

Early Modern Academic Culture

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The Congratulatory Poetry of Petrus Lagerlöf

Functions, Social Patterns, and Characteristic Ideas

Latin culture has never been more strongly cherished in Sweden than it was in Uppsala during the last decades of the 17th century. There was an abundance of great scholars and writers using the old Roman language at that time, but texts were also published by those less talented in it. Dissertations were all written in Latin. Poetry and eloquence flourished when students were taught how to deliver panegyrics to the Royal house, in Latin orations and verses. There were always occasions for such performances, and extant programmes with eloquent invitations to these festivities, written in Latin by the vice-chancellor of the university, still bear witness to the events. The presence of scholars and poets like Johannes and Samuel Columbus, Petrus Lagerlöf, Urban Hiärne, Martin Brunnerus, Laurentius Norrman, and Johannes Bilberg, led Kurt Johannesson to describe Uppsala University as the literary centre of Sweden at the time. This was the Golden Age in the history of Latin in our country.¹

Festive elements were also included in the scholarly output from this university. For just as in other learned publications from the early modern period, we often find poems and texts composed for the respondent presented as *gratulationes*² in the dissertations. Liminary texts that in this way expressed academic *sodalitas* with time became an almost mandatory ingredient in the printed items.³ For as David Money concisely put it in *The Oxford handbook of Neo-Latin*: “Neo-Latin occasional po-

1 Johannesson 1968, p. 41. Cf. Aili 1995, p. 146f. and Piltz 2006, p. 32.

2 Strangely enough, van Dam, whose article on Neo-Latin *carmina liminaria* is one of the most important in the field, does not designate any text of this kind as “congratulatory”, but suggests several other labels, such as “liminary poetry”, “threshold poetry”, “liminal poetry”, or the narrower “laudatory verse”, *Ehrungsgedicht*, “commendatory poetry”, or “dedicatory poetry” (van Dam 2015, p. 51). In Lagerlöf’s poems, however, the congratulatory function is so frequently stressed, most often even with the verb *gratulor*, that the designation seems to be obvious.

3 Cf. van Dam 2009, p. 118; 2015, p. 61f.

etry mattered to the university: it was an important part of its collective public image, and the self-representation of individual members as loyal and learned citizens”.⁴ The university environment was in fact the most important context for occasional poetry in Sweden at the time.⁵ The first dissertation extant from Uppsala University was printed in 1602, and was a very simple piece containing only some theses and a dedication. Soon, however, congratulatory texts from fellow students were included in the publications as well, and in the 1620s even congratulatory texts of professors appear.⁶ While the former type of text would continue to be a part of dissertations for a very long time, my impression is that the usage of the latter would culminate at the end of the 17th century, and step by step vanish during the first decades of the 18th century, with occasional later occurrences.⁷ These congratulatory texts of professors could be written in either prose or poetry – neither is much more common than the other – but I have so far not seen any in languages other than Latin.

But if considerable research has been carried out both on early modern occasional literature⁸ and dissertations⁹ during the last decades, very little still has been written on occasional literature in the academia.¹⁰ And this is even truer for the type of text

4 Money 2015, p. 83.

5 Ridderstad 1983, p. 239.

6 Notably, congratulatory poems by teachers can also be found in the first dissertations published at the Swedish academy of Dorpat, which was founded in 1632: Lill 2003, p. 171. Later we find such texts also in Turku: Korhonen 2004, p. 518.

7 So does also liminary poetry in dissertations in general. Lindberg 2016, pp. 26 and 31.

8 From a Swedish perspective, the classical works are still Gustafsson 1967, Bennich-Björkman 1970, and von Platen 1985. For a recent account of previous research on occasional literature in Sweden, see Hansson 2012, 28f.

9 For an overview, see e.g. Lindberg 2006, p. 118f., or my own brief summary of the field in Sjökvist 2012, p. 11f. The early modern disputation from a European perspective is dealt with in Weijers 2013, p. 209f., while the disputation act at Swedish universities is treated in Östlund 2007.

10 Lars Burman (2012) studied Swedish congratulatory texts exchanged between students in an article, in which he showed how social relations could be expressed among them within the academy, and called for further research into this vast but still unexplored material. Anne Lill (2003) discussed the presence of the classical tradition in *carmina gratulatoria* from the Swedish university at Dorpat during the first years of its existence (1632–1636), focusing on classical and Christian motifs, as well as the contemporary baroque imagery in these poems. As she stated at the beginning, they are “interesting not only from the literary point of view but [they] could also help to understand the academic life at the time”. Tua Korhonen (2004) partly treated congratulatory texts written in Greek in dissertations from Finnish parts of the Swedish realm, with a focus on the poems’ dependence on rhetorical handbooks. Tanja van Hoorn’s 2010 article on the relation between paratext and dissertation in a specific specimen from Halle

that I want to discuss here, which was written by professors for students as congratulatory addresses in dissertations. The perspective is here opposite to what we most commonly meet in occasional literature, where persons lower in the social hierarchy write flattering texts to persons higher in it, in order to gain favour of some kind,¹¹ or when people address their equals in the social hierarchy, which is especially common in the learned world.¹² An obvious starting-point is thus that this changed perspective also means that professors are writing for other reasons than other occasional writers do, and that they therefore express themselves differently. The function of their texts in their contexts, i.e. the dissertations in which they were published, must likewise be of a particular kind. The discussion here will be based on the poems composed to students by Petrus Lagerlöf (1648–1699) during his time as a professor in Uppsala. These are 55 in number, and were published in dissertations between 1683 and 1698. But before we take a closer look at his poems, there are some general observations on congratulatory poems by professors to students that must be accounted for, besides the abovementioned time-span (i.e. that they appear in the 1620s, culminate at the end of the 17th century, and gradually disappear during the 18th century.)

CONGRATULATORY TEXTS BY PROFESSORS

When we find such congratulatory texts in the dissertations we can almost always find them at a certain location in the printed item. First in these publications is of course the title-page. Thereafter we meet the dedication or dedications. Then is the place of the congratulatory texts of professors, if there are any. Thereafter is the body of the dissertation, i.e. the actual treatise. Last in the publication congratulatory texts written by fellow students can usually be found. This is the general pattern, but there

is of special interest, since the paratextual *function* of the congratulatory addresses is there in focus. As she shows, the addresses were a place in which comments on the main texts could be made, objections raised, and further discussions on the subject held. On liminary poetry from a wider perspective, see for instance J.W. Binns's book (1990, p. 165f.) on the intellectual culture in Elizabethan and Jacobean England. He there focuses on the potential of this literature to mirror the author's networks, from literary, political, and social points of view. In another article, the same author compares prefatory verses with "adverts or blurbs on the dustjackets of modern books" (Binns 1996, p. 9), as they are providing a "puff" for the work. Moreover, Franklin Williams (1962) covers the preliminaries from this region and period, providing personal, non-personal, and bibliographical information.

11 This discussion is summarized in Hansson 2012, p. 72f.

12 There are differences here between different countries, of course. In the Netherlands, for instance, without a Royal court and with comparatively few noblemen, poetry was accordingly to a great extent addressed to people on the same level in society. van Dam 2009, p. 96.

are, of course, also exceptions and variation. Sometimes all congratulatory texts are located before the body of the dissertation, sometimes they are all after it. But the texts of professors are almost always located before the texts of students. The only cases I have seen where this is not true is when the students are noblemen. And when there are several congratulatory addresses by professors, the most important professors come first. So the location of the congratulatory texts in the dissertations obviously mirrors the social hierarchy.¹³

We can also easily find some very noteworthy examples of what purposes these congratulatory texts of professors *could* serve. Some months after the publication of his *Atlantica* in 1679, Olof Rudbeck in a congratulatory text for the student Olaus Swanberg took the opportunity to ridicule the scholars who opposed him, while praising the respondent for having given the fatherland Sweden its due honour in the study of antiquity. He had not done like other people who cannot realize well-documented truth and who only mock those who have. Such scholars are like birds, who soil their own nest, when they cannot embellish it, Rudbeck writes: *Aviculis scilicet haud absimiles, quae, quod est in proverbio, nidum proprium, quem ornare non possunt, faece maculant.*¹⁴ 60 years later the physician Nils Rosén von Rosenstein in a congratulatory text ridiculed the usual bad education of doctors, which was carried out by means of short compendia, while at the same time praising the respondent for having chosen the long and heavy path.¹⁵ So, why deliver such criticism in congratulatory texts in dissertations? Who were the intended readers? As we know, dissertations from Uppsala were after their publication sometimes sent to academies abroad and to other universities in Sweden. However, a large portion was distributed to the student societies, the “nations”, in Uppsala, and to the students of the nobility, and disseminated there. In the middle of the 18th century an issue of a dissertation consisted of approximately 500 copies, or even somewhat more.¹⁶ We also know that they were sometimes used in education. So we could assume that an important group of readers was always to be found at the Swedish universities, and particularly at Uppsala University itself, and there especially among the students. On the other hand, university education in Sweden stood under the control of the Royal chancellery. A

13 As regards these observations, cf. Burman 2012, p. 70; van Dam 2015, p. 62.

14 In Columbus / Swanberg 1679, *Dissertatio academica de Troia capta ...*, Uppsala. As Gunnar Eriksson hinted, the situation in Uppsala was perhaps even such that it was risky not to speak well of the *Atlantica* and Gothicist ideas, given Rudbeck's powerful position at the time (Eriksson 2002, p. 347).

15 Von Rosenstein's congratulatory text has been published in Örneholm 2014.

16 Annerstedt 1914, pp. 183, 202–203.

professor could undoubtedly use this publication format for his own career-building as well, by publicly displaying loyalty and patriotism. And when the student was a nobleman, the professor also addressed a superior in the social hierarchy.

THE CASE OF PETRUS LAGERLÖF

While messages of Rudbeck's and von Rosenstein's kind could be delivered in these texts, this was not normally the case. The intention here has therefore been to consider all texts written by one prominent professor. Petrus Lagerlöf was appointed professor of logic in Uppsala in 1682, of poetry in 1684, and of eloquence in 1687.¹⁷ The chair he held was accordingly in a special way responsible for Latin education at the university. He has sometimes been regarded as the most talented Latin writer in Swedish history,¹⁸ and he is, as far as I know, the only Latin author in our country who has had his collected Latin works edited and published in later times. This was done by Samuel Älf in 1780.¹⁹ In this collection the editor gathered Lagerlöf's poems from academic dissertations separately in one of the two main sections, since they in fact constitute a considerable part of his entire poetical output. In the preface of the publication Älf explained his motivation for making the collection by stating that Lagerlöf had created the most perfect examples of the genre. In addition Lagerlöf was, according to his reputation, also very popular among the students. One sign of this was that he was elected inspector of no fewer than three different student nations, Värmland, Österbotten, and Gotland,²⁰ and this is a good starting-point.

In earlier research, by Lars Burman among a very few others, the importance of the student nations has been stressed in the exchange of liminary poetry between students in dissertations from Uppsala.²¹ This is also true in our material. In the 55 dissertations where poems by Lagerlöf can be found, approximately half of them also contain congratulatory poetry to the respondent written by students all belonging to the same nation as the respondent. The other dissertations are either lacking congratulatory poetry by students completely, or show somewhat different patterns. In some cases, when the respondents are noblemen, the students writing poetry are also

17 For Lagerlöf's biography see especially Olsson 1977, with further references.

18 See e.g. Ihre/Wählberg 1739, p. 28f. Nobody in Sweden had been able to write pure Latin before Lagerlöf, Haqvin Spegel wrote in a letter to his son (Piltz 2006, p. 42). Cf. Piltz 2006, p. 33; Aili 1995, p. 149; and Helander 1994, p. 43.

19 *Petri Lagerlöfvii, prof. olim Upsal. et historiographi regii, orationes, programmata ac carmina varia* (1780).

20 Hanselli 1866, vi. Cf. Piltz 2006, p. 31.

21 Burman 2012, p. 69, with further references.

usually noblemen. But there is a difference here, if we compare with the texts of professors. In Lagerlöf's case, we notice that approximately only one in four of the students were members of the same nation as he himself. Students who are members of the same nations as the professors who write congratulatory poetry still constitute an important group from professors, but in comparison not as important as when the students compose the poems. We could of course assume that many of the students who receive congratulatory poetry quite simply had Lagerlöf as a teacher. For 17 of the 55 dissertations in my material, Lagerlöf himself had been the praeses at the oral disputation. Only three of these 17 were written for students also belonging to any of the nations for which Lagerlöf was the inspector.

If we look at the poems that Lagerlöf wrote, we soon see some very clear patterns. Generally, we meet in them all kinds of features that are typical of Latin poetry at the time, such as plenty of allusions and references to ancient literature and mythology, a frequent usage of rhetorical devices, and a flagrant striving for wittiness, often by means of paronomasia. As far as the contents are concerned, we could say that the generally most common ingredients are presentation and praise, just as in allographic paratexts of later times, as Genette described them.²² Let me take a short poem as an example. This text was composed in 1687 for the student Laurentius Sellinger, who then defended a dissertation under Lagerlöf's presidency with the title *De modis percipiendi et inclinationibus animae humanae*. Lagerlöf celebrates it with the following words:²³

*Mens hominum tantas quae res vestigat et ambit,
Ipsam se quaerens, se fugitiva latet.
SELLINGERE, tibi felices gratulor ausus,
Qui satagis mentem prendere mentis ope.*²⁴

22 Genette 1997, p. 263f. With allographic prefaces, Genette refers to prefaces written by persons other than the author of the main text. In our congratulatory texts, that must mean another person than the addressee, since the question of authorship cannot always be answered for sure. The basic functions of such prefaces are, according to Genette, to promote and to guide a reading of the work. Genette claims that here "high praise of the text [or the author] becomes a recommendation, and information about the text becomes a presentation".

23 Lagerlöf's Latin texts have in this article been quoted from Samuel Älf's edition *Petri Lagerlöfvii ... Orationes, programmata ac carmina varia* from 1780, with only a few alterations. The ampersand is rendered as et. The ligatures æ and œ are rendered as ae and oe. But punctuation, the use of uppercase and lowercase letters, and characteristic Neo-Latin spellings such as *heic* for *hic* and *queis* for *quis* are retained as they were printed in Älf's edition.

24 Lagerlöf 1780, p. 221. "The human mind, which investigates and strives for such great things, When it makes inquiries into itself, it is concealed and fleeing. I congratulate you, O Sellinger, on your successful attempt, You who work hard to grasp the mind by means of the mind."

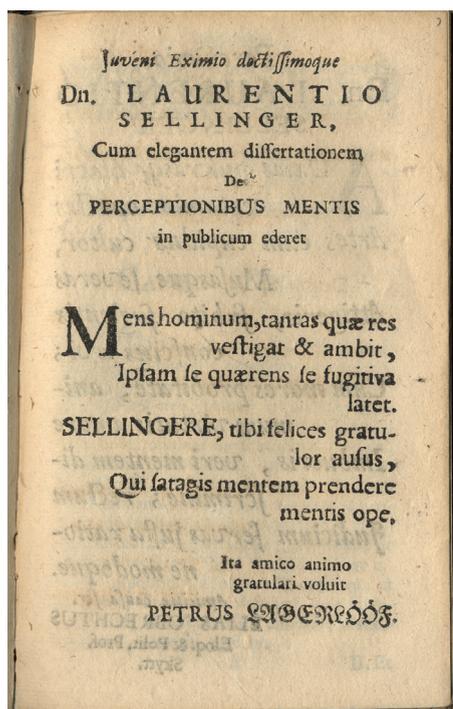


Fig. Lagerlöf's congratulatory poem in *Lagerlöf/Sellinger, De modis percipiendi et inclinationibus animæ humanæ, 1687*. Photo: Magnus Hjalmarsson, Uppsala University Library.

The first two lines present the contents of the dissertation, and state the great difficulties in understanding how perception functions in human beings. In the last two lines Lagerlöf congratulates and praises the respondent, while addressing him explicitly in the vocative, on his successful enterprise, in which he has tried to grasp the human mind by means of his own mind. Worth noticing here is that the praise for the respondent stresses that he has successfully performed exactly what he has treated in his dissertation; he has described the human mind by

using his own mind. As we shall see, the respondent successfully fulfilling, as it were, the subject of his own treatise is one of Lagerlöf's most frequently occurring ideas in his congratulatory poetry.

If we would already here summarize the messages and functions of Lagerlöf's congratulatory poems, we could thus say that they in general give a short poetical presentation and circumlocution of the contents of the dissertation, followed by praise of the respondent for his great enterprise.²⁵ The function of recommending is vital in

25 The impression expressed by Harm-Jan van Dam (2009) on liminary poetry from the academic circles of the Netherlands is thus a bit different than ours: "There seems hardly any connection between the subject of the book and the metre or content of the introductory poetry, except, of course, insofar as the message of all poems is that at last we can read this wonderful book or author. In other words, the theme is praise of the writer-editor, and nothing but praise, with perhaps a few apt words thrown in on the theme of the book" (p. 121). Cf. Binns 1990, p. 171: "Most dedicatory poems evince some awareness of what the book to which they are all attached is all about. Detailed allusions to the work cannot be expected within the compass of a short poem, but the authors often refer to the title of the book, usually make some reference to its

allographic prefaces, according to Genette. As he also states: “this support is generally provided by a writer whose reputation is more firmly established than the author’s”.²⁶ With Bourdieu we could likewise speak of a transference of symbolic capital from professor to student.²⁷ The former makes use of his authority as a university professor and teacher, his charisma and reputation, and lends these to the student and the publication by praising it publicly and by congratulating the respondent. In accordance with the discussions of Karl Enenkel, another term for this process could be authorization.²⁸ By praising the student in his first achievements as a scholar, the professor assists in legitimizing and authorizing him as an agent in the scholarly discussion.²⁹ Worth noticing in this context is that while the contents of the presentations naturally differ in every single case, since the subjects of the dissertations are usually different, Lagerlöf in the praising parts often return to some special lines of thought in his argumentation, and we shall be focusing on those in the following. These ideas also essentially distinguish this congratulatory poetry from other kinds of occasional poetry, since they usually give the arguments *why the respondent is worth praising*. Sometimes explicit praise is absent from the poem, and we only find the presentation part. In those cases the mere presence of the professor’s poem in the dissertation is to be regarded as a kind of praise, and often laudatory words can then also be found in the titles of the poems.

THEMES OF PRAISE

A recurrent idea in Lagerlöf’s praising parts is, for instance, that the respondent by his dissertation has demonstrated his erudition. We find this in every single case, if not in the actual poem, then in the titles of the poems. Almost as frequent is that the praise is

subject matter, and praise both its utility and the manner in which it was written”. In van Dam (2015, p. 65f.), this topic is addressed as well. He stresses the liminary poem’s function of a summary, and that “liminary poets often take their cue from the very texts they introduce” (p. 70).

26 Genette 1997, p. 268.

27 Cf. e.g. Broady 1990, p. 171f.

28 Cf. Enenkel 2014, p. 13.

29 To consider the congratulatory texts as part of an initiation of the student into the scholarly world would make sense in some respects, that is true, but could perhaps be somewhat misleading as well. Since these peritexts can be found in both dissertations *pro exercitio* and in those *pro gradu*, there are reasons to regard them more as pertaining to a gradual growth and an acquisition of a scholarly voice on the student’s behalf. The real initiation into the world of the learned took place with the promotion ceremony, once the *pro gradu* dissertation had been successfully defended.

connected or alludes to the subject of the dissertation in some way, as in the example to Laurentius Sellinger above, but this can be done in different ways. A simple variant is the one that Lagerlöf uses in a poem on a dissertation *De festis Hebraeorum* (pr. Johannes Palmroot 1697):³⁰

*Sacra Palaestinae dum narras otia terrae,
Et festos, illic quotquot iere, dies;
Nostra tibi, RUTHI, festos Academia plausus,
Atque favens Paeon laureaserta parat.*³¹

He simply states that just as the respondent had treated the festivities of the Jewish people in the dissertation, the academy now prepares festivities for him.³² In a poem for a dissertation on the magnet from 1687 (pr. Johan Bilberg) the simile goes a bit further, stating that just as the iron follows the magnet, honour shall follow upon the great achievement of the respondent:³³

[...] *Quam cum defendas Musis et Apolline dextro,
Et des ingenii pignora pulchra tui;
Ut magneta chalybs arcano diligit aestu,
Sic te promeritus sponte sequetur honos.*³⁴

Very commonly, moreover, Lagerlöf claims that the student by his work personally “fulfills” or “represents” what he has treated in his dissertation, if the subject is a positive one. In *De honesto* (pr. Johan Bilberg 1684), for instance, Lagerlöf in the congratulatory poem states that “love for the honest is what stirs the heart of the

30 Lagerlöf 1780, p. 232.

31 “When you relate about the sacred holidays of the Palestinian land, and all the festive days that have passed there, our academy prepares festive applauses for you, Ruth, and Paeon with favour a laurel crown.”

32 In a poem on *De vita hominis* (pr. J. Salenius 1695), Lagerlöf likewise ends by saying that just as the respondent has now treated how life functions, we all wish that this life will be happy and gentle for him.

33 Lagerlöf 1780, p. 221.

34 “When you defend this with Apollo’s and the Muses’ approval, and give good proof of your intellect, then honour deservedly follows you, just like steel loves the magnet with a hidden ardour.”

respondent, and that the actual dissertation makes it possible to discern his good manners”:³⁵

[...] *Hic est [amor honesti], WIGELLI, qui tibi pectus agit.
Hic est, quem nobis praebet tua charta tuendum,
Datque simul mores cernere posse tuos.*³⁶

We meet the same in dissertations like *De generoso* (pr. Elias Obrecht 1691), *De idea boni civis* (pr. Hemming Forelius 1697), and *De praecipuis amicos devinciendi rationibus* (pr. Petrus Lagerlöf 1698). In the poems for these Lagerlöf respectively states how the treatises show that the respondent is noble-hearted, a good citizen, and deserving of good friends.³⁷

Furthermore, noble subjects are of course commendable in themselves. In the poem for a dissertation *De justitia* (pr. Andreas Norcopensis 1684), he addresses justice personified as the goddess Astraea, and states that the treatise could be praised merely by the fact that it has such a wonderful subject:³⁸

[...] *Non delenda tui legimus vestigia cultus,
Qualibus ESBERGI haec pagina docta nitet:
Pagina, quae potuit plausus meruisse vel uno hoc
Nomine, quod Nomen praeferat, alma, tuum.*³⁹

In poems for the astronomical dissertations *De stellis fixis* (pr. Anders Spole 1683) and *De cyclis solis atque lunae* (pr. Nicolaus Celsius 1689) Lagerlöf likewise states that the

35 Lagerlöf 1780, p. 216f.

36 “This [love of the honest] is what stirs your heart, Wigelius. This love is what your dissertation offers to the readers to cherish. At the same time it makes it possible for us to see your manners.”

37 The same is the case with the dissertation *De grato animo* (pr. J. Columbus 1684), on the grateful soul, where Lagerlöf in his poem states that Apollo and the Muses, who here represent the academy, will love the respondent just as much as he himself loves a grateful soul. In a poem for a dissertation *De aenigmatibus* (pr. P. Lagerlöf 1696), the respondent has of course displayed an artfulness like that of Oedipus. And in the poem for a dissertation on the sacred rites of the vestals of Rome, where the fires were always burning on their altars, it is stated that the treatise bears witness of a similar fire in the lamp at the respondent’s home, when he was writing it.

38 Lagerlöf 1780, p. 217.

39 “Traces of your worship that must never be deleted we have read about, of these Esberg’s learned publication shines. This publication could even have earned applause only from the fact that it carries your name.”

nobility of the subjects will surely ennoble also the respondents, so that their lives on earth will be better and more successful.

Personifications of the subjects as in the previous example occur quite often. In the poem for *De antiquitatibus Dalecarlicis* (pr. Andreas Goeding 1693), for instance, the region of Dalecarlia herself, the mother of so many riches, rejoices over the respondent, and the glory that he has bestowed on her, she gives back to him:⁴⁰

*Dum tibi belligeris DALEKARLLA foeta colonis,
Multarumque eadem prodiga mater opum,
Scribitur; illa probum sibi te gratatur alumnum,
Quodque decus praestas, reddit amica tibi.*⁴¹

In *De ritu veterum precandi Anatolico* (pr. Andreas Goeding 1693), we meet what seems to be a rather witty reference to a disputation act *ante meridiem* which usually took place already at 7 in the morning:⁴²

*In se quot quondam, dum littore surgit Eoo,
Solis adorantum verteret ora jubar;
Dum, TOERLINGE, doces, tibi matutinus Apollo
Plaudit, et Auroram pagina docta sapit.*⁴³

Because of the ancient rite treated in the dissertation, where the sun was important, Lagerlöf has three different circumlocutions for the morning sun. When the respondent Törling teaches how the ancients in their rite turned their gaze towards the morning sun (Eoo), matutinus Apollo applauds him, and the treatise displays

40 Lagerlöf 1780, p. 229. In a dissertation containing a comparison of the precepts of Noah's ancestors and natural law (pr. C. Lundius 1689), Themis herself likewise gives the respondent the laurel crown. In a poem for a dissertation comparing the Greek and the Romans (pr. E. Obrecht 1691), Rome and Macedonia themselves, represented by the cities of Pella and Quiris, applaud the respondent.

41 "When you write about Dalecarlia who is full of belligerent farmers, and at the same time the generous mother of many riches, she rejoices that you are her pupil, and the honour that you bestow, she gives back to you as her friend."

42 Lagerlöf 1780, p. 229.

43 "When you teach, o Törling, how many faces of worshippers the light of the sun used to turn towards itself when dawn raised from the coast, the morning Apollo applauds you, and the learned treatise resembles Aurora."

knowledge of Aurora. I presume that Apollo in the morning here refers both to this god's capacity as sun-god and to the academy, for which he is often used as a symbol.

But if the subject is of a negative or reprovable kind, the respondent of course represents the opposite. In the dissertation *De invidia* (pr. Johan Bilberg 1683), on envy, Lagerlöf addresses personified envy (following Ov. *Pont.* 3.3.1, *Livor iners vitium mores non exit in altos*) and suggests that she will groan at this successful enterprise, since she has been so well described in the treatise, and her true nature revealed:⁴⁴

[...] *Et qualem heic docta pinxit DIONYSIUS arte:
Huc te spectatum, si lubet, ipse veni.
Cumque gemas coeptis felicibus, hoc quoque luge,
Haec quod tam pulchre cessit imago tui.*⁴⁵

In both *De fato astrologico* (pr. Johan Bilberg 1683) and *De philosophia Epicurea* (pr. Petrus Lagerlöf 1697) the respondents are in a similar way praised for not liking these foolish ideas personally. In *De tribuni militum consulari potestate* (pr. Petrus Lagerlöf 1697) Lagerlöf states in the two last lines, that although the respondent has treated the fights of the Roman *plebs* in his treatise, this does not contain anything plebeian or simple at all:⁴⁶

[...] *Haec tua dum, SKUNKI, plebis certamina narrat
Pagina, plebejum nil tamen ipsa sapit.*⁴⁷

This last mentioned idea, that the student by his achievement stands out from the common throng, *vulgus*, we meet also in the poems for the dissertations *De fato astrologico* (pr. Johan Bilberg 1683) and *De stellis fixis* (pr. Anders Spole 1683).

Another important recurring topos is that the student by his treatise has restored and given life to something that was broken or dead. In the poem for a dissertation on lighthouses (pr. Nils Wolff Stiernberg 1685), Lagerlöf first states that the ancient wonder at Pharos, which had helped so many sailors, does not exist any longer. But

44 Lagerlöf 1780, p. 214f.

45 "And come here yourself, if you want, and see how Dionysius depicted you with learned artfulness. And when you groan at this successful enterprise, do also mourn that this picture of you is so well painted there."

46 Lagerlöf 1780, p. 233.

47 "When this book of yours tells about the fights of the plebs, it nevertheless does not resemble anything plebeian itself."

the respondent has lit its fires again, and kindles a new torch, while he thus gives light to those who travel by sea, he makes a road for himself to glory:⁴⁸

[...] *Sed lapsos iterum CARLHOLMIUS asserit ignes,
Extinctaeque faci porrigit ecce! facem:
Dumque iter illustrat vastum sulcantibus aequor,
Ipse novum ad famam sic sibi sternit iter.*⁴⁹

In a poem for a dissertation on Theseus (pr. Petrus Lagerlöf 1689), Lagerlöf praises the respondent explicitly for having given the god life again:⁵⁰

[...] *Heic nunc ecce! nova redivivus imagine spirat,
Qualis in Actaeo constitit ante foro;
Laetus Hyperboreo nomen sibi crescere in orbe,
Dum sub barbarie Graecia tota gemit*⁵¹

The name of the god is becoming better known in the Northern countries, while all of Greece is suffering under barbarianism.⁵² It should be added here that Lagerlöf stresses the miserable state of Greece at the time in more poems. The Nordic countries are now the caretakers of the ancient legacy.

48 Lagerlöf 1780, p. 219.

49 "But Carlholm again starts the fires that have been extinguished, and behold, he puts forth a torch to the extinguished torch. When it enlightens the road for those who cross the vast sea, he thus builds a new road for himself to glory."

50 Lagerlöf 1780, p. 222.

51 "Behold here now, reborn he breathes in a new image, just as he stood before in the Athenian square. He is happy that his name grows in the Northern countries, while the entire Greece groans under barbarism."

52 In a poem for a dissertation on the history of the Greek language (*Historiola linguae Graecae*, pr. P. Lagerlöf 1685), Lagerlöf likewise states, with an allusion to some lines in book 15 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, that while Greece is now in ruins, and nothing is left of Athens but the name, the respondent briefly brings it back from antiquity, so that it can survive himself. In a poem for the dissertation *De Gallorum veterum druidum institutis atque disciplina* (pr. P. Lagerlöf 1689), Lagerlöf stated that not only Athens and Greece owned wisdom in Antiquity, but also the Northern countries and the Celts did so. Also the druids served the Muses. The respondent now presents this unearthed from the ancient shadows, and diligently locates it in the abode of the Muses, that is the academy. In a poem for a dissertation on the life of Cicero (*De vita Ciceronis*, pr. N. Wolff Stiernberg 1685), Lagerlöf addresses Cicero's murderer Antony and exclaims *tua victima vivit*, since posterity, represented by the respondent, pleads Cicero's cause.

I have in another context briefly treated Lagerlöf's congratulatory poems containing Gothicist ideas, and will thus pass this over here, although it is a very important theme in four of Lagerlöf's poems.⁵³ May it suffice here to mention the circumstance that two of the poems do not have any Gothicist counterpart in the actual dissertations. In the poems for both *De aquila Romanorum* (pr. Hemming Forelius 1694) and *De Platone Pythagorizante* (pr. Johannes Salenius 1697), Lagerlöf is the one that introduces the ideas, adding, as it were, or even correcting, what is not to be found in the dissertation. The dissertation *De aquila Romanorum*, for instance, is entirely dealing with the Roman army, but in Lagerlöf's poem for it the point is that the Gothic nation was the only one that was unconquered by it.

Another recurring theme stresses that the praised dissertation will start a discussion and get attention at the academy. We meet it, for instance, in one on truces (*De induciis*, pr. Julius Micrander 1684), where Lagerlöf first refers to the Truce of Regensburg, which had been settled between France and Spain on 15 August 1684, only some months before the disputation, stating that while this happened, treatises were also prepared for learned and unbloody battles:⁵⁴

[...] *Sis, Gradive, procul, nostroque aversus ab orbe;*
Barbarico potius sanguine tinge manus.
Te Thrax, te Scythicae trux accola sentiat undae,
Te tremat, Euphratem quae fera turba bibit.
Nos penes at solae renovent certamina Musae,
*Qualia LYRELI pagina culta movet.*⁵⁵

With a hope that wars will be far away from the country, he then claims that only the Muses renew the battles here among us, such battles as those that the respondent's work provokes.⁵⁶

I mentioned at the beginning that wittiness is common in poetry of the time. Most obviously we meet this in two poems that play on the names of the respondents.

53 See Sjökvist 2017.

54 Lagerlöf 1780, p. 218.

55 "May Mars (*Gradivus*), be far away, and turned away from our lands, may he rather moisten his hands with barbarian blood. May Thracia close to Scythian waters know you, may that ferocious crowd who drinks the waters of Euphrates tremble at you. But among us only the Muses renew the battles, such battles as Lyrell's learned book starts."

56 In a short poem for the dissertation *De lege Charonda septima* (pr. J. Micrander 1686), Lagerlöf states that just like Sybaris had listened to the precepts of Charondas during a banquet, the respondent now brings up these precepts to be celebrated at the academy.

In one case the surname of the respondent is Phoenix, to which I will shortly return, but the best is surely Lagerlöf's poem for the dissertation *De natura avium* (pr. Johannes Schwede 1690). The respondent's name was Olaus Celsius (adverb "higher"), and one wonders if not the subject of the dissertation had been chosen just because of the name. Such things happened quite often:⁵⁷

*Qui celeres sollers venatur in aëre pennas,
Ingenioque leves praepete captat aves;
Doctaque naturae, qua fas est, retia tendit,
Aucupiique movet nobilioris opus:
Attollit volucrem sensim ad coelestia mentem;
Atque suis terris Celsior ire parat.*⁵⁸

What we meet is a very nice piece built on bird-hunting seen as the search for knowledge and erudition. The swift-flying birds are also compared with the gifted and intelligent mind of Celsius, whose name is used for the pun in the last line, where the change to *Celsior*, indicating, as it were, a permanent improvement of the character of the respondent, very effectively makes the reader notice what the name means, although *celsius* would have worked grammatically as well. The birds are called swift with the words *celer* and *leves*. Likewise Celsius's mind is swift, with the words *praepes* and *volucer*, both of which are also mentioned as synonyms of *avis* for birds in the dissertation itself. Hunting is in the first four lines expressed in no less than four different ways: *venatur*, *captat*, *retia tendit*, and *aucupii*. The last two lines are built on the antithesis of heaven and earth, in combination with the pun on Celsius's name, which is of course well-suited here to birds and minds rising towards heaven. In the poem for the dissertation *De veterum philosophandi modo* (pr. Petrus Lagerlöf 1692), where the respondent's surname was Phoenix, we of course could not expect but a witty poem. The myth of the Phoenix is still alive and has a reputation, but the respondent should use his gifts so that he could become a true Phoenix after his death.

The last theme to which I want to pay attention is one that we could perhaps have expected to meet even more often, namely that the respondent has produced a work that will resist time, and live much longer than himself. This can be found in the

57 Lagerlöf 1780, p. 225.

58 "He who is skilled in hunting swift birds in the air, and tries to catch them with a fortunate mind, he stretches his learned nets in nature, where it is possible, and works on a more noble bird-catching. He gradually lifts his winged mind to the heavens, and prepares to proceed more loftily on earth."

abovementioned poem for the respondent with the surname Phoenix, who will of course live also after his death if he uses his gifts wisely. But most explicitly we find it in the poem on a dissertation on funerals (pr. Petrus Lagerlöf 1691):⁵⁹

*Gignimur, heu! Tumulo, Lachesis nascentibus instat,
et cunae Manes, quos patiantur, habent;
primaque lux vitae tacitis nos destinat umbris,
incipimusque mori et vivere paene simul.
Felix, supremae quem postquam cesserit horae,
non totum injecto pulvere condit humus.*⁶⁰

In only eight lines Lagerlöf manages to reproduce several topoi that we usually find in funerary poetry, such as the “democracy of death”, the “shortness of life”, that “we must all die”.⁶¹ The two last lines are magnificent: beginning with *felix*, which recalls an ancient hieratic formula which is especially famous from an instance in Vergil’s *Georgica*,⁶² the last lines allude to Horace’s *carmen* 1.28, which stresses the democracy of death as well. A corpse of a drowned man which lies unburied on the shore is there speaking, and asks a sailor passing by to bury him. Three handfuls of sand are enough to do so. But Lagerlöf makes something quite new and original of this, stating that happy is the man whom the earth does not cover completely. In contrast to Horace, Lagerlöf thus connects a complete burial with oblivion. The simile, which is surprising to say the least, and probably ironic, alludes to another well-known poem of Horace, the *exegi monumentum*, with expressions like *non omnis moriar*, I will not die completely.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

To sum up in a few words, we could say that the congratulatory poems from professors to students in dissertations in many ways mirror the social hierarchy and the importance of the student nations. They could be seen as performing an act of au-

59 Lagerlöf 1780, p. 226.

60 “We are born, alas! for the grave, Lachesis threatens those who are born, and the cradle holds the ghosts of the dead, whom they endure. The first day of life destines us for the silent shadows, and we start to die and live almost at the same time. Happy he, when he has yielded to the very last hour of life, whom the soil does not conceal completely when dust has been thrown upon him.”

61 For references on further reading on these topoi, see Sjökvist 2007, p. 247f.

62 Cf. Mynors 1990, p. 169.

thorization, or a transference of symbolic capital, when the senior scholar in this way bestows shares of his reputation and authority to the younger. As we have seen in the case of Petrus Lagerlöf, the actual poems mainly consist of two parts, which are also their main functions, namely presentation of the subject material and praise of the respondent, which is a recommendation as well. In them we meet wittiness, personifications, and strong rhetorical colouring. Gothicism recurs at several occasions, although the dissertation in itself treats something else. Characteristic in the praising parts is the connection of the praise to the subject in some way, where the respondent is usually said to represent or fulfil its good qualities. The respondents are also often praised merely for having chosen good subjects. Other reoccurring ideas are that the respondent with his treatise has restored or given back life to something that was broken or dead, that the respondent has brought up a subject for discussion in the academy, and that he has created something that will last much longer than his own life. Happy is he whom the earth does not cover completely.

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