

RHETORIC FOR THE EAR AND THE EYE  
IN SEVENTEENTH- AND EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY SWEDEN

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This article originally appeared as a chapter in my book from 2000, *Från Hercules till Swea* ('From Hercules to Swea'), which took its point of departure in textual analyses focusing on three issues: rhetoric, orality, and 'literary repertory'. By examining a number of Swedish texts from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, I wished to call attention to some of the long-term changes that contributed to the transition from the broad classical to the restricted Romantic and post-Romantic definitions of literature. In the pre-Romantic period, the term 'literature' clearly referred to a much wider range of genres than those characterized in the Romantic period as 'belles-lettres'.

In order to distinguish between the two definitions, in my book I chose to use the term 'artful literature' about pre-Romantic texts, since these were composed by way of 'art', that is, the craft and 'artfulness' taught in classical rhetorical theory. Some of these 'artful' texts were later to be called 'bellet-

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ristic’, but ‘artful literature’ also comprised non-belletristic genres that were composed by way of ‘art’, such as historiography, oratory, poetic or prose eulogies, and sermons.

In what follows, I analyze two texts that both belong to the category of ‘artful literature’: (1) the preface to a dictionary of Old Swedish, *Gambla Swea- och Götha-Måles fatebvr* (‘A Storeroom of the Ancient Swedish and Gothic Language’), written by ‘the father of Swedish poetry’, Georg Stiernhielm (1598-1672), and printed in 1643; and (2) the dedicatory letter by the famous natural scientist Carolus Linnaeus (Carl von Linné, 1707-1778) in his travel account *Skånska resan* (‘Travels in Scania’), published in 1751.<sup>1</sup>

The analyses specifically illuminate the relationship between rhetorical theory and oral/written markers in the two texts, and aim to show that these two examples of ‘artful literature’ involve the same kind of ‘art’ as those seventeenth- and eighteenth-century texts that nowadays are regarded as belletristic. When studying pre-Romantic literature, there seems, in other words, to be little reason to uphold the Romantic distinction between belles-lettres and other kinds of ‘literature’.

### *Stiernhielm’s Gothic Lady*

Georg Stiernhielm’s dictionary project, *Gambla Swea- och Götha-Måles fatebvr*, is an eloquent example of the interest in the vernacular and in the national literatures that arose in country after country in sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Europe – together with the consolidation of nation-states and the dissemination of Renaissance ideas. In Sweden, the dictionary project formed part of a Gothic-nationalist movement in support of the vernacular, led by Stiernhielm and other prominent authors with close connections to the

Royal Chancery.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, Stiernhielm's project did not advance beyond the letter A, and only this 'sample' of the dictionary was printed, in 1643, including a preface to the work.<sup>3</sup>

Rhetorically, Stiernhielm's preface takes the shape of an *exordium*, the main content of which is to define the subject matter of his presentation, to establish his ethos as an authority on the matter, and to awaken the interest of the audience. However, although Stiernhielm's preface is formulated in accordance with the rules of spoken rhetoric, it clearly exhibits features that are typical, not of oral but of written texts. It is composed in accordance with the model of a subgenre of one of the three major classical rhetorical genres, namely the prescriptions found in humanist epistolary theory concerning letters of the deliberative genre. In the Renaissance, epistolography was considered a type of speech. However, the rhetorical structure of a letter might be somewhat looser than that of an oration, since the reader, as opposed to the listener, would not have to be guided in quite as systematic a fashion from one part of the presentation to the other.

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<sup>1</sup> I quote Stiernhielm's preface from Stiernhielm 1993, pp. 271-275, and Linnaeus's dedication from Linné 1993, pp. 449-450.

<sup>2</sup> The main idea of 'Gothicism', taking its point of departure in the sixth-century historian Jordanes and other authorities, was that the Swedes were the original Goths. In their efforts to improve the reputation of their forefathers, who were known as barbarian warriors most famous for having once conquered Rome, the seventeenth-century 'Gothicists' claimed that the Goths in fact brought literary culture to Greece and Rome. One of their arguments for this was that the Greek letters and the old Swedish runes strongly resembled each other. Among the supporters of the 'movement' were, e.g., Johannes Bureus and Johan Axehiålm, respectively the first and the second Custodian of National Antiquities. On the importance of the Royal Chancery, roughly the equivalent of a privy council, for the linguistic and the literary endeavors in seventeenth-century Sweden, see Hansson 1984, esp. chapter 6, pp. 101-115.

<sup>3</sup> I use the word 'sample' as a translation of the Swedish word 'smakprov', and with reference to Delblanc 1987, p. 184, where it was first used as a fitting characterization of the partial publication.

According to the humanist manuals of letter writing, letters of the deliberative genre should begin with a *salutatio*, a greeting to the reader. Then there was to follow a series of sections that corresponded to the *dispositio* of classical rhetorical theory: an *exordium*; a *narratio* giving the background to the letter; and a *petitio* corresponding to the *propositio* in rhetorical theory and expressing the petition or request, which was the main purpose of the letter. The recommended disposition of the letter did not include a section on *argumentatio*. However, the subsections *confirmatio* and *refutatio* – which, in oratory, contained arguments for and refutations of arguments against the speaker’s proposal – were to be incorporated in the *narratio* of the letter. The *petitio* would then offer a possible solution to the situation that had been described and the problem that had been introduced in the *narratio*. In a *conclusio* the letter writer was to sum up the subject matter and ensure once more the benevolence of the addressee.

Stiernhielm’s preface is written in accordance with these recommendations, apart from the fact that it contains not one, but two pairs of *narratio-petitio* sequences, one following immediately after the other in the text. More specifically, however, the contents of the preface follow the prescriptions for one of the deliberative subgenres, the dedicatory letter, *epistola dedicatoria* or *nuncupatoria*. According to the earliest Swedish letter writing manual, *Thesaurus epistolicus* (1619), written in a combination of Latin and Swedish by the headmaster Andreas Jonae Gothus,<sup>4</sup> the subgenre of dedicatory letters comprises ‘[I]etters, printed in the beginning of a book or any other work that we dedicate to someone else and send off to be printed’.<sup>5</sup> The *exordium* of

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<sup>4</sup> On Jonae Gothus’s manual and its rhetorical context, see Hansson 1988, p. 24.

<sup>5</sup> “Breeff/ som sättes främst för någhon Book/ eller elliest något annat Werck/ thet wij någhom tildedicere och tilskriffue/ och aff Trycket vthgå låte”; Jonae Gothus 1619, p. 84. On the dedicatory letter, see *op.cit.*, pp. 69-72.

such a letter should either deal with ‘great, wonderful, delightful, and important things’ or with ‘matters regarding ourselves and our lives’, and always in such a manner that ‘it fits well with the contents of the work itself’.<sup>6</sup>

Stiernhielm’s preface is addressed ‘To my well-disposed reader’,<sup>7</sup> and opens, as recommended by Jonae Gothus, with a general question that leads to a specific discussion of ‘the contents of the work itself’.<sup>8</sup> In order to illuminate the general question, ‘how do we live in this world’<sup>9</sup>, Stiernhielm introduces two figures from the period’s standard repertory of literary references, namely the philosophers Democritus, who was said to have always laughed at human behavior, and Heraclitus, who, by contrast, was said to have bemoaned it.<sup>10</sup> If you look at the world at large, Stiernhielm continues, you may find everything grand, but if you begin ‘to deliberate and reflect on it piece by piece’,<sup>11</sup> you’ll find that all that appears to be wonderful, beautiful, rich, wise, and complete, is, in reality, vain, false, illusory, ridiculous, and empty. This, however, does not worry most people: ‘How few are they who have concerned themselves with matters other than those at hand? How rare is it to find someone who has not hesitated to trouble himself with thorough-

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<sup>6</sup> “någgra högga/ härligha/ liuffligha och wiktiga saaker”; “wåra eghna sakers och leffuernes tilstånd”; “så at thet kommer öffuereens medh sielffua Arbetes Jnnehåld”; Jonae Gothus 1619, p. 84.

<sup>7</sup> “Til min Gunstige Läsare”; Stiernhielm 1993, p. 271.

<sup>8</sup> “sielffua Arbetes Jnnehåld”; Jonae Gothus 1619, p. 84. Beginning *in genere* and continuing *in specie*, is, of course, a basic model of rhetorical composition. Nearly all Swedish funeral and wedding poems from the middle of the seventeenth century and onward make use of this model.

<sup>9</sup> “huru wij lefwom här i werlden”; Stiernhielm 1993, p. 271.

<sup>10</sup> The pair of philosophers also appears in two seventeenth-century funeral poems, written by the Swedish poet Lars Johanson, also known as Lucidor; cf. Johanson (Lucidor) 1997, pp. 268 (no. 16) and 369-370 (no. 36).

<sup>11</sup> “dät stycke-wijs at öfwerwäga och begrunda”; Stiernhielm 1993, p. 271.

ly thinking about and examining something?’<sup>12</sup> Through these rhetorical questions Stiernhielm has brought the topic of history to the fore, and in the following part of the text he insists that, on account of this lack of concern, almost all of mankind ‘live in the dark, blind to their origin and descent’.<sup>13</sup> What man knows about his past is comparable to ‘a thick haze and darkness’ or ‘a light cloud that takes the shape of horses, wagons, mountains, castles, giants, dwarfs, crowns, scepters; without any foundation, without existence and truth’.<sup>14</sup> The fact that so little is known about the language – so Stiernhielm continues, now closing in on the specific issue of his preface – is no less astonishing:

We speak it, we write it, and we have no idea about it. We don’t know which language we speak, whether it is ours, or someone else’s. We even consider it to be an idle pursuit to inquire about this, and we ridicule anyone who insists on thinking about it; whereby we forget to take into consideration that whatever mankind takes pains to do and strives for is, in the words of our ancestors, “fifl” and “folsko”, that is, delusion and vanity.<sup>15</sup>

In his letter writing manual, Jonae Gothus had recommended that, after having introduced the specific issue of their work, writers of dedicatory letters should ‘explain the reasons why [they] have set about to write that

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<sup>12</sup> “Huru fåå äre the, som i werlden hafwe bekymbrat sig med annat änn dät, som hafwer warit them för fötterne? Huru långt hafwer warit emellan them, som hafwa welat göra sig omak tänckia och ransaka något tilbaka?”; Stiernhielm 1993, p. 271.

<sup>13</sup> “Iefwe i mörker och blindheet aff deres Vrsprung och Härkomst”; Stiernhielm 1993, p. 271.

<sup>14</sup> “en tiock tökn och dimba”; “ett liust moln, som formar sigh i Hästar, Wagner, Berg, Slott, Reesar, Dwärgar, Kronor, Spiror; utan grund, uthan warelse och sanning”; Stiernhielm 1993, p. 272.

<sup>15</sup> “Wij talom, wij skrifwom; och wete intet hwad. Wetom intet hwad mål wij talom; om dät är vårt, eller annars. Hållom och för fåfängia fråga där effter, och lee åt, om någon däropå wil läggia någon tancka; intet betrachtandes, at alt hwad Menniskian i Werlden fyses om och äflas med, är fifl (som the gamla tala) och folsko; thet är gäckeri och fåfängia”; Stiernhielm 1993, p. 272.

very book, in order not to appear to have acted without reflection'.<sup>16</sup> As shown by the above quotation, Stiernhielm follows this advice, presenting one of his motives for endeavoring to undertake the dictionary project and quoting two of the ancient words (“fifl” and “folsko”) that the dictionary was to bring to life. In the following part of the preface, Stiernhielm argues that ‘language’ and the fact that we are able to speak with one another, is God’s ‘great, unutterable, wonderful, and incomprehensible’ gift. It is indeed worth the while to dedicate oneself to ‘this idle pursuit’ – ‘if it can be considered an idle pursuit to contemplate God’s wonderful creation and greatest gift, with which He has adorned and endowed mankind in preference to all other creatures’.<sup>17</sup>

Stiernhielm has now defined his topic, established his *ethos* as someone who has more insight than most, and ensured a sympathetic response from his readers by letting them know that he, unlike most people, is aware of the great importance of the issue.

In the *narratio* that follows, Stiernhielm develops the idea of the wonder of language. In order to amplify his subject, he makes use of some of the classical rhetorical commonplaces or *loci*, which the orator was to memorize or look up in the available literature and which gave access to the ‘matters’ (Latin: *res*) that were to be included in the speech. Thus, employing the classical locus of ‘similarity’, Stiernhielm first compares language to fire, both of which are so common that we do not marvel at them. Then he goes on to the

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<sup>16</sup> “Thernäst skole wij giffua tilkenna Orsakerna/ hwarföre wij haffue företagit oss til at skriffua samma Book/ at wij icke synes haffa giordt sådant obetänckt”; Jonae Gothus 1619, p. 84.

<sup>17</sup> “stoor, o-uthsäyelig, underlig och obegrijpelig”; “denne fåfängian [...] om thet är fåfängia betrachta Gudz underlige wärck och högste skänck, thet med han Menniskian i denne Werlden för all ander creatur prydt och begåfwat hafwer”; Stiernhielm 1993, p. 272.

locus of ‘difference’, recounting an anecdote from the time of the colonization of America, which evidently had already found its place in the literary repertory of the seventeenth century:<sup>18</sup>

But to the Indians, the wretched creatures who had never heard or seen the like, it seemed strange when they were dispatched to each other by the first conquerors over a distance of twenty miles or more with a scrap of paper and saw that one man was able to make out from the scrap of paper what the other one, who was so far away, wanted and thought. Oh Lord, how they wondered! They looked upon the conquerors as no real human beings, since they were able to express themselves to each other and understand each other’s thoughts in this manner.<sup>19</sup>

In the final part of the *narratio*, Stiernhielm analyses similarities and differences between ‘the language’ (= oral form) on the one hand, and ‘the letter’ (= written form) on the other. However, since the seventeenth century represents a mainly oral stage in the development of Swedish culture, the differences that Stiernhielm draws attention to are not particularly great. Speech and writing both have the purpose of conveying messages, so he points out, but whereas speech brings messages to the ears, writing appeals to the eyes. But both are worthy messengers that deserve to be known and used well, and – as is the case with heralds, although this parallel is not explicitly

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<sup>18</sup> The anecdote also appears in one of the young Swedish noblewoman Beata Rosenhane’s rhetorical exercises dating from the end of the 1640s; see Hansson 1993, pp. 80-82.

<sup>19</sup> “Men Indianerne, thet älande usle fä, som aldrigh hade hört eller seet slijkt, them kom thet sälsynt före, när the aff them, som först intogo landet, blefwo sände til hwar andre öfwer tiugo oc flere mijl med en pappers-lapp, och the märckte at then ene kunde see i pappers-lappen, hwad then andre, som så långt borto war, wille och mente. Ach Herre! hwad the sigh grufwade! The tänckte intet mänskeligt om them, som sålunda kunde sijn-emellan betyda och förstå hwars annars tanckar”; Stiernhielm 1993, p. 273.



stated in the text – they also deserve to be clothed and adorned ‘with colors and material that befit and become them’.<sup>20</sup>

The first *petitio* follows, the beginning of which takes up the thread of the previous argument: the general lack of knowledge about the Swedish language is the reason why Stiernhielm has ‘set aside a moment here and there, whenever I have been able to, and spent it on the tongue of our dear fatherland’.<sup>21</sup> It is just as important to learn Swedish as French or Italian, Stiernhielm maintains. To be sure, French and Italian exhibit ‘great ornaments and uses’, but ‘an adorned servant girl’ should never be held in higher esteem ‘than the uncoiffed and unplaited lady’.<sup>22</sup> Stiernhielm here introduces a completely new and controversial issue in his text and in the public discussion. In the middle of the seventeenth century, the Swedish language was generally considered inferior to Latin and to the Romance languages.<sup>23</sup> However, by employing the contrasting metaphors of the adorned servant girl and the unfashionable noblewoman, Stiernhielm unexpectedly and dramatically turns the prevalent notion upside down.

Obviously, Stiernhielm had to defend this bold move, and so he does in yet another *narratio*, initially stating that he is well aware of the fact that, on account of its simplicity and poverty, the Swedes do not treat their own language with due respect. Instead they are in awe of the French, Spanish, and Italian languages, which are ‘rich in words and vocabulary, of magnificent

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<sup>20</sup> “medh behörige anföd-bequämlige färgor och yrke”; Stiernhielm 1993, p. 273.

<sup>21</sup> “hafwer welat affknäppa någre stunder, ther iagh hafwer kunnat, til at anwända opå vårt käre Fäderneslandz, thet Swenske Tungomålet”; Stiernhielm 1993, p. 273.

<sup>22</sup> “sin store prydnad och nytta med sig”; “en smyckiat tärna”; “änn fruen obörstad och ofleetad”; Stiernhielm 1993, p. 273.

<sup>23</sup> Thus, for example, eulogies addressed to the nobility were hardly ever written in Swedish, and the few existing Swedish compositions were always supplemented with eulogies in Latin or in one of the Romance languages. For a statistical overview of the

splendor and gleaming beauty, and overflow with sugar and sweetness'.<sup>24</sup> Stiernhielm then elaborates on the simile of the lady and the servant girl(s) in an apostrophe, a direct – emphatic and emotional – address to the Swedish language:<sup>25</sup> 'Oh, ancient, honorable, unblemished Gothic Lady, how can it be, how did it come about that you, who have bestowed riches upon all these young women, have now yourself been impoverished?'.<sup>26</sup> Part of the problem stems from the antiquity of the Swedish language and from the contempt she has been exposed to, Stiernhielm continues, but it is due still more to the fact that the seemingly beautiful girls, whom she has embellished with her own splendor, are luring her children, the Swedes, away from her. Now the children, who were supposed to have clothed and adorned their mother, lavish their care and attention on her servant girls instead, and only when her poverty becomes so great that it can no longer be ignored, do they borrow one garment or another from their mistresses in order to cover up the shameful state of their mother tongue.

'But how suitable it is and how well it befits an aging, serious Lady, who is used to wearing garments of the old style, to dress up in this or that slit, fringed, creased, gold-trimmed, chic dress – this is something we observe and ridicule every day.'<sup>27</sup> After having introduced his second *petitio* in this way,

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Latin, Swedish, and German occasional poetry of seventeenth-century Sweden, see Ståhle 1975, pp. 292-293.

<sup>24</sup> "rijke aff myckla ord och orda-ägendomar, härlige aff prång, glimmande aff fagerlek och flödande aff sucker och sötma"; Stiernhielm 1993, p. 274.

<sup>25</sup> On the various functions of the figure of apostrophe, see Tua Korhonen's contribution to the present volume.

<sup>26</sup> "Ach, huru går thet så, huru kommer thet til, at du ährlige, gamble, obefläckiade Götha-Matrona, som hafwer giort alle thesse Vnge Damer rijke, nu sielfwer äst så fattigh worden?"; Stiernhielm 1993, p. 274.

<sup>27</sup> "Men huru wäl thet ståår och tämer een til ålders kommen alwarsam Fru, som kläder sigh effter gamble drägthen, att hon behänger sigh här medh ett, och ther medh ett annat sönderhackat, franssat, krusat, gull-brämat, allamodisk plagg, thet see och lee

Stiernhielm makes it clear that he feels pity for the Swedish language and wonders ‘how this honorable lady can regain and retain her dignified robes’.<sup>28</sup> For this reason he has looked into ‘her closet and gone through her old keepsakes and remaining boxes’,<sup>29</sup> and in this ‘storeroom of the ancient Swedish and Gothic language’ (*Gambla Swea- och Götha-Måles fatebvr*) – which has given the dictionary its title – he came upon much that was ‘outdated, musty, worn-out, as well as a lot of hackneyed scraps’, but also a great many things of good quality, albeit old-fashioned and of dated design, that might ‘clothe and adorn’ if only they were repaired and remade.<sup>30</sup> He also found ‘a fairly large store of smithery, silver and gold’, superior to what is currently made, as well as some ‘costly pearls and precious stones’. If all of this would only come into ‘the masterly hands of a skilful artisan who knows and understands how and where they should be placed, put together, and arranged’, then ‘the Gothic Lady’ would again be able to appear in ‘an ornate and fitting dress’.<sup>31</sup> – Thus, by underlining the importance and the usefulness of his project, Stiernhielm also in this part of the text observes Jonae

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wij åt alle dagar”; Stiernhielm 1993, p. 274. – As has been pointed out by the Swedish historian of literature Sverker Ek, Stiernhielm’s description of ‘the Gothic Lady’ and her servant girls may be compared to his description of ‘Mistress Virtue’ and her daughter ‘Vanity’ in the hexameter poem *Hercules*, a work that was published in 1658 but probably begun at about the same time as the dictionary; see Ek 1914, pp. 330-333. On Stiernhielm’s *Hercules*, see also Mats Malm’s contribution to the present volume.

<sup>28</sup> “dragit billig medhömkan däröfwer”; “huru then höghwyrdige Matrona kunde komma til och hållas widh sin ährlige skrud igen”; Stiernhielm 1993, p. 274.

<sup>29</sup> “hennes Fatebur, igenom-letat hennes öfwerblefne gamle gömor och quarlefde skrijn”; Stiernhielm 1993, p. 274.

<sup>30</sup> “off-gammalt, möglot och uthnött, myckit bortkastat halfnött”; “kläda och skryda”; Stiernhielm 1993, p. 274.

<sup>31</sup> “ett tämmeligt förråd aff Smide, Sölf och Gull”; “dyrbare Pärlor och kostelige Ädelstenar”; “ens sinnerijks konstnårs mästerlige hand, som weet och förståår, huru och hwart bör sättias, skickas och stiftas”; “Ädelstenar”; “en rijk och prydhlig skrud”; Stiernhielm 1993, pp. 374-375.

Gothus's recommendations for dedicatory letters: 'In addition we should explicitly stress the uses and benefits that will result from reading this book.'<sup>32</sup>

In the final part of the preface, the *conclusio*, Stiernhielm expands on the simile of the lady and the servant girls, and on the purpose of the dictionary. He is aware, he writes, of the flaws and shortcomings of the Swedish language but believes that this deplorable state of affairs is due to the fact that the ancient language has been forgotten and is hardly understood anymore. Yet, Swedish abounds in 'all kinds of remarkable expressions and sayings', all of which, or at least most of which, can 'be rediscovered, renewed, and gradually brought back into use again'. In this way the language may become not only 'abounding and rich', but also 'sweet, beautiful, and ornate'.<sup>33</sup> Stiernhielm concludes: 'This is the purpose and good intent that I wanted to convey to my benevolent reader, in the hope that all that is well meant, may also be well received and accepted.'<sup>34</sup>

Notwithstanding Stiernhielm's initial comments on the difference between speech and writing, the dictionary preface is a text that – through the frequent use of rhetorical questions, anaphors, and alliterations – first and foremost appeals to the ear. Another oral marker is Stiernhielm's choice of using the concrete examples of the Gothic Lady and the servant girls as a starting point for his presentation, instead of proceeding from abstract and

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<sup>32</sup> "Ther til skole wij ock vthtryckeligen förmäla then nytta och gagn/ som man kan haffua aff samma Books läsande"; Jonae Gothus 1619, p. 84.

<sup>33</sup> "allehanda märckelige betydande ord och ordasätt"; "optagas, förnyas och så maakliga föras i bruk igen"; "flödigt och rijkt"; "liuft, fagert och prydeligt"; Stiernhielm 1993, p. 275.

<sup>34</sup> "Thetta mitt ärnande och godhmening iagh min wälbeuogne Läsare härmedh hafwer welat yppa och tillkänna gifwa; önskandes, at hwart, som thet är wälmeent, och måtte wäl blifwa anammat och vptaget"; Stiernhielm 1993, p. 275.

analytic categories. The preface is also characterized by amplification and redundancy; it is striking that Stiernhielm seldom says with one word what he can say with many, as in the following examples from the first few lines of the text: ‘contemplation and reflection’; ‘we look at it as a whole and without distinction’; ‘to deliberate and reflect’.<sup>35</sup> Redundancy is necessary in oral cultures, as Walter J. Ong pointed out, as a means for the listener to perceive what the speaker says and as a means for the speaker to be able to mentally prepare what he is going to say next.<sup>36</sup> On the topic of *amplificatio*, which in early written texts can be “annoyingly abundant by modern standards”, Ong further noted that “[o]ral cultures encourage fluency, fulsomeness, volubility. [...] Concern with *copia* remains intense in western culture so long as the culture sustains massive oral residue – which is roughly until the age of Romanticism or even beyond”.<sup>37</sup>

#### *Linnaeus’s Little Green Field*

Linnaeus dedicated his book on the Swedish province of Scania, *Skånska resan* (‘Travels in Scania’), from 1751, to the Royal Councilor, the nobleman Clas Ekeblad the Younger (1708-1771). In contrast to Stiernhielm’s preface, which is not a dedicatory letter as such – although, as I have shown, it is formulated along the lines of the humanist prescriptions for this epistolographic subgenre – Linnaeus’s introductory address to Ekeblad is a genuine dedicatory letter. On this, Jonae Gothus gave the following additional advice:

Then we should highly praise and extol the illustrious and manly deeds of our benefactor and patron (but without vain flattery and hypocrisy), and, if appropriate, exhort him to continue along the same lines of good reputation and

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<sup>35</sup> “effttertänckiande och åthyggio [...] wij seen til i flock, och uthan åskynio [...] öfwerwäga och begrunda”; Stiernhielm 1993, p. 271.

<sup>36</sup> Ong 1982, pp. 39-41.

<sup>37</sup> Ong 1982, pp. 40-41.

fame. We should strongly commend our work and ourselves to him, subserviently or humbly entreating him to place us and our completed work favorably and benevolently under his aegis and protection, in return for which we declare that henceforth he shall always find us prepared and willing to offer our service in matters that are of more importance and consequence.<sup>38</sup>

Jonae Gothus further added that ‘NOTA. This letter [i.e., the dedicatory letter], as well as others, is called a free letter, since it is not necessary to observe the genre prescriptions that carefully’.<sup>39</sup>

In Linnaeus’s dedicatory letter, after the address to Councilor Ekeblad (including all of the nobleman’s official titles),<sup>40</sup> there follows the *exordium*, which is divided into three sections consisting of three, six, and three lines, respectively. The first section reads:

*The crofter is pleased with his little green field,  
The Hottentot treasures her children, who look just like herself,  
The author flatters himself with his self-important works;*<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> “Sedhan skole wij högeligen prijsa och loffua vår Befordrars och Patroners berömliga och manliga gerningar (doch vthan alt fåfängt smicker och skrymterij) och om så synes förmana honom/ at han vthi samma loff och berömmelse ytermehra wille fortfara. Til thet ytersta skole wij befala honom samma vårt arbete och oss sielffua bediandes vnderdåningen (eller) ödmuikeligen at han gunsteligen och wälwilligligen anammar oß samt vårt giorda Arbete vthi sitt hägn och förswaar för hwilket wij honom tilsäye vthi thet som viktigare och högre aff nödenne är här effter altijdh wilia finnas beredde och tienstwillige”; Jonae Gothus 1619, pp. 84-85.

<sup>39</sup> “NOTA, Thetta Breff såsom ock andre kallas ett fritt Breff theruthinnan icke är nödenne at man på samma Lärdomars ordningar skal giffua så nogha acht”; Jonae Gothus 1619, p. 85.

<sup>40</sup> “HÖGVÅLBORNE GREFVE/ HERR CLAS/ EKEBLAD,/ KONGL. MAJ:TS/ HÖGSTBETRODDE MAN/ OCH SVEA RIKES RÅD./ CANCELLIE RÅD./ RIDDARE OCH COMMENDEUR/ AF KONGL. MAJ:TS ORDEN” (‘Noble Count, Lord Clas Ekeblad, His Royal Majesty’s Most Trusted Man, and Royal Councilor, Knight and Commander of the Order of His Royal Majesty’).

<sup>41</sup> “Torparen gläder sig åt sin gröna Vret,/ Hottentotten fägnar sig åt sina lika barn,/ Auctoren smickrar sig af sina sjelfkloka Arbeten”; Linné 1993, pp. 449-450.

The *exordium* obviously does not deal with ‘great, wonderful, delightful, and important things’, as recommended by Jonae Gothus,<sup>42</sup> but instead emphasizes matters that may be described as ‘lowly’. However, by introducing in this *exordium* ‘the author’ and his works, Linnaeus follows Jonae Gothus’s advice to write about ‘matters regarding ourselves’.<sup>43</sup>

In the following two sections of the *exordium*, Linnaeus develops the three parallel themes introduced in the first section: the content crofter, the proud Hottentot, and the self-happy author. The three sections are linked together by conjunctions that are placed on separate lines and thereby emphasize the logical structure of the text. Thus, the second section begins with the adversative conjunction ‘but’:

But  
*Farming with all its toils is fruitless,*  
 If God does not provide the right weather;  
*The progress of the youth is futile,*  
 If the authorities do not show their goodwill;  
*The sciences are developed in vain,*  
 If patrons do not support the cause;<sup>44</sup>

The lines in italics further develop the three parallel themes of the first section: the crofter is engaged in ‘farming’, the Hottentot in ‘youth’, and the author in ‘the sciences’. The anaphoric lines in between describe the necessary conditions for the flourishing of the three areas of activity: assistance from God, the authorities, and generous patrons, respectively.

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<sup>42</sup> “någhra högha/ härligha/ liuffligha och wiktiga saaker”; Jonae Gothus 1619, p. 84 (cf. note 6 above).

<sup>43</sup> “wåra eghna sakers [...] tilstånd”; Jonae Gothus 1619, p. 84 (cf. note 6 above).

<sup>44</sup> “Men/ Åkerbruket blifver med alt släp fruktlöst./ Om ej Gud gifver väderleken;/ Ungdomens framsteg äro fäfänge./ Om ej Öfverheten visar Nåd;/ Vetenskaperne uparbetas förgäfves./ Om ej Mæcenater gynna saken”; Linné 1993, p. 450.

The third and last section of the *exordium*, then, introduced by the causal conjunction ‘and therefore’, presents the action to be pursued in order to ensure that this assistance is granted:

*And therefore  
The farmer invokes Heaven’s blessing,  
Parents choose more distinguished godparents for their children,  
Authors dedicate their work to benefactors in high positions,*<sup>45</sup>

The three sections all illustrate the idea of bringing forth something, focusing, on the one hand, on the two general issues of farming and raising children, and, on the other, on the specific issue of dedicating a scientific work to a generous patron. Having thus defined his subject matter, at this point Linnaeus has also fulfilled the two other traditional aims of an *exordium*: he has established his *ethos* as inferior to that of his addressee, presenting himself as an author and a scientist; and he has captured the reader’s interest, thanks to the unusual disposition and contents of the *exordium*.

Next follows the *salutatio*, emphatically printed in capital letters, ‘YOUR EXCELLENCY’, and the *narratio*, in which Linnaeus again employs the tripartite model. However, in the *narratio* the three lines in italics are interspersed with three anaphoric lines, each opening with the words ‘I would never have’, and each including one of three semantically related words, ‘dared’, ‘burdened’, and ‘inconvenienced’. And in contrast to the *exordium*, in the *narratio* the lines in italics refer to the prominent addressee, whereas the interspersed lines refer to the ‘lowly’ author:

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<sup>45</sup> “Hvarföre ock/ Åkermannen anropar Himmelen om välsignelse./ Föräldrar kalla förnämre faddrar åt sina barn./ Auctorer upoffra sina verk åt Höga Gynnare”; Linné 1993, p. 450.



*YOUR EXCELLENCY, whom God and merit have raised to such a high  
position,*  
I would never have dared to invite down to the humble cottages;  
*YOUR EXCELLENCY, who contemplate such great matters regarding the  
destiny of people,*  
I would never have burdened with the disdained sciences;  
*YOUR EXCELLENCY, who glitters with purple, noble descent, stars, gold and  
green forests,*  
I would never have inconvenienced with my swamps;<sup>46</sup>

Here, in the first and the second of the ‘lowly’ lines, respectively, the theme of the humble crofter and the author/scientist again appears, whereas the theme of the Hottentot and the youth has been abandoned. This does not necessarily reflect any lack of consistency on the part of Linnaeus, for this section of the *narratio* clearly focuses on and amplifies the specific issue of the author’s work and its patronage.

The *narratio* closes with the author stating that the book project would never have been completed without the support and interest of his generous patron. This section is fittingly introduced by the conditional conjunction ‘if not’:

*If not  
YOUR EXCELLENCY by participating in the supervision of the sciences  
More than myself  
Had advised me to sacrifice this  
On  
YOUR EXCELLENCY’S  
Altar,<sup>47</sup>*

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<sup>46</sup> “E. E. som Gud och förtjenst uplyft så högt./ Hade aldrig jag vågat nederkalla til de låga Landtkojor./ E. E. som välfver så stora ting om Folks öden./ Hade aldrig jag besvärat med de föraktade vetenskaper./ E. E. som skimrar af Purpur, Anor, Stiernor, Gull och gröna skogar./ Hade aldrig jag oroat med mina myror”; Linné 1993, p. 450.

<sup>47</sup> “Om icke/ E. E. höga deltagande i öfverinseendet på vetenskaperne./ Mer än jag sjelf./ Rådt mig upoffra detta/ På/ EDERS EXCELLENCES/ Altare”; Linné 1993, p. 450.

Then follows a brief *conclusio*:

*With this expression of reverence I hope to be*  
 YOUR EXCELLENCY'S  
 Most humble servant  
 CARL LINNAEUS.<sup>48</sup>

Linnaeus's dedicatory letter appears to be the result of artistry combined with careful consideration. This is confirmed by three autograph manuscripts with a series of drafts of the letter, which were examined, in 1971, in an article by the Swedish historian of literature Sixten Belfrage.<sup>49</sup> In his study, Belfrage interestingly showed how the series of manuscript drafts illustrate the step-by-step process of revision that Linnaeus used in writing his text. However, as I would like to argue, the manuscripts also call into question the general idea of a typical rhetorical work process.

As we learn from classical rhetorical theory, the process of composing a text should proceed in five separate stages, the so-called *partes oratoriae*. In the first three stages – *inventio*, *dispositio*, and *elocutio* – the orator should first define his subject matter; then he should organized the arguments; and finally he was to dress the subject matter up in a fitting verbal style.<sup>50</sup>

I have always regarded the presentation in classical rhetorical theory of the five *partes* as a way of theoretically describing and tidily keeping separate

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<sup>48</sup> “*Med den vördnad jag bör vara/ ETERS EXCELLENCES/ Allerödmjukaste Tjenare/ CARL LINNAEUS*”; Linné 1993, p. 450.

<sup>49</sup> See Belfrage 1971a, pp. 74-110. However, Belfrage does not take into account the influence of classical rhetoric and the five *partes oratoriae*, but portrays Linnaeus as a modern author who proceeds by trying out ideas and rejecting some of them during the writing process.

<sup>50</sup> The *partes oratoriae* further include *memoria*, the committing of the text to memory, and *actio/pronuntiatio*, the delivery of the speech.

the various stages in a process that, in practice, is quite complex and disorderly. In fact, it is hard to believe that, while coming up with the *res* in his speech, the orator would not also simultaneously have chosen many of the *verba* he wanted to use in it and gotten an idea of the way in which he wanted to organize it. As appears from the manuscript drafts, in his composition of the dedicatory letter, Linnaeus, at any rate, engaged in all three stages simultaneously.

In his 1971 article, Belfrage arranged the drafts in a chronological order, according to the time of their composition, and was thus able to show that Linnaeus did not begin writing the dedicatory letter until the major part of the book that it was to introduce had already been printed.<sup>51</sup> In the following discussion I focus on the various drafts of what was to become the first parts of the *exordium* and of the *narratio*.

In the earliest of the manuscripts, Linnaeus's text begins with a conventional expression that would be deleted in the later versions: 'It has been a laudable practice to'.<sup>52</sup> There follows the general issue of the first part of the *exordium*: 'All parents love their offspring;/ all authors their work'.<sup>53</sup> Linnaeus then develops this issue further in a couple of lines (expanding on the themes of godparents and dedications) that were, eventually, to form the last part of the *exordium*. Five lines further down in the manuscript, Linnaeus wrote yet another version of the introductory lines. This draft version contains the tripartite structure as well as the emphasis on something poor in the first line, something ugly in the second, and something overrated in the third:

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<sup>51</sup> See Belfrage 1971a, pp. 79-80. This was clearly common practice, not least since in this way the patron and addressee had the opportunity to see the book in advance and approve the dedication.

<sup>52</sup> "En lofligt bruk har varit at"; Belfrage 1971a, p. 81.

<sup>53</sup> "Alla foraldrar hafwa kiarlek för sine foster;/ alla Autorer for sine wärk"; Belfrage 1971a, p. 81.

‘The farmer treasures his small home/ Even the ape loves her babies/ Authors like their own works.’<sup>54</sup>

In the second manuscript, Linnaeus moved the tripartite lines up to the beginning of the *exordium* and made sure to underline the subjectivity of the statements: ‘The farmer treasures his small home./ The ape herself finds her babies pretty/ Authors all brag about their work.’<sup>55</sup>

In the third manuscript, Linnaeus also placed these lines at the beginning of the text, after having made a few more changes: ‘The farmer treasures his lovely little ploughed field/ The Moor marvels at her beautiful children/ Authors flatter themselves with their own works.’<sup>56</sup> Thus, in this version of the dedication letter, Linnaeus had decided on the ‘little field’, but not yet on the printed version’s ‘crofter’, who was in possession of an even smaller field than ‘the farmer’. Furthermore, he had replaced ‘the ape’ by ‘the Moor’, who, in the printed version, was to be replaced by the Hottentot, the African native whom eighteenth-century Swedes thought to be particularly ugly.

As for the *narratio*, in the earliest of the manuscripts Linnaeus wrote:

Your Excellency has been placed by God and good fortune in such a high position that I/ thought I could no longer be seen./ Your Excellency’s daily duty consists in securing people’s happiness and destiny./ Your Excellency, who sparkle with highness, noble descent, estates, and stars./ I had not expected to be able to induce Your Highness to turn your eyes any longer/ to the base countryside, to/ the dust of science, to a stumbling pen/ if not [...].<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> “Landtmannen fägnar sig at sitt lilla hemman/ Sielfwa apan alska sine barn/ Authores tycka om sine egne arbeten”; Belfrage 1971a, p. 81.

<sup>55</sup> “Lantmannen fägnar sig at sit lilla hemman./ Apan sielf tycker hennes barn wara wakra/ Auctores alla skryta af sit arbete”; Belfrage 1971a, p. 82.

<sup>56</sup> “Åckermannen fägnar sig åht sitt fagra Åcker wret/ Moren forundrar sig åt sine sköne barn/ Authorer smikra sig af sine egne wärk”; Belfrage 1971a, p. 83.

<sup>57</sup> “E. E. är satt af Gud och lyckan så högt at jag/ icke trot mig mera kunna ses./ Ed. E. warf går uht på hogre att dageligen/ walwa folk lycka och oden./ E: E. som blänker af Hoghet, Aner, gods och/ stierner./ hade jag ej formodat kunna förmå E. E. at wända

In this early draft, Linnaeus still had not decided for the tripartite structure of the first part of the *narratio*, with alternating lines describing high and low subjects, respectively. In the second manuscript, however, he had begun to employ this idea, although he had not as yet visually separated the ‘high’ and ‘low’ lines:

Your Excellency, whom God and good fortune have placed in such a high position, I/ would never have/ inconvenienced/ Your Excellency, who shine so brightly in the Swedish sky/ with highness, noble descent, stars, and estates, I would never have invited to the dirty dust of the countryside/ Your Excellency’s thoughts that are occupied with such grand matters/ as the happiness of the people and the destiny of science, I would never have/ induced to come down to me.<sup>58</sup>

Although the wording was to become even more pregnant in the printed version, in the third manuscript Linnaeus had worked out both the formal structure and the arguments of the passage:

Your Excellency, whom God and good fortune have raised to such a high position in our/ Swedish sky,/I would never have troubled to come to the dusty field/ Your Excellency, who only reflect on lofty matters, on the destiny and goods of the people,/ I would never have tried to make look into/ the dirty huts./ Your Excellency, who only reflect on lofty matters, on the destiny of the people/ and the ends of science,/ I would never have thought to induce to look at my petty pursuits.<sup>59</sup>

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mer sine ögon/ till den nedriga landtbygden, till/ wettenskapens stoft, till en staplande penna/ om ej”; Belfrage 1971a, p. 81.

<sup>58</sup> “Eders Excellence som Gud och lyckan upsat så hogt hade jag/ aldrig oroa/ Eders Excellence som blanker så klar på war svanska himel/ af hoghet, Aner, stiernor, gods hade jag aldrig kallat ned/ till det smutsiga landsstofet/ Ex. E. tankar som wandas på så hoga ting/ som folkens lycka och wettenskap[ens] oden hade jag aldrig/ formå komma neder till mig”; Belfrage 1971a, p. 83.

<sup>59</sup> “Ed Ex: som Gud och lyckan uplyftat så hogt på vår/ swanska himmel,/ hade jag aldrig beswaret till den damfulle åcker / E. E. som endast tänker på hoga ting, om folksens öden och gods/ hade jag aldrig sökt förmå se in uti/ de smutsige rokstufwor./

In his study of the Linnaeus drafts, Belfrage comments on the first line of the first draft and points out that it could have led to an altogether conventional dedication. He remarks that Linnaeus quickly ‘switches onto a new track [...] one that he is more at home with, for what we now encounter is a succession of the kind of simple sentences – with subject, predicate, and object in normal word order, not disturbed by any qualifiers – which are characteristic of Linnaeus’.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, Belfrage demonstrates that Linnaeus used this simple style in both his letters and his scientific works.

In another article, Belfrage relates this way of writing to Linnaeus’s habit of making annotations<sup>61</sup> and to the fact that, in Linnaeus’s childhood in a vicarage in the Swedish countryside, ‘the language of the Bible’, must have ‘echoed in his ears, on both weekdays and Sundays’.<sup>62</sup>

Belfrage further claims that Linnaeus found ‘a personal method of expressing his pathos’ in the ‘rhythmic and parallel sentences’ of the Bible,

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E. E. som endast tänker på hoga ting, om folksens öden/ och wettenskapens mått/ hade jag aldrig trott formå at se på mina gräl syslor”; Belfrage 1971a, pp. 83-84.

<sup>60</sup> “växlar in på nytt spår [...] ett på vilket han mera är hemma, ty vad vi nu möta är en rad av dessa enkla meningar med subjekt, predikat, objekt i rak ordföljd, icke störd av några bestämningar, som är något så karakteristiskt för Linné”; Belfrage 1971a, p. 85.

<sup>61</sup> See Belfrage 1971b. Belfrage further notes: ‘Whoever makes notes about what he observes in nature, will nearly of necessity come to use a characteristic style of annotation. Every observation is put down in one short sentence, complete or incomplete. Taken altogether this results in a number of these short sentences, which often look more or less the same’ (“Den som ute i naturen annoterar vad han iakttagger, kommer med en viss naturnödvändighet att använda en karakteristisk annotationsstil. Varje iakttagelse fixeras i var sin korta mening, fullständig eller ofullständig. Det hela blir en rad av dylika korta meningar, ofta kongruerande med varandra i fråga om den yttre formen”; *op.cit.*, pp. 45-46).

<sup>62</sup> “bibelns språk”; “ha ljudit i hans öron vardag som söndag”; Belfrage 1971b, p. 40. As Belfrage further points out (*op.cit.*, pp. 41-42), Linnaeus’s brother Samuel, who grew up under the same circumstances, did not write in this manner, as appears from his book on bee keeping, published in 1768.

which replaced ‘the expression of pathos offered in humanist rhetoric’. ‘Therefore’, he concludes, ‘Linnaeus’s biblical style also forms part of the transition to naturalism that he has in common with the period’s other natural scientists.’<sup>63</sup>

I do not question the influence of the annotation technique and the Bible style on Linnaeus’s writing. Yet, I would like to emphasize that Linnaeus’s dedicatory letter – as well as other parts of his oeuvre – satisfies what Stiernhielm in his preface described as the most important purpose of written texts, namely to convey a message to the eyes of the reader. Belfrage seems to have thought of this when noting that the conjunctions that bind together the separate sections in the final printed version, add ‘a certain air of lapidary style’ to Linnaeus’s dedicatory letter.<sup>64</sup>

However, there is more to it than that: the tripartite structure of the text, the division of the text into separate sections, and the deliberate use of different printing types – capital letters, lower case letters, and italics – all contribute to the making of a text that conveys its message specifically to

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<sup>63</sup> “ett personligt uttryck för sitt patos”; “rytmiska och parallelliserande språk”; “ersätter det uttryck för patos som den humanistiska retoriken kunde erbjuda”; Belfrage 1971b, p. 55. – “Därför är Linnés bibelstil också ett inslag i den övergång till naturalism som han har gemensam med tidens naturforskare i gemen”; *ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> See Belfrage 1971a, pp. 105-107 (“en viss turnyr av stenstil”, p. 105). As Belfrage points out, the lapidary style was used for congratulations and in dedicatory letters in eighteenth-century academic treatises. However, he does not believe that Linnaeus intended to employ this style, since he omitted the characteristic dots in between the words; Belfrage argues further that, in his written work, Linnaeus became more and more in favor of ‘a sort of ceremonious inscription-like style’ (*op.cit.*, p. 105). The Swedish book historian, Per S. Ridderstad has shown that the lapidary style was not very common in Sweden in the first half of the eighteenth century but became very popular around 1750, when employed by the President of the Royal Chancery, Carl Gustaf Tessin (see Ridderstad 1975, pp. 311 and 321-332). The close relationship between Tessin and Clas Ekeblad the Younger may have inspired Linnaeus to use the lapidary style in the dedicatory letter as a tribute to his addressee, Ekeblad.

the eyes. If one does not read the dedicatory letter to oneself, but has it read aloud by someone else, the text loses a large part of its characteristic artfulness.

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Clearly, both Stiernhielm's preface to the dictionary project and Linnaeus's dedicatory letter to Clas Ekeblad are composed with 'art' – in imitation of classical rhetorical models – as was the case with any other 'literary' text from the period. Neither as regards the writing process nor as regards the authors' ambition, do these two texts differ from those that would later be referred to as belletristic. In contrast to the oral character of Stiernhielm's preface, however, Linnaeus's dedicatory letter is a genuine product of the printing press and efficiently exploits the artistic possibilities inherent in this medium. This does not mean that Linnaeus repudiated 'humanist rhetoric', as Belfrage maintains. On the contrary, I believe that Linnaeus's style of writing has more to do with the author's awareness of the new conditions and possibilities for the written text in eighteenth-century Sweden than with his scientific annotation technique and his childhood exposure to Bible readings.



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