claim to have revealed the meaning of the divine Word and to know the will of God is what made the orthodox react, not 'chiliasm' or 'mysticism' in itself, nor the occult sciences.

If we return to Rudbeckius' arguments concerning those people who strived to acquire illicit knowledge of the last things, it appears as if his tendency to put authoritative philosophers and scholars on par with heretics and enthusiasts provided a rhetorical point of attack. He used this rhetoric as a device to keep the initiative in the debate and to maintain clerical authority when it came to interpreting sacred texts and eschatological prophecies. Yet as a consequence, the argument pushed the worldly wise over the edge of illicit knowledge. Rudbeckius simply forced them to a heretical standpoint, as soon as they interfered with issues where the clergy and the theologians defended what they saw as their authoritative right of interpretation.

But, without violating any philosophical or scientific paradigms, this tactic created a new kind of demarcation within the epistemological system. The worldly wise and the enthusiasts are put on par with each other, not to demonstrate that their knowledge is useless or lacks validity, but because they had all tried to trespass the limit of the knowable – from an epistemological as well as from an ethical standpoint. In this respect the difference that later onlookers put between the enthusiasts and the natural philosophers – or between the 'mystics' and the 'scientists' – is only illusive to Rudbeckius' discussion.

According to the orthodox view, true knowledge was only achievable to a person who had already seen it in the light of true faith. Natural philosophy, sailing between the Scylla and Charybdis of theological condemnation and self-assertion, could not be allowed to gain status as an independent

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*Context, and Influence of Petrus Severinus (1540/2–1602)*, Museum Tusculanum Press, København 2004 pp. 332–337; Jole Shackelford, "Rosicrucianism, Lutheran Orthodoxy, and the Rejection of Paracelsianism in Early Seventeenth-Century Denmark", *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* vol. 70:2 1996 p. 195; cf. Fink-Jensen p. 206.

authority of knowledge. Or, as the Danish medic and theologian Caspar Bartholin (1585–1629) put it: when exercising true natural philosophy and medicine one would have to capture “fornuften under troens lydigheid” – ‘reason under the obedience of faith’.<sup>80</sup> Implicitly this meant that the natural sciences, including astrology, should be kept under the supervision of the clergy as a social group.

In Petrus Jonae Angermannus’ discussions on the eschatological issues it is made clear that the biblical testimonies “That Daniel and other Prophets have prophesied of coming Monarchies and else”, were altogether resting on divine revelation. The prophecies through which the eschatological destiny of the fallen world and the death of the individual could be understood “is coming of God and not of Men”.<sup>81</sup> Or as he put it in another sermon: “...no prophecy has emerged through human will, on the contrary the holy Men of God have spoken, touched by the holy Spirit”. This statement places full bearing on the Book of Revelation, which was not a product of earthly prophecies, “but is Sent from Heaven by God.”<sup>82</sup>

A similar perspective had previously been used by Laurentius Paulinus. In two funeral sermons he pointed out the vanity in searching for answers to the question why man must die by studying the stars. Thus death had its origin:

Not from God, who created man for eternal life, and made him in his Image, that he should be like him; nor from the Stars and their revolutions, For they rule not over men, but are ordained by the Lord (even after the Fall) to serve all people under heaven: But through the envy of the devil, afflictions of all kind and death itself are come into the world<sup>83</sup>

80 Fink-Jensen pp. 275–281, cit. p. 277.

81 P. Jonae Angermannus, *En Christeligh/och then H Skriffitz lijkmätigh vthlägningh* p. 431; “Thet Daniel och andre Propheter haffua propheterat om tilkommande Monarchier och annat/ thet är aff Gudhi kommet och icke aff Menniskiom.”

82 P. Jonae Angermannus, *En Christeligh/och then H Skriffitz lijkmätigh vthlägningh* p. 585: “...ingen *prophetia* är framkommen aff Menniskio willia/ vthan the helige Gudz Menniskior haffua talat rörde aff then helga Ande: Lickwäl är högt achtandes/ at Johannis Vppenbarelse är inte genom *prophetier* eller medel/ vthan aff Himmelen aff Gudhi Skickader.”

83 L. Paulinus Gothus, *Symbolum Carolinum* p. 31, cit. p. 8; “N. Icke aff Gudhi/ som skapade menniskiona til ewigt lifff/ oc giorde honom til sitt Beläte/ at han skulle sådana wara som han är/ icke heller aff Stjärnorna och deras lopp/ Ty the härska icke öffuer menniskiona/ vthan äro skickade aff Herranom (iämwäl efter Fallet) allom folckom vnder himmelen til tjänst: Men genom dieffuulens affuund är allehanda plågho och sielffue dödhen kommen i werldena/ och the som på hans sijdhä äro/ hielpa och ther til.”; cf. L. Paulinus Gothus, *Iosie Then Femptonde Juda Konungz Historia* p. 20.

Yet this was no rejection of natural philosophy on behalf of faith. Nor was it a denial that the wisdom of God was revealed in nature; instead it was a limitation – or even a restriction – of what issues could be answered without direct support from theology. Knowledge without correct guidance from the clergy was not only godless; it was futile and meaningless. According to Petrus Jonae Angermannus, only God claimed the property of omniscience: only he knew future, therefore only he should have the glory when someone made correct forecasts by invoking ‘pagan gods’. Yet God decided that those who made such forecasts “and those that agree are an abomination”.<sup>84</sup>

## Claiming the Right of Interpretation

In this discussion of the possibility and the ethical limits of divination, the starry arts had a specific position as they concerned matter that was celestial, both in a figurative and a literal sense. Principally out of an Aristotelian point of view, Petrus Jonae Angermannus concluded that the stars were not elementary. If they were, they would have been corruptible: they would die away, and in their stead new stars would grow. Instead the stars were created of “*simplicissima corpora*, of a pure and simple matter, that God has purged from *informi*” – deformity. Their nature was therefore subtler than “all other Creatures (with the exception of Angels and the soul of Man) that are between the Moon and Earth, and are on and in Earth, Water and Weather.”<sup>85</sup>

This in turn settled the eternal, unchangeable movement of the heavens that made eclipses and planetary aspects predictable like the slow recession of the fixed stars, just as if they were all determined from the very first day of the Creation. Thus the God-given possibility of calculation was “a beautiful art” that made “all that belong to *Astronomiam* very praiseworthy”.<sup>86</sup> But this high esteem of astronomy only increased the necessity of restraining the listeners of the sermon – “the simple minded, with whom I now speak, and not with the highly learned” – from being “enticed from God” by “augurs

84 P. Jonae Angermannus, *En Christeligh/och then H Skrifftz lijmätigh vthlägningh* p. 431; “Ty protesterar Gudh hårdt ther om/ at then egenskapen hörer Gudhi allena til. Han menar Hedniska Gudhar at bära fram thet the stä vppå/ och förkunna tilkommande ting som skee skola/ Kunna the thet göra/ så ära the Gudh/ men han beslutar/ at the och the som hålla medh äro en styggelse.”

85 Ibid. pp. 157–158 cit. p. 157; “Är först achtandes/ at stiernorna the äro inthe aff Elementerna/ Jord/ watn/ eld och wäder sammansatta/ som alla andra Creatur (Änglar och Menniskionnes siäl vndantagendes) som emellom Mänen och Jorden/ på och i Jorden/ Watn och Wäder äre.”

86 Ibid. p. 162; “Och är thenna vthräckningen en wacker konst/ såsom och alt thet som hörer *Astronomiam* til myckit beprisligt”.

or *Prognostica* small or great”.<sup>87</sup> The fact that the astrologers could predict the exact times of solar and lunar eclipses in their almanacs was no wonder as some simple people believed. Eclipses only followed a given pattern according to their nature. Yet Angermannus emphasized that the astronomers could in no way predict unnatural or supernatural phenomena, either in heaven or on earth. In the 4000 years that preceded the death of Christ, no ‘*astronomus*’ or ‘calculator of almanacs’ could have predicted the miraculous, godsend solar eclipse that is mentioned in the Passion of the gospels.<sup>88</sup>

Nor could the astrologers provide knowledge and solace in the face of death and of the eschatological tribulations, or in the ever-present issues of worldly welfare and misery. Angermannus criticised those who “deceive people” with astrological matter, primarily in judgements concerning the fortune and misfortune of the individual. Thus he rejected the classical apology of the astrologers and the assertion that “*Astra regunt homines, Deus astra ubiq. gubernat*; the courses of the Heavens rule Man, but God rules the stars so that they do not always prevail.” Instead of seeing the influence of the heavens as a part of God’s providence and the almanac as a useful advisor, Angermannus thus emphasized that only the Word of God – construed exclusively as the Scriptures – would give true guidance and solace. Only piety and awe would provide health and security “on sea and on land”. Yet this criticism did not only affect astrology as a specifically misguided phenomenon. Even the learned physicians got a good telling off: “*Medici* plead that the temperament of Man, diet and else do cause this or that fortune or misfortune, but that is *petitio principii*” – a logical fallacy, and a circular argument – since bad diet and bad temper have but one cause, and that is sin. “Thus says the Word of God: Fear of God is the right wisdom, the one who follows her, his praise will endure forever.”<sup>89</sup>

87 Ibid. p. 159; “...at then eenfaldige/ medh hwilken jagh nu/ och icke medh höglärde talar/ icke skulle ännu lockas ifrå Gudh och till tecknatydare/ *Prognostica* små eller stora”.

88 Ibid. pp. 158–159.; cf. Luke 23:44–45.

89 P. Jonae Angermannus, *En Christeligh/och then H Skrifftz lijkmatigh vthlägningh* pp. 162–163; “The som ther medh bedraga folk/ the förswara sig så: *Astra regunt homines, Deus astra ubiq. gubernat*; Himmels lopp regerar Menniskian/ men Gudh regerar stiernorna att the råda inthe altid. Men Gudz ord giffuer andra orsaker til Menniskiones wälfärd och olycko: Deut. 28. Om Menniskian fructar Gudh bliffuer hon wälsignat både til watn och land/ inne och vthe/ i itt rum och annat. *Medici* förebära att Menniskiones *temperament, diaet* och annat wäller then och then lycka eller olycka/ men thet är *petitio principij*, hwadan är ond *diaet* och *temperament*? aff synden. Ty så säger Gudz ord: Gudzfrucktan hon är then rätta wijsheten/ then henne fölger hans loff bliffuer ewinnerliga.”; cf. Psalms III:10 “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.”



But the emphasis on the Bible in these issues, where any ‘scientific’ or philosophical aspect were subjected to moral and religious standards, did not rule out the Book of Nature as a reliable source of true knowledge. A vivid example is provided by Angermannus as he consoled his listeners not to doubt the final resurrection of their earthly bodies – not even at times when the flesh was weak, and they could see for themselves how the worms consumed the earthly flesh down to the bones. When God asked the prophet Ezekiel at the Field of Death, whether these bones might live again, it was a question like “a lament, as if God wanted to say: you human child, you are slow at heart to believe all what I have let be written through Moses and the Prophets, and what I reveal *ex libro naturae* of the daily experience of the Creatures.” Trees die at the eve of winter, and lie all the season “as buried without fruit”. Yet in summer they will have life and bud again: “behold the herbs of the earth, the swallows in the water,<sup>90</sup> worms under the earth, flies and others that lie sleeping in the winter; yet in the summer they come forth with life.”<sup>91</sup>

It is in this context we have to regard the criticism of the astrologers as being hawkers of idolatry, expressed by orthodox theologians as Paulinus, Angermannus and Rudbeckius. The emphasis on the supernatural as superior to the natural may appear to be a new approach – at least in comparison to the Melanchthonian view, where natural and supernatural signs were regarded as more or less equal when it came to the issue of proclaiming the validity of divine providence and to revealing the Word of God.

Yet this change within the learned discourse was not mainly philosophical or dogmatic in character. Like the medics in Angermannus’ discussion above, the astrologers were not rejected for being wrong in their philosophical presumptions, or for their knowledge being unfounded or untrue, but for having the wrong spiritual prerequisites seen from a dogmatic point of view. The book of Nature and natural philosophy were still reliable sources of knowledge in religious and moral issues, but only if they were used correctly – by the right person in the right context. To decide between right

90 This is a reminder of the old belief that swallows hibernated on the bottom of lakes.

91 P. Jonae Angermannus, *En Christeligh/och then H Skriffiz lijkmätigh vthlägningh* p. 165, cit. p. 166; “Hwad frågan anlangar/ går hon vth på en klaga/ lika som Gudh wille säya: J menniskio barn/ i äre seenhiertade til at troo alt thet jag haffuer skriffua låtit genom Mosen och Propheterna/ och thet jagh *ex libro naturae* aff Creatures dageliga förfarenheet vppenbarar. J see åhrligen huru trän döo emoot winteren/ och winteren öffuer ligga lika som begraffne vthan fruckt/ och lickwål emoot sommaren få lijff och knoppas/ Luc. 21. skoda örterna på jordenne/ swalerna i watnet/ matkar vnder jorden/ flugor och andre som ligga söse om winteren/ men om sommaren komma the medh lijffuet fram igen.”

and wrong in these issues was primarily a privilege of the clergy. Yet this was a privilege that had to be maintained and defended. It is probably in this context that we should see the new demarcation line between theology and philosophy. It was drawn to protect dogmatic truths from being interfered with by worldly intellectuals, quacks, charlatans and ignorant laymen, or astrologers. By keeping 'reason under the obedience of faith' the clerical supervision over intellectual life could be preserved.

If we compare the apocalyptic prognostications of Forsius from the early 1620s with Paulinus' almanac for 1598, it is clear that Forsius' writings provoked reactions among his contemporaries. In contrast there are no preserved indications that anyone presented any objections to Paulinus' text whatsoever. Clearly the differences in approach between the two authors should not be neglected: Forsius *was* more explicit, both in method and in literary style. His apocalyptic forecasts and astrological interpretations were bold and outspoken. There were also dubious elements in his references to planetary intelligences and personifications of the planets from the pagan Pantheon. Changing attitudes over time among the higher clergy could also be used to explain the criticism of Forsius' predictions in the latter part of his career. What could be said in 1598 could not be said as easily in 1622.

Another aspect that has been discussed throughout this book is the difference in status and social position between the two authors. As an academic and prelate, Paulinus had access to closed, social arenas where even potentially heretical standpoints could be penetrated and discussed on a hypothetic level, and where the traditional use of Latin, incomprehensible for the common man, "afforded a kind of asylum or sanctuary for comparatively free debate" to quote a Swedish Latinist.<sup>92</sup> At the turn of the seventeenth century even the circulation of vernacular astrological literature was generally limited to the inner circles of learning – circles from which Forsius would become more or less excluded in the 1610s, due to his social failings as well as to his 'irresponsible' use of the knowledge and skills he possessed.

However, at this point it is also possible to compare Forsius to Johannes Bureus, who in his writings and symposia was even more explicit in his apocalyptic brooding and fascination for the Rosicrucian Reformation. Bureus obviously regarded himself as a prophetic voice and as a herald trumpet – *buccina* – for the ultimate Reformation of mankind. Yet even though doubts were raised against Bureus' activities, writings and religious views, he seems to have been regarded as a harmless dreamer – or even a

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92 Hans Helander, *Neo-Latin Literature in Sweden in the Period 1620–1720: Stylistics, Vocabulary and Characteristic ideas*, Acta universitatis Upsaliensis, Uppsala 2004 p. 25; cf. Fink-Jensen p. 366.

genuine crackpot – who was more or less left in peace for the most part of his career. Unlike with Forsius and the 1619 trial, it would never have been of common interest to worldly and clerical authorities to silence Bureus. Obviously he had the patronage of Gustavus Adolphus, which may have discouraged potential enemies; yet even after the king's death, there was hardly anyone, not even among the more zealous prelates, who saw the need to persecute him.<sup>93</sup>

Yet a main reason why Forsius, and not Bureus, would become the subject of interrogations and open criticism in sermons had to do, not necessarily with him as an author of certain messages that were regarded as potentially heterodox, but with the reception of his texts. In this respect, the almanac medium and the changes to the Swedish book market may have played an important role.

### Prophecy, Print and Profit

In previous research on Swedish almanac literature, it has been suggested that the genre slowly became more popular at the turn of the seventeenth century. There are no figures preserved of the circulation, or of how many copies were printed. However, since the first translated almanac of David Herlitz had been published in 1604, Swedish almanacs and prognostications had been issued on a regular, annual basis. The market broadened, and the charter granted to Forsius in 1613 confirmed that there were economical interests in the business worthy of protection.<sup>94</sup>

It is quite unlikely that the almanacs yielded any greater profit to their authors. For Forsius it is clear that the almanacs served primarily as a source of income through the benefits he was bestowed by his patrons. In September 1621, shortly after he had gained the patronage of Sten Axelsson Lewenhaupt as vicar in Ekenäs, Forsius explained that he had decided to quit his astrological and chronological work “for the sake of my keeping and daily bread”. But since “good Christian people” had beseeched him to go on, he had agreed to “calculate yet a Calendar and Almanac this year to the benefit of the common man”.<sup>95</sup> Previously he had also complained that his more comprehensive prognostications would not pay:

93 For a comprehensive study of Bureus and his writings, see Lindroth, *Paracelsismen i Sverige* pp. 139–171.

94 For a short survey of previous research, see Hansson pp. 29–30.

95 Forsius, *Prognostica Astrotheologica, Til thet år Christi M. DC. XXII.*, sig. A4v; “Oanseedt/ Nädighe Grefwe/ at iagh hafwer för hwszhäll och omsorg om födan/ meent thetta arbete aldeles aff händerna lägga/ doch at iagh aff gott Christet folck ombidin war/ at än i år itt Calender och Almanach menigh man til godo affräkna”.

Certainly I let publish a great *Prognostica* to this year 1617, but few people have bought it, or wanted to spend any small change thereupon, and thence follows a work made in vain with expenditures. It is a bad habit among us, that when such a work is issued, that is only for a year, then people borrow from one who has got hold of a copy, and read it hastily over, and give it back, whereas everyone could very well buy his own copy with a trifling loss.<sup>96</sup>

Still, as he referred to his readers and the spreading of his works, this comment suggests that astrological literature was demanded and read in wider circles than had previously been the case – such as when Paulinus issued his almanacs in the 1590s. And even if Forsius did not profit from his prognostications, there were others who would.

Before Forsius settled in Stockholm, he had several of his works published in the city. He altered between the printing offices of Andreas Gutterwitz and Anund Olofsson (both d. 1610). However, in the early 1610s he began a lifelong cooperation with Ignatius Meurer (1586–1672), a German immigrant who had previously worked for Gutterwitz and succeeded to Anund Olofsson as master printer by marrying his widow.<sup>97</sup>

Through his education in Rostock, Meurer gained fresh experience in the German book market. As the first independent publisher in the Swedish realm he realized the commercial potential of almanacs and prognostications. As they were small and comparatively cheap items, they could probably be sold directly at the printing office: other books would normally come under the privilege of the bookbinders.<sup>98</sup>

Indeed there were enough economical interests in Forsius' work to make his publisher his sponsor. In his *Prognostica Astrotheologica* for 1622, Forsius related how had been persuaded to go on with his work despite his economical distress and his previous decision to quit. But since he had soon

96 Sigfridus Aronus Forsius, *Prognostica Til thet Åår Christi 1618. J olägenheet medh flijt stält och judicerat aff Sigfrido Arono F. Reg. Astron.*, printed by Ignatius Meurer, Stockholm 1617 sig A2v-A3r; "Jagh lät wäl en stoor Prognostica vthgå til thetta året 1617/ men fåå hafwa henne köpt/ eller welat någre ören ther på kâsta/ oc fölier så ther af itt fåfångt arbete och omkostnat. Thz år then osedh hoos oss/ at när sådant arbete framkommer/ som allenast itt åhrs är/ tå tager man tillåns aff then som itt Exemplar fått hafwer/ och läser thet som snarast öfwer/ och får honom thet igen/ ther hwar mz ringa skada itt Exemplar sigh sielfwom wäl kiöpa kunde."

97 G. E. Klemming & J. G. Nordin, *Svensk boktryckerihistoria 1483–1883*, Norstedt, Stockholm 1883 p. 158; Tomas Lidman, "Meurer, Ignatius", SBL vol. 25, Stockholm 1985–1987 p. 439. Before her remarriage, Anund Olofsson's widow Christina Mårtensdotter Klinck (d. 1660) had run the business for a couple of years with Meurer as her foreman.

98 Cf. Arvid Hedberg, *Stockholms bokbindare 1460–1880 I: tiden från 1460 till omkring 1700*, Nordiska museets handlingar 36, Stockholm 1949 pp. 7–10.

realized that “you cannot include everything that seems to be needed in the small Prognostication”, he had also “completed this greater Prognostication with the help of the Book printer”.<sup>99</sup>

Partly due to his royal charter, Forsius became an important client to his publisher. But apparently he also sold almanacs through his renown. In his prognostication for 1625, Nicolaus Petri Niurenienus complained that

Ignatius Meurer has taken my well-intentioned work, that I had issued to the year 1624 and put M. Sigfrid's name under, not changing a word, totally without M. Sigfrid's and my knowledge, over which I highly complain. Where I had expected promoters, he has brought me adversaries and defamation by those who have not understood such things.<sup>100</sup>

Thus Forsius' name was used as a sales pitch even after his death.<sup>101</sup> Yet Niurenienus was not the only author subjected to competition and piracy. As reported by Forsius in 1617,

... here among us a retailer of Almanacs and Prognostications has emerged, who steals Herlitz' work and have it translated into Swedish and printed against the royal privilege gracefully granted to me, and hawk them out through his boys in the church, at the Quay and the seaside in streets and alleys, in dishonour, to my great scorn and others to harm, over which I highly complain.<sup>102</sup>

99 Forsius, *Prognostica Astrotheologica, Til thet åår Christi M. DC. XXII.*, sig. A4v; “Och medan man icke alt/ thet som ther til syntes behöfwat/ i then lilla Prognostica införa kunde/ hafwer iagh medh Boketryckiarens råd thenne större Prognostica ther brede widh förfärdigat”.

100 Niurenienus, *Almanach – Prognosticon astrologicum ... til thet åhr Christi M. DC. XXV.*; “Men effter Ignatius Meurer haffuer mitt wälmente Arbete tagit/ som iagh haffuer låtit vthgå til Ann. 1624. och satt M. Sigfridi namn vnder/ intet förändrandes til itt ord/ M. Sigfrido och mig aldeles owitterligit/ ther öffuer iagh migh höghligen beklagar. Ther iagh haffuer tenckt/ iagh skulle få *promotores*, haffuer han migh förskaffat *osores*, och förtal aff them som sådant intet förståat haffuer”; cf. Forsius, Sigfridus Aronus, *Calendarium, Eller Almanach* [sic] *Til thet åhr Christi M. DCXXIII*, printed by Ignatius Meurer, Stockholm 1623.

101 He was not alone: almanacs were sold in Sweden under the name of David Herlitz until the mid-1640s, although Herlitz died in 1636; Isak Collijn, *Sveriges bibliografi: 1600-talet, vol. I, A-Q*, Uppsala 1942–1944 col. 380.

102 Forsius, *Prognostica Til thet Åår Christi 1618* sig A3r-v; “... här hoos oss en Almanachs och Prognosticokrämäre är vpkommen/ then ther Herlicij arbete stäl och oc förswenska låter/ och thet aftrycker/ emot H.K.M. migh nådeligen meddelt Privilegio/ och månglar them igenom sina Poickar vth i Kyrkian/ på Broon och i stranderna på gator och gränder/ i wanwyrd/ mih til stort spott/ och andre til skada/ ther öfwer iagh migh högeligen beklagar.”; it should be noticed that the Swedish word ‘krämäre’, signifying small-time traders of various kinds, was generally laden with pejorative connotations.

It is not known who this retailer or small-time dealer (Sw. *krämare*) of almanacs was, but Christoffer Reusner (d. 1637) was probably responsible for the printing. Like Meurer, Reusner was a German printer, emigrated from Rostock, and he had indeed printed several Swedish editions of the popular almanacs of David Herlitz – Forsius' old acquaintance from Lübeck.<sup>103</sup>

The main problem with this competition was not the economical loss, but the fact that Forsius' own work lost its credibility as cheap almanacs were spread, calculated from a foreign horizon and poorly adapted to Swedish conditions. Clearly the main purpose of the comment was to turn the reader's attention to the differences in quality and accuracy between his own works and the cheaper translations. But still the statement appears as an unintentional testimony that the almanacs had become an item that was spread, read and demanded even among non-scholars.

To some extent this explains why astrology came under a new focus for the authorities. Almanacs were increasingly an authoritative source of knowledge for the common man, unchecked by the clergy. This made them problematic, irrespective of what messages they conveyed. When the prophet Jon Olofsson was interrogated by Johannes Rudbeckius concerning the reasons of his calling, he claimed that he, although being an unlearned man had noticed how "the spring this year is gone out of its circle, and shall do so even more in the two following years, so that the almanac shall go amiss on its progress".<sup>104</sup> Although he primarily used the almanac to prove it wrong, and thereby to strengthen his own claims, Jon Olofsson's statement testifies how bookish learning was adopted into a primarily oral culture, that recognized no sharp demarcation between high and low, or between the learned and the illiterate. Clearly Jon made a point of his underdog position as an unlearned peasant. Yet he incorporated things he had heard and read in his preaching. Like Forsius in his excursion 'on some portents' in the prognostication for 1619, Jon mediated news and rumours of presages and wonders in both speech and writing. As we have seen he had heard of the 'heavenly letter' found on the high altar in Uppsala, and he also referred to "the sayings of Johannes Bureus". This probably refers to three private symposia over the apocalyptic tract *Buccina iubilei ultimi* (i.e. 'The Trumpet of the Last Joyful Cry'), held in Uppsala in the spring of 1617. Obviously Jon had not attended Bureus' lectures, but like several others he had apparently

103 See Collijn, *Sveriges bibliografi: 1600-talet I* col. 377–380.

104 Rudbeckius, "Itt kort extract ..." UUB K 23, cit. fol. 1; "Ther aff at wåren är gången theta året uthu sin cirkel, och skal än meera gå i the tw efferföljande åår: så at almanacken om hans gang skola slå felt. thet han haffuer kunnat merkia och kan förkunna."

heard of them and of the prophetic potentiality of their subject.<sup>105</sup>

The problem with the almanacs and the prognostications was not their astrological content in general, but the support they could provide for various claims in religious and political issues. In 1619 Gustavus Adolphus maintained that Forsius had caused commotion among the common man through his acknowledgement of Jon's statements. Yet Forsius' crime was not primarily that he had speculated on Jon's sayings, but that his speculations had got a new public approach, thanks to the medial change.

## An Orthodox Response

As demonstrated by the homilies of Petrus Jonae Angermannus, the astrologers were criticized by the clergy for allowing the knowledge of the almanacs to easily come into the wrong hands.

In his discussion on eschatology, and on craving for knowledge in a world subjected to sickness and death, Angermannus maintained that the astrologers exploited the fears of men and "much beset both Nobility and non-nobles, so that they come in that opinion that they consider them as prophets and buy the one Prognostication and Planet book after the other, nativities and their birth moments, how the stars were positioned in their course in Heaven"<sup>106</sup>

Clearly individual horoscopes were problematic as they incited the fatalistic belief that "they who are born in a sign of thieves, they have to steal even though they know the gallows are waiting for them. They who are born in a sign of manslaughters, they must kill, if yet the executioner stands right there with the sword behind his back." The emergence of new astrological books had clearly accentuated the problem, for instance through their accuracy in predicting eclipses:

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105 Rudbeckius, "Itt kort extract ..." UUB K 23, cit. fol. 1; "Sedhan til at bewijisa at han är en rett kallat och sanferdigh propheet tagher han skääl ... 7. aff johannis Burraei taal"; cf. Lindroth, *Paracelsismen i Sverige* pp. 151–152; on the 'heavenly letter' of 1618, see above p. 226.

106 P. Jonae Angermannus, *En Christeligh/ och then H Skriffitz lijkmätigh vthlägningh* pp. 155–156; "Sombliga giffua stiernorna skul/ som Astrologi myckit vexera både Adel och oadel/ som the komma i then mening at hålla them för Propheter och kiöpa then ena Prognosticon och Planetz boka effter then andra/ nativiteter och theas födelse tid/ huru stiernorna woro stälte i theas lopp på Himmelen"; a few years previously a 'planet book' had been issued in Swedish by a certain Jon Hansson Burman, an astrological manual with description of the properties of the planets and the Zodiac signs; see *Planetz booken, huruledes man een menniskias art, natur och complexion, effter såsom hon vnder planeten och teken födder är, förfahra skal. . . . Nu nyligen förswenskat aff Jon Hansson Burman.*, printed by Christoffer Reusner, Stockholm 1621.

And even though God has highly forbidden you to believe in such augurs, and put any faith in them: nevertheless will unlearned people, who understand nothing or just little of the courses of the Heavens, be induced to believe such mendacious publications, as they do see how the great lights of Heaven, the Sun and the Moon, will loose their light, even on the same day and at the same hour as the Prognostication predicts.<sup>107</sup>

Yet as bishop, Angermannus' first concern was not the congregation. The whole collection of homilies was explicitly intended as a help for the clergy of his diocese. In an excursus he prescribed a modest orientation in astronomy – not so “that the priests thus particularly in their sermons should relate it to unlearned people”, but to ensure that those priests “who in Universities and royal Schools have learned no Astronomy” should know for themselves how eclipses occur. In other cases there was a risk that, impressed by the accuracy of the astrologers, they should “be so fond of Almanacs, that their listeners should ask the Priest at Sunday, what the weather should be like the following week”, thus indirectly putting their trust for coming times in the almanac, and not in God.<sup>108</sup>

In other words, the bishop was concerned that the proliferation of astrological literature would allow a situation where the content of almanacs and prognostications – for good and for bad – could be spread to the illiterate by the mediation of thoughtless clergymen. Even if they could not afford to buy almanacs or even read them, the peasants of his diocese would still know where to learn of their contents – in church, through the agency of their priest. Yet Angermannus exemplifies not with the grave eschatological or prophetic content that one would suspect would be a main issue to the clergy, but with a kind of knowledge that would probably concern

107 P. Jonae Angermannus, *En Christeligh/ och then H Skriffiz lijmätigh vthlägningh* p. 156; “the som föddes i tiuffua teckn/ the moste stiela fast the än weta galgan står them före. The som föddes i dråpare teckn/ the moste dräpa/ om böffuelen än står strax medh swerdet baak om ryggen ... Ock endock Gudh högeligen haffuer förbudit att tro sådanne tecknetydare/ och sättia någon tro til them: lickwäl bliffuer olärde folk/ som litet eller inthe förstå sig på Himmelens lopp/ beweeckte at tro sådanna lögnskriffter/ therföre at the see the stora Himmelens lius Sool och Måne mista sitt skeen/ äffuen på samma dag och timma Prognosticon förutsäger.”

108 Ibid. p. 163; “Hwad then *digression* till *Astronomiam* angår/ är infört icke i then mening/ at Presterna så synnerligen i predickningen thet för olärdt folk framstella skola: vthan at the som på *Universiteter* och *regijs Scholis* intet haffua *Astronomiam* lärdt, skola sielffua weta huru förmörkelsen skeer/ och icke för then skul hålla så myckit aff Allmenacher/ at theas åhörare skulle fråga Presten om Söndagen/ hwad wäderleek bliffua skal nästkommande weko/ vnderwijsa meenlöst folk som wela alla sina bestellningar både til at såå och skära/ lycko och olycko ställa efter Allmenacher/ icke skulle lita ther på och öffuergiffua Gudh”.



the peasants more: the coming weather, which would decide whether one should starve or prosper the coming year.

The prescription to overcome this risk was knowledge, provided by the right teachers and derived from the right source: "God grant to us the gifts of his Holy Spirit, so that we would not depart from God's word, seeking unknown causes to our sad condition here in this World". Clearly death and sorrow was a result of human sin and God's just punishment. Thus, instead of "running to *Astrologos*, soothsayers and sorceresses" one should pray to God for "awe and the right knowledge and enlightenment". In exchange God promises to provide "the right *Prognostication* (Deut. 28) in this world, and after this life he will give our bones flesh and life, and let this mortal rise, and attire immortality, and rejoice with the right Israelites".<sup>109</sup>

The notion of the 'right prognostication' provided by God to the faithful reminds us of the reference to the Scriptures as the "great and unwavering Prognostication" in the almanac for the year 1600 by Olaus Andreae and Gerardus Eriici.<sup>110</sup> Yet here the context is quite different. The statement of Angermannus appears in a sermon, and not in an astrological prognostication. It is no longer a question of reservations against the far-reaching claims of the astrologers, emphasizing that all forecasts had to be checked against the testimony of the Scriptures. Angermannus' aim is to point out the Scriptures as the only reliable source when it comes to the crucial, eschatological issues of the Last Things and of individual death.

At the same time, this is once again a question of authority. For Angermannus, knowledge of the world and of the forces in nature is a good thing in the right hands, as far as it can be subjected to the Word of God as interpreted by the orthodox clergy. Thus it seems as if the increasing demands for astrological literature, from the clerical point of view, also called for a new rhetorical means of distinguishing the good and useful knowledge that could be extracted from almanacs, from the presumptuous assertions of the astrologers and the interests of unscrupulous printers. Illicit knowledge

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109 Ibid. p. 171; Gudh oss sins Helige Andes gåffuor förläne/ at wij icke giffua oss ifrå Gudz ord/ sökandes fremmande orsaker til vårt sorgeliga tilstånd i thenna Werldenne/ vthan weeta at synden haffuer thet wällit/ henner straff hoos Gudh affbidia/ och icke löpa til *Astrologos* spåmän och trolbackor/ vthan bidia Gudh om hans frucktan/ rätta kundskap och vplysning/ så loffuar Gudh oss then rätta *Prognosticon* Deut: 28 i thenna Werldenne/ och efter thetta lifftet wil giffua wärom benom kött och lijff/ och låta thetta dödeliga vpstå/ och ikläda sig odödeligheten/ och frögdas medh the rätta Jsraeliter/ hwilket oss för Christi skul vnne Gudh Fader/ Son och then H. Ande högt loffuat i all ewigheet/ Amen/ Amen."

110 See above p. 105.

was primarily recognized as it encroached on the primacy of theology and thus could be used to question the authority of the clergy.

Thus the rejection of astrology among the orthodox prelates was not primarily a question of how astrology was regarded as more problematic than previously, but that it was at the risk of slipping out of clerical control. Astrology became more clearly defined, and certain aspects of astrological knowledge were more firmly pushed over the edge of illicit knowledge in the homiletic literature. It became part of a clerical strategy to curb, discredit and refute claims of knowledge in a new social and political situation. Otherwise these claims threatened the preferential right of interpretation of the *Lehrstand*.

In other words, as long as astrology was discussed within the learned world, by reliable scholars and clergymen, it was an internal affair. The problematic aspects of astrology could be discussed, but there was no explicit need to discredit the art as such. However, when the authoritative claims of the astrologers were suddenly understood by the common people, the issue became problematic. The easiest way to confront the problem was apparently to turn to conventional and recognized arguments against the astrologer's trade. In this debate the astrologer would virtually become a heretic, while his practice would as far as possible be designated as non-knowledge, synonymous with pagan, illicit superstition. Through the transition of his wisdom from the towers of learning to the urban, plebeian arena, the role of the astrologer changed. He was no longer a philosopher, but instead placed in pejorative terms alongside enthusiasts, Rosicrucians, magicians and heretics.



# Taming the Prophets

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my  
course, I have kept the faith ...

2 Tim. 4:7

## Public and Academic Debate

**D**espite the harsh statements presented in the previous chapter, the orthodox discourse on astrology was by no means uniform at the beginning of the 1620s. Obviously the censures were meant to restrain astrological knowledge. Yet primarily they concerned specific issues into which astrologers should not inquire and addressed the risk that astrological knowledge would be misinterpreted and uncritically accepted when spread through almanacs.

Moreover it should be taken into consideration that these statements were primarily included in sermons, written directly for the pulpit or published as homiletic examples for the serving clergy. The right 'orthodox' view on astrology that they represent was public, meant to be mediated to the listening congregation. The message was adjusted to the laypeople, be they learned, unlearned or outright illiterate.

In academic circles, the subject became more complex. Even Martinus Olavi Stenius' unrelenting showdown with the "uncertainty and vanity" of astrological forecasts from 1611 was primarily intended to sum up the critical arguments in a thesis to be defended in a public disputation. In accordance with its genre, the academic dissertation presupposed the possibility of valid arguments to be presented by the opponent.

Different approaches on the issue were also represented within the academy, partly as a matter of scholarly discipline and faculty. In 1626 the Chair of Medicine wrote and presided at the disputation of an "astrological dissertation" concerning the "conspicuous and remarkable influence of the celestial stars", seemingly without a word of protest from his colleagues.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Johannes Franck, *De insigni et admirabili siderum coelestium in sublunaria corpora influxu vi & efficacia disputatio astrologica*, printed by Eskil Mattsson, Uppsala 1626.

Five years later the university council censored a dissertation in mechanics on account of some astrological statements inserted by its respondent Petrus Andreae Schomerus (1607–1660). However, in 1632 the aforementioned attempt of Laurentius Stigzelius' to associate astrological conjectures with demonic *pacta* in a dissertation was also censored. This was primarily because the colleagues conceived the passage as a personal and undue attack on the Chair of Mechanics, who had been Schomerus' preceptor. But according to Jonas Magni Wexionensis – foremost among Laurentius Paulinus' adversaries during the Ramistic controversy and since 1624 Professor of Theology – the measures were also motivated to hinder “the science of astrological predictions” from being totally disgraced among the students.<sup>2</sup> Moreover it should be noted that Schomerus, despite his views being censored, and despite his astrological authorship (he was an almanac writer and prognosticator in his own right), was not hindered in his academic and clerical career. He later became professor at Dorpat (Est. *Tartu*) and at Uppsala, and in 1655 he was appointed Superintendent of the Diocese of Kalmar.<sup>3</sup>

In 1636 Laurentius Paulinus would also return to the issue of astrology and its epistemological limits in his *Historia arctoa*. In a long excursion on natural history he emphasized that the stars were created to serve and not to rule, wherefore Man should not become a slave under their influence as the stargazers would have it. Yet he also discussed physical change in relation to the movements and position of the stars. He made distinctions between ‘natural’ and ‘imaginary’ predictions and argued for the possibility of using astrology in medicine and agriculture. Even though his criticism against the astrologers was grave and severe, there were astrological predictions and observations, in which “nothing is impious, nothing superstitious”. On the contrary such ‘natural’ predictions could have “great advantages”<sup>4</sup>

The argument that the stars were created to serve and not to be served, would reappear in the calendar of the so-called Uppsala hymnal from 1645,

2. Cit. Records from the University Council 7 & 8 March 1632, quoted in Annerstedt, *Uppsala universitets historia I* p. 251; Bengt Åhlén, *Ord mot ordningen: Farliga skrifter, bokbål och kättarprocesser i svensk censurhistoria*, Ordfront, Stockholm 1986 p. 54; Bengt & Agneta Åhlén, *Censur och tryckfrihet: Farliga skrifter i Sverige 1522–1954*, Ordfront, Stockholm 2003 p. 26; cf. Lindroth, *Svensk lärdomshistoria II* p. 175; as we have seen, associations of astrological predictions with diabolical *pacta* had also been discussed by Forsius; see above p. 231.

3. On Schomerus' appointment in 1655, see Sven Göransson, *Ortodoxi och synkretism i Sverige 1647–1660*, Almqvist & Wiksell, Uppsala 1950 p. 331; for a list of his almanacs, see Isak Collijn, *Sveriges bibliografi: 1600-talet, vol. II R–Ö*; Uppsala 1946 col. 835–836.

4. L. Paulinus Gothus, *Historiae Arctoe libri tres*, printed by Johannes Barkenius, Strängnäs 1636 pp. 19–36, cit. p. 24; “In his sanè Observationibus nihil est impietatis, nihil superstitionis, sed potius magnam habent utilitatem”.

issued towards the end of Paulinus' archiepiscopate. In this hymnal, the "superstitious figure" of the Zodiac Man and the traditional astrological tables were omitted, and in their place was inserted a critical discussion "On Starry Conjectures". Forecasts concerning lucky days, religion, politics, warfare and the destinies of individuals were rejected, and although it was maintained that some astrological predictions could be tolerated, "the Christian reader" was exhorted not to rely on "pagan fabrications and idolatry deceit".<sup>5</sup>

Clearly the differences between these two works were due to their respective character. Although apparently well known,<sup>6</sup> Paulinus' historiography *Historia Arctoa* was a scholarly work, written in Latin for educated readers, whereas the hymnal, although primarily being handled by the clergy, was meant for public use and consequently relieved of scholarly ballast. The critical discussion in the hymnal was probably addressed to the parish priests: as revealed by the comments of Petrus Jonae Angermannus in the previous chapter, there was a genuine concern among the higher clergy that pastors with little or no education in the starry arts could be misled by astrological matter in almanacs and calendars, and that they could thereby endanger the spiritual weal of their flock. As the preceptors of the people, the pastors had therefore to be properly educated and ensured to hold the right views before possibly being introduced to the more subtle aspects and distinctions of the subject.

Consequently, in whatever fashion we would characterize the scholarly and clerical attitudes towards astrology at the mid-seventeenth century, they cannot by any means be described in terms of a categorical rejection. Obviously the orthodox discourse on the issue had changed since Paulinus wrote his prognostication for 1598, but the positions of the debate were also depending on the context in which they were assumed. What could be said in academic circles had to be revised before being told in public. The arguments shifted, depending on whether they were used in a scholarly

5 *Then Swenska Vbsala Psalmboken/ Sampt andra små wanligha Handböcker: Vthi Stockholms Rijkzdagh/ åhr M.DC.XLIII. Vthaff S. Ministerio nödhstorffteligha öfversedt/ förmeradt och förbättradt*, printed by Ignatius Meurer Stockholm 1649; "Cap. XI. Om Stiernegissningar ... bemelte widhskepelighe Figur ... Och wil ther brede widh then Christelighe Läsaren trolighen hafwa förmanadt/ at Han sådana Hedniska påfunder och Affgudeske Bedrägetij plat inter achtar".

6 That *Historia arctoa* was known and read may be seen from the protests raised by the city council of Riga in the summer of 1636 against a passage in the book, concerning the Swedish conquest of the city in the 1620s; A.B. Carlsson, "Laurentius Paulinus och censureringen af *Historia arctoa*", *Nordisk tidskrift för bok- och biblioteksväsen* 1916 pp. 59–61.

debate or presented from the pulpit, teaching righteous Christian conduct in daily life to a congregation.

Once again this means that the displacement in the discourse cannot be described as being a paradigmatic shift – particularly as the main arguments for and against astrological practice were virtually unaltered since the time of the Church Fathers. What appears to be a new approach is actually an accentuation of the critical arguments. As the analysis of the sources in the previous study has shown, the prime motive among the clergy was not to dismiss astrology as such, but to keep a check on a discipline and a practice with which philosophers and scholars could raise claims of interpreting the Word of God as revealed through the Book of Nature. A major concern was the consequences such claims could have for the religious and social order. Thus the criticism of astrology was not an end, but a means of taming unauthorized prophets, scholars and sages presenting potentially dissentient doctrines of faith, or even alternate routes of salvation to the people. Although not directly outlawed or driven underground, astrology became a practice held in tight reins by the orthodox clergy, due to its prophetic potential.

### Keeping the Faith

With regard to the sources, it may appear evident that the orthodox clergymen were successful in their ambition, even with a minimum of coercive measures. After 1619 there are no known reports of astrologers put to trial for their writings, or any cases of direct censorship or confiscations of unwanted prognostications.<sup>7</sup>

Obviously it may be suggested that the clerical authorities simply had to tolerate the circulation of astrological literature as a concession to public demand and to the economical interests of printers and book-sellers. Yet at the same time there seems to be clear that almanac writers generally lowered their prophetic claims in the decades following the death of Forsius. News of prodigies and portents were still related in the almanacs, but the astrologer's role as interpreter of the divine meaning of planetary aspects was toned down, as was every statement with any kind of religious or political significance. For instance, while defending the astrological art in a prognostication for 1633, the mathematician Simon Kexlerus (1602–1669) maintained – seemingly in accordance with the limits settled by the orthodox – that it was a “doctrine of the Devil” to think that you could foresee

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7 See Åhlén, *Censur och tryckfrihet* for a bibliography of censored books in Sweden, see esp. pp. 25–41 covering the seventeenth century.

any change “of lands, realms and Religions”, or proclaim “the oppression and demise of the congregation of God” by consulting the stars.<sup>8</sup>

Thus it may appear as if Nils Ahnlund was correct in his assumption that the orthodox clergymen actually represented “a new victorious outlook, which branded what was formerly permitted, as illicit and presumptuous”. The critical view on astrology presented by Paulinus in his later years would, according to Ahnlund, “set the tone and the course within the country.”<sup>9</sup> However, as the purpose of the previous study has been to examine the displacement of the orthodox discourse on astrology, and in its extension the general demarcations set between allowable and illicit knowledge, the complexity of the issue has also come to surface.

Obviously it is possible to see the accentuation of the critical arguments against astrology as an intrinsic element of social disciplining and confessionalization in early modern Europe. The attempts to quell the astrologer’s prophetic claims may be related to a joint ambition of clerical and worldly authorities to maintain unity within society, and to adjust the subjects unto a system of normative values and views, defined in religious and confessional terms. The primary reason to restrain non-authorized ideas or practices was not necessarily that the dogmatic divergence between the orthodox and alleged dissenters was insuperable, but that disunity and disobedience to clerical authorities seemed to threaten religious as well as social and political order.<sup>10</sup> Consequently the orthodox rejection of astrology was forced, not through any kind of theoretical or epistemological considerations, but because the prophetic claims of astrological practitioners had become a threat.

Yet to understand the displacement of the orthodox discourse on astrology in this context, we will also have to see how the Swedish and Finnish clergy, in the time span between 1590 and 1620 achieved and maintained a new role within the “coordinated and territorially bounded network” of agents “exercising political power” that constituted the expanding military

8 Simon Kexlerus, *Almanach/ Til thet Ååret Christi MDCXXXIII. Medh flijt stält Til Örebro Horizont – Ett litet Prognosticon eller Practica, på thet Ååret effter Christi Bördh/ MDCXXXIII*, printed by Christoffer Reusner, Stockholm 1632 sig. A5r; “Om man Gvdz Församblingz Förtryckelse och Vndergångh/ såsom och Framgångh och Wälfärdh/ ja och om man Landz/ Rijkers och Religions Förändringar vthaff Stiernorne framføre åt see kan/ och thet androm förwisso förkunna? Ther til nekar man aldeles/ och sager sådant wara rätt idel Dieffuuls läro”; cf. Hansson pp. 29–40.

9 Ahnlund, “Gustav Adolf, lejonprofetian och astrologin” pp. 40–41; “Det var mer än en personlig avsvärjelse av astrologien; det var uttrycket för en allmän omsvängning inom Sveriges kyrka och för en ny segrande åskådning, som stämplade det förut tillåtna som otillåtet och förmätet. ... Den riktning han numera företrädde angav tonen och kursen i landet.”

10 Braddick pp. 287–291.



state.” By accepting a model of the state as a network, stretching through virtually every level of society, the orthodox clergy will appear as one among several factions and corporations contending and interacting to strengthen their influence. But this also means that we will have to revise the presumably vertical aspect of confessionalization. The view of the orthodox clergy, putting a heavy cloth of rigorous dogmatism and religious intolerance over social and intellectual life in Post-Reformation Europe must in other words be regarded as oversimplified. ‘Orthodoxy’ can no longer be seen as a body of coercive doctrines, solely emanating from above and operating on a passive body of subordinates. Instead we have to see the orthodox claim, initially raised by a clerical cadre, as a consequence of a continuous and multilateral struggle for the preferential right of interpretation in religious, ethical and epistemological issues.

As has been demonstrated in the previous study, the whole discussion of astrology was constantly intertwined with the issues of who was allowed to tell right from wrong, to preach and expose the Word of God, and to authorize prophetic claims and statements. The accentuation of the critical arguments against astrology took place during a continuous struggle for authority. The different positions assumed in the debate were – just as the claims of representing the ‘orthodox’ standpoint in general – included in and transformed through a dialectic process. There was no given logic according to which the critical and apologetic notions of astrology were construed and utilized. Instead usage and articulation took place in various social contexts and in relation and contrast to other articulated notions. Every given context provided new meanings and connotations.<sup>12</sup>

Consequently, seen in the short perspective between the 1590s and the early 1620s, there is nothing inevitable in the new orthodox approach. In certain contexts astrology remained an accepted practice, depending on

11 Cit. *ibid.* p. 6.

12 The dialectic ‘struggle for authority’ in early modern society could with a few adjustments be discussed with reference to the concept of hegemony. In the Marxist tradition of Antonio Gramsci, this signifies a situation when the dominated strata have submitted to the worldview of the dominating, generally conceiving the prevailing order as being legitimate. Yet as discussed by Patrick Curry, and with reference to E.P. Thompson’s definition of the concept of class, the ‘hegemonic struggle’ between the social strata “precedes and imperfectly produces hegemony just as class struggle does class, and for the same fundamental reason: because, like class, it is not a thing, but a relation.” Thus hegemony should be understood, not as an actual condition, but as a potentiality and as the goal of any part within a given social relationship with intrinsic conflicts of interests; Curry, *Prophecy and Power* p. 163, cit. p. 165; see also Hans Henrik Appel, *Tinget, magten og æren: Studier i sociale processer og magtrelationer i et jysk bondesamfund i 1600-tallet*, Odense Universitetsforlag, Odense 1999 p. 44.

who used it, for what purpose, and to whom the astrological knowledge was presented. As instanced by Paulinus' prognostication for 1598, astrology could even serve the orthodox cause of clerical independence. For his part, Paulinus used his astrological expertise and his position at the academy, rhetorically to substantiate his claims and to meet the threats of false teachings being forced upon the church by the worldly authorities.

In *Cometoscopia* and the *Ethica* however, other issues had become more urgent. *Cometoscopia* served the purpose of subordinating the prophetic interpretation of portents and natural phenomena under clerical supervision, whereas the chapters on 'superstition in general', starry conjectures and 'pagan' ethics and metaphysics in the *Ethica* placed virtually all worldly learning under the authority of theology and of the true faith – and consequently under the authority of the clergy. Thus, in both works the discussions on astrology directly concerned the formation and authorization of knowledge. In 1619 the verdict against Forsius had served the purpose of censoring the almanac market, while the statements of Johannes Rudbeckius and Petrus Jonae Angermannus in the 1620s may be regarded as attempts to quell unauthorized apocalyptic fervour, and to counteract unwanted and potentially subversive prophecies from being spread among the common people. Both Paulinus' apology of 1598 and the criticism expressed by him and other prelates and clerical institutions in the following decades served corporative interests in addition to genuine concerns for the spiritual weal of the congregation. All the arguments supported clerical authority in the struggle to keep the true faith.

## New Contexts

Somewhat paradoxically, this will show that the confessional struggle of the orthodox cannot be seen as a process where dogmatic issues as such played a main part – something that is quite symptomatic for the Reformation in the Nordic countries. As the Church in Sweden and Finland had gained a relative independence after the death of Gustav Vasa, the leading reformers, prelates and clergymen had appeared conspicuously cautious and vague in their theological and liturgical standpoints. The sharpening of the doctrinal tools did not occur until the spiritual supremacy of the Church was threatened, either by the influence of foreign teachers and confessors – Catholics and Calvinists alike – or by the worldly authorities, such as during the Liturgical Strife and in the aftermath of the political crisis of the 1590s.<sup>13</sup>

13 See Montgomery, "The institutionalism of Lutheranism" pp. 147–150, pp. 162–164; Kouri p. 67; Ole Peter Grell, "Scandinavia" in Robert W. Scribner, Roy Porter & Mikuláš Teich (eds.), *The Reformation in National Context*, Cambridge University

The struggle of the orthodox was not primarily a struggle of *what* could be said, but of *who* should have the right to speak in religious, ethical or epistemological issues.

Obviously, constituting the *Lehrstand*, the clergy was already privileged. Clerical authority in religious, doctrinal and epistemological issues was generally acknowledged by the estates and by the worldly authorities, whereas the institutions of education and learning primarily lay under the control of the clergy. Yet as has been demonstrated, this position was not unchallenged, and through the sources it is possible to see how it was maintained through a complicated process of continual cooperation and confrontation with other social groups, primarily represented by the estates, the aristocracy and with the institutions of royal and princely power.

In this perspective, it should be noted that the unity of the Swedish clergy was illusive. The decisions taken in Uppsala in 1593 reflected the need to close ranks and display unity in front of the Catholic monarch, rather than any kind of dogmatic zeal. Conflicts and controversies would continue to characterize the church throughout the seventeenth century. Moreover, the role of the Swedish clergy as representing a dominating, territorial church is getting even more complicated when seen from the supranational perspective of Western Christianity as a whole. What must be remembered is that the struggle of the Lutheran movement in Sweden at the turn of the seventeenth century was conceived of as a struggle for survival. The power and influence of the Roman Church was still formidable and was sustained by the political and military support from Poland and the Habsburg emperors. Recatholization of the realms in the North was still regarded as a plausible prospect for the future. This threat, conceived as apocalyptic down to the last letter, was a basic conception of the clerical worldview in the 1620s. It would also be adduced when the Swedish realm got involved in the religious and political conflicts ravaging the Holy Roman Empire during the Thirty Year's War.<sup>14</sup>

However, at that time the relationship between clerical and worldly authorities had radically changed, and the scope of measures to handle these threats had been extended. In the time span between the early 1590s and 1620s there are four points we can use as benchmarks to illustrate this shift. First, when the decisions of the Uppsala Synod were ratified by the estates in 1593, the principle of unity in religion was codified as the foun-

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Press, Cambridge 1994 pp. 123–127.

<sup>14</sup> See Johan Nordström, "Lejonet från Norden", in idem *De yverbornes ö. Sextonhundratalsstudier*, Albert Bonniers förlag, Stockholm 1934 pp. 30–33; Montgomery, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria* 4 pp. 81–82.

dation of society and political order. Secondly, although the relationship between king and clergy remained tense and fraught with conflict after the deposition of Sigismund in 1599, the protection of the true faith – no matter the differences of how this faith would be defined – remained a common interest and a main motive in the relationship between church and state. In the following, the confessional issues would legitimize both the revolutionary regime and the aggressive war policy towards the Polish provinces of the Baltic region. Thirdly, through the charter granted at the accession of Gustavus Adolphus in 1611, the spheres of authority of church and state were redefined and settled in order to forestall and handle future conflicts. Finally the common interests were manifested in the Ordinance of Örebro from 1617, primarily drawn up in order to meet the Polish threat through its regulations against suspected Catholic renegades.

Thus the changing approach towards astrology among the orthodox occurred in a situation when the formerly dominating conflict between church and crown was, if not settled, then at least toned down. In exchange for support and even active participating in the expansive war politics and the project of the military state, the clergy was allowed to maintain its relative independence in religious and doctrinal issues, as well as its influence over the educational system. Within their respective field of competence king and clergy supported each other, mutually strengthening current institutions and instruments of education, discipline and censorship.

However, it was also in this situation, when the cooperation between king and clergy became institutionalized, that a new crisis of authority arose. As the outer threat of recatholization diminished along with the need to counteract the undue ambitions of worldly sovereigns, the Swedish clergy could concentrate on inner disciplining and persecution of sorcerers, non-authorized preachers and self-acclaimed prophets – people who exercised dangerous practices and spread heresies around the country. Consequently, more emphasis was placed on the challenge of alleged nonconformists – radical spiritualists, mystics, chiliasts, Paracelsians and Rosicrucians et cetera – who while regarding themselves as the true heirs of the evangelical movement embraced ambitions of continuous religious, moral and social reform.

It may be discussed whether the reactions of the orthodox clergy really indicated an increase of religious dissent in the 1610s and 1620s, or if these issues were only more attended to by clerical and worldly authorities. Still the anxious censures against 'Rosicrucian brothers, Calvinists and Enthusiasts' seem to indicate a continuous need to maintain the authority of the clergy. As becomes evident in the criticism against attempts to calculate

the time and moment of the Second Advent, the orthodox clergymen feared that the prophetic potential of astrology would become a tool in the hands of dissentients and sectarians. Moreover it has been demonstrated that the ambition of the orthodox to forward their positions on the issue of astrology in Sweden occurred concurrently with the tendency that astrological literature turned from being the exclusive concern of clergymen and intellectuals, to become a public item circulated among laypeople and commoners. Obviously there was no problem in censuring the astrologers by referring to their expertise as being non-knowledge, and to their craft as being equivalent to superstition and sorcery. The possibilities were legion: since ancient times the astrological art had balanced between the allowable and the illicit, between the wisdom of Nestor and the hubris of Prometheus. And as demonstrated by the trial of 1619, the arguments could always gain the support from the Scriptures and other authoritative sources. However, the need to do so was not given precedence in the orthodox discourse until the astrologer's claims of interpreting the Word of God by studying the revolutions of the heavens had become public, and almanacs, prognostications and planet books were adopted into popular culture.

# Att tāmja profeter: astrologi, ortodoxi och Guds ord i det tidigmoderna Sverige

Hela det intressanta problemet om astrologiens upplösning är i själva verket ganska invecklat; jag hoppas att deo volente få återkomma till det i annat sammanhang.

Henrik Sandblad, *De eskatologiska föreställningarna*<sup>1</sup>

Denna bok har behandlat den intellektuella diskussion som fördes om astrologisk teori och praktik i Sverige från 1590-talet fram till mitten av 1620-talet. Undersökningens fokus har varit en förskjutning i det ortodoxa, lutherska tänkandet, där nya skiljelinjer drogs mellan tillåten och otillåten kunskap. Astrologin, som varit en omistlig del av skolmedicinen sedan århundraden och vars fysiska principer var naturfilosofiskt allmogods, började omkring sekelskiftet 1600 att motarbetas öppet av prästerskapet. I predikningar, teologiska kommentarer och utlåtanden fördömdes astrologin som en förbjuden, hednisk konst, utövad i syfte att nå kunskap om sådant som inte tillkom människan.

Under arbetets gång har det varit min ambition att frånga ett äldre forskningsläge, där förkastandet av astrologin betraktas som ett led i en fortgående moderniseringsprocess, och där 15- och 1600-talens reformatorer i sin strävan att rensa religionen från "vidskeplighet" och magiska föreställningar antas ha banat väg för den moderna rationalismen – eller för "avförtrollningen" av det västerländska tänkandet för att tala med Max Weber. I stället för att se till de långa linjerna och tolka det tidiga 1600-talets debatt i ljuset av moderna uppfattningar om skiljelinjerna mellan begreppen magi, religion och vetenskap, har jag anlagt ett kort tidsperspektiv för att försöka analysera materialet i en samtida kontext. Med utgångspunkt från två olika författare – Laurentius Paulinus Gothus och Sigfridus Aronus Forsius – har en huvudpoäng varit att visa hur det ortodoxa prästerskapets

1 Sandblad, *De eskatologiska föreställningarna* s. 253 n. 6.

ställningstaganden i fråga om astrologin hängde samman med en strävan att vidmakthålla den prästerliga auktoriteten i religiösa såväl som vetenskapliga och etiska frågor.

Hela diskussionen präglades av astrologins profetiska potential. Den tidigmoderna filosofin och vetenskapen vilade på en religiös grund. Naturens ordning liksom samhällets, sattes i relation till ett transcendent vara som utgjorde den yttersta principen för alla epistemologiska resonemang om sann och falsk kunskap om världen. Eftersom hela skapelsen emanerade från det gudomliga Ordet – logos – som speglade Guds visdom och kunskap, tänktes naturen i termer av en text eller en bok ("liber naturae") som korresponderade med det uppenbarade Ordet i Skriften ("liber scripturae"), och som kunde tolkas av den som hade den rätta kunskapen. I stort sett alla fenomen, vare sig de betraktades som naturliga eller övernaturliga kunde därmed ges en profetisk innebörd. Naturfilosofen arbetade inte bara i en from ambition att studera och förstå Guds skapelse. Det yttersta målet var att nå den bakomliggande verkligheten och att förstå Gud själv. I denna kontext kunde astrologin bli en metod att uttolla de gudomliga mysterierna och Guds försyn genom historiens linjära och cirkulära skiften, från skapelsens gryning till den annalkande domedagen.

Samtidigt bidrog detta till att göra astrologin problematisk. Kritik mot astrologin hade förekommit sedan antiken, men de höga anspråken gjorde att astrologen ständigt befann sig i gränslandet mellan gudomligt sanktionerat profeterande och en strävan efter otillåten kunskap. Det som av astrologen själv beskrevs som en from och ödmjuk strävan efter vishet, kunde av andra fördömas som ett utslag av högmod och gudlös nyfikenhet.

### Astrologi i kyrkans tjänst

Detta innebar att det fanns en given poäng för snart sagt varje utövare av astrologi att definiera skiljelinjerna mellan tillåtna och förbjudna praktiker. När astronomen och kyrkomannen Laurentius Paulinus Gothus i sin första almanacka och astrologiska prognostika för 1592 gav uttryck för en kritisk hållning gentemot vissa typer av förutsägelser, kan detta snarast betraktas som en del av genren. Det fåtal svenska almanackor och prognostikor som gavs ut mellan 1584 och 1599 hade i första hand karaktären av lärdomsprov riktade till kolleger, patroner och framtida välgörare. Paulinus första almanacka var inget undantag, och de kritiska argumenten fick i sammanhanget en retorisk funktion, i och med att de stärkte hans auktoritet i ämnet.

När Paulinus sex år senare förbehållslöst försvarade astrologin i en ny almanacka och prognostika, ska detta knappast tolkas som att han ändrat

inställning på ett personligt plan. Snarare handlar det om att han hade ett annat syfte än att ge prov på sina egna färdigheter. I texten berördes centrala delar i det ledande svenska prästerskapets politiska program, rörande utbildningsväsendet och kyrkans ställning i relation till den världsliga överheten. Prognostikan var dedicerad till riksföreståndaren, hertig Karl, med inlindade uppmaningar att denne skulle stå fast som garant för besluten vid 1593 års generalsynod i Uppsala. Paulinus tycks med andra ord ha försökt påverka hertigen att axla sin roll som *custos ecclesiae* – kyrkans beskyddare – för att i övrigt låta prästerskapet ansvara för lära och rit, med auktoriteten att leda rikets utbildningsväsen. Samtidigt vände sig Paulinus också till prästerskapet och till kollegerna vid universitetet med sin text. I de astrologiska auspicierne för 1598 kan anas uppmaningar att stå fasta och förlita sig på Gud och den gudomliga försynen i en tid då kyrkan i Sverige stod mellan två eldar: den katolske kung Sigismund och hertig Karl, vars kyrkopolitiska ambitioner misstroddes av det högre prästerskapet. I den yttersta av tider, då den påviske Antikrist rasade för att störta Kristi församling i fördärvet, och då kätteriet hotade från alla håll, kunde med andra ord astrologiska motiv användas för att bekräfta prästerskapets ställning som ledare för den renläriga, ortodoxa kyrka som skulle leda människor till frälsning.

### Till försvar för prästerskapets auktoritet

Vintern 1607–1608, när Paulinus återkom till frågan om astrologins berättigande i *Cometoscopia*, hade motsättningarna mellan prästerskapet och den numera evangeliska överheten skärpts. Sedan Sigismund formellt avsatts av ständerna framträdde hertig Karl/Karl IX som prästerskapets huvudmotståndare genom sin ambition att som världslig överhet aktivt föra reformationsverket vidare enligt sin egen övertygelse, oavsett vilka invändningar prästerskapet kunde tänkas ha.

Hösten 1607, mitt under denna konflikt, uppenbarade sig en komet på himlen. Paulinus, som tidigare avsatts från sin professur i Uppsala, tillkallades av kungen och uppmanades att författa en tolkning av fenomenet. Resultatet blev *Cometoscopia*, som mer än en vidräkning med astrologernas tolkningar framträder som ett resonemang där all filosofisk eller vetenskaplig kunskap om kometer – och därmed den profetiska och apokalyptiska potential som fanns i denna kunskap – underordnades det rättrogna prästerskapets exegetiska expertis. Astrologernas tolkningar, liksom alla försök att uttyda kometers betydelse utan prästerskapets sanktion, framträder här som ett resultat av människans ”förvetenhet” – det vill säga hennes ogudaktigt nyfikna strävan att nå kunskap som inte tillkommer henne. I



förlängningen framstår kritiken mot astrologin som del av prästerskapets positionering mot de "världsliga visa", men också mot överheten, eftersom den poängterade prästernas auktoritet när det gällde att tolka de tecknen i skyn och i naturen som också överheten måste ta hänsyn till.

Liknande motiv kan anas när Paulinus i den första delen av sin *Ethica christiana* från 1617 jämför astrologisk spådomskonst med avgudadyrkan och som ett brott mot det första av de tio budorden i Guds lag. Vid denna tid hade visserligen den mest akuta konflikten med kungamakten bilagts. Efter tronskiftet 1611 kan vi se hur prästerskapet under biskoparnas ledning förmåddes stödja den svenska expansionspolitiken och hur de därmed drogs in i det projekt som skulle bli den svenska stormakten. Mot relativt fria händer i lärofrågor bidrog de med en luthersk statsideologi och med en kår av präster som tidvis fick tjäna som överhetens talesmän i sina församlingar. Samtidigt är det uppenbart att kyrkans män, inom universitet och domkapitel fortsatte att kämpa om rätten att formulera problem och att sätta en egen agenda.

I Ethican diskuterade Paulinus astrologiska "gissningar" (ett uttryck som för övrigt hade använts på titelbladen till hans egna prognostikor) i termer av att vara *magia illicita*, och därmed en otillåten praktik, sprungen ur hednisk spådomskonst och åkallan av demoniska krafter. Paulinus hårda dom över astrologerna tycks därmed bekräfta äldre teoretiska resonemang om ortodoxin som en socialdisciplinerande rörelse och som de magiska föreställningarnas nemeses under tidigmodern tid – i synnerhet som texten var riktad till prästerskapet som en hjälp i katekesundervisningen och den dagliga ämbetsutövningen och mötet med församlingsborna. Samtidigt står det klart att Paulinus resonemang inte rymmer något ifrågasättande av de magiska föreställningarnas realitet, lika lite som han i kritiken av astrologin ifrågasatte dess fysiska principer.

Av upplägget och dispositionen framgår också att diskussionerna om astrologin och den otillåtna magin ingår i ett längre resonemang om kunskapen och om filosofins och det mänskliga förnuftets epistemologiska och etiska gränser. Resonemanget anknyter till en samtida akademisk debatt om den världsliga filosofin – då främst representerad av Aristoteles – och dess normativa betydelse för tro, lära, vetenskap och samhällsliv. I Ethican relaterar Paulinus till den infekterade ordväxling som han tidigare fört med Jonas Magni, professor i etik i Uppsala, där han med stöd i den ramistiska filosofin underkände Aristoteles som auktoritet för någon form av kristen morallära.

Diskussionen om astrologiska praktiker som en del av den otillåtna magin har alltså paralleller med det resonemang liknande det Paulinus fört

i *Cometoscopia*, som betonade teologins, givet då den rätta evangeliska teologins primat i relation till filosofin och vetenskaperna. Tillsammans med aristotelismen och diverse tolldomspraktiker befann sig den astrologiska förutsägelsekonsten på ett sluttande plan mot den eviga fördömsen. Men trots Paulinus hårda ord mot aristotelikerna ingick såväl Paulinus ramism som den lutherska, aristoteliska skolastik som företrädades av bland andra Johannes Rudbeckius i ett ortodox sammanhang, som definierades utifrån sociala, snarare än doktrinära utgångspunkter. Det som från Paulinus utgångspunkt gjorde såväl astrologin som aristotelismen och magin problematisk, var inte i huvudsak teorierna eller idéinnehållet, utan att de tillämpades på klandervärda sätt av klandervärda personer. Men ett centralt motiv för hela resonemanget var också strävan att bevara prästerskapets auktoritet inom utbildningsväsendet

### 1619 års rannsakan

Att avgränsningen mellan det ortodoxa och det heterodoxa var socialt betingad blir än tydligare när vi betraktar Uppsala domkapitels utlåtande om astrologin i rättegången mot Sigfridus Aronus Forsius i maj 1619. Att döma av Forsius egna ord hade hans astrologiska verksamhet mötts av ett öppet motstånd från såväl kyrka som akademi under i stort sett hela hans aktiva karriär, vilket i viss mån bekräftas av Martinus Olavi Stenius disputation mot ”de astrologiska förutsägelseernas fåfänglighet” från 1611 och av domkapitlets prövning 1619. Men Forsius dissidentskap handlade om betydligt mer än just frågan om astrologin.

När Uppsala domkapitel rannsakade Forsius handlade de på ett direkt mandat av Gustav II Adolf. För kungens del innebar hänvändandet till domkapitlet att saken formellt sett var utagerad. De ursprungliga anklagelsepunkterna – framför allt att Forsius i sin prognostika för 1619 hade sanktionerat utsagor av en självutnämnd bondeprofet – var heller inte det som intresserade domkapitlet. Fokus lades i stället på de ”andra superstitiosiska handlingar” som kungen inte preciserat, men som i domkapitlets tolkning identifierades som Forsius bruk av den astrologiska konsten.

Som visats fanns det inslag i Forsius författarskap som borde kunna ha mötts med misstänksamhet och skepsis – bland annat hans referenser till ärkeänglarna som planetariska intelligenser. Trots detta bygger domkapitlets resolution på standardargument, i vissa fall identiska med dem som Stenius hade använt i sin disputation åtta år tidigare. Någon ambition att faktiskt bemöta Forsius fanns inte.

I sin resolution argumenterade domkapitlet inte mot astrologins prin-

ciper, utan mot specifika astrologiska utsagor – framför allt rörande individuella levnadsöden och känsliga politiska och religiösa ämnen. Som det stora problemet, liksom genomgående i Paulinus kritik, framstår astrologin i domkapitlets resolution som ett utslag av människans ”förvetenhet”.

I första hand framstår resolutionen som ett medel att få tyst på Forsius, eller åtminstone dämpa hans anspråk. Argumentationen mot den astrologiska praktiken och slutsatsen att Forsius hade gått för långt i sina förutsägelser pekar i denna riktning, liksom rekommendationen att han varken borde få ge ut nya prognostikor eller utöva prästämbetet tills han i tryckt text gjort offentlig avbön.

Men detta har inte så mycket med Forsius idéer, eller med det faktiska innehållet i hans prognostikor att göra. Snarare handlar det om vem han är och från vilken social position han uttalar sig. Med ledning av hans egna utsagor och hur han beskrivs i andra källor, tycks det som att han var i stort sett utestängd sig från de rum där den lärda diskussionen kunde och skulle föras. Att döma av hans egna ord är det troligt att han inte bedrivit sina studier vid de rätta akademierna, och hans namn tycks heller inte kunna återfinnas bland de tyska universitetens matriklar. Men hans utanförskap berodde också till stor del på hans egen oregerlighet, hans omvittnade superi och ständiga bråk med kollegerna – liksom på hans trassliga familjeförhållanden.

Likafullt var han en auktoritet med stöd hos patroner högt upp i den sociala hierarkin – tidvis även i kungahuset och inom rådsaristokratin. Genom sin bokutgivning hade han också tillträde till det offentliga rummet. Ytterst framstår domkapitlets resolution som ett försök att kväsa, eller åtminstone utöva större kontroll över en typ av kunskapsförmedling som inte hade deras sanktion.

## Det nya mediet

Även om domkapitlets prövning av Forsius möjligen skedde efter en något fri tolkning av Gustav Adolfs instruktioner, står det klart att ärkebiskopen och de övriga ledamöterna agerade med kungamakten i ryggen. Hela processen kan därmed användas för att demonstrera hur det som betraktats som en rätt hastig attitydförändring gentemot astrologin från senare delen av 1500-talet till 1610-talet, i viss utsträckning kan förklaras med att det är först under denna tid som kyrkan och dess prästerskap inte längre behöver frukta för sin konfessionella självständighet. Enligt denna modell kan reformationen sägas ha frambringat något av ett auktoritärt tomrum i religionsfrågorna, ett fält som tycktes fritt för exploatering för olika grup-

per, religiösa inriktningar och sekter. Först genom den interaktion med kungamakten och med ständerna och andra korporationer, organ och maktgrupper som konstituerade det tidigmoderna statsprojektet, kunde de svenska evangeliska prästerna och teologerna överta det tolkningsföreträde, som tidigare hade varit den romerska kyrkans.

Men att statsbildningsprocessen kan bidra till att förklara det lutherska prästerskapets ställning i Sverige, liksom de kyrkliga aktörernas kamp för att behålla densamma är en sak – en annan är att förklara varför vissa specifika idéer och praktiker, som astrologin i det aktuella fallet, kom att kategoriseras som heterodoxa eller ”vidskepliga”.

När Rudbeckius i sin Varningspredikan från 1622 buntade samman Forsius med gamla astrologiska auktoriteter och kända sekterister i sin samtid, och gemensamt anklagade dem för att eftersträva förbjuden kunskap om tidpunkten för den yttersta domen, är det tydligt att han utgick från en retorisk mall, snarare än från de författare han refererade till och fördömde. Ser vi exempelvis till Forsius texter framgår att hans och Rudbeckius ambitioner inte skiljde sig nämnvärt. Även om genrerna och uttryckssätten är disparata predikade de båda bot, bättring och vaksamhet i den yttersta av tider. I denna diskussion är gränserna mellan ortodoxi och heterodoxi flytande. Klassificeringen av ortodoxa och icke-ortodoxa föreställningar framträder i första hand som försök att sätta klara gränser i ett vagt landskap och sker i konfrontationerna mellan människor snarare än mellan idéer.

Samtidigt går det att se de etablerade kyrkornas reaktion och disciplinerande strävan som tendenser till att begränsa alla försök att nå kunskap med profetiska anspråk – kunskap som kunde ha politisk och religiös relevans, eller som till och med kunde betraktas som frälsningsvägar oberoende av de etablerade kyrkoorganisationerna. I den apokalyptiska världsuppfattning som präglade hela reformationstiden, och som kulminerade under 1620- och 1630-talen, framstod astrologin som just en sådan, icke sanktionerad källa till profetisk kunskap. Det är därför knappast förvånande att myndigheterna strävade efter att begränsa och kontrollera det astrologiska kunskapsflödet. Positioneringen gentemot det som uppfattades som subversiva rörelser gjorde att de kritiska argumenten gavs större tyngd i debatten.

Vad det svenska exemplet kan ge i detta sammanhang, och som jag har försökt visa på i denna bok, är hur centralt själva mediet var för denna utveckling. Det tryckta ordet underlättade inte bara spridning av almanackornas och prognostikornas kunskap bland lärda och olärda; det gav också auktoritet – en auktoritet som det högre prästerskapet att döma av bevarad predikolitteratur tycks ha betraktat med växande oro. Under en jämförelsevis kort tidrymd mellan 1580- och 1610-tal bytte de svenska almanackorna

och prognostikorna arena. Astrologisk litteratur blev ett massmedium som spreds till stadens offentliga rum och landsortens kyrkbacke, något som uteslöt kyrkliga och världsliga myndigheter från den kontroll de tidigare haft. Några upplagesiffror finns inte bevarade, men det faktum att Forsius från 1605 kunde inleda en i stort sett årlig utgivning av almanackor och större och mindre prognostikor talar sitt tydliga språk, liksom den täta utgivningen av David Herlitz översatta almanackor.

Delvis låg den här utvecklingen i boktryckarnas intresse. Flera exempel, bland annat Sveriges första privilegium med upphovsrättsskydd från 1613 och den piratutgivning som uppenbarligen förekom, visar att det fanns ekonomiska intressen att bevaka. I Stockholm fanns en marknad och en efterfrågan, men almanackorna fann också sin väg ut i landsorten, och deras innehåll spreds inom ramen för en delvis muntlig kultur.

Forsius blev alltså ett fall för domkapitlet, i första hand eftersom hans olyckliga formuleringar om bondeprofeten Jon Olofsson hade tryckts och fått viss spridning. Det fanns också en genuin oro bland det högre prästerskapet, inte bara för att den astrologiska litteraturen skulle bli en kanal för rosenkreutzeri och andra svärmiska och sekteristiska idéer, utan för att de olärda, oavsett stånd och samhällsställning skulle få svårt att sova bland de astrologiska förutsägelserna. Växjöbiskopen Petrus Jonae Angermannus fruktade att almanackornas läsare, när de såg att dessa spådde rätt i fråga om sol- och månförmörkelser, också skulle hålla astrologerna för profeter i såväl direkt som överförd bemärkelse – som språkrör för gudomliga uppenbarelser likaväl som augurer som förutspådde framtiden genom att tolka tecknen i naturen. Det var med andra ord i prästerskapets strävan att tämja och neutralisera dessa potentiella profeter som gamla argument mot astrologin lyftes fram, och där man starkare än tidigare betonade de astrologiska gissningarnas osäkerhet och okristliga karaktär. Reaktionerna mot astrologin, parat med det ortodoxa anspråket och prästerskapets strävan mot renlärighet och doktrinär enhetlighet, framstår i sammanhanget som ett led i en kamp för att i varje given kontext kunna definiera såväl den religiösa normen som det religiöst avvikande. Det teologiska sakinnehållet var underordnat målet, som var att upprätthålla läroståndets auktoritet och privilegium att tolka omvärlden, rätten att predika och profetera, liksom rätten att utnyttja de offentliga rum och de fora, där den lärda diskussionen fördes.

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## Abbreviations

- ADB: *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*  
AOSB: *Rikskansleren Axel Oxenstiernas skrifter och brevväxling*  
HT: *Historisk tidskrift*  
KhÅ: *Kyrkohistorisk årsskrift*  
NDB: *Neue Deutsche Biographie*  
PHT: *Personhistorisk tidskrift*  
SAOB: *Ordbok över svenska språket, utgiven av Svenska akademien*  
SBL: *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon*  
SRA: *Svenska riksdagsakter*  
WA: *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Weimarer Ausgabe)

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**IN MAY 1619**, the Finnish astrologer Sigfridus Aronus Forsius (d. 1624) was examined by clerical authorities. In the verdict, astrology was rejected as a pagan craft, forbidden for anyone who wanted to be called a Christian.

Still, astrology was inseparable from the scholarly conception of the world. The principles of astral influence were indispensable in physical theory and in medical practice. In the Reformation debate, astrology had also been used as a prophetic method, revealing the Word of God as it was displayed in the Book of Nature. Some of the orthodox critics of astrology in Sweden had even practiced the art themselves and gained 'abundant maintenance' from it. Foremost among them was Laurentius Paulinus Gothus (1565–1646), the grave and vehemently orthodox bishop of Strängnäs, who as an academic in the 1590s had published astrological prognostications.

Challenging the view of how clergymen of the Reformation contributed to the so-called 'disenchantment of the world' by rejecting astrology and other 'occult' sciences, this book offers new perspectives on early modern intellectual debate. With focus on the issue of astrology, the displacement of the limits between allowable and illicit knowledge in the orthodox, Lutheran discourse, is set in context of social and political change in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth century Sweden.

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