

Educating the Christian Prince for Learning and Peace

The Cases of Archdukes Rudolf and Ernst in Spain (1564–1571)

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Received 12 November 2020 | Accepted 04 February 2021 | Published online 31 March 2021

Abstract. This paper reconstructs the education of Emperor Rudolf II and his brother Ernst in Spain. It emphasizes the essentially political character of humanist educational literature, which was intended to cultivate a learned political elite whose decisions would be guided by good morals and unbiased reason. In order to achieve their educational goals, humanists promoted a scientific approach to the rearing and schooling of children, from observation of their essentially non-adult nature to adaptation to their potentials, their character, and their age. The recognition that children could not be forced to be virtuous and needed to be given incentives to pursue study was coupled, however, with a certain degree of anthropological pessimism about their corruptibility and the habitual nature of virtues. This explains why the stress on free will and mild methods was always coupled with an emphasis on discipline and indoctrination. The education of Rudolf and Ernst, which was intended to foster moderation, self-control, diligence, and a love of learning, is a rare example of humanist ideals put into practice. It confirms both the special importance of the ideas of Erasmus for Northern humanism and the strong relationship between Latin learning, moral education, and governing.

Keywords: humanism, education, Habsburg, Erasmus, discipline

Rudolf II (1552–1612) and his brother Ernst (1553–95) had a uniquely lengthy and thorough humanist education.¹ Their higher studies, which focused singularly on Latin and the reading of classical authors, lasted seven and half years in Spain. Rudolf (who became Holy Roman Emperor in 1576) was not yet twelve when he arrived in Barcelona. His brother was exactly one year younger. They were eighteen and nineteen respectively when they eventually returned to Austria.

1 The only reliable study of their education is by Mayer-Löwenschwerdt, *Der Aufenthalt der Erzherzoge Rudolf*. On Rudolf II, see Gindely, *Rudolf II. und seine Zeit*; Schwarzenfeld, *Rudolf II.*; Evans, *Rudolf II. and His World*; Vocelka, *Rudolf II. und seine Zeit*; Schultze, *Prag um 1600*; Fučíková, *Rudolf II. and Prague*; Ehrenpreis, *Kaiserliche Gerichtsbarkeit und Konfessionskonflikt*; Janáček, *Rudolf II. a jeho doba*; Purš and Karpenko, *Alchemy and Rudolf II*. On Ernst, see Bibl, “Erzherzog Ernst.”

This study will explore the details of the education of Rudolf and Ernst and place it in both the general context of humanist schooling and the particular context of princely education. The argument will be based on little used archival sources² and an array of recent and older secondary literature, which will provide a comparative framework.³ It will corroborate, on the one hand, the claim concerning Erasmus's immense influence on princely education and on sixteenth-century educational ideas in general. It will tackle, on the other hand, the problem of indoctrination and discipline in the whole process of humanist schooling. Although originally, humanist education was intended for the schooling of "free men," and the system was consequently highly elitist, by the sixteenth century, it began to become increasingly institutionalized. This was not due simply to the work of individual city authorities, but in great part also to the spread of the Reformation and the rise of the Jesuit order. Indoctrination and discipline gained increasing impetus in the new religious institutional settings, which brought together large, socially mixed student bodies. Yet the increasing emphasis placed on indoctrination and discipline in contemporary education cannot be explained simply by the institutional framework and the religious-institutional goals of the individual churches.⁴ Indoctrination, it will be argued, was central to the whole idea of humanist educational practice. As the documents pertinent to the education of Rudolf and Ernst reveal, a central feature of the indoctrination process was the stress on moral development. Humanist education in practice consisted not of empty grammatical exercises, but aimed rather at the inculcation of virtues through a range of methods, exercises, and disciplinary practices.⁵ In order to offer a comparative view on the education of Rudolf and Ernst, the paper will revisit some of the key sources

2 The original letters of Rudolf and Ernst addressed to their father are kept in Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (hereafter ÖStA), Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv (hereafter HHStA), Familienkorrespondenz A, Karton 2, Ehg Ernst an Kaiser Maximilian II, fol. 1–63; Ehg Rudolf an Kaiser Maximilian II, fol. 259–314. In the same archive, Spanien 6 and 7 contain the letters written by the princes' chamberlain Adam von Dietrichstein to Maximilian II (partly published by Strohmeyer). Their exercise books, containing many of their other (for the most part fictive) letters and homework (compositions and translations) are held in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (hereafter ÖNB) Cod. 8051–52, 8470, 9103. The teaching material is listed in note 118.

3 In particular, two recent monographs help further comparative analysis: Pollnitz, *Princely Education*; Sánchez-Molero, *Felipe II*.

4 See, for example, Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*; Niccoli, "Creanza e disciplina."

5 In this regard, the paper may also be read as criticism of Grafton and Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities*, who famously questioned the moral orientation and uses of the tedious philological and mnemonic practices of the humanist classroom. Among other critics, see Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy* (esp. 404–9); Tracy, "From Humanism to the Humanities"; Black, "Italian Renaissance Education"; Erdman, "Imitation Pedagogy"; and more recently Groenland, "Humanism in the Classroom"; and Pollnitz, *Princely Education*.

on humanist educational ideas and summarize the essential features of this education. The goal of this general introduction is to provide a coherent explanation of humanist educational ideas and practices. The essay will then examine the special case of princely education and underline Erasmus's enormous influence on it, presenting some examples of the schooling that was given to Habsburg and English rulers. Finally, it will analyze the case of Rudolf and Ernst as characteristic examples of humanist education and Erasmian indoctrination.

Humanist educational ideas

In the early fifteenth century, education began to become a primary concern of Renaissance humanism.⁶ New educational ideas were first advanced in Italy on the basis of classical texts, most importantly Plutarch and Quintilian. One cannot sufficiently stress the influence of these two authors on the entire corpus of Renaissance pedagogical literature. The major part of what seems innovative in humanist education goes back to them, in particular to Plutarch's "The Education of Children" from his *Moralia*. If we had to name a third influential author, he would certainly be Cicero. If Renaissance pedagogical literature had a distinctly political character, it was due in a great part to his influence, in particular to *De officiis*, the most widely studied classical text ever, which was read as a manual for moral education, teaching aspiring politicians to govern the soul by the principles of virtue and render the appetites only their due, as well as to *De oratore*, according to which one of the essential functions of any educational system was to produce leading political figures.⁷

The earliest and probably the most famous humanist essay dealing exclusively with the question of education was written by Pier Paolo Vergerio in Padua in c. 1403.⁸ Vergerio dedicated his pedagogical tract to the young son of Francesco da Carrara the Younger, which places his work in a courtly setting, typical of early educational literature.⁹ Although the addressee was a prince, the chief audience of the work was the broader political elite—not the traditional patriotic or aristocratic elite of wealth and power, but a new meritocratic elite envisioned and promoted by the book itself and by similar pieces of humanist literature. The creation of a learned (political) elite molded by Stoic and other classical ideals was one of the central aims of Vergerio and the new pedagogical literature. This was an open elite, as Vergerio's dedication to his

6 For a bibliography of Italian school treatises, see Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy*, 432–41.

7 On *De Oratore*, see Grafton and Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities*, 210–20. On ancient educational thought and practice, see Bloomer, *Companion to Ancient Education*.

8 Vergerio, "Character and Studies."

9 See Rossi, who also stresses the princely and elitist (hence political and social) character of this literature (Rossi, *Pedagogia*).

prestigious Carrara patron also indicates, in which he describes education as a means to rise above the rest of society—if not in wealth at least in glory:¹⁰

parents can provide their children with no more lasting resource, no more dependable protection in life than instruction in honorable arts and liberal disciplines. With such an endowment, children can usually overcome and bring distinction to obscure family origins and humble homelands.¹¹

This was a clear expression of the belief that humanist studies can bring social benefits to the individual: any child may become learned, prudent, and, hence, socially respected. Neo-Platonic literature expressed the same belief with the claim that the seeds of virtue were born in everyone, and when educated in the right manner, they could be brought to blossom. This did not mean, however, that every child should choose the same (humanist) studies. As the new literature repeatedly emphasized, the individual had to decide what suited him best. Vergerio asserted that the child should decide about his fate:

First, therefore, everyone of his own accord should look to his own abilities; or, if we are not yet of responsible years, our parents [...] should attend to this; and it will be fitting that we turn our attention particularly to those studies for which we are naturally inclined and suited, and to devote ourselves entirely to them.¹²

In early fifteenth-century paternalistic societies, in which a father even chose his son's bride and studies (especially the study of Latin) constituted a considerable family investment, this assertion might have seemed absurd to many of the readers. It was surely no exaggeration, however, for Vergerio, who proudly narrates in one of his letters how his father wisely allowed him to make the final decision about his future.¹³ After all, his was education for free men. The liberty of the child to choose to pursue *liberal* studies (or anything else)¹⁴ and the emphasis on natural inclinations appear to be two of the novel ideas which humanists borrowed from Antiquity and refashioned for their times. Everyone had a talent for some kind of career or vocation, and these talents had to be put to proper use through the choice

10 Compare with Erasmus, *Opera omnia*, vol. 1.2, 29 (*De pueris instituendis*): “nothing is more conducive to wealth, social status, and even good health, all blessings which parents earnestly desire their children to enjoy, than moral and intellectual excellence.” Erasmus, *Collected Works of Erasmus*, 2, 302 (trans. by Beert C. Verstraete).

11 Vergerio, “Character and Studies,” 5.

12 Vergerio, “Character and Studies,” 9.

13 Vergerio, *Epistolario*, 131–37.

14 In my assessment, Vergerio consciously plays with the semantic potentials of the word “liberal” (in liberal arts).

of the proper career.¹⁵ If not the children, then their parents or educators surely needed to pay more attention to the personal inclinations of the students. They had to observe them, measure their strengths and weaknesses, consider their age, and apply methods that suited the given student's individual talents.¹⁶ This was in principle the idea of differentiated education, which was fully feasible only in situations in which teachers could cope with the number of students, which was hardly a challenge in the small private schools in which famous fifteenth-century pedagogues taught but was less easy to put into practice in the larger grammar schools. If some of the humanist teachers became well-known masters of generations of learned men, this was due in large part to their celebrated pedagogical skills, their talents in managing children, and their ability and willingness to acknowledge children's essentially different (non-adult) sensibilities, needs, and ways of thinking and behaving. This person-centered approach to teaching is still at the core of what we call humanistic education.

Another major novelty in humanist educational thought was the change in the perception of the uses of force. Since the early fifteenth century, the admonition to avoid force and reduce the use of corporal punishment was a recurrent theme. Once again, the sources of these ideals were classical, but they suited the new Renaissance audience of educational tracts and harmonized with the personal experiences of many educators concerning the counterproductive nature of force in education. Enea Silvio Piccolomini claimed that "Quintilian and Plutarch have more weight with me when they say that boys must be led to honorable practices not by wounds or blows, but by admonitions and explanations."¹⁷ Like many other humanist pedagogues, Piccolomini also emphasized the benefits of praise in motivating children and the right balance between praise and punishment.¹⁸ Guarino da Verona espoused the same idea, and commented that corporal punishment "has something slave-like about it."¹⁹ It should not come as a surprise that the idea of the

15 Cf. with Vegio, "De educatione liberorum," 192 (but read the full text of Section II.20). However, the context and implications of this idea changed from treatise to treatise. It probably most generally meant freedom of choice at the university level or, more generally, the choice of an intellectual career (vis-à-vis the arts or crafts, including banking, trade, etc.). In Vives, *On Education*, 62, a quarterly meeting of schoolmasters was to decide on the course of study most fit for a given student.

16 These notions are commonplaces in many parts of fifteenth-century Italy. In addition to Vergerio, see also Prendilacqua, "Dialogus," 604–5 (for Vittorino); Vitullo, "Fashioning Fatherhood" (for Leon Battista Alberti). See more in Garin, *Educazione umanistica*; Vasoli, "Vittorino da Feltre"; Robey, "Vittorino da Feltre e Vergerio"; Goeing, *Summus Mathematicus*.

17 Piccolomini, "The Education of Boys," 137. Cf. with Vegio, "De educatione liberorum," 177–79.

18 Piccolomini, "The Education of Boys," 139.

19 Guarino, "Program of Teaching and Learning," 267.

slavishness of physical punishment went back to Plutarch's times; yet it coincided with the elitist aspirations of high born students and parents, who were experimenting with a new social-cultural consciousness grounded in the re-valorization and re-interpretation of antiquity.

Plutarch's teaching was popular, but it was internalized only very slowly, if at all, and the actual practice of punishment remained generally severe (corporal punishment hardly fell out of use) and was more determined by the *habitus* of the individual teacher than subtle pedagogical ideals.²⁰ Guarino himself hastened to add that it may be useful to maintain the *threat* of corporal punishment, since children would neglect their studies if they felt totally safe from castigation. Nevertheless, he admitted that it was better to motivate them through rivalry and emulation than fear of punishment.²¹

It was along these lines that Erasmus, Juan Luis Vives, Johannes Sturm, and other sixteenth-century humanist pedagogues built on existing pedagogical ideas, making them more nuanced and psychologically elaborate. Erasmus, for example, showed himself to be particular sensible in his attitudes towards the uses and limitations of rivalry, which was indeed a major disciplinary tool in sixteenth-century grammar schools.²² Rivalry, for Erasmus, was useful only up to a certain limit, and in his assessment, it should in no way leave anyone with the feeling of humiliation or hopelessness.²³ It was similarly in the sixteenth century that humanists began to write more about the uses of humor and playfulness in education, and not only in early childhood education, but also later.²⁴

20 On the persistent use of corporal punishment in schools we have plenty of sixteenth-century (and later) sources. The best are the school rules, which are listed in note 114. See, for example, the rules used in the grammar school in Goldberg (Złotoryja) in Silesia of 1563, according to which, as Isocrates contended, “the roots of discipline are bitter but the fruits are sweet”: “Punishment should be distributed according to the gravity of the offense either by the rod or the *fidicula* [a medieval instrument of torture] or by imprisonment.” Vormbaum, *Die evangelischen Schulordnungen*, 55, 57. See also the autobiography of Lukas Geizkofler, edited by Linsbauer, *Lukas Geizkofler*, 187–88; Geizkofler's *De miseris studiosorum* (1576), § 44, edited by Rothfuß, *Lucas Geizkoflers*; and Platter, *The autobiography*, 18. See footnote 70.

21 Guarino, “Program of Teaching and Learning,” 267.

22 See Strauss, “State of Pedagogical Theory c. 1530,” 80–81; Adam, *Vitae Germanorum philosophorum*.

23 Erasmus, *Opera omnia*, vol. 1.2, 71–72 (*De pueris instituendis*). He added that praise and reprehension ought to be balanced.

24 Erasmus, *Opera omnia*, vol. 1.2, 69–71. Erasmus's favorite Christian author Jerome also emphasized playfulness (*Ep.* 107 and 128). On playfulness in the sixteenth-century classroom, see Adam, *Vitae Germanorum philosophorum*, 149, 273.

Roger Ascham's *Schoolmaster* also shows subtle sophistication and sensitive psychological insight. The book begins with a discussion on physical discipline based on a real debate which took place in the court of Queen Elizabeth (Ascham's former private student) in 1563. Contrary to the opinion of some participants, Ascham asserts that beatings can dishearten students, especially since they are usually a reaction not to a fault on the part of the student, but rather to a fault of nature (which failed to provide the student with the proper abilities).²⁵ William Cecil, Elizabeth's chief advisor, went so far as to claim that a "Scholehouse should be in deede, as it is called by name, the house of playe and pleasure, and not of feare and bondage: and so I do remember, so saith Socrates in one place of Plato."²⁶ Cecil thus connected the refutation of corporal punishment to a free, playful, and nurturing education, which is a source of pleasure rather than stress. Accordingly, Ascham repeatedly underlined the uses of praise and the importance of differentiated education:²⁷

With [...] diligent parsinge, dailie translatinge, cherefull admonishinge, and heedfull amendinge of faultes: neuer leauing behind iuste praise for well doinge, I would haue the Scholer brought vp withall, till he had red, and translated ouer ye first booke of Epistles [by Cicero] chosen out by Sturmius, with a good peece of a Comedie of Terence also.²⁸

The question of discipline and virtues

So far, we have focused on two major traits of humanist educational literature—its increased concern with a child's individual characteristics and its stress on free choice and avoidance of force. These ideals, as has been observed, harmonized perfectly with the new humanist ideal of the virtuous (free) man, who was not raised above the rest of society because of his wealth, title, and hereditary prerogatives, but because of his merits, industry, and erudition. Person-centered education with a stress on free choice was also compatible with the Aristotelian idea of virtue as a voluntary habitus. For Aristotle, "virtue is a habit or trained faculty of choice."²⁹ One cannot be forced to be virtuous. Humanist educational literature stressed that a child needed to be enticed to pursue studies and learning. However, it was not

25 Ascham, "The Schoolmaster (1570)," 175–77.

26 Ascham, "The Schoolmaster (1570)," 176.

27 Ascham, "The Schoolmaster (1570)," 188–91.

28 Ascham, "The Schoolmaster (1570)," 185.

29 The full quote is "Virtue, then, is a habit or trained faculty of choice, the characteristic of which lies in moderation or observance of the mean relatively to the persons concerned, as determined by reason, i.e. by the reason by which the prudent man would determine it." Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.* 2.6.15 (trans. F. H. Peters).

enough merely to coax a child to study; the schoolmaster also had to make sure to keep him on the right track, from which a student could easily stray.³⁰

The secret of keeping a child on the right track in the pursuit of his studies lay in the very method of discipline chosen by the schoolmaster. The biographers-hagiographers of Vittorino da Feltre claimed that no one else provided a better method of *disciplina* than Vittorino, which was the most direct path to virtue.³¹ A child needed continuous discipline, which would ultimately lead him to espouse and embody good morals, and this discipline did not consist simply of the punishment of the child's lapses or errors or the rehearsal of moral maxims. It was a complex system with an endless list of dos and don'ts. As in the case of Aristotle's virtue, the point was to avoid extreme forms of behavior, to moderate passions, and to imitate the good and polite manners of high society.

How can one explain the enormous emphasis on discipline and routine which was so integral to humanist pedagogy and in apparent contradiction with the new emphasis on free choice and the idea of virtue as a matter of voluntary habitus? This question, raised in different forms, seems to have troubled earlier scholars.³² We might arrive at a more satisfactory answer if we approach it from the perspective of humanist psychology.

Following Plato and Plutarch, Renaissance pedagogical literature repeatedly claimed that children are very easy to influence. While children are malleable, adults are less easy to shape, since influence can quickly turn into habit, and *habitus* is intrinsically bound up with moral behavior. Erasmus claimed that in an ideal state, broad public and private schooling, especially for girls, was an imperative precisely because children “at a tender age are responsive to any training you like,” and if they are educated in the right way, the state would eventually run smoothly without the need for many laws.³³ For humanists, children were not born sinners, as they had been for Augustine, but their tender age still made them liable to sin.³⁴ They followed their passions too readily, since they did not yet have the prudence and

30 See, for example, Platina, “De vita Victorini Feltrensis commentaries,” 674.

31 See Sassolo da Prato, “De Victorini Feltrensis vita,” 512.

32 I refer to Grafton and Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities*. The answer by Strauss (Strauss, “State of Pedagogical Theory c. 1530”) is more similar to mine.

33 Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, 72. Cf. with Erasmus, *Opera omnia*, vol. 1.2, 48 (*De pueris instituendis*). “Nature has equipped children with a unique urge to imitate whatever they hear or see; they do this with great enthusiasm, as though they were monkeys, and are overjoyed if they think they have been successful.” Erasmus, *Collected Works of Erasmus*, 26, 319 (trans. by Beert C. Verstraete).

34 Vergerio, “Character and Studies,” 14. Cf. with Erasmus, *Opera omnia*, vol. 1.2, 36 (*De pueris instituendis*). “The urge to imitate evil is considerably stronger than the urge to imitate the good.” Erasmus, *Collected Works of Erasmus*, 26, 308–9 (trans. by Beert C. Verstraete).

rationality which would enable them to keep these passions in check.³⁵ It was too easy to write or imprint things (but easier to imprint the bad than to imprint the good) on their minds, which were generally perceived in the Renaissance as a *tabula rasa*. The danger lay in children's everyday environment, which was normally vulgar (female) society, dominated by pleasure-seeking people and informed by false beliefs ("idols of the mind").³⁶ One finds a detailed description of the dangers of childhood influences in one of Vergerio's letters:

It is grossly difficult for man to avoid falling back on a bad pleasure-seeking life, as he is born and fed with sensuality [...] and follows his inborn passions unless there are checks to control them. [...] As long as our rational mind is dormant, we hang with excessive avidity on this harmful nourishment of the senses. And when we start growing and making distinctions, we come to be influenced by things, such as the wretched opinion of the common people, which easily drive us away from virtue and good ways to just the opposite side. We think wise, good and happy those who are held so by the common people, and fail to realize what is right or wrong but only what the common opinion is. Likewise, we do not seek in our studies what is appropriate or honest but look ambitiously and greedily only for honors and benefits.³⁷

This is exactly why Vittorino's message to newcomers at his school was quickly to unlearn the bad and distorted notions they had previously acquired and purge their minds of all blemish and vice.³⁸ Was unlearning possible though? Erasmus, who claimed "once a certain pattern of behavior has been imprinted upon a young and receptive mind, that pattern will remain," would probably have answered in the negative.³⁹ In fact, it was for this reason that he argued for a much earlier education and socialization for children than most of his contemporaries, who were content if the influence of the mother and other "harmful female company" ended once a child

35 "The young follow their passions above all and do everything with great vigor because they have keen desires which their bodily heat spurs on, while the rational powers and prudence that could moderate their desires are weak." Vergerio, "Character and Studies," 19. Cf. with Plato, *Laws* 808d. See also Strauss, "State of Pedagogical Theory c. 1530," 72–77.

36 See Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, 13: "A large section of the masses are swayed by false opinions, just like those people trussed up in Plato's cave, who regarded the empty shadows of things as the things themselves."

37 Vergerio, *Epistolario*, 132–33. This preoccupation becomes even more intense in Erasmus's works. See, for example, Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, 8–9.

38 Platina, "De vita Victorini Feltrensis commentaries," 680. Cf. with Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, 11, 61.

39 Erasmus, *Opera omnia*, vol. 1.2, 47 (*De pueris instituendis*). See Erasmus, *Collected Works of Erasmus*, 26, 318 (trans. by Beert C. Verstraete).

had turned six or seven.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, humanists—although never discounting the character with which a child was born—were generally positive about the educability of children. Erasmus also expressed his faith in the same treatise:⁴¹

I still hold that human nature is amenable to almost any form of learning provided we subject it to *instruction* and *practice*. We can teach elephants to walk a rope, bears to dance, and donkeys to perform amusing tricks. So is there anything we could not teach a human being? Man cannot create or change his natural aptitudes, but, as I have shown, we can reinforce to some extent what nature has given us.⁴²

What mattered, then, was proper instruction and a due amount of practice. Erasmus argued that both method and practice were “entirely within our control.”⁴³ And in order to be able to use the proper method of instruction, one needed to know the psychology of children and to respect their stadial development. Everything had its due time, as was the case in agriculture. In the humanists’ hands, pedagogy was beginning to resemble a new discipline—the science of child-rearing—which necessarily started with the observation of children and was based on method and practice.⁴⁴ If man could develop such profound knowledge when it came to training animals, why could the same objective knowledge not be acquired with regard to children? Like classical authors, humanist educators (and in particular Erasmus) liked analogies with the animal world and certainly learned a lot from medieval and Renaissance breeders of horses, dogs, and birds. Education, Erasmus argued, was characteristic of the animal world as well, but animals had the advantage of possessing better instincts to guide them.⁴⁵ An untrained animal followed its instincts.

40 Erasmus claimed that as soon as a child could speak, he could start learning to read. Erasmus, *Opera omnia*, vol. 1.2, 48 (*De pueris instituendis*). Erasmus, *Collected Works of Erasmus*, 26, 319 (trans. by Beert C. Verstraete). In fact, fathers should take the education of their sons in their hands as early as possible and leave little space for female influence: “Hard and unbending before his teacher is a child that is the product of such a soft and permissive upbringing—gentleness is their word for it, but its effects are totally corruptive.” Erasmus, *Collected Works of Erasmus*, 309.

41 Cf. with Piccolomini, who elaborated on the same passage from Quintilian. Piccolomini, “The Education of Boys,” 132–33. Piccolomini also believed that most children were teachable; it was practically a question of a given student’s talent whether he was amenable to discipline or not. Only children who had these natural gifts could be led to the summit of virtue.

42 Erasmus, *Collected Works of Erasmus*, 26, 317 (translated by Beert C. Verstraete). See Erasmus, *Opera omnia*, vol. 1.2, 45 (*De pueris instituendis*).

43 Erasmus, *Opera omnia*, vol. 1.2. On the importance of *method* in sixteenth-century humanist pedagogy, see Grafton and Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities*, 122–48.

44 Cf. with Strauss, “State of Pedagogical Theory c. 1530”; Strauss, *Luther’s House of Learning*, who is much less positive about Renaissance education.

45 Erasmus, *Opera omnia*, vol. 1.2, 28–29, 38–39, 57 (*De pueris instituendis*).

But a man who remained uninfluenced by “learning and philosophy, is at the mercy of impulses that are worse than those of a wild beast.”⁴⁶

For humanist pedagogues, education was a complex, scientifically based process of discipline. Making children love and learn the liberal arts was only part of it. Education started earlier and included more than verbal instruction about good morals. A child, Erasmus claimed, also had to be taught good morals, piety, and civilized manners.⁴⁷ A precondition of good education was not only a good teacher but also a good environment. It had to start early, removing the child from his environment and subsequently providing shelter against bad influences.⁴⁸ The easiest way to avoid the temptations of passions and bad influences was to keep the child busy either mentally or physically all the time. Allowing him free time would mean leaving space for sexuality and excesses.⁴⁹ At the core of the Renaissance process of discipline was not merely praise and admonition, but—equally important—hard work and a demanding timetable, filling a student’s entire day and even monitoring his weekend. Even as early as the beginning of the fifteenth century, Vergerio was aware of the importance of rigorous time-management: “everything will happen satisfactorily if time will be apportioned suitably; if every day we allot fixed times to letters and are not distracted by affairs of any kind.”⁵⁰ Arguably, time-management became an even more central concern by the sixteenth century. In the first half of the century, we find schoolchildren who were expected to get up at 4:00 a.m. and attend school from 5:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with a single break of three hours, part of which was to be spent reading and discussing the classics (c. 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.).⁵¹

Thus, it was not simply the moral content of the readings which helped children grow into virtuous and self-governing men who could rule their passions and follow the dictates of reason, but the whole educational and disciplining process as well.

46 Erasmus, *Opera omnia*, vol. 1.2, 32 (*De pueris instituendis*). Cf. with Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, 11.

47 See Erasmus, *De civilitate morum puerilium*, 10. This is a very interesting annotated edition, useful for the interpretation of the work and its reception.

48 See Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, 10.

49 Vergerio emphasizes that “it is in the public interest that the young people in our cities be well-behaved,” and he asserts that the best way to discipline them is to keep them isolated from all sorts of diversions and temptations: “Success is most likely if they are never allowed holidays. They should always be kept occupied with some honorable physical or mental activity, for leisure makes young people inclined to lust and every intemperance.” Vergerio, “Character and Studies,” 21.

50 Vergerio, “Character and Studies,” 65. On Vittorino’s strict time-management see Prendilacqua, “Dialogus,” 586.

51 This is the example of Henry de Mesmes in the 1540s in a Toulouse boarding school. See Mesmes 138–40; Grafton and Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities*, 153–54. More typically, students started school at 6:00 or 7:00 a.m. See Engammare, *On Time, Punctuality, and Discipline*.

The moral of Latin and Greek readings needed to be continuously underlined by schoolmasters,⁵² and moral maxims had to be “fixed in [the student’s] mind, pressed in [...] and kept fresh in the memory in all sorts of ways.”⁵³ This verbal and rhetorical moral training had to begin as early as possible, but moral education involved more than this. Virtues and good morals also required continuous practice and a disciplined environment. Virtuous manners had to be made matters of *habitus*. After all, virtue, as Aristotle taught, was of two kinds, intellectual and moral: “intellectual virtue in the main owes both its birth and its growth to teaching (for which reason it requires experience and time), while moral virtue comes about as a result of habit.”⁵⁴ The two had to be in harmony,⁵⁵ and the humanist schoolmaster had to pay attention to both.

The Education of a Christian Prince and Erasmus’s European influence

Humanist educational literature aimed to promote the creation of a new high society, which would accept responsibility not only for its own fate but also for the fate of the rest of society. In this sense, it always had a political scope. Since it initially evolved in a certain symbiosis with court culture, its primary but not exclusive audience consisted of princes, courtiers, patricians, and noblemen. Nevertheless, there was an important difference between the education of a simple person and that of a future prince. The latter had no opportunity to choose his vocation. It was a given fact. Erasmus put it in the following way in *The Education of a Christian Prince* (1516):

But when the prince is born to office, not elected [...], then the main hope of getting a good prince hangs on his proper education, which should be managed all the more attentively, so that what has been lost with the right to vote is made up for by the care given to his upbringing.⁵⁶

From the perspective of society, the greatest danger was to have a potential tyrant as a prince. Erasmus comes back to this point in several of his writings:

52 See Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, 12, 64.

53 See Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, 10. Cf. with 14: “These [moral] principles should be fixed in the mind of the future prince and be engraved on his tender young heart.”

54 Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.* 2.1.1 (trans. W. D. Ross). Cf. with Plutarch (“character is habit long continued”) and Quintilian (“repeated imitation passes into habit”), both are quoted by Strauss, “State of Pedagogical Theory c. 1530,” 82–83. Strauss claims without firm evidence that in the sixteenth century, the child’s habitual conditioning was understood as a requirement of *later* moral education. Conditioning was supposed to precede intellectual education.

55 Aristotle, *Pol.* 7.13.21–3.

56 Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, 5.

The first [expedient], perhaps, will be not to receive the lion into the city. Next, by the authority of senate, magistrates, and people, to limit his power in such a way that he may not easily break out into tyranny. But the best safeguard of all is to shape his character by sacred teachings while he's still a boy and doesn't realise he's a ruler.⁵⁷

It should come as no surprise that Erasmus's *The Education of a Christian Prince*, which was dedicated to Charles V, had a deeply political character, precisely because of his concerns about tyranny and the abuse of power.⁵⁸ It cannot be sufficiently emphasized how heavily Erasmus relied on Aristotle's *Politica*. In fact, the *Politica* should be read as a subtext of Erasmus's work as much as Isocrates's *Ad Nicoclem* (joined to the first editions) or parts of Plutarch's *Moralia* (translated by Erasmus two years earlier).⁵⁹ Actually, the book can be considered an elaboration of some of Aristotle's political notions, most importantly the claim that a good prince ought to serve the interest of his subjects and not his own desires, which was typical of the tyrant. For Erasmus, a prince had to understand his vocation as a service, principally service to the people but consequently also to God. Probably his vocation was the most difficult of all, still it was a vocation for which one could and had to prepare, first by becoming a paragon of virtue and learning to rule oneself before ruling others (in other words, the Christian prince had to be the exact opposite of common people who, like tyrants, pursued only their own interests and passions) and, second, by studying the classics and being initiated into the logic of governing at an early age.⁶⁰

Erasmus was not really interested in the question of whether a prince could or should remain virtuous in all situations, which was the point of departure of more serious political literature, from Cicero to Machiavelli. For him, a Christian prince had simply no other choice than self-sacrifice: "If you cannot look after the possessions of your subjects without danger to your life, set the safety of the people before your own."⁶¹ Christian ethics were an imperative that could not be overruled or replaced by political ethics, whatever logic the latter followed. A prince had to understand that he did not have unlimited power over his people. He had rights but also obligations, as

57 Erasmus, *Collected Works of Erasmus*, 39, 185 (trans. by Craig R. Thompson).

58 See Herding, "Isokrates, Erasmus" and Herding's introduction in Erasmus, *Opera omnia*, vol. 4.1, 105–32; Strauss, "State of Pedagogical Theory c. 1530"; Hardin, "The Literary Conventions"; Hampton, *Writing from History*, 48–62; Jardine's introduction in Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, i–xxiv; Michael J. Heath's introduction in Erasmus, *Collected Works of Erasmus*, 27, 200–2; and Pollnitz, *Princely Education*, 107–12.

59 Cf. with Hardin, "The Literary Conventions."

60 See Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, 46 on early participation on royal councils. See also Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, 11, 53, 61 on the importance of getting rid of vulgar opinions and passions.

61 Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, 19.

was the case for the people.⁶² The people were not *his*, “because it takes general agreement to make a prince.” “In the end,” Erasmus claimed, “those [subjects] are truly *yours* who obey you voluntarily and of their own accord.”⁶³ Erasmus asserted in other places that most princes were unlike the ideal one described in his book. This was especially true of contemporary rulers, who were closer to Aristotle’s tyrants than anything else and were precisely the opposite of how they appeared.⁶⁴ If one read *The Education of a Christian Prince* with this gloomy view of politics in mind, one had to realize that the solution for social change proposed by Erasmus—a radical transformation of princely education—would still be one of the least difficult to realise.⁶⁵

As we know, it was not only the style and content of Erasmus’s books which made them so influential in princely courts but also his enormous intellectual prestige and networking skills. Erasmus made it one of his missions to promote humanist education at major courts and contribute to the birth of a new princely elite, particularly among the various branches of the Habsburg family and the rulers of England. *The Education of a Christian Prince* was only one chapter in his pedagogical mission, which had begun much earlier. Among Erasmus’s chief princely targets were King of Castile Philip I (1478–1506); his sons Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (1500–58) and King of Hungary and Bohemia Ferdinand I (1503–64); and King of England Henry VIII (1491–1547).⁶⁶ Erasmus approached each of them through his personal contacts, books, dedications, and letters.⁶⁷ The education of Henry VIII may well have been his greatest success, or perhaps the education of Henry’s son Edward VI (1537–53). The educators of both English rulers remained under Erasmus’s strong influence. Henry studied much more extensively and profoundly than any previous English ruler, and he adhered to a renewed humanist curriculum.⁶⁸ Cicero’s *De officiis*, Livy’s *Ab urbe condita*, and the oration *Ad Nicoclem* from Erasmus’s avowed model Isocrates figured among Henry’s readings.⁶⁹ Henry became a highly sophisti-

62 Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, 43.

63 Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, 42.

64 See Adage 2601 (*Scarabeus aquilam quaerit*).

65 *The Education of a Christian Prince* could even be read as a foundation for a theory of contract and rightful resistance. See Jardine’s introduction in Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, xiv.

66 See Pollnitz, *Princely Education*. For more special influence of the book see Pollnitz, *Princely Education*, 88. Also see Sánchez-Molero, *Felipe II*, 196.

67 Tracy has considered the extent to which these attempts were at the same time offers for employment; Grafton and Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities*; and Jardine, *Erasmus, Man of Letters*.

68 Pollnitz, *Princely Education*, 42–138.

69 Pollnitz, *Princely Education*, 53–55, 61. Erasmus’s interest in *Ad Nicoclem* went back to 1501. He added his translation of the text to the 1516 and 1517 editions of *The Education of a Christian Prince*. See Pollnitz, *Princely Education*, 90, n. 144.

cated, learned man who failed to follow Erasmus's teachings about the art of peace but used the rhetorical skills which one could acquire from a humanist curriculum to great effect, especially in the defense of his faith. His conviction concerning the benefits of learning is illustrated by the education he secured for his son Edward, entrusting him to two fervent Erasmian humanists and distinguished Greek specialists Richard Cox and John Cheke.⁷⁰ They continued to serve as Edward's tutors after his coronation in 1547 (at the age of ten) and until his death in 1553.

Edward's education followed humanist prescriptions to the letter. Together with a few noblemen, he studied six days a week. His elementary study of Latin was based on some basic prayers and Erasmus's catechism, then on the famous *Cato* (in Erasmus's edition), and finally on Erasmus's *De copia*.⁷¹ His first compositions were letters (as Erasmus suggested), which sometimes presented the same subject in several ways. By the age of eleven, he was ready to start reading Cicero. Curiously, he began with a difficult book, *De officiis*, and continued with *De amicitia*, *De senectute*, and *Paradoxes*. A year later, he carried on with *Tusculanae disputationes*, which took him two years to finish. He began studying French at the age of nine. By the age of twelve, he knew Greek well enough to read Aristotle's *Dialectics* and *Ethics*, and at the age of fourteen, he spent six months studying Plato's *Republic*, followed by the orations of Demosthenes. Edward used the age-old practice of double translation, which was celebrated by Ascham as the most efficient one.⁷² He took words, phrases, and sentences from the books he read, used them in his homework, and ordered the morale of his religious readings according to commonplaces.⁷³ When writing his own compositions, the chief goal was to develop persuasive arguments if possible *in utramque partem*. Finally, Cox and Cheke did not forget about Edward's verbal skills either. He had to present a topic orally every Sunday, preparing his notes for the presentation during the week on Thursday and Saturday.⁷⁴

70 See Pollnitz, *Princely Education*, 139–98; Baldwin, *William Shakspeare's*, 200–56. John Cheke was admittedly one of Ascham's inspirations "for the gentle prescriptions" of *The scholemaster*. Cox, in contrast, is known to have beaten Edward (although not regularly). He even found that beating was useful. See Pollnitz, *Princely Education*, 149. See more details in Sánchez-Molero, *Felipe II*, 290.

71 On this early stage of Edward's education, see Baldwin, *William Shakspeare's*, 203–4.

72 Ascham, "The Schoolmaster (1570)," 238–46. Double translation means translating from one language to another (from Latin to English) and then, a few hours later, translating the text back into the original language.

73 Pollnitz, *Princely Education*, 152, 172.

74 Pollnitz, *Princely Education*, 155. Pollnitz does not specify when this practice took place or for how long.

As Edward VI was raised in a rather closed—learned Protestant—environment, his humanist education worked well. His education seems even more remarkable when compared to that given to Philip II of Spain (1527–98), the future host of Rudolf and Ernst in Madrid. Although the quantity and quality of the documents which survived on Edward VI's education have very few sixteenth-century equals, the works of Gonzalo Sánchez-Molero and Geoffrey Parker provide a good idea of Philip II's education.⁷⁵

To be sure, Spanish Erasmianism was contested and short-lived, and the discordant intellectual situation left its mark on young Philip's growth.⁷⁶ His father Charles V, who greatly appreciated the master of Rotterdam, was rarely present in the life of his son, which was dominated by Philip's mother Isabella of Portugal until her death in 1539. Nevertheless, when Philip turned seven, enormous attention was given to the selection of his future teacher. Though three Erasmian pedagogues were among the nominees (including Juan Vives), under the apparent influence of Isabella, the court chose Juan Martínez Silíceo, an elderly established professor of moral philosophy and theology who was no friend of the new fashion of Erasmianism or Northern intellectual influence, which was still very strong in Spain in the early 1530s, and as far as he was concerned, his principal task was to educate little Philip as an orthodox Catholic.⁷⁷ Like Edward, Philip studied together with other boys, and his reading began with religious prayers, catechisms, and articles of faith, but apparently had hardly gone much further than that even a few years later. We do not know his daily schedule (most probably, he had one class in the morning and another in the early afternoon), but it seems rather obvious that his days were dominated by pastimes and court life and that he preferred hunting to studying, though there were no problems concerning his piety.⁷⁸ Although he started studying Latin at the age of nine, he made slow progress. Four years later, his reading skills were still weak, and he had only just begun writing in Latin.⁷⁹ When Philip was fourteen, the learned courtier

75 Much more substantial than the English edition (*Felipe II: la biografía definitiva*, Barcelona: Planeta, 2010) is Parker's Spanish monograph, to which I did not have access. Also see Edelmayer, *Philipp II*.

76 On Spanish Erasmianism, see Bataillon, *Erasme et l'Espagne*.

77 Sánchez-Molero, *Felipe II*, 198–241 (on Isabella's influence see p. 237). These were years when humanists would be repressed and “Judaizers”, like Vives's uncle, persecuted. See Sánchez-Molero, *Felipe II*, 215–16, 227 on how much “pure blood” (“limpieza de sangre”) was a criterion of employment at this time. On Silíceo see Sánchez-Molero, *Felipe II*, 293, 523.

78 Sánchez-Molero, *Felipe II*, 284–86, 503–4. See also the report of c. 1540 (Sánchez-Molero, *Felipe II*, 506), according to which, with all the feasting, Philip hardly studied more than five hours in four months.

79 Sánchez-Molero, *Felipe II*, 499–500. See more on Latin problems in Sánchez-Molero, *Felipe II*, 325, 354.

Juan de Zúñiga, who was in charge of his education, was still complaining to Charles V about his bad Latin. His letter is worth citing because of the evidence it gives of the relationship conceived between Latin learning, moral education, and governing:

For the past two months, I have been more optimistic than I used to be that he will like Latin, which pleases me very much because I believe being a good Latinist is an important part of being a good ruler, for knowing how to govern oneself and others.⁸⁰

Charles's reaction was to select three new masters of humanist erudition to work alongside Silíceo.⁸¹ Philip could not be permitted to grow up without learning Latin well and acquiring the necessary erudition. In a territorially and linguistically composite state, “nothing could be more necessary or universal than the Latin language.”⁸² Charles was no less convinced than Zúñiga of the benefits of education. In a memorandum addressed secretly to his son, who became governor of Spain in the age of sixteen, he stressed that one needed a good education to develop good judgment:

Becoming a man early is not a matter of thinking or desiring it, or of being fully grown, but solely of having the judgment and knowledge necessary to act as a man [...]. For this to happen, everyone needs education, good examples and discourses.⁸³

Philip II's new schoolmasters did what they could. They tried to put his Latin grammar on Erasmian foundations, and they purchased a large and exciting library for him. If Philip read only a small portion of his new books, he still learned much more than he had in the previous years. Nevertheless, it is difficult to tell how much progress he actually made with his knowledge of Latin.⁸⁴ To be sure, he developed a good sense of style in Spanish at least, and he acquired broad cultural interests. When he began to rule, some of his letters addressed to his father still echoed Erasmian precepts about peaceful and just governance. He criticized the French king, for example, for “governing more as a despot than a natural lord, following his passions more than his reason.”⁸⁵

80 Parker, *Imprudent King*, 15. For the Spanish original see Sánchez-Molero, *Felipe II*, 500.

81 Sánchez-Molero, *Felipe II*, 504–72.

82 Parker, *Imprudent King*, 17.

83 Parker, *Imprudent King*, 20. Cf. with Sánchez-Molero, *Felipe II*, 600.

84 The fact that he continued to have the Latin letters addressed to him (e.g. by Maximilian II) translated into Spanish suggests that he was hardly fluent in Latin (Edelmayer, “Habsburgische Gesandte,” 60). Parker claims he had “facility” in Latin (Parker, *Imprudent King*, 18), but Sánchez-Molero suggests that Philip read the Latin books of his library “collectively,” i.e. together with his masters (Sánchez-Molero, *Felipe II*, 817).

85 Sánchez-Molero, *Felipe II*, 813.

Maximilian II (1527–76), the father of Rudolf and Ernst, was born in the same year as his Spanish cousin Philip II. His uncle Charles V and his father Ferdinand I were devoted followers of Erasmus. Ferdinand was a dedicatee of several of Erasmus's works and apparently also an avid reader of them, including *The Education of a Christian Prince*.⁸⁶ Ferdinand and Erasmus knew each other personally from the time of Ferdinand's stay in the Netherlands as a young man. When Erasmus was asked to be his mentor in 1519, he did not accept (he recommended Juan Vives for the post instead), but he kept in touch with the archduke even after Ferdinand's move to Austria in 1521. In 1528, he refused Ferdinand's invitation to move to Vienna and accept an annual salary. Many years after his death, Ferdinand was portrayed by the humanist diplomat Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq as a perfect Erasmian ruler who understood that his vocation was to labor in the service of the people.⁸⁷ Busbecq modeled his account on Erasmus's Christian ruler, and he may have been exaggerating, but only a little. Ferdinand was an exceptionally learned, sober, and stoic mind, and he selected his councilors according to their merits and believed in the power of education.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, the education of his first-born son Maximilian did not go as smoothly as he wished. The problem, apparently, was the lack of a learned tutor who had modern (i.e. Erasmian) ideas about education but was also a reliable Catholic. Teachers must have been replaced rather frequently at the princely court in Innsbruck, and Maximilian was not given a coherent Catholic education. As a ruler, he sought confessional compromise not purely out of *realpolitik* considerations, as his father had done, but also out of personal conviction.⁸⁹ Unlike his cousin Philip, who did not even learn French well, Maximilian became fluent in many languages.⁹⁰ Still, his daily schedule was similar to Philip's. The morning class

86 See Ferdinand's letter to Erasmus (composed by Jacob Spiegel) of 12 October 1524: "We do not choose to trespass against the public good by interrupting your sacred labors, the result of which we read eagerly, or listen eagerly as they are read to us [...] when such leisure permits as we can steal from public business, there is no one with whom we converse more readily than Erasmus". Erasmus, *Collected Works of Erasmus*, 10, 402. See also Erasmus's letters to Ferdinand of 29 November 1522, in Erasmus, *Collected Works of Erasmus*, 9, 201–2; of 5 January 1523, in Erasmus, *Collected Works of Erasmus*, 232–43. For a summary of their relationship see Alfred Kohler's article in Bietenholz, *Contemporaries of Erasmus*, 18–19.

87 Busbecq underlined that the emperor "keeps his passions under control, and confines them within the limits of reason." More importantly, he lived entirely for the people entrusted to him: "He feels intensely the seriousness of his position. All his words and actions have the common weal for their object, and he ever makes his personal interests subordinate to his subjects' welfare." Forster and Daniell, *Life and Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq*, 402–3.

88 See Almási, *Uses of Humanism*, 99–141.

89 On Maximilian II, see Holtzmann, *Kaiser Maximilian II.*; Bibl, *Maximilian II.*; Fichtner, *Emperor Maximilian II.*

90 In addition to speaking fluent German, Maximilian was fluent in Latin, Spanish, Italian, and

lasted one and a half hours and started after morning mass. The afternoon class began after the daily soup from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. According to Ferdinand's educational instructions of 1538—when Maximilian was eleven and the earlier preceptor Wolfgang Schiefer (Severus) had to leave because of some Erasmian comments on the luxury of the cardinals⁹¹—the new tutor Laurentius Kretschmer of Transylvania was not only expected to teach the princes to read, write, and argue both in German and Latin (they had to spend at least three hours a week learning to write in Latin and German), but also had to tend to the Catholic schooling of the archdukes, provide morally edifying instruction, and prepare them to rule. Every Saturday evening, they had to contemplate a passage from the Gospels and prepare themselves for Sunday mass.⁹² In the end, Maximilian's education can be regarded as successful not only in terms of his language skills, cultural interests, and erudition, but also because of his unshakable belief in Christian humanist morals.⁹³

The mission of Rudolf and Ernst to Spain

In the first half of the sixteenth century, the Spanish and Austrian branches of the Habsburg family gave high priority to parental relationships. Next to the heritage of Charles V's universal empire, there were also several foreign political concerns which made the friendship between Spain and the Habsburg Monarchy mutually desirable, such as Spain's conflict with the Low Countries and the common Ottoman enemy. Maximilian II spent two and a half years in Spain (1548–50), where he traveled to marry his cousin Maria of Spain, Philip II's dearest sister.⁹⁴ Later, he designated his eldest daughter Anna as a wife for Don Carlos, Philip II's problematic son, but following Don Carlos's imprisonment and consequent death, Philip himself married his cousin's daughter. It was only natural that Philip, who became an arch-protector of Catholicism, contrived to have the sons of his sister raised in Spain. This was not only to secure the survival of close relations between the two branches of the Habsburg house but also to preserve the very Catholicism of the Austrian branch. Moreover, in case Don Carlos turned out to be unsuitable and Philip died without a

(probably to a lesser degree) French. He had reasonable knowledge of Czech and poor Hungarian. Presumably, he learned Spanish (and perhaps also French) only later in Spain, while he had an Italian mentor already in Innsbruck. He studied together with noblemen but was only allowed to speak with them in Latin, Czech, or other foreign languages. See Holtzmann, *Kaiser Maximilian II.*, 22; Fazekas, "Besztercei Kretschmer Lőrinc," 68; and the instruction quoted below.

91 Fazekas, "Besztercei Kretschmer Lőrinc," 69.

92 ÖStA, HHStA, Hofarchiv Obersthofmeisteramt, Sonderreihe, Fasc. 181. Nr. 12. Also see Almási, *Uses of Humanism*, 108–9.

93 See Almási, *Uses of Humanism*, 99–141. Also see Wolf, "Die kaiserliche Landesschule in Wien," 10.

94 On his Spanish stay see Holtzmann, *Kaiser Maximilian II.*, 79–106.

male heir, Maximilian's sons and Maria were to inherit Spain. This must have been one of Maria's strongest arguments to convince her husband Maximilian, who disliked Philip and anything Spanish (except for his wife) and had strong Protestant sympathies.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, in order to succeed Ferdinand as an emperor, Maximilian slowly had to accept Catholicism as one of his father's conditions. In 1560, he had to make a public affirmation of his Catholicism, and two years later, he had to take an oath in front of his relatives that he would rule as a Catholic.⁹⁶

The two archdukes arrived in Barcelona by boat in March 1564, where Philip II had been waiting for them.⁹⁷ Rudolf was eleven years old, and Ernst was ten. Their large entourage was led by one of Maximilian II's most reliable courtiers, Adam von Dietrichstein (1527–90), who had been in charge of their education from the very start and had served as their majordomo.⁹⁸ Dietrichstein, who was Maximilian's age and had been raised together with him for some time, had a spectacular career thanks to his loyalty, his erudition, and his skills as a diplomat. He enrolled in the University of Vienna at the age of twelve and was only fifteen when he took up the study of law in Padua, spending altogether five years in Italy.⁹⁹ In 1548, he traveled with Maximilian to Spain and married a high-born Spanish lady from Maria of Austria's court. Later, he became a patron of Viennese humanists, and he ensured that his son, with whom he corresponded in Italian, also received a good education. More importantly, Dietrichstein, who originally came from a Protestant family and was no zealous Catholic (although he gradually became one after Maximilian's death), served several times as a great religious mediator. He was joined by another of Ferdinand's and Maximilian's distinguished diplomats of humanist learning, the above-mentioned Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq (1522–92), as the marshal of the hall, who returned, however, to Vienna after two years with the archdukes' warm recommendation and was soon put in charge of the education of Rudolf's younger brothers.¹⁰⁰ Finally, Wolf(gang) Rumpf von Wielross, a younger courtier, served

95 On his hatred of Philip and Spain, see the report of the Venetian ambassador Zuan (Giovanni) Michiel of July 1564 in Fiedler, *Relationen venetianischer Botschafter*, 223, 259–61. Cf. with Fiedler, *Relationen venetianischer Botschafter*, 302.

96 See Mayer-Löwenschwerdt, *Der Aufenthalt der Erzherzoge Rudolf*, 3–15. See also Patrouch, *Queen's Apprentice*, 238. Although Maximilian consented to the plan for his sons' Spanish education in 1561, he managed to delay their departure until late 1563.

97 On their voyage, see Mayer-Löwenschwerdt, *Der Aufenthalt der Erzherzoge Rudolf*, 15–19, and Holtzmann, *Kaiser Maximilian II.*, 489–90.

98 On Dietrichstein, see Edelmayer, "Ehre, Geld, Karriere" and the introduction to Strohmeyer, *Die Korrespondenz der Kaiser*.

99 Edelmayer, "Ehre, Geld, Karriere," 112.

100 Martels, "On his Majesty's Service," 175–77. Busbecq's mission apparently had a private goal: collecting the money he spent on ransoming Spanish prisoners in Constantinople. Rudolf's

as the archdukes' master of horse, remaining with them throughout their time in Spain.¹⁰¹ Dietrichstein and (to a lesser degree) Rumpf later became central figures in Rudolf's imperial government, but Besbecq also remained close to Rudolf.

The private tutor Johannes Tonner, who accompanied Rudolf and Ernst, was less famous than the diplomats at the head of their court. All we know about Tonner is that he came from the village of Trübbach in the easternmost part of Switzerland, he held a doctorate in law, and in 1543, he entered the service of Anton Fugger, becoming responsible for the education of his sons Hans and Mark and also accompanying them on their study tours and travels in Italy, France, and Spain.¹⁰² Very probably, the imperial court recruited him only in 1561 with the very goal of employing him as princely preceptor. By that time, Tonner was already a nobleman. The Fuggers arranged for him to receive a diploma of nobility in 1545, which Ferdinand augmented with newer privileges in 1563, just before the archdukes departed for Spain. When the mission was over, Tonner was made imperial councilor. He first took part in different missions and then followed Rudolf to Prague and worked as a member of the Bohemian court of appeal until he died.¹⁰³

Unfortunately, Maximilian's instructions to Tonner and Dietrichstein have not survived. The emperor, who heartily disliked Spanish customs, may well have insisted that the archdukes use German in their schooling and study German culture from the very beginning.¹⁰⁴ He let his sons go to Spain, not because he wanted them to adopt Spanish habits, but rather to study with their German master and communicate chiefly with their German courtiers. In an early letter to Dietrichstein, he demanded information on the degree to which they mingled with Spanish people and were held back by the company of women, especially by the queen and the princess (Philip's sister).¹⁰⁵ His inquiry was not out of place, since the female members of

letter of recommendation is in ÖNB, Cond. Vindob. 9103, 45^v.

101 Edelmayer, "Wolf Rumpf Wielross." Rumpf was first sent to Rome to inform the pope of the archdukes' mission to Spain, and he joined them in Italy on their way to Barcelona (Holtzmann, *Kaiser Maximilian II.*, 489). His Spanish stay meant the start of his political career. By the end of the century, he became a fervent Catholic, forcing people on his estates to convert, like Dietrichstein did.

102 See Lill, *Hans Fugger*, 6.

103 He was still alive in 1596. On Tonner's life see Wolf, "Die kaiserliche Landesschule in Wien," 12; and the documents preserved in Vienna, ÖStA, Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv (hereafter AVA), Finanz- und Hofkammerarchiv (hereafter FHKA), Alte Hofkammer, Hoffinanz, Akten Rote Nr. 59 [Jan-Mai 1592; 13613], Feb 1592, fol. 46^v–48^v (published by Manfred Staudinger on documenta.rudolphina.org, accessed on 21 July 2019), and in ÖStA, AVA, Adel RAA 427.15–16.

104 See ÖNB, Cond. Vindob. 9103, fols. 48^v–49^r and Dietrichstein's letter in Strohmeyer, *Die Korrespondenz der Kaiser*, 235 (29 June 1564).

105 Letter of 25 October 1564, in Strohmeyer, *Die Korrespondenz der Kaiser*, 290.

Philip's court initially took care of the young archdukes. The summer months spent in the royal castle and park of Aranjuez were arguably the most enjoyable part of their stay, spent with daily dancing, riding, singing, and walking in the company of women.¹⁰⁶ Less than a month after their arrival, Dietrichstein expressed his worries in this regard to his friend Leonhard von Harrach. The archdukes, he fretted, were wasting their time: “no one would have thought how harmful it is for them to stay so long with women.”¹⁰⁷ The letter makes it clear that Dietrichstein regarded the whole mission as a nuisance and hoped to be able to return as soon as possible. Obviously, the end of their Spanish sojourn was not fixed, but surely no one had thought it would last for so long. It seems that Maximilian first urged that the archdukes return in 1568, but his wife, allegedly worried about her unorthodox husband's potential bad (Protestant) influence on her sons, continued to lobby for them to remain in Spain.¹⁰⁸ When they finally left Barcelona for Genoa in July 1571, Philip insisted in his farewell letter only on their adherence to the formal rituals of Catholicism, including the taking of the Sacraments, Holy Communion, and Confession in the interest of maintaining their reputations.¹⁰⁹ As an old man, Rudolf remembered that he had been so overjoyed on the day when he had been “called back from Spain” that he could not fall asleep that night.¹¹⁰

Humanist education by the book

The education of Rudolf and Ernst most probably began in 1559, when Rudolf turned seven. Their first teacher, Georg Muschler, a man of Bavarian origin, was a doctor of law (like Tonner) and a graduate from Leipzig. In the 1550s, he taught dialectics and rhetoric at the University of Vienna, heading at the same time the municipal Stephanschule.¹¹¹ Although his father was only a shoemaker, he and his brother

106 See Cod. Vindob. 9103, 1^r–3^r. They returned to Aranjuez every spring. See Mayer-Löwenschwerdt, *Der Aufenthalt der Erzherzoge Rudolf*, 25.

107 Letter of 9 April 1564, in Vienna, ÖStA, AVA, FHKA, Gräfllich Harrachsches Familienarchiv, Karton 708, fol. 3^v (published by Manfred Staudinger on documenta.rudolphina.org, accessed on 21 July 2019).

108 Mayer-Löwenschwerdt, *Der Aufenthalt der Erzherzoge Rudolf*, 22–35; Fiedler, *Relationen venetianischer Botschafter*, 223, 259–61.

109 Mayer-Löwenschwerdt, *Der Aufenthalt der Erzherzoge Rudolf*, 32–33. The issue of the sacraments was hotly contested. Philip must have known that Maximilian loathed Catholic insistence on them and that he tried to delay the archdukes' taking first communion in Madrid, which they eventually did in 1567.

110 Schwarzenfeld, *Rudolf II.*, 29.

111 On Muschler, see Kecskeméti, “Egy alig ismert 16. századi humanista,” 652; Noflatscher, *Glaube, Reich und Dynastie*, 37; Steinherz, *Nuntiaturreportagen aus Deutschland*, vol. 2.1, lxxvi; 224;

Johann both had impressive intellectual careers and a good number of contacts with members of humanist and Protestant circles. Muschler was a secret Protestant and a friend of Maximilian's court chaplain Sebastian Pfauser. His Protestantism, however, soon became a subject of gossip and hence a problem for Maximilian's family, i.e. for Emperor Ferdinand and Maria of Austria, especially as the apostolic nuncio Stanislaus Hosius lobbied for his removal from the university. Maximilian took Muschler's side and tried to resist the pressure put on him by his father, who demanded a Jesuit educator for his nephews, but in the end Muschler had to go.

In 1561, Johannes Tonner took over the education of the archdukes and taught them basic Latin. All we know is that, alongside Latin, they must have had classes in German, Italian, Spanish, and French as well.¹¹² They also seem to have studied drawing, probably copying two-dimensional images like coins together with Dietrichstein, inspired, it seems, by the court antiquarian Jacopo Strada.¹¹³ The picture becomes clearer only after their arrival in Spain, when both the archdukes and Dietrichstein began to inform the emperor about their progress.

In its methods, curriculum, and discipline, the education of the archdukes in Spain reflected typical humanist expectations, although their schedule may seem more relaxed than the schedules in the more rigorous boarding schools.¹¹⁴ They had fewer hours of study and proceeded rather slowly with their readings, and there was a striking difference between their schooling and that given to Edward VI.¹¹⁵ It did not help that, despite Maximilian's insistence that the archdukes study alongside other boys their age, Rudolf and Ernst had no study companions. Dietrichstein claimed that he could not find suitable students belonging to families of the nobility whose level of erudition matched theirs.¹¹⁶ Nevertheless, the archdukes unques-

Aschbach, *Geschichte der Wiener Universität*, 49–54, 238–40, 283.

112 Turba, *Venetianische Depeschen vom Kaiserhofe*, 255.

113 See Strada's letter to Dietrichstein of 1566, quoted in Jansen, *Jacopo Strada*, 572, in which he encouraged Dietrichstein to continue the practice of drawing and also remind the archdukes to do so. In fact, we find copies of Rudolf's numismatic drawings from 1567 in Vienna, ÖNB, Cod. Vindob. 9103.

114 On sixteenth-century grammar school education, discipline, and curricula see Dolch, *Lehrplan des Abendlandes*; Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*; Huppert, *Public Schools in Renaissance France*. There are plenty of editions of *Schulordnungen* and related documents. See, for example, Sturm, *Institutio literata*; Vormbaum, *Die evangelischen Schulordnungen*; Pachtler, *Ratio studiorum*; and Wolf, "Die kaiserliche Landesschule in Wien."

115 Edward not only studied Greek, he also read more widely and needed much less time to complete individual works (e.g. he finished Cicero's *De officiis* in half a year, while it took the archdukes three years). See Pollnitz, *Princely Education*, 152.

116 Strohmeyer, *Die Korrespondenz der Kaiser*, 295, 359, 446. Maximilian complained that Tonner followed his own precepts in this matter and did not want to accept any advice. Since the archdukes could not speak Hungarian, the lack of Latin, he claimed, would be greatly damaging

tionably had more intensive schooling than their father Maximilian II, grandfather Ferdinand I, or uncle Philip II had had. On an average day, they woke up a little before 7:00 a.m. and studied until 9:00 a.m. After the morning class, they heard daily mass, briefly met with the king, and took their first meal around 10:00 a.m. or a little later. We do not know what they did after this, but they probably had time to relax and do homework. They returned to school at 1:00 p.m. and studied until 4:00 p.m. They then had an hour of physical exercise (dancing or fencing). The evening meal lasted until 6:00 p.m., after which they socialized with the queen or other members of the court.¹¹⁷

Schooling in Spain was particularly focused on reading and imitating the authors of antiquity. Tonner had the archdukes read the essential works of the humanist curriculum, i.e. writings by Terence, Cicero, Sallust, Horace, Caesar, Livy, and Aristotle (see the table below), and he provided them with written glossaries and commentaries for each text.¹¹⁸ They may also have prepared their own lists of phrases and words, like Edward VI did, but no such notebooks survived, only neat copies of their exercise books.¹¹⁹ Alongside the writings of these key authors, the archdukes also touched on the works of Plato, Xenophon, Aesop, Cato, Varro, Virgil, Isocrates, etc., but they did not consult books by late medieval and Renaissance grammarians or other contemporaries. In addition to Latin, which they began to speak only after long delays,¹²⁰ they needed to learn Spanish (they were soon to translate from Spanish into Latin¹²¹), and they also had to improve their written German, which was rudimentary upon their arrival.¹²² Nevertheless, German classes, like arithme-

for them, and the fault would be Tonner's only. He finished this short section of his letter with "sed transeat" ("but let's move on"). Strohmeyer, *Die Korrespondenz der Kaiser*, 359.

117 Strohmeyer, *Die Korrespondenz der Kaiser*, 317. Cf. with Strohmeyer, *Die Korrespondenz der Kaiser*, 235.

118 "Commentarius in tres libros officiorum Ciceronis" (ÖNB, Cod. Vindob. 9563–68); "Moralia Aristotelis methodico compendio illustrate" (Cod. 10463); "Commentarius in Laelium Ciceronis" (Cod. 9569–70); "Scholia in Horatii 18 priores epistolas" (Cod. 9572–73); "Scholia in C. Iulii Caesaris commentarios de bello gallico" (Cod. 9399); "Scholia perpetua partim latina, partim germanica in I. Caesaris et A. Hirtii commentarios de bello Gallico" (Cod. 9620, 9624); "Scholia et enarrationes historiarum C. Sallustii Crispi" (Cod. 9400); "Annotationes in Sallustii Bellum Iugurthinum" (Cod. 9619); "Scholia perpetua partim latina" (Cod. 9620). See more on their curriculum in Mayer-Löwenschwert, *Der Aufenthalt der Erzherzoge Rudolf*, 44–54.

119 Pollnitz, *Princely Education*, 152.

120 The archdukes' spoken Latin was one of Maximilian's constant worries. A year and a half after their arrival, Dietrichstein reported that their ability to speak Latin was poor, while their ability to understand was fine. Strohmeyer, *Die Korrespondenz der Kaiser*, 445.

121 Strohmeyer, *Die Korrespondenz der Kaiser*, 446 (report of 21 October 1565). In 1568, they translated Cicero's letters from Spanish into Latin. See ÖNB, Cod. Vindob. 8052, fols. 12^{r-v}.

122 Mayer-Löwenschwert, *Der Aufenthalt der Erzherzoge Rudolf*, 51.

tic, are mentioned only once in their correspondence.¹²³ Certainly, mathematics was not a priority for Maximilian, and they each wrote only a single letter apiece in German, and only to demonstrate their proficiency in the language to their father.¹²⁴ They acquired their knowledge of history and geography from their classical readings, which meant they hardly learned anything of the history of their own times and dynasty or anything about the geography of Central Europe.

It is difficult to reconstruct Tonner's teaching methods with precision. We have no evidence of his use of the method of double translation, but it was probably one of the pedagogical tools he employed. To be sure, he put emphasis on dictation, translation, and imitation. In most of their letters, orations, and other exercises, the archdukes had to expand on a theme or develop arguments from their readings or reflect on real situations connected to their circumstances or current events.¹²⁵ For instance, before the imperial diet convened in 1566 in Augsburg, Rudolph had to develop a deliberative oration addressed to the members of the diet urging them to give succor to the emperor in his coming war against the Ottomans. Tonner stressed that it had to be wisely planned, adapted to the aptitudes of all the listeners, and cleverly organized according to rhetorical and grammatical rules. As usual, the different parts of the oration were indicated in the margins (in this case "*exordium a mea ipsius persona, ratio, aethiologia, adversativa, propositio, narratio, conclusio sive epilogus, clausola*").¹²⁶

Tonner may also have followed Erasmus's method of reading as described in *De conscribendis epistolis*, which included four steps: 1) capturing the general meaning of the text, 2) reading backwards and looking for unfamiliar Latin diction and grammar, 3) understanding the rhetorical devices and strategies used by the author, and 4) drawing the moral lesson.¹²⁷ Obviously, the archdukes spent a great deal of time on each text, studying it in depth, and they never failed to discuss the moral lessons. For Tonner, moral education was as important as the study of grammar, dialectics, and rhetoric and the efforts he made to habituate the archdukes to regular, disciplined work and obedience. Drawing moral messages from the readings must also have been a priority for Maximilian. Rudolf dwelt on this in a letter he wrote to his father in late 1567:

123 ÖStA, HHStA, Familienkorrespondenz A, Karton 2, fol. 35^r.

124 ÖStA, HHStA, Familienkorrespondenz A, Karton 2, fol. 35^r and 283^r.

125 Some early examples from ÖNB, Cod. Vindob. 9103: "Admonitio et hortacio quam scripsit Plutarchus discipulo suo Traiano Imperatori, latine a me facta" (18^v–19^r); "Epistola hortatoria ad valetudinem curandum" (25^{r-v}); "Excusatoria epistola in qua excusat se quod diu non scripserit" (35^{r-v}); "Narratoria epistola de obsidione Melitensi" (36^{r-v}); "Oratio legati Pontifitii ad S.mos principes Hungariae," "Responsio Rudolphi" (36^r–37^r).

126 ÖNB, Cod. Vindob. 9103, 47^v–48^r.

127 Erasmus, *Opera omnia*, vol. 1.2, 496–98 (*De conscribendis epistolis*). See Erasmus, *Collected Works of Erasmus*, 25, 194–95. See Erdman, "Imitation pedagogy", 3–4.

Table 1 The major readings or Rudolf and Ernst

1564	1565	1566	1567	1568	1569	1570	1571
Terence, <i>Adelphoe, Phormio, Andria</i>		Cicero, <i>Letters</i>					
	Cicero, <i>De amicitia</i>		Sallust, <i>Bellum Catalinae and Iughurtinum</i>				
		Horace, <i>Letters and Poems</i>			Caesar, <i>Commentarii de bello gallico</i>		
			Cicero, <i>De officiis</i>		Livy, <i>Decades (parts)</i>		
					Aristotle, <i>Moralia</i>		Aristotle, <i>Politica (?)</i>

We have studied several of Horace’s letters so profoundly (*ita memoriter*), letters which seemed particularly useful for shaping our lives and morals, that the precepts of these letters are serving us as points of orientation like the stars of the Ursa Minor serve ships. We have finally finished *Bellum Iughurtinum* by Sallust. By examining the elegance of the words, the substance of the sentences (characteristic of this author), and by learning about history, the figure of Jughurta and the art of war, we have hopefully made considerable progress in our studies while reading and listening to this book. What especially inflamed me was the acquisition of those virtues (by reading the book) that may serve me later in life, as much in war as in peace.¹²⁸

In fact, Tonner’s commentaries on Sallust’s histories were of a particularly moralizing nature. He spent several pages expanding on the introductory lines of *Bellum Iughurtinum*, which emphasized the importance of virtues and diligence in life against fortune and the lack of human faculties. Tonner emphasized intellectual virtues, rational thinking, and judgment, which can help one overcome the vicissitudes of fortune, and he elaborated on the adage of Erasmus (2.4.30), “Sui cuique mores fingunt fortunam,” adding what Pseudo-Sallust noted of the Roman censor Appius:

128 ÖStA, HHStA, Familienkorrespondenz A, Karton 2, fol. 310^r.

“every man is the architect of his own fortune” (a maxim also used by Bacon).¹²⁹ As we will see, this Renaissance adaptation of Stoic philosophical thought on *virtus* and *fortuna* was one of the central messages of Tonner’s pedagogy.

The Erasmian indoctrination of Rudolf and Ernst

When Maximilian II chose Johannes Tonner, the former tutor of the Fuggers, as the mentor and instructor of his two eldest sons, he chose someone who not only had considerable experience tutoring children but also had credentials as a reliable Catholic. Tonner must have convinced Maximilian’s father and wife of his Catholicism, but he was apparently less convincing to the new apostolic nuncio of Vienna, Zaccaria Delfino.¹³⁰ Nevertheless, doubts about his Catholicism did not reemerge during his long sojourn in Spain. Still, we can be sure that Tonner was no rigid Catholic either. Otherwise, Maximilian would not have trusted him. He was an Erasmian humanist who considered the issue of Catholic rituals and dogmas well-nigh irrelevant for a true follower of Christ.¹³¹ Maximilian had similar views, and he certainly did not want the prospective tutor of his sons to discuss confessional questions during their classes. Tonner, in fact, hardly mentioned modern pedagogical authors like Erasmus, Melanchthon, or Sturm, which is not hard to understand, given the changed confessional atmosphere of the 1560s, typified for instance by the appearance of Jesuit educators. Nonetheless, the almost total absence of references to religion in the surviving teaching materials is striking. If Tonner was an Erasmian humanist, he was a curious one, who hardly mentioned God, and when he did, it was often alongside mention of nature: “God and nature.” A case in point is one of Rudolf’s early letters to his father, which apparently aimed to summarize Maximilian’s chief expectations with regards to his sons’ studies.¹³² Rudolf asserted that he was expected, first, to use his mind and develop his talents and, second, to show obedience and deference to the people who were taking care of him:

The first is that I need to teach and govern myself, as I need to confess without arrogance that *God and nature* have given me many talents (*dona animi*), and if I use them, as it should be, in the right way, I can [i.e. could] make great advancement [also] without a preceptor.¹³³

129 ÖNB, Cod. Vindob. 9400, fols. 1^r–9^r.

130 Steinherz, *Nuntiaturreportagen aus Deutschland*, vol. 2.4, 9.

131 See Mayer-Löwenschwert, *Der Aufenthalt der Erzherzoge Rudolf*, 63. From a letter Hans Fugger sent him in 1581, it appears that he disliked the Jesuits. Lill, *Hans Fugger*, 27.

132 The children’s early letters were translations from German into Latin; the German originals were written by Tonner.

133 Vienna, ÖNB, Cond. Vindob. 9103, fols. 13^{r-v}. (Dated on 26 October 1564.)

Two years later, Rudolf mentioned “God and nature” again in a letter to his father, now expanding a little more freely on a theme given by Tonner. His Latin had improved, and he may also have begun to take an interest in the works of nature and providence, which became central to his later scientific interests:¹³⁴

As I heard, it goes back to Aristotle’s writings that *God and nature* did nothing in vain. This opinion seems to me, as far as I can see, truer than truth. This may be clearly discerned in anything that *nature* has created, such as the stars, planets, heavenly bodies, and other things that are placed in the upper skies—whose radiating divine power influences humans as if it were creeping on earth. The same can be seen in herbs, plants, fruits, and trees, which spontaneously grow without human care; in all the metals, which *nature* seems to have created specifically for human uses and needs; in poisonous and harmful animals, which are nonetheless useful for men. Likewise, one may also say the same of the nature of a bomb, which is a human product, constructed not only for the glory of God but also to serve humans, since man to man is a kind of God.¹³⁵

This was obviously an argument dear to Tonner. When the archdukes were studying Cicero’s *De officiis*, he was keen on returning to the subject in his glossaries and commentaries (a teaching tool neatly copied in two versions for the archdukes).¹³⁶ In connection with a short section from *De officiis* on nature’s careful construction of the human body (1.35), Tonner went into minute detail in his description of the wonderfully rational design of the body, especially of the head, on which nature had placed nothing by chance. His commentary is reminiscent of the Lutheran natural theology taught by Melanchthon and his followers in Wittenberg, who referred to the great design of God and Providence instead of nature. Yet again, Tonner was mostly speaking about nature and hardly mentioned God. He was, in fact, basing his commentary on Cicero’s *De natura deorum* (2.47) and other classical sources, such as Lactantius’s *De opificio Dei*.¹³⁷

From the beginning of their studies in Spain, Rudolf and Ernst were expected to write letters of all types in Latin, including many fictional ones to real and invented

134 This is practically the only sign of such interest in the surviving material. Tonner was most probably no enthusiast of astrology and alchemy, and if Spain had given any inspiration to Rudolf’s later occult interests, he must have taken them from Philip’s court, as Eamon argues (Eamon, “The Scientific Education of a Renaissance Prince”).

135 Vienna, ÖNB, Cod. Vindob. 9103, fol. 52^r. (Dated on 9 December 1566.) Rudolf took a keen interest in bombs and weapons in this period. (Cf. ÖNB, Cod. Vindob. 9103, fols. 41^r–42^v.)

136 See the copy of Ernst in Vienna, ÖNB, Cod. Vindob. 9567, fols. 63^v–67^r.

137 Gianozzo Manetti quotes much the same sources at the beginning of his *De dignitate et excellentia hominis* (1.3–12).

personages, including themselves. The archdukes also wrote letters to their younger brothers and sisters in Vienna in which they gave them moral advice, which, in reality, went back to the ideas of their father and tutor. One of these letters which Rudolf wrote to his younger brother contains one of the rare and exceptional mentions of piety and God as goals of their education:

I hope that everything in the future will happen for you as it should, so that eventually you can govern yourself, since everyone is the architect of his own fortune. So make sure that *you are pious and keep your eyes on God*, and make sure that your mind is full of good precepts, that you adore virtues and rid yourself of the firmly held habits of the peasants, especially when you speak with illustrious men in these days, and that you become more civilized and polite.¹³⁸

The mention of piety and God is hardly the central point of the letter. Tonner's key lesson was indeed secular: the goal of education needed to be the maturation of a self-reliant, learned, virtuous, and civilized man. One had to use one's talents in the right way and not waste the years of one's youth.¹³⁹ In the case of the archdukes, this meant in practice the imperative of studying with dedication and diligence. This was Maximilian's strictest order, to which Tonner gladly called their attention time and again, as Rudolf noted in a letter to Maximilian:

I believe Your Majesty knows very well how deeply I would like to deserve the praise of Your Majesty. The only way to do so is by studying, since I can clearly see Your Majesty is resolute in desiring me to put all my efforts into studies, which until now I have happily done, or at least as much as I could, and I will do so with the same spirit hereafter, since it has been Your Majesty's strict command, and Your Majesty has no other wish, and since I myself believe I see clearly the need to become well learned in all kinds of disciplines, especially as nothing suits a prince more than to be most learned, prudent, wise, virtuous, and martial, which your majesty undoubtedly knows better than I.¹⁴⁰

The importance of studying with dedication and diligence was a moral which was almost always part of Tonner's classes. A crucial element of the archdukes' Ciceronian/Erasmian indoctrination was the claim concerning virtue as personal merit, unrelated to birth. Who you were at birth did not really matter. What mattered was who you became thanks to your own efforts. In another early letter to Maximilian

138 Vienna, ÖNB, Cod. Vindob. 9103, fol. 3^r.

139 See, for example, ÖNB, Cod. Vindob. 9103, fol. 2^{r-v}, 32^r.

140 Rudolf to Maximilian of 11 December 1565. Vienna, ÖStA, HHStA, Familienkorrespondenz A, Kart. 2, fol. 288; copy of the draft is held in ÖNB, Cod. Vindob. 9103, fol. 39^r.

(which was either dictated or translated from German), Rudolf described how happy he was to inform his father about the progress he had made in his studies:

I myself very well understand that not everything rests on the fact that one is high-born or comes from the noblest family, but in my opinion it is equally important that someone be [well] governed and trained and taught to adopt all the virtues, especially if one is an illustrious adolescent.¹⁴¹

“I myself very well understand,” the eleven-year-old Ernst repeated in a letter to his father a few weeks later, “that it is not enough to be born high and have great talents, but it is even more important for a man to be well educated and wisely instructed.” He did not want to get into a philosophical debate on whether inborn talents or education enjoyed primacy,¹⁴² but sought merely to affirm that every man had natural gifts, “and if one does not search them out, they remain hidden.”¹⁴³

In the context of princely education, where the vocation of the future governors was not a question of choice, the humanist doctrines about the need to develop one’s talents and become the architect of one’s fortune may seem odd. If there was any uncertainty concerning their future positions, it was because of the potential rivalry between the princely heirs over precisely these positions. Likewise, the enormous emphasis on learnedness—Maximilian’s firmest expectation—may also seem peculiar. The archdukes repeatedly stressed in their letters and homework that it was only through studies and “honest exercises” that one could rise above one’s peers and become prudent, firm,¹⁴⁴ learned, and virtuous.¹⁴⁵ One had occasion to observe as a matter of everyday experience, Rudolph claimed in one of his fictional letters, that “no public office remained barred to the learned.”¹⁴⁶ Lack of learning, in contrast, brought ruin to the prince, as history had so often proven. Most importantly, studies helped one learn to rein in one’s passions. How could one govern a state if one did not even learn to govern oneself and rule over one’s bad inclinations and desires? This question, raised by Ernst,¹⁴⁷ was at the core of Isocrates’s (and Erasmus’s) political ideas, and it must have been part of

141 ÖNB, Cod. Vindob. 9103, fols. 11^v–12^r = ÖStA, HHStA, Familienkorrespondenz A, Karton 2, fol. 273^{r-v}.

142 Tonner showed particular interest in this question, see, for example, ÖNB, Cod. Vindob. 8051, fols. 8^v–9^v.

143 ÖStA, HHStA, Familienkorrespondenz A, Karton 2, fol. 45^r.

144 ÖNB, Cod. Vindob. 9103, fol. 15^r.

145 ÖStA, HHStA, Familienkorrespondenz A, Karton 2, fol. 13^{r-v}. (Dated 28 February 1567.)

146 ÖNB, Cod. Vindob. 9103, fol. 10^v.

147 ÖStA, HHStA, Familienkorrespondenz A, Karton 2, fol. 13^v. Cf. with ÖNB, Cod. Vindob. 9103, fol. 28^v and 30^v.

the archdukes' curriculum too.¹⁴⁸ It was obvious that a future prince needed to make special efforts, even if it was the nature of things that virtue could not be obtained without effort and diligence: “the gods wanted that virtues might be obtained only with hard work; what is nice and honest is also difficult.”¹⁴⁹ With hard work and resolution, one could overcome all difficulties—“labor omnia vincit improbus.”¹⁵⁰ What made the job of a prince even harder was the fact that he was “not born for himself but for many others”; i.e. not only for his family and friends, but for the entire country (cf. Cic. Off. 1.7).¹⁵¹ Drawing on Aristotle, Cicero, and Erasmus, Tonner taught the archdukes that as rulers, they would essentially labor in the service of the people and the common good, and not in the pursuit of their personal interests or desires.

A prince not only needed to learn to govern himself, rule over his passions, and make the best of his talents. He also had to be peaceful and moderate in his actions. Tonner understood the Erasmian lesson on tyranny, and he systematically collected relevant historical examples from Greek and Roman history.¹⁵² Yet one did not need to turn to history for good and bad examples of princely moderation; it was sufficient to follow the Spanish politics of Philip II. For Tonner as for his patron Maximilian II, the reactions of the Spanish king to both the Morisco Revolt (1568–71) and the Dutch Revolt (1568–1648) showed a lack of princely moderation and were not only ethically wrong but also politically misguided. However, Philip understood both revolts in religious terms, and he believed that in matters of faith involving such enormous passions, lenience and compromise would yield no result.¹⁵³ In reaction to Philip's responses to both events, Tonner asked Rudolf and Ernst to address fictional letters and orations to the king and argue for and against princely moderation.

In the middle of July 1568, Rudolf composed an oration addressed to Philip II in which he asked the king to grant Flemish noblemen who were being held prisoner by the Duke of Alba clemency.¹⁵⁴ The work was merely an exercise, as the noblemen had already been executed by the dreaded Council of Trouble, which was Alba's

148 Isocrates's two orations *Ad Nicoclem* appear to have been dictated in their entirety to the archdukes. Their copies are preserved in the notebooks of both (ÖNB, Cod. Vindob. 8051, fols. 42^v–58^v; 8052, fols. 32^r–43^v). Curiously, the translation was not by Erasmus but probably by Tonner.

149 ÖStA, HHStA, Familienkorrespondenz A, Karton 2, fol. 13^v.

150 ÖNB, Cod. Vindob. 9103, fol. 30^r. See also ÖStA, HHStA, Familienkorrespondenz A, Karton 2, fol. 13^v.

151 See ÖNB, Cod. Vindob. 9103, fol. 1^v, 5^r and 14^v.

152 See, for example, ÖNB, Cod. Vindob. 9103, fols. 8^{r-v}, 20^r–22^r, 23^v–24^r; ÖStA, HHStA, Familienkorrespondenz A, Karton 2, fols. 33^{r-v}.

153 Parker, *Imprudent King*, 195–213.

154 “Oratio Rudolphi ad Philippum regem Hispaniae pro Belgis rebellibus.” It was probably not recited. ÖNB, Cod. Vindob. 8051, fols. 27^v–29^r.

chief instrument of terror. Rudolf first analyzed the reasons why many noblemen in Belgium were alienated from the Spanish king and pointed out that these people managed to obtain the support of the commoners and start a rebellion, but Alba's arrival brought about their escape or imprisonment. Rudolf begged Philip to show mercy and punish only the people who had led the uprising. He referred to historical examples and argued that clemency would be its own reward in the future, while fierceness would generate further conflict and dissent. It was easier to ensure the stability of the state and loyalty through friendship than by force or fear, since fear was only a temporary weapon, and it nurtured hatred in the king's subjects. It was safer to rule over friends than serfs.¹⁵⁵ In a later oration on the same subject which allegedly was recited in front of the king, he argued that nothing was worse than to be moved by anger and governed by passions.¹⁵⁶

Two years later, Philip II traveled to Cordoba better to assert control over Don Juan of Austria's campaign against the Moriscos and to impress and presumably intimidate the rebels with his presence.¹⁵⁷ He sought to bring the Morisco conflict to an end by way of war, execution, and expulsion. Tonner and the archdukes traveled with the king's entourage; they were studying Livy's first books and discussing the political situation. Once again, Rudolf allegedly recited an oration to the king, again asking him to grant the rebels clemency. He acknowledged that the aggression shown by the Moriscos (who were rebelling against Spanish oppression and forced assimilation) was dangerous and that the king had to maintain religious order. Nevertheless, he claimed that forgiveness would win the ruler more respect. The power obtained through the arts of peace was more stable, while an overly harsh response could bring about the fall of the kingdom in the end. If there were no fear, there would also be greater prosperity, while if the king were to nurture fear among his subjects, he himself would also have something to fear. Moreover, the expulsion of the Moriscos would lead to the impoverishment of the local Spanish nobility and a drop in royal incomes.¹⁵⁸

On the same day (22 April 1570), Ernst presented the contrary argument to the king: "Oration in which I urge the king not to be hospitable with the indigenous Moriscos, but to act ferociously and cruelly and to wipe them out regardless of their

155 See the next piece, in ÖNB, Cod. Vindob. 8051, fols. 36^r.

156 "Oratio Rudolphi pro pacificatione Belgicae apud regem Hispaniarum habita." The oration finishes with "Dixi." Dated on 16 November 1568, in ÖNB, Cod. Vindob. 8051, fols. 35^v–27^r.

157 On the expulsion of the Moriscos, see Poutrin, "Éradication ou conversion forcée?"; and Birr, "Rebellische Väter, versklavte Kinder."

158 "Oratio ad regem habita, qua suadetur regi, ut Mauris indigenis ignoscat, eosque in gratiam recipiat atque veluti per coloniam passim eos in Hispania deducat." ÖNB, Cod. Vindob. 8051, fols. 79^r–81^v.

sex and age and kill almost all of them.”¹⁵⁹ Apparently, Tonner used the old scholastic strategy to appear neutral and apolitical and show off his rhetorical and advisory talents. He also must have understood the benefit of teaching more than one political idiom to the archdukes and studying anti-Ciceronian arguments, prompted perhaps in part by the spread of Machiavellian reasoning at the time. Although some exaggerations (like the title itself) showed that such hateful reasoning was meant to sound bizarre,¹⁶⁰ Ernst’s argument was based on a new political rhetoric, which by the 1570s was well established and did not sound absurd at all.

Ernst argued that, in the interest of civil society, the Morisco rebels had to be severely punished. They had to be exterminated. The king not only had a divine mandate to do so, but could also rely on the *ius gentium*, since the way in which the Moriscos lived was against divine right. The king had to place God before anything else, and he had to destroy the churches of this fanatical people. If others might argue that a king should avoid cruelty, Ernst would respond that it was not always good and useful to be gentle and merciful and that a king sometimes had to be cruel and inhuman, since excess gentleness with the common people could easily be abused. Ernst showed knowledge of Machiavellian reasoning and even used a phraseology typical of contemporary Machiavellians:

It is the nature of things that a body may be preserved in health only by the occasional cutting and burning of some of its parts, as the doctors do when they remove the wounded part in order not to let the whole body be affected. The overall wickedness of people is so great that there is no place for goodness, since the authorities’ lenience only increases their wickedness. So a thing which often appears a cruelty and a crime may sometimes be found to be gentleness and virtue.¹⁶¹

Ernst’s oration is a surprising text in the entire humanist curriculum. Two years later, in defense of the tragedy of the St. Bartholomew’s Day massacre, some authors would use very similar arguments and phraseology to justify the cruelty of the Catholic party.¹⁶²

The case of Ernst’s oration can be interpreted in several ways. One could argue that it shows the failure of Tonner’s Erasmian indoctrination, since *despite* Tonner’s attempts, the archdukes were not untouched by other schools of thought. However, it is unreasonable to think that Tonner, as a good humanist, would have been uninterested in counterarguments or non-Erasmian ways of reasoning or that Ernst’s

159 ÖNB, Cod. Vindob. 8052, fols. 72^v–74^v.

160 Note that the title of Rudolf’s oration was also intentionally exaggerated.

161 ÖNB, Cod. Vindob. 8052, fol. 74^r.

162 Almási, “Experientia,” 869.

oration was merely a gesture toward Philip II. If Ernst wrote such a polished and well-structured work, Tonner must have been behind his desk. The oration shows the trust Tonner had in the archdukes' Christian humanist learning: they were capable of arguing *in utramque partem* on any important question and of doing it eloquently. However, they never for a second could have had any doubts concerning which argument or act was right or wrong. Lessons about peaceful means, moderation, and virtues, Tonner must have believed, had been repeated during the archdukes' classes too many times not to have had a decisive impact on their thinking.

We know of an analogous case which took place at the court of Edward VI. Despite the strictest Erasmian schooling, Edward VI was exposed to Machiavellian thinking right after he began to sit on the royal council regularly, beginning in 1551. William Thomas, one of the councilors, decided to initiate the king into more "modern" political thought in secret, encouraging him to set aside the Ciceronian understanding of friendship, follow Machiavelli's historical examples, and "phrame his proceadinge unto his tyme."¹⁶³ Edward died too early to allow us to judge the effect of his encounter with new political languages, languages that downgraded moral principles and tried to found political action on the inherent logic of contemporary political and social science.

Epilogue

As an emperor, Rudolf failed to follow the religious politics of his father, which had aimed at compromise and a confessional middle ground. Ernst strayed from the path of his forerunners, which was characterized by religious moderation, even more sharply. With more or less conviction, both of them took sides with—or at least failed to withstand—the forces of the Counter-Reformation, which were to determine social and political dynamics by the end of the century. From this perspective, Tonner's Erasmian indoctrination was a failure. It apparently could not counterbalance the influence of Philip II's Catholic court and the absence of the archdukes' father. Nevertheless, the main point of Tonner's education was not confessional neutralism but moderation, rational self-control and emphasis on personal virtue. Both Rudolf and Ernst espoused these values and became erudite men and significant citizens of the humanist Republic of Letters. They selected courtiers and councilors considering (next to their loyalty) not so much their Catholic orthodoxy as their erudition and suitability. However, efficient ruling needed an emperor keen on decision-making and with an original interest in politics. It needed one with good communication skills and courtly manners, which the archdukes failed to acquire in Spain. As the Venetian ambassador commented three years after their return,

163 Pollnitz, *Princely Education*, 186–95 (quotation at p. 191).

there is a certain strangeness in their ways, as in all their actions, which makes them, I would not say, hateful, not to use this heavy word, but not at all well-received, which they will never be, because their ways are totally contrary to the habits of the country, which would desire from a prince some habitual conversational style.¹⁶⁴

Obviously, Maximilian II's worries came true, and the archdukes took up Spanish habits. There was unfortunately not much to be done about it:

When after their return from Spain His Majesty noticed [their awkward behavior], he called their attention to it, and commanded them to change their ways of behaving [*stile*], and then repeated this several other times, which is known, and as things did not turn better, not even a little bit, one day he said to excuse them that they behave the same way also with him, meaning that they do so not because of haughtiness, but because such inveterate habits are difficult to abandon.¹⁶⁵

Viennese courtiers were generally upset and interpreted the archdukes' behavior as "haughtiness, and all the more so, as they are by nature men of few words." "They especially come across badly when compared to their father", who had the perfect ways of a German courtier, as he was "loveable with all ranks of people" and used words, gave looks, and made gestures with such sweetness that he entirely enchanted the people around him.¹⁶⁶

What or who is to blame, then, for what ultimately proved a failed venture? Should one fault Tonner's disciplinary measures or Maximilian's insistence on learning? This is a question hard to answer. If Tonner was guilty of anything, it may be the heavy psychological pressure he exerted on Rudolf to get him to study. The documents suggest that Rudolf's long education in Spain not only robbed him of important emotional ties, opportunities to socialize in his natural environment, and the chance to gain early exposure to and understanding of political practice at his father's side, but also failed to provide what he apparently needed most, self-confidence. According to humanist educational guidelines, Tonner should have discovered and nurtured Rudolf's talents and given him abundant praise, but perhaps it was difficult to praise him, as his study companion—Ernst—was smarter and more inclined towards the pursuit of serious studies. Even before they arrived in Spain, Maximilian cheerfully told the Venetian ambassador that his two sons were much the same in age but very dissimilar in *genius*. While Rudolf was only interested in physical activities like playing with weapons or riding horses, Ernst

164 Report of Giovanni Corrado (1574) in Fiedler, *Relationen venetianischer Botschafter*, 336.

165 Fiedler, *Relationen venetianischer Botschafter*.

166 Fiedler, *Relationen venetianischer Botschafter*.

allegedly desired nothing more than to study and continue learning the four languages—Latin, Spanish, French, and Italian—also in Spain.¹⁶⁷ Dietrichstein also confirmed that Ernst was more talented and could easily surpass Rudolf. As a result, one had to take care not to dishearten Rudolf through their rivalry.¹⁶⁸ Tonner may have tried to avoid encouraging rivalry between the two brothers, but he may well not have succeeded, at least not always. Rudolf repeatedly promised that he would study harder and satisfy Maximilian’s and Tonner’s expectations. Again and again, he acknowledged his guilt for not studying or controlling his passions adequately, but sometimes he added that his heart was troubled and that he would rather be like the Spanish noblemen who, like donkeys, were deficient in many things but did not have to pursue studies or attend classes.¹⁶⁹ Nevertheless, Tonner’s continuous pressure slowly appears to have worked. In 1569, five years after their arrival, Rudolf addressed a letter to Tonner, who by that time was bedridden. Rudolf claimed to have recovered after having felt weak for three days, and he claimed to feel glad to get back to his studies, but sadly he had learned in the meantime that his master had fallen sick. He understood from Tonner’s instruction, handed over by one of the courtiers, that he needed to repeat Cicero’s *Commentaries* in the morning and write an oration or an official letter in the afternoon, and he had finished Cicero but then had used the afternoon to write the personal letter to Tonner instead of an official one. He hoped his master would not mind learning how sorry he was to hear of his illness, and he hoped Tonner would understand that he had been wrong to believe Rudolf had been pleased by Tonner’s absence.¹⁷⁰ Arguably, Tonner could have made his sometimes tense relationship with Rudolf smoother if he had been at liberty better to adjust the teaching materials, methods, and schedule to his character.¹⁷¹

In many ways, the princely education of Rudolf and Ernst is a rare example of humanist ideals put into practice. Their schooling took place in a kind of incubator cut off from “vulgar” influences, and it was very much based on moral indoctrination through the study of the writings of classical authors and a tireless repetition of humanist dogmas. If Erasmus had had a chance to criticize it, he would most probably have complained about its late start; he would have insisted that the disciplinary process, directed by a humanist mentor, ought to begin as early as possible. He might also have realized that in the *The Education of a Christian Prince*, his emphasis on a theoretical humanist education had been exaggerated

167 Turba, *Venetianische Depeschen vom Kaiserhofe*, 255.

168 Strohmeyer, *Die Korrespondenz der Kaiser*, 296.

169 ÖNB, Cod. Vindob. 9103, fol. 14^{r-v}. Cf. with ÖNB, Cod. Vindob. 9103, fol. 28^v–29^r and 30^v–31^r.

170 ÖNB, Cod. Vindob. 8051, fol. 42^r. See also Cod. 9103, 3^{r-v}, 38^r, 52^r, 67^r.

171 More arithmetic, sciences, gymnastics etc., and the involvement of other classmates might have helped.

when compared to the relatively minor emphasis he put on political practice. But how could he foresee that his ideas were going to be followed with such dedication in the pessimism of the mid-1510s, when the courts of Europe seemed to abound with examples of princes who were being given a poor education and poor preparation to serve as the rulers of the next generation?

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