

La letteratura d'istruzione intesa nella sua accezione più ampia costituisce uno dei campi d'indagine più fecondi della cultura medievale d'area germanica, sia perché consente di seguire la nascita e lo sviluppo di diverse forme letterarie in società nelle quali a lungo la trasmissione della conoscenza era stata orale, sia perché aiuta a comprendere le dinamiche di adattamento di quelle popolazioni al mondo classico e cristiano col quale esse vennero in contatto, gradualmente, nei secoli compresi tra la Tarda Antichità e il Medioevo.

Ma già prima dell'incontro con la superiore cultura latina le popolazioni germaniche dovettero essere ben consapevoli "dell'utilità di quella socializzazione del sapere che è alla base di ogni attività formativa", dandone evidenza anche nei primissimi documenti scritti, perfino quelli runici.

L'istruzione, che è primariamente condivisione del sapere, diventa così il "pretesto" per la traduzione, l'adattamento e l'originale redazione di opere di grande profondità. Opere dai contenuti più diversi: saggi grammaticali, riflessioni sulla lingua, testi filosofici, storici, pedagogici.

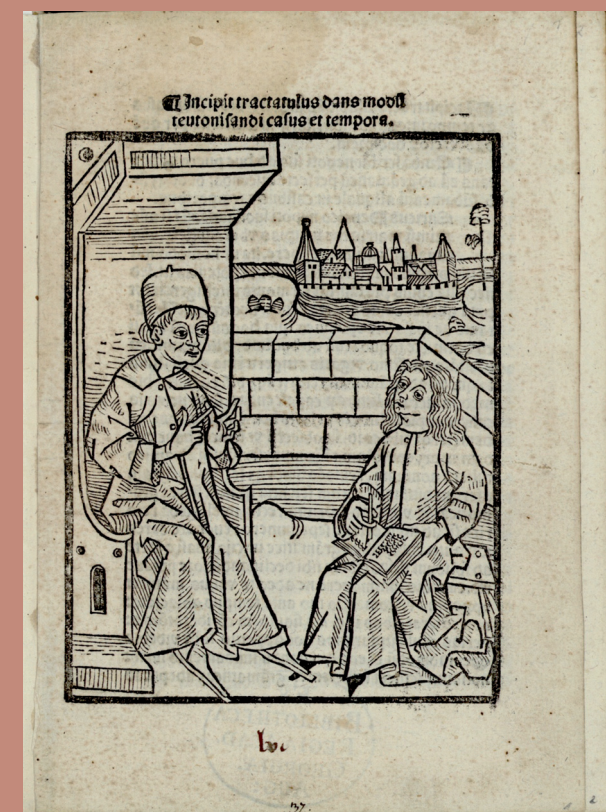
I saggi contenuti nel volume danno un quadro variegato del fermento d'interessi, curiosità, riflessioni che le popolazioni germaniche, non solo nei primi secoli della loro storia, hanno dedicato a un tema centrale per lo sviluppo di qualunque comunità culturalmente evoluta, come è la condivisione del sapere e la formazione delle generazioni future, e costituiscono l'omaggio e il saluto della comunità accademica, non solo italiana, a Fabrizio D. Raschellà, a conclusione della sua carriera.

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LA LETTERATURA DI ISTRUZIONE NEL MEDIOEVO GERMANICO

STUDI IN ONORE DI
FABRIZIO D. RASCHELLÀ



A cura di
Marialuisa Caparrini, Maria Rita Digilio, Fulvio Ferrari

Barcelona - Roma
2017

Fédération Internationale des Instituts d'Études Médiévales
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MASSIMILIANO BAMPÌ*

PRODESSE ET DELECTARE. COURTLY ROMANCE AS DIDACTIC LITERATURE IN MEDIEVAL SWEDEN

The introduction of courtly literature and ideology in medieval Scandinavia was no doubt one major step in the process that brought the Nordic countries in increasingly closer contact with the social and cultural developments that took place in continental Europe from the 12th century onwards. The reception of the ideals that lie at the heart of the fictional representation of the courtly and chivalric world(s) was made possible mainly by a rather intense translation activity promoted by the highest strata of the Scandinavian societies of the High and Late Middle Ages. This translation activity was indeed largely a royal initiative both in Norway and in Sweden. The scholarly consensus holds that King Hákon Hákonarson (1217-1263) was the main promoter of a translation programme that involved some of the major works of courtly literature from the continent, and that was probably meant to endorse the royalist programme that the king was seeking to carry out in Norway¹. This translation programme was the initial stage of a process that led to giving shape to a new genre in Old Norse-Icelandic literature, i.e. the so-called *riddarasögur* ('sagas of knights')².

The rise and development of courtly ideology in medieval Sweden is strictly connected to the political relations with the Norwegian Crown. The three Old Swedish texts customarily known as *Eufemiavisor* are indeed translations of chivalric works that are generally held to have been made at the behest of the Norwegian queen Eufemia, whose daughter Ingeborg was betrothed to Duke Erik Magnusson – son of King Magnus Ladulås of Sweden – when she was one year old, in 1302.

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¹ L. IRLÉNBUSCH REYNARD, «Translations at the court of Hákon Hákonarson: A well planned and highly selective programme», *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 36.4 (2011), pp. 387-405.

² On the translated *riddarasögur* as a genre see J. GLAUSER, «Romance (Translated *riddarasögur*)», in R. McTURK (ed.), *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Society*, Blackwell, Oxford 2005, pp. 372-87.

The *Eufemiavisor* were probably meant as a gift to the couple³. The three translations – *Herr Ivan lejonriddaren*, *Hertig Fredrik av Normandie*, and *Flores och Blanzefflor* – represent the first major example of literature in the vernacular in medieval Sweden. It is safe to assert that they laid the foundations for the reception of courtly literature and its underlying ideology that continued well into the 15th century, in the shape of both original works such as the *rimkrönikor* (most notably *Erikskrönikan*) and translations of other continental works that were meant to address an aristocratic audience⁴. Major examples of such later works, translated from various languages, are *Konung Alexander*, *Karl Magnus*, *Namnlös och Valentin*, *Didrikskrönikan* and *Paris och Vienna*, all of which survive in manuscripts compiled during the course of the 15th century⁵.

One of the most debated questions pertaining to the translation of courtly literature in medieval Scandinavia regards the purpose that these texts were meant to serve. The debate has been particularly intense in the field of *riddarasögur*-research, in which two major opposing standpoints have set the tone of the discussion. On one side are those who view the *riddarasögur* as mere entertainment, on the other those who claim that the translated chivalric sagas are endowed with a didactic function⁶. Although

³ See S. WÜRTH, «Eufemia: Deutsche Auftraggeberin schwedischer Literatur am norwegischen Hof», in F. PAUL (Hrsg.), *Arbeiten zur Skandinavistik: 13. Arbeitstagung der deutschsprachigen Skandinavistik in Oslo*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main 2000, pp. 277-281.

⁴ M. BAMPI, «Translating Courtly Literature and Ideology in Medieval Sweden: *Flores och Blanzefflor*», *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia*, 4 (2008) 1-14.

⁵ On *Konung Alexander* see S-B. JANSSON, *Konung Alexander. En svensk roman från 1300-talet*, Sällskapet Runica et Mediævalia, Stockholm 2015. On *Karl Magnus* see M. BAMPI, «In Praise of the Copy: Karl Magnus in 15th-century Sweden», in M. BAMPI – F. FERRARI, *Lärdomber oc skämtan. Medieval Swedish Literature Reconsidered*, Svenska fornskriftsällskapet, Uppsala 2008, pp. 11-34. For a presentation of *Namnlös och Valentin* see G. VILHEMSDOTTER, «Den profana litteraturen: Namnlös och Valentin», in I. LARSSON – S-B. JANSSON – R. PALM – B. SÖDERBERG (eds.), *Den medeltida skriftkulturen i Sverige. Genrer och texter*, Sällskapet Runica et Mediævalia, Stockholm 2010, pp. 262-277. A detailed study of *Didrikskrönikan* is provided by B. HENNING, *Didrikskrönikan. Handskriftsrelationer, översättningsteknik och stildrag*, Almqvist & Wiksell, Stockholm 1970. On *Paris och Vienna* see S. LODÉN, «Paris et Vienne and its Swedish Translation», *Medioevi. Rivista di letteratura e culture medievali*, 1 (2015), pp. 169-185.

⁶ G. BARNES, «Some Current Issues in *Riddarasögur* Research», *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*, 104 (1989), pp. 73-88; J. GLAUSER, «Romance»; M. KALINKE, «Norse

both stances have in different ways contributed towards enlightening various aspects of the narrative universe of the chivalric sagas, the dichotomic view that they appear to establish – entertainment vs. didacticism – carries the risk of being detrimental to our understanding of these texts, and more recent research has indeed progressively moved away from such rigid distinction in favour of a more nuanced approach⁷.

The discussion that has arisen in *riddarasögur*-research has progressively come to include the Old Swedish *Eufemiavisor*⁸. The present article aims to make some observations on them as works intended for the instruction of an aristocratic audience. However, the fact that in the following the didactic purpose of the *Eufemiavisor* will be foregrounded should not be taken to imply that their entertaining value is either questioned or marginalised. Although a thorough discussion of this aspect of the intended message of chivalric works falls outside the remit of the present essay, here it may suffice to say that an entertaining work can provide amusement while aiming to convey a message. The observations that will be made in the following are thus based on this assumption.

The debate on the purpose behind the translation of the *Eufemiavisor* on behalf of the Norwegian queen has been quite intense⁹.

The scholarly consensus holds that the three texts were translated mainly for ideological purposes. By listening to the stories of knights and kings, queens and princesses, the Swedish aristocrats could learn how to behave according to courtly manners, also by means of negative examples¹⁰. The *Eufemiavisor* thus contributed towards shaping the collective identity of the Swedish nobility as part of a broader social process that led to the

Romance (*riddarasögur*)», in C. CLOVER – J. LINDOW (eds.), *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature. A Critical Guide*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto – Buffalo – London 1985, pp. 316-63; G. W. WEBER, «The Decadence of Feudal Myth: Towards a Theory of *Riddarasaga* and Romance», in J. LINDOW – L. LÖNNROTH – G.W. WEBER (eds.), *Structure and Meaning in Old Norse Literature: New Approaches to Textual Analysis and Literary Criticism*, Odense University Press, Odense 1986, pp. 415-54.

⁷ See GLAUSER, «Romance», pp. 379-381.

⁸ T. SMÅBERG, «Bland drottningar och hertigar. Utblickar kring riddarromaner och deras användning i svensk medeltidsforskning», *Historisk tidskrift (Sweden)*, 131:2 (2011), pp. 197-226.

⁹ See SMÅBERG, «Bland drottningar och hertigar», p. 202.

¹⁰ The prologue and the ending of *Hertig Fredrik* have been described by Stefanie Würth-Gropper as «eine Art Fürstenspiegel» (WÜRTH, «Eufemia. Deutsche Auftraggeberin», p. 279).

establishment and consolidation of a new élite¹¹. In addition to providing role models, though, the *Eufemiavisor* also offered narrative material that lent itself to political purposes, especially with regard to the limitations of kingship and the tensions between the aristocracy and the monarchy in 14th-century Sweden¹².

The assumption on which the didactic and ideological use of the *Eufemiavisor* in the early 14th century is based is that they were primarily meant to be read aloud at court¹³, as is the case with other more or less such coeval texts as the verse chronicle known as *Erikskrönikan*.

Unfortunately, no original version of the *Eufemiavisor* is extant. The texts have indeed been handed down to us almost exclusively in 15th-century copies. The only exception is represented by a fragment of *Flores och Blanzeflor* – probably the youngest of the *Eufemiavisor* – that dates back to the 1350s (Helsinki, University Library, Cod. Hels. RIII). Here is a list of the major manuscript witnesses¹⁴:

Stockholm, Kungliga Biblioteket, Cod. Holm. D 2 (ca. 1480-1500)
 Stockholm, Kungliga Biblioteket, Cod. Holm. D 3 (1488)
 Stockholm, Kungliga Biblioteket, Cod. Holm. D 4 (ca. 1410-1430)
 Stockholm, Kungliga Biblioteket, Cod. Holm. D 4 a (1448)
 Stockholm, Riksarkivet, E 8822 fol. (ca. 1450-1500)
 Copenhagen, Den Arnamagnæanske Samling, AM 191 fol. (before 1492)

The main consequence of the chronological hiatus between the alleged date of translation of the *Eufemiavisor* (i.e. the early 14th century)

¹¹ The Swedish *frälse* ('nobility') was formally established around 1280, when the so-called Alsnö stadga was issued.

¹² K. BERGKVIST, «Debating the Limitations of Kingship in Fourteenth-Century Sweden. Political Language and Norms in Romance and Chronicle», in O. FERM – I. HEDSTRÖM – S. LODÉN – J. PETERSSON – M. ÅKESTAM (eds.), *The Eufemiavisor and Courtly Culture. Time, Texts and Cultural Transfer*, Kungliga Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien, Stockholm 2015, pp. 67-85. For a discussion of the *Eufemiavisor* as political instrument see also W. LAYHER, *Queenship and Voice in Medieval Northern Europe*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2010, pp. 107-128.

¹³ SMÅBERG, «Bland drottningar och hertigar», p. 205.

¹⁴ For a complete list of manuscripts preserving the *Eufemiavisor* see W. LAYHER, «Manuscripts of the *Eufemiavisor*», in FERM – HEDSTRÖM – LODÉN – PETERSSON – ÅKESTAM (eds.), *The Eufemiavisor and Courtly Culture*, op. cit., pp. 273-279.

and the date of the extant copies is that we do not know to what extent the *Eufemiavisor* as we now have them reflect the wording of the original translations.

Still, the investigation of how the texts were employed is certainly not restricted to the time in which they are held to have been translated. The study of their manuscript transmission does indeed enable us to make some observations on the kind of purpose these works were probably meant to serve during the 15th century, when they appear to have enjoyed a great deal of popularity, if we are to judge from the number of manuscript witnesses.

Thus, in what follows the question of the didactic use of the *Eufemiavisor* will be approached from the vantage point of their manuscript transmission. As will be shown presently, the fact that the *Eufemiavisor* and other literature intended for an aristocratic audience are preserved exclusively in miscellanies allows us to deal with the question of their use starting from the assumption that some of the works in the manuscripts appear to be meant to be read intertextually. In other words, if we view them as part of a broader codicological context, rather than as individual works, as is often the case, it is possible to detect some textual clusters (i.e. group of texts that are thematically related) that suggest possible reading pathways within the manuscript. This provides us with relevant clues to how the texts would probably have been used.

The 15th- century miscellanies that preserve the *Eufemiavisor* (either all of them or just one single work) contain for the most part other literature that share the same kind of ideology.

In the following attention will be drawn to the contents and structure of four of the aforementioned manuscripts: D 4, D 4 a, D 3 and AM 191 fol. For the sake of brevity, only the texts that appear to point to an aristocratic audience are listed¹⁵:

D 4

- Herr Ivan (1r-56r)
- Hertig Fredrik, (56v-85v)
- Flores och Blanzeflor (89r-107v)
- Konung Alexander (110r-199v)
- Karl Magnus (219r-229v)

¹⁵ For a complete overview see LAYHER, «Manuscripts of the *Eufemiavisor*», pp. 273-277.

- Dikten om kung Albrekt (229v-230v)
- Sju vise mästare, (245r-263r)
- Riddaren Sankt Göran (267r-271r)

D 4 a

- Erikskrönikan (1-111)
- Karl Magnus, 111-150
- Flores och Blanzeflor, 150-203
- Herr Ivan, 207-349
- Namnlös och Valentin, 349-403
- Hertig Fredrik, 403-474

D 3

- Herr Ivan (3-168)
- Karl Magnus (169-212)
- Erikskrönikan, (213-342)
- Flores och Blanzeflor (347-407)
- Namnlös och Valentin (407-461)
- Hertig Fredrik, (461-542)
- Schacktavelslek, (593-626)

AM 191

- Schacktavelslek, (1r-35r)
- Karl Magnus (37r-49r)
- De Alexandro rege (from Själen's tröst) (49r-58r)
- Amicus och Amelius (from Själen's tröst) (58v-66v)
- Flores och Blanzeflor (67r-89r)
- Sju vise mästare, (126r-137v)
- Prosaiska krönikan (94r-107r)
- Lilla rimkrönikan (107v-112r)

Before moving on to the analysis of the *Eufemiavisor* from within the codicological context in which they appear, some background information on the owners of the aforementioned manuscripts will be provided. This is indeed of paramount importance in order to locate the manuscripts in their social context.

Mss. D 4 a and D 3 are known to have belonged to two noblewomen. D 4 a is indeed also known either as *Codex Verelanus* or as *fru Märtas bok*

(‘the book of Lady Märta’). Her owner is held to have been the noblewoman Märta Ulfsdotter, daughter of the knight Ulf Bengtsson (Sparre av Hjulsta och Ängsö). The texts that make up the manuscript in its extant form have been copied in all likelihood by Märta’s brother, Sigge Ulfsson, who had studied in Leipzig and became bishop in Strängnäs in 1449¹⁶.

Ms. D 3 is named after Elin Gustavsdotter (*fru Elins bok*), daughter of Märta Ulfsdotter and Gustav Algotsson, who was one of the most prominent men of his time in Sweden.

Gustav Algotsson is intimately linked to ms. D 4. Recent studies on this manuscript have indeed shown that it was most probably owned by him, who might have had some monk from Vadstena copy the texts he wanted to have in the collection¹⁷. According to Roger Andersson, it is likely that he provided the scribe with a copy of the texts to include in the manuscript. Gustav’s former wife, Elin Arvidsdotter Oxenstierna, was born into a wealthy family with important political connections with the monarchy as well as with literary interests on both sides¹⁸. Even Gustav himself was born into a prominent family, from which he might have inherited manuscripts. In either case, it is clear that, according to this hypothesis, three of the most important Swedish miscellanies from medieval times belong to one and the same wealthy family.

If ms. D 4 is an intriguing collection of texts written in three languages, AM 191 fol. is no less fascinating. A note on f. 49^r reveals that, around 1492, the manuscript was owned by Johannis Gerardi, chaplain of a Cistercian nunnery in Askeby (Östergötland), who was also responsible for copying most of the texts that make up the manuscript in its extant form¹⁹.

¹⁶ On this aspect see P-A. WIKTORSSON, «On the Scribal Hands in the Manuscripts of Skempton», in O. FERM – B. MORRIS (eds.), *Master Golyas and Sweden. The Transformation of a Clerical Satire*, Sällskapet Runica et Mediævalia, Stockholm 1997, pp. 226-231. An overview of these manuscripts is provided by R. ANDERSSON, «Die Eufemiavisor - Literatur für die Oberklasse», in J. GLAUSER – S. KRAMARZ-BEIN (Hrsg.), *Rittersagas. Übersetzung, Überlieferung, Transmission*, A. Francke Verlag, Tübingen 2014, pp. 58-65.

¹⁷ B. R. JONSSON, *Erikskrönikans diktare – ett försök till identifiering*, Svenska fornskriftsällskapet, Uppsala 2010, p. 103-131; R. ANDERSSON, «Eufemiavisenes publikum», in B. BANDLIEN (ed.), *Eufemia. Oslos middelalderdronning*, Dreyers forlag, Oslo 2012, pp. 233-245.

¹⁸ ANDERSSON, «Eufemiavisenes publikum», pp. 239-240.

¹⁹ J. CARLQUIST, *Handskriften som historiskt vittne. Fornsvenska samlingshandskrifter – miljö och funktion*, Sällskapet Runica et Mediævalia, Stockholm 2002, p. 112.

A look at the contents of *Codex Askabysensis* – as the manuscript is also called – reveals that most of the texts preserved in it are of a secular nature rather than of a religious one, as one would expect from a book owned by a chaplain. Two major hypotheses have been put forth to explain this fact.

Per-Axel Wiktorsson believes that the manuscript was commissioned to the chaplain by some member of the local aristocracy in Östergötland, where the Askeby nunnery was placed²⁰.

Another possible explanation is based on what is known about the owner and the nunnery. It is indeed possible that the chaplain used some of the works preserved in AM 191 for the moral instruction of the nuns²¹. If we are to judge from what is known of other nunneries in Sweden (most notably Vreta, to which Askeby was formally related), the nuns living at Askeby were in all likelihood noblewomen. According to James France, the Swedish Cistercian nunneries «were largely the preserve of the nobility and even royalty [...]. Whereas boys were not allowed in Cistercian abbeys, young girls of a certain class were frequently raised in convents»²².

In either case, though, it seems rather clear that the intended audience of the secular texts in the collection was an aristocratic one.

The analysis of the didactic value of the *Eufemiavisor* and other narrative literature preserved in the four miscellanies described above will now focus especially on two of the aforementioned manuscripts, i.e. Cod. Holm. D 3 and AM 191.

In particular, what is known about the history of composition of the manuscripts and the texts preserved in them suggests that some of the works making up the miscellanies were in all likelihood intended to be read together, or at least as part of a reading programme built around a thematic unity. Whereas in the case of D 3 there is no reason to doubt that the manuscript was compiled for a noblewoman, as far as AM 191 is concerned we can infer from the contents and some clues in the manuscript that at least part of the works were meant to address an audience consisting of noblewomen.

²⁰ P-A. WIKTORSSON, *Äktenskapsvisan. En lustig visa om samgåendets vedermödor*, Sällskapet Runica et Mediævalia, Stockholm 2007, pp. 14-15.

²¹ M. BAMPI, *The Reception of the Septem Sapientes in Medieval Sweden between Translation and Rewriting*, Kümmerle, Göppingen 2007, pp. 35-39.

²² J. FRANCE, *The Cistercians in Scandinavia*, Cistercian Publications, Kalamazoo 1997, p. 71.

The aforementioned note on fol. 49r in *Codex Askabyensis* gives us some relevant clues on the possible use of some of the texts in the manuscript:

Anno dominj M cd x cij feria 3:a infra octauas
 omnium sanctorum hore decima ante
 prandivm Et est liber dominj johannis
 gerardi cappellani monasterij
 askaby Et habentur in isto libro
 primo de ludo scakariorum/ liber
 blanzaflor / De septem sapienti
 bus Et de rege magno karulo

(‘The 3rd of November in the year of Our Lord 1492, around ten o’clock in the morning. And this book belongs to Johan Gerdsson, chaplain of the Askeby monastery. And in this first book there are On the game of chess/ the book of Blanzaflor/ On the Seven Sages and On King Charlemagne’. The translation is mine.)

Johannis Gerardi mentions four works: *Schacktavelslek*, *Flores och Blanzefflor*, *Sju vise mästare*, and *Karl Magnus*. What binds these texts together is the edifying purpose that they were probably meant to serve in a female aristocratic environment.

It is certainly noteworthy that *Flores och Blanzefflor* is referred to as *liber blanzaflor*. This does indeed foreground the role of the female protagonist of the story. Furthermore it is equally noteworthy that the story in *Flores och Blanzefflor* ends with the noblewoman Blanzefflor retiring to a nunnery (and Flores to a monastery), thus making the whole narrative into some sort of *exemplum*, as Stefanie Würth-Gropper points out²³. The choice to include *Flores och Blanzefflor* in the collection of works that the chaplain intended to assemble is thus best understood as part of an edifying project that probably included the other works listed by him in his note, together with both stories from the collection of *exempla* known as *Själens tröst* (*Amicus och Amelius* and *De Alexandro rege*, about the deeds of Alexander the Great)²⁴.

²³ WÜRTH, «Eufemia. Deutsche Auftraggeberin», p. 274.

²⁴ On *Själens tröst* see I. THORÉN, *Studier över Själens tröst. Bidrag till kännedom om den litterära verksamheten i 1400-talets Vadstena*, Hugo Gebers förlag, Stockholm 1942.

An edifying purpose can be hypothesized also for at least part of the collection in D 3. It is indeed noteworthy that the two manuscripts (together with D 4 a) share a significant number of texts: the *Eufemiavisor*, *Karl Magnus*, *Schacktavelslek*, and historiographical works (*Erikskrönikan*, *Lilla rimkrönikan*, *Prosaiska krönikan*).

A key role to understanding the didactic purpose attached to the *Eufemiavisor* and other related works in these two manuscripts is played by *Schacktavelslek*, an allegorical work that contains a description of all classes of society and of the virtues that each of them should possess. The Old Swedish text was translated around 1460 from both the Latin *Liber de moribus hominum et officiis nobilium ac popularium super de ludo schacorum* (henceforth *Ludo schacorum*) and the Middle Low German Meister *Stephans Schachbuch*, which was based on the Latin *De ludo schacorum* and dates back to 1357-1375²⁵.

The description begins with the king, the queen and the knight, and proceeds down the social scale. It is noteworthy that the section on the queen has been described by Blomqvist as a *kvinnospegel*, i.e. a work containing moral instructions for noblewomen²⁶.

If the works preserved in a compilation manuscript are best understood as part of an intertextual dialogue, in AM 191 and D 3 *Schacktavelslek* can be said to provide both the frame within which the stories narrated in other works are interpreted and some narratives that illustrate vices and virtues of the members of each social group.

Such works as the *Eufemiavisor*, *Sju vise mästare*, *Karl Magnus*, *Namnlös och Valentin*, and probably *Erikskrönikan*, would thus offer other examples that could be read against the ideological background provided by *Schacktavelslek*²⁷.

These examples were no doubt something the female public could relate to as the protagonists are all of noble origin. The many female characters who

²⁵ On *Schacktavelslek* see P-A. WIKTORSSON, *Schacktavelslek med Äktenskap-svisan*, Sällskapet Runica et Mediævalia, Stockholm 2016.

²⁶ G. BLOMQVIST, *Schacktavelslek och Sju vise mästare. De ludo scaccorum. De septem sapientibus. Studier i medeltidens litteraturhistoria*, Hugo Gebers förlag, Stockholm 1941, p. 72.

²⁷ On *Schacktavelslek* and intertextual reading in D 3 and AM 191 see M. BAMPI, «Schacktavelslek och intertextuell dialog i AM 191 fol. och Cod. Holm. D 3», in J. ADAMS (ed.), *Østnordisk filologi – nu og i fremtiden*, Universitets-Jubilæets danske Samfund & Syddansk Universitetsforlag, Copenhagen & Odense 2015, pp. 147-157.

play a major role in such works (e.g. Blanzefflor in *Flores och Blanzefflor*, Luneta and Laudine in *Herr Ivan*, Phila in *Namnlös och Valentin*, the empress in *Sju vise mästare*) embody in different ways – even as negative examples, as in the case of the empress in *Sju vise mästare* – the virtues that *Schacktavelslek* illustrates, among which wisdom plays a central role.

The same holds true for the male protagonists. It is certainly interesting that the texts in D 3 and AM 191 provide a broad palette of stories of knights and kings whose behaviour illustrates both virtues and vices.

In *Karl Magnus*, for instance, the exemplary value of the story is revealed by the structure of the work. In the first branch, the conceit of the king and his retinue is brought to the fore, while the second branch is built on the contrast between loyalty and treachery against the background of the fight against the Saracens.

In *Sju vise mästare* in AM 191 the main subject is the contrast between wise counsellors and wicked women. The edifying purpose of the work is overtly stated in the prologue, where one reads that the stories must be interpreted in a spiritual way, as a *caveat* to stay away from sin²⁸.

Further evidence in support of an edifying reading of the *Eufemiavisor* is provided by ms. E 8822, in which *Herr Ivan* is preserved alongside a number of devotional poems. This manuscript «was compiled by Friar Johannes of Nidaros, a Franciscan living in Trondheim in the third quarter of the fifteenth century»²⁹. In a recent study Bjørn Bandlien has shown that «the friars and the pious laity in late fifteenth-century Nidaros and its surrounding district shared their pleasure in the adventures of an Arthurian knight who could be interpreted as experiencing a penitential journey»³⁰. What is even more interesting is that Bandlien puts forward the hypothesis that *Herr Ivan* may have been used by the Franciscans in their preaching to address not only the higher strata of society but also farmers «who were

²⁸ «thaa skal man märkia ath j tänna bok warda rörda warastogha istorior ssom fordom waro skedda och warda här aandeligha wtydda oppaa thet wy maagom aaterwända at synda oc bätra waart syndogha liwerne» ('it has to be noticed that this book tells true stories which happened in the past, and which will be interpreted spiritually so that we can give up sinning and improve our sinful lives'. The translation is mine). The passage is taken from G. E. KLEMMING, *Prosadikter från Sveriges medeltid*, Svenska fornskriftsällskapet, Stockholm 1887-1889, p. 221.

²⁹ B. BANDLIEN, «Yvain among Friars. A Late Medieval Franciscan Manuscript of *Herr Ivan*», *Journal of the International Arthurian Society*, 1:1 (2013) 81-119, at p. 81.

³⁰ *Ivi*, p. 118.

to be inspired to give alms and become part of the spiritual confraternity of the Franciscans»³¹.

The kind of analysis that has been carried out in this article may no doubt be extended to other miscellanies preserving the *Eufemiavisor*, and in particular to ms. D 4 a and ms. D 4³².

The didactic use of the *Eufemiavisor* as examples of conduct for the moral edification of an aristocratic public that the analysis enables us to hypothesize does not exclude other forms of appropriation in the same cultural context. In particular, the question of kingship and royal power and the relationship between the king and the aristocracy as presented, at a fictional level, in the three texts is probably still topical in the turbulent 15th century, a period characterized by fierce internal struggles between various kings and the nobility.

In addition, the case of E 8822 indicates that the *Eufemiavisor* may have reached a wider public than the original one. All this, I believe, bears witness to the hermeneutic and semantic richness of these works.

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³¹ Ivi, p. 119.

³² BAMPI, «In Praise of the Copy », pp. 11-34.

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