NOUUS ÆNEAS LUTHERANUS:

Canonical Archives and the creation of meaning in Johannes Sascerides' *Epicedium in obitum Christiani Tertij* (1559)

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Using an adapted version of Aleida Assmann's theory of cultural memory, this article explores how the humanist practice of imitating canonical literature contributes to the creation of meaning in Johannes Sascerides' Epicedium in obitum serenissimi et potentissimi Daniæ etc. Regis Christiani Tertij. *It is argued that Sascerides uses a combination of Virgil's Aeneid and Biblical allusions to fashion a meaningful memory of King Christian III of Denmark-Norway in which the king is presented as a new Aeneas, his position resting on personal agency and Lutheran piety rather than the divine mandate that normally characterizes Virgil's canonical hero.*

Introduction

The imitation and emulation of classical literature was a practice central to the literary production of the Renaissance humanists. United in the pursuit of Latin eloquence, they believed that a precondition for the production of Neo-Latin literature that could rival the works of the ancients was to acquire true eloquence and learn the proper use of genre by meticulously studying, internalizing, and imitating the writings of the best classical authors.[2] A literary canon therefore emerged that supplied budding humanists with the appropriate models. While this resulted in a literary frame of reference that was shared among humanists all over Europe, a further consequence was that

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[2] My understanding of Renaissance humanism is largely based on the humanist meta-discourse presented in Baker 2015 as well as on the concept of "The Pursuit of Eloquence" presented in Gray 1963. For the concepts of *imitatio* and *aemulatio*, see Fantazzi 2014.

the canon in turn became a common archive full of themes and passages that could be incorporated into new works of literature.[3]

However, for those belonging to the *Respublica litterarum*, simply to replicate what one had found in a text that was worthy of imitation was not sufficient. Authors were expected to draw upon the culturally significant canon of literature in a manner resembling that of the bees: just as bees produce honey by collecting the pollen of a variety of flowers, transforming it within themselves to create a new substance, so each humanist had to bring together narrative structures and verbal elements from the rich variety of works that were common to all, combining them in novel ways or mixing them with new material to produce a work that, like honey, retained the characteristics of its sources while still being the author's own creation.[4]

The aim of my article will be to explore how the humanist practice of selective imitation and drawing upon canonical works contributed to the creation of meaning in the *Epicedium in obitum serenissimi et potentissimi Daniæ etc. Regis Christiani Tertij* (Hafniæ 1559) of Johannes Sascerides (1526–1594), a Flemish-born professor of Hebrew at the University of Copenhagen. Written as a poetic biography commemorating the recently deceased King Christian III of Denmark-Norway (1503–1559), for the most part the *Epicedium* comprises a detailed account of the many personal details and historical events that made up the life of the deceased king. But within this biographical account, Sascerides also includes a number of references to two works, each of which held a central position in the humanist literary environment: Virgil's Aeneid and the Christian Bible. To show how Sascerides uses these allusions to fashion the memory of the king into the memory of a new – but distinctly Lutheran – Aeneas who comes to power as God's pious champion in a civil war-like battle for power, I will approach the *Epicedium* through the lens of Aleida Assmann's theory of cultural memory.

The following will therefore open with a brief introduction to Assmann's theoretical framework, which I modify slightly in order to apply it to the products of a literary culture devoted to the imitation of canonical literature.

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[3] See for instance the reading list provided by Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (later Pope Pius II) in his *De liberorum educatione*, 69–73 (ed. Kallendorf 2002), as well as Fantazzi 2014.

[4] The bee simile, first popularized by Petrarca and later on by Erasmus, was itself copied from Seneca. For an overview, see Fantazzi 2014. Stefan Tilg has recently demonstrated how the Neo-Latin novel could play around with fact and fiction by creating allegorical narratives in which historical or contemporary events were concealed in a fictitious narrative inspired by ancient literature, thereby effectively splitting the work into "einen fiktiven Vordergrund und einen faktischen Hintergrund" (Tilg 2020, 78–79). This allegorical blend of classical motifs and contemporary content had been part of bucolic poetry since the time of Virgil, and it continued to be an essential part of the genre within Renaissance humanism (see e.g. Marsh 2014).

I then outline the content and structure of the *Epicedium,* while paying close attention to a passage in which Sascerides reveals the principles that govern his method of utilizing classical and Biblical material within his work. Next, I go deeper into the text to investigate how such canonical borrowings are used to frame and give meaning to episodes central to the portrayal of Christian and his ascent to power, before finally taking a step back to discuss how Sascerides' imitative practice has ultimately shaped the resulting narrative.

Cultural memory and literary canons

According to Assmann, all narratives of the past that are present and active within a society can be defined as *functional memories*. These, she explains, are constructed on the basis of material drawn from the passive *archives* of history, in a binary relationship similar to that existing between the narratological concepts of *syuzhet* and *fabula*.[5] Unlike functional memories, which are alive and meaningful, Assmann sees archives and the material they contain as dormant and in themselves void of signification, describing them as "de-contextualized and disconnected from their former frames which had authorized them or determined their meaning".[6] Since material only enters into an archive after it has lost its original addressees and has thus ceased to be immediately present within society – yet without yet having been consigned to the realm of *forgetting* – everything that the archives contain "is stored and potentially available, but it is not interpreted".[7] Assmann therefore concludes that in order for the dormant material found in an archive to become part of a functional memory, it must first be reawakened and reinterpreted.

This perception, however, does not really hold true for the canons of classical and Biblical literature that served as important archives for humanist writers, since these in no way contained dormant material lacking in signification. On the contrary, as pointed out by Hartmut Böhme in relation to the research project "Transformationen der Antike", the canonical position enjoyed by antiquity would rather have conferred on its material and literary relics a special energy and vigour. While Böhme follows Assmann in acknowledging that the discontinuation of the ancient world turned its remnants into "ein Archiv des Toten" (an archive of the dead), he posits that

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[5] Assmann first used the terms *functional memory* and *storage memory* (see Assmann 2011), which in time became *canon* and *archive* (see Assmann 2008, especially 98–99). I have chosen to combine the two into the conceptual pair of *functional memory* and *archive*, thereby actively abstaining from Assmann's use of the word *canon,* which I reserve for literary canons.

[6] Assmann 2008, 99.

[7] Assmann 2008, 102–103. See also Assmann 2011, 127.

the stability and continuity conferred by that canonization at the same time gave these remnants power, influence, and the potential to determine or transform the meaning of any new material with which they might come into contact.[8] I therefore propose that we adapt Assmann's system so as to accommodate the special position of what might accordingly be termed *canonical archives*, by acknowledging how these can oscillate between the roles of passive archive and active memory. As a consequence, we must observe that canonical archives supply a special kind of material: one that not only comes with meaning that is already well defined, but also has the potential to influence, even transform the meaning of other elements in the resulting functional memory – even if these elements in turn belong to other canonical archives of culturally foreign or rival traditions.[9]

It is easy to imagine how the Bible might have had this effect as an important canonical archive in the communal memory of the European humanists. Although its content was not easily reconciled with a literary tradition founded upon the works of pagan antiquity as I will touch upon below, the Bible was an archive of Judeo-Christian history and literature, and as the source of Christian doctrine, it offered up a variety of themes, parables, and historical narratives all deeply imbued with religious significance.

Virgil's Aeneid, on the other hand, owed its dual importance to the special position it enjoyed at the very top of the humanist canon of classics. Virgil was revered as the undisputed master of and model for the genre of epic,[10] and his twelve-book masterpiece on the mythological foundation of the Roman Empire by the Trojan hero Aeneas was seen as providing its humanist imitators with more than just examples of Latin epic style. It also contained a wealth of epic conventions that could easily be adapted to suit new narrative content. More importantly, at the core of the Aeneid were themes touching upon powerful ideals of heroic virtue, divine support, and the God-given right to rule. In the centuries that followed the first attempt at a true Neo-Latin epic, Francesco Petrarca's unfinished *Africa*, numerous works were produced after a distinctly Virgilian template. New epics were written on ancient themes, contemporary princes were cast as mighty warriors and founder of dynasties, and even Christian protagonists such as the Egyptian hermit Saint Anthony of the Desert (in Maffeo Vegio's four-book *Antonias*) and Jesus Christ

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[8] Böhme 2011, especially 16–17.

[9] Assmann herself regards literary canons as belonging to the category of *functional memories*, but she does not recognize their equal potential as *archives* of communal memory for the creation of new *functional memories*. See Assmann 2008, 101.

[10] While other authors such as Lucan and Claudian also influenced the Neo-Latin epic, Virgil continued to hold, and strengthen, his position as the main model for epic literature, cf. Schaffenrath 2016, 199, particularly n. 24 ("Ab dem 16. Jahrhundert aber übertrifft Vergil die Bedeutung der anderen Epiker bei weitem.").

himself (in Marco Girolamo Vida's influential six-book *Christias*) were celebrated as proper heroes in the language and style of Virgil.[11]

It is not surprising, then, that Sascerides too turned to Virgil for inspiration as he composed his *Epicedium* on the life and death of Christian III.[12] In fact, the deceased king lent himself quite easily to being commemorated in a Virgilian vein. Just as Virgil's hero had carried the ancient gods from Troy to Latium, Christian had been the reformer king responsible for the (official) introduction of the Lutheran confession; he had also, after his ascent to power in the bloody and civil-war-like interregnum known as the Count's Feud (1534–1536), re-established his branch of the Oldenburg dynasty's claim to the Danish throne. This could accordingly be seen as mirroring Aeneas' role as founder of the Roman Empire after his victory over Turnus in the war following his arrival in Latium. Rather than merely decorating his tale with borrowed feathers, however, Sascerides consciously exploits the innate significations of this canonical archive to impart certain meanings to his portrayal of the king, whom he tellingly describes as a "nouus Æneas" (new Aeneas).[13] Moreover, he adds further nuance the Aeneid-inspired narrative with the help of Biblical allusions. As we might expect given such a canonical source, these in turn exert their own influence on the type of "nouus Æneas" that ultimately emerges from the functional memory of the devout king and dynastic (re-)founder.

Content and structure of the Epicedium

The *Epicedium* is made up of 580 verses of elegiac distichs, arranged into three units roughly corresponding to the basic structure of an epicedium: a lengthy proem (vv. 1–90); a main narrative (vv. 91–550); and a short epilogue (vv. 551–580).[14] In the main narrative, the life and reign of Christian III is

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[11] For an overview of Virgilian epic in the Renaissance, see Bloemendal 2014; Kallendorf 2014; Schaffenrath 2015; Gwynne 2017. An introduction to Vegio's *Antonias* can be found in Michael Putnam's preface to his edition of Vegio's short epics (Vegio 2004, xxxvi–xlvi), just as an introduction to Vida, known as the Christian Virgil, and the *Christias* can be found in James Gardner's preface to his edition of the *Christias* (Vida 2009, vii–xxviii).

[12] The *Epicedium* is part one of a three part volume (see Sascerides 1559) which contains two more poems by Sascerides: the shorter *Carmen gratulatorium* on Frederik II's, Christian's son and heir, victory in the war against the peasants' republic of Ditmarschen, and the *Historia de Coronatione* on the coronation of Frederik II. While the *Epicedium* has not received much scholarly attention, Karen Skovgaard-Petersen has pointed out allusions to the Aeneid in the *Historia de Coronatione*, see Skovgaard-Petersen 1991, 12–13. I have made some preliminary investigations into the *Epicedium* in Borggaard 2019.

[13] Sascerides, *Epicedium*, v. 155 (fol. Br).

[14] A brief introduction to the genre can be found in Gräßer 1994, 11–18, while a detailed overview of the treatment of funerary poetry such as epicedia in renaissance poetics is given in Witstein 1969, 98–131.

unfolded chronologically, beginning with his illustrious lineage and ending with his death on New Year's Day 1559. This biography is divided into two distinctly different parts of roughly the same length (234 verses and 226 verses respectively) by Christian's coronation in 1537: the first part recounting how he became king, the second portraying his rule as king.

The first part (vv. 91–324) consists of a continuous narrative that largely follows the basic structure of the Aeneid, as I will show in greater detail below. It opens with a brief summary of Christian's family, birth, and childhood years before describing how Christian as a young man was sent to the court of his maternal uncle, Elector Joachim I of Brandenburg. While there, he attended the imperial Diet of Worms, and the encounter with Protestant ideas led him to convert to Lutheranism. On his return home, he brought the new confession with him and quickly converted his father, Frederik (then duke of Schleswig-Holstein). Together, the two began a small-scale Reformation in the duchies. Christian then joined a war to put his father on the Danish throne; afterwards, he returned to Schleswig. On his father's death ten years later, Christian was called upon to leave Schleswig and accept the Danish crown in order to save the country from the civil war that had erupted in the wake of Frederik's death. Reluctantly agreeing, he entered into the Count's Feud against Count Christopher of Oldenburg. After years of fighting, Christian finally captured Copenhagen and defeated his enemy.

The second part (vv. 325–550) is a topical presentation of Christian's government after his coronation. Christian reforms the Church and the educational system, brings in Lutheran staff from Wittenberg, and commissions a Danish translation of the Bible. Then, in the midst of the peace and prosperity his government had created, Christian is portrayed as falling gravely ill, recovering thanks only to his piety and unwavering trust in God. Finally, Sascerides describes the very end of Christian's reign and how he always exhibited great piety in his private as well as public life. This was also true of his final days, and the main narrative ends as Christian, lying on his deathbed, closes his eyes as he recites the *Nunc Dimittis*.

Before analysing the first part of the main narrative in greater detail, we first need to take a look at the proem, as Sascerides here seems to reveal how he intends to exploit and combine two separate canonical archives, the pagan Aeneid and the Christian Bible, within his work. In accordance with the nature of an epicedium, the proem opens with the poet lamenting the king's untimely death. As the lamentation reaches a climax, Sascerides invokes the classical Muses, asking them to take part in mourning the king and praising his deeds:

> Promite pierides lachrymas, proferte querelas,
>> Lugubreque humenti fundite ab ore melos.
> Plangant laurigeri communi in clade poetæ,

> Tristia nam vester fata patronus obijt.
> Plangat doctiloquę plæbs nata vacare Mineruę,
>   Et quibus est verbum cura sonare Dei.
> Cessit enim terra, superasque migrauit ad arces,
>   Qui verę columen relligionis erat.
> Et per quem Christi doctrinam habet vltimus orbis,
>   Vt, quo vix radios sol iacet, illa micet.[15]

> Weep, Pierian Muses, bring forth your sorrows, and sing a mournful song with tears in your eyes. Let the poets with their laurel wreaths lament in this universal misfortune, for your patron has met a sad end. Let the crowd born to pursue the eloquent Minerva lament, those whose duty it is also to preach the Word of God. For he has left the earth and moved to the highest of heavens, he who was a column of true religion and spread the teaching of Christ to the end of world, so that it shines where even the rays of the sun can barely reach.[16]

It is a commonplace in epic as well as other genres of (Neo-)Latin poetry to invoke the classical Muses as the source of poetic eloquence and the divine authors of the narrative that is to be unfolded through the agency of the poet. However, Sascerides expands on this theme by asking the Muses to sing not just through their usual representatives, the humanist poets identified by their laurel wreaths, but also through a crowd that combines Minervan eloquence with the preaching of the Bible. Moreover, Sascerides' invocation of divine assistance does not end with the traditional authority of the classical Muses. After having cursorily touched upon Christian's main achievements as king and subsequently lamented the harsh times that are surely to come following his death, Sascerides concludes the proem by directing his attention to God, imploring Him to assist in expounding Christian's many deeds:

> Sis Deus auxilio, nec nostrum hunc desere nisum:
>   Te cano nunc etiam, dum tua dona cano.
> Nunc age sim gratus, magnasque exponere laudes
>   Egregij digno principis ore queam.[17]

> God, help me and do not desert me in this undertaking, for when I sing of Your gifts, I sing of You as well. Let me now be found pleasing and able to set forth the great praises of that illustrious prince with a mouth that is worthy of him.

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[15] Sascerides, *Epicedium*, vv. 25–34 (fol. Aiijr).
[16] All translations in the article are my own.
[17] Sascerides, *Epicedium*, vv. 87–90 (fol. A4r).

Sascerides thereby appears to blend two distinct traditions by having the classical Muses sing together with the Christian God through the agency of a particular type of scholar who is distinguished from other humanist poets by his ability to unite classical literature with the dissemination of Biblical doctrine. This may seem to be a way of addressing Christian's dual role as patron of the Muses and proponent of Lutheranism, but I believe that it should rather be seen in connection with how the Lutheran scholarly environment in which the *Epicedium* was produced sought to unite classical literature and Christian doctrine in the production of new literature.

The practice of merging classical traditions from the pagan past with material from contemporary Christianity had not always been straightforward in humanist tradition. The Muses were commonly invoked in epics composed on the deeds of European princes to signal the beginning of a narrative in which historical material was to be cast in a classical mould, but the same *modus operandi* was less well received in epics devoted to Christian themes or Biblical narratives. While Iacopo Sannazaro followed classical tradition and invoked the Muses to sing of the virgin birth of Christ in his *De partu Virginis* commissioned by Pope Leo X, critics such as Erasmus "found the classical language inappropriate to the Christian subject".[18] As Craig Kallendorf has argued, it was against the decorum of its content to invoke pagan deities in a Christian poem which, despite its classical style, needed to convey a distinctly Christian theology. Accordingly, Marco Girolamo Vida, an otherwise ardent admirer of Virgil, opens his *Christias* by calling upon the Holy Spirit rather than the Virgilian Muses.[19] Maffeo Vegio had previously done something similar in his *Antonias*, in which he explicitly rejects Apollo and the false Muses of antiquity, choosing instead to invoke Jesus Christ as the poetic authority behind his work.[20]

In a Lutheran context, the Muses could more easily be made to sing a Christian tune, as humanism was regarded as the essential point of departure for both the study of theology and the proper reading of scripture. This view had played a key role in the early Reformation, and with the formalization of the Melanchthonian system, humanism and theology became fused as two mutually indispensable parts of Lutheran education. As a consequence, both classical and Biblical literature became canonical archives in the cultural

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[18] Sannazaro, *De partu Virginis*, 1.1–18. Gwynne 2017, 212–213.

[19] Vida, *Christias*, 1.1–14. Kallendorf 1995, 58–60.

[20] Vegio, *Antonias*, 1.1–14. Francesco Benci also turned his back on the Muses by choosing to invoke the *Caelicolae* ("those who dwell in heaven", i.e. angels or Christian martyrs) in his *Quinque Martyres e Societate Jesu in India* (1591), which constituted the beginning of a new genre, the Jesuit epic. See Gwynne 2016, 7. On the *Caelicolae* as angels, see also Gregory 2006, 64.

memory of every Lutheran humanist, and the ability to display familiarity with both literary canons became essential to securing ecclesiastical offices or positions at the university in the newly reformed societies. This was effectively a way of expressing membership in the Lutheran *Respublica litterarum*.[21] It is therefore telling that Sascerides asks the classical Muses to sing under the direction of the Christian God in accordance with this ideal through the agency of a crowd remarkably similar to Lutheran scholars such as himself,[22] who knew how to combine classical eloquence with the propagation of the Gospel. To a contemporary reader educated in the Melanchthonian tradition, this would have suggested two things: that the *Epicedium* would employ elements from the canonical archives of both disciplines, and, more importantly, that these elements would cooperate, in accordance with Lutheran ideology. While the Muses would provide a classical model for the eloquent memorialization of Christian's life, the authority lent by God and the Bible would ensure that the resulting narrative harmonized with Lutheran theology, thus creating a literary syncretism that promoted Lutheran orthodoxy through a classical motif.[23]

Meaningful episodes in the life of a new Aeneas

1. The one where Aeneas became a Lutheran

Within the main narrative of the *Epicedium*, Sascerides effectively transforms the first half of the biography into an epicizing narrative which utilizes the general framework of the Aeneid to portray how Christian became the rightful king of Denmark-Norway. For this, he relies on a series of verbal and thematic allusions to Virgil's canonical work. The first time he takes advantage of the

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[21] The Lutheran theology of education is concisely explained in Witte 2002, 262–267. For a thorough treatment of the environments in Wittenberg and Copenhagen, see Grane 1987, especially 104–114. See also Skovgaard-Petersen & Zeeberg 2007, 245 and Skafte Jensen 1993.

[22] Sascerides had previously demonstrated his abilities as a Lutheran scholar by combining theology and humanism in his *Odarum*, *siue carminum sacrorum libri IX* (Basileae 1557), which was dedicated to Christian III and came with a letter of recommendation from Melanchthon. It contained among other things a Latin translation and versification of the entire Book of Psalms and of songs from the Old and New Testament, and it earned him the position of professor of Hebrew in Copenhagen. Jacoby 1890; Rørdam 1900. Both Jacoby and Rørdam provide an overview of the life of Sascerides, but for a more nuanced view, see also *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek*, *s. v*. Rørdam 1872, 495–502 moreover provides a survey of Sascerides' activities at the University of Copenhagen.

[23] Cf. Kallendorf 1995. I have recently demonstrated how the classical *topos* of the paternal prince (*Pater patriae*) was transformed to comply with and promote a Lutheran ideal, see Borggaard 2019.

canonical archive to shape his narrative is when young Christian returns home from the Diet of Worms and introduces his father to the new Lutheran faith. As he does so, Sascerides explicitly compares him to the protagonist of Virgil's epic:

> Aggreditur mira iuuenis pietate parentem,
>   Quę secum attulerat, pura docere sacra.
> Et nouus Æneas gestando horrentibus illum
>   Eripuit tenebris, in quibus orbis erat.[24]

> The young man approached his father with marvellous piety to teach him the pure religion which he had brought with him. And as a new Aeneas he picked up his father and rescued him from the horrible darkness which then covered the earth.

By referring to Christian as a new Aeneas, Sascerides openly directs the reader's attention to the Aeneid, and he does so at a key point in the epic's canonical narrative. Chronologically speaking, the Aeneid begins in book two, as Aeneas sets out from the falling city of Troy to the destined shores of Latium. On his shoulders he carries his ageing father Anchises, and with him he has the Penates, the Trojan gods, which he is taking with him to the new homeland. In portraying Christian as a new Aeneas, rescuing his father from the darkness of the Catholic Church while wielding the "pura sacra" of Lutheranism, Sascerides is exploiting this well-known motif to signal the beginning of a new Aeneid with Christian as its new protagonist. However, in this version of the culturally significant narrative, a major influence is exercised by the "pura sacra" brought home by Christian from Worms. Whereas Virgil's Aeneas is divinely commanded to carry his father and the Penates away from Troy, Christian uses the "pura sacra" to rescue his father from the clutches of Catholicism. His ability to assume the role of "nouus Æneas" is therefore intimately linked to his conversion to Lutheranism at the Diet of Worms immediately beforehand.

In Worms, despite being in the company of the Emperor and the German nobility, all eager to condemn Luther as a heretic, Christian had secretly embraced the teachings of Luther, that "innocent and divinely inspired servant of God".[25] This momentous event, however, is not described using motifs from the Aeneid or the canon of classical literature. Instead, Sascerides

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[24] Sascerides, *Epicedium*, vv. 153–156 (fol. Br).
[25]   Quando palam instructo diuinitus ore Lutherus
         Vera fatebatur dogmata iussus ibi.
     Turbati proceres illum tacuisse volebant,
         Prę reliquis iram Carolus ipse fouet.
     Insontemque Dei famulum proscribit inique:
         Cur adeo papę Carole diue faues?" Sascerides, *Epicedium*, vv. 135–140 (fol. A4v).

turns to his Biblical archive. He uses an allusion to a key passage of scripture, the parable of the sower, known from the synoptic gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, to accentuate the narrative significance of young Christian's acceptance of Lutheranism:[26]

> Dux autem iuuenis cor nondum affectibus atris
>   Præclusum, quos dat ruga senilis, habens,
> Haurit ibi furtim diuinę semina lucis,
>   Quę cito et excrescent vbere iacta solo.[27]

> But the young prince who did not yet have a heart closed up by
> the dark emotions that come with wrinkly old age, embraced there
> in secret the seed of the divine light, and the seed quickly grew
> forth from the fertile soil in which it had landed.

In the parable of the sower, the Word of God is compared to the seeds scattered by the sower across his field. While many of the seeds die, having fallen on stony ground or among thorny shrubs, some land on fertile soil, where they grow and bear fruit. This is meant to symbolize how a good Christian is supposed to embrace the Word when he hears it – as does our young protagonist in Worms – and thereby serve as the fertile soil in which the Word can grow and bear fruit.

The lesson contained in the parable of the sower touches upon something lying at the centre of contemporary Lutheran theology. In the influential *Enchiridion theologicum* (Wittebergae 1557), published only a few years prior to the *Epicedium*, Niels Hemmingsen, a leading theologian and Sascerides' colleague at the University of Copenhagen, had explained how a Christian could become part of God's divine plan of salvation, which constitutes "the foundation and main cause of all good things that we receive from God".[28] While the offer to be entered in the Book of Life is universally extended to all people by the infinite grace of God, Hemmingsen cautions that we need to actively accept this invitation in faith and piety whenever God extends it to us.[29] How this relates to the parable of the sower and its significance to the episode in Worms becomes evident as Hemmingsen clarifies how and when God invites us to accept His gift:

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[26] Matthew 13:1–23; Mark 4:1–20; Luke 8:4–15.

[27] Sascerides, *Epicedium*, vv. 141–144 (fol. A4v).

[28] "Nam æterna Dei prędestinatio est fundamentum ac prima causa bonorum omnium, quæ à Deo percipimus". Hemmingsen 1557, fol. V8v. As a testament to Hemmingsen's influence on Lutheran theology, he was honoured as the *Praeceptor Daniae* (Teacher of Denmark) just as Melanchthon had been the *Praeceptor Germaniae*. On Hemmingsen and his influence, see Rørdam 1893; Witte 2002, 139–140.

[29] Hemmingsen 1557, fols. V8r–X8v.

Quando uocat? Ab initio mundi, statim post lapsum parentum nostrorum, ipse Dominus uocare cœpit, et postea nonnunquam per Angelos, interdum per Prophetas, postea per Filium et Apostolos, et hodie uocat omnes, quibus ex sua bonitate Euangelium patefacit.[30]

When does He invite us? From the beginning of the world, immediately after the fall of our ancestors, the Lord began to extend His invitation Himself, and since then He has done so sometimes through angels and at times through the prophets, then through His Son and the apostles, and today He invites everyone to whom the Gospel is revealed by virtue of His goodness.

As the passage shows, God is represented as calling upon each person to whom the Gospel is preached through His divine mediators, disseminating the Word across the world like seeds across a field.[31] Sascerides undoubtedly knew the *Enchiridion,* as he had in fact composed the epigrammatic *Ad lectorem* that accompanied Hemmingsen's work. It is therefore telling that he portrays Christian's conversion at the hands of Luther, the divinely inspired servant of God, using a parable which exemplifies one of the most fundamental teachings of Lutheranism. The parable thereby comes to exert a strong religious influence on the new Aeneid that is about to begin, as Sascerides uses it to implicitly connect Christian's proclamation as a new Aeneas with his demonstration of Lutheran piety in accepting the Word of God. We have already seen that it was Christian's conversion that gave him the tools he needed to carry out the Virgilian rescue of his father; but he in fact becomes Aeneas at the very moment when he first spreads the Gospel, thus bearing fruit in accordance with the parable, by sowing the Word in the heart of his father. The resulting image of the "nouus Æneas" as a sower of the Gospel is made strikingly explicit in the passage immediately following Frederik's conversion at the hands of his son, where the metaphors from the parable reappear in even greater number and intensity:

Quoque magis pietas excresceret orta, peritos
    Aduocat, vt spargant semina sancta, viros.
Misit Iohannem celebris Goslaria Slauum,
    Holsatico vt sereret verba salutis agro.

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[30] Hemmingsen 1557, fol. X7r.

[31] Hemmingsen stresses the importance of divine mediators in the exposition of the parable in his later *Postilla seu Ennaratio Evangeliorum*: "Seminator Deus est, qui tametsi per homines semen in terram mittit: tamen ipse unà adest et operantur: quare ministri verbi coadiutores Dei dicuntur" (God is a sower who scatters His seed on the earth although He does so through humans. He is nevertheless present and works through them, wherefore preachers of the Word are called assistants of God), Hemmingsen 1561, 184–197, 187.

> Iamque pio sudore viri seges extitit ingens,
>   Et pressę vepres occuluere caput.[32]

> In order for the piety which had sprung forth to grow even
> stronger, [Frederik] invited learned men to spread the holy seed.
> Renowned Goslar sent Johann Wenth to sow the Word of
> Salvation in the soil of Schleswig-Holstein, and with his pious
> sweat a bountiful field soon appeared, and the struggling thorn-
> bushes concealed their heads.

This time it is Frederik who, as duke of Schleswig-Holstein, facilitates an
even wider dissemination of the Gospel, but Sascerides makes sure to remind
us that it all began when Christian, or Aeneas, rescued his father from
Catholicism by successfully sowing the first seed.[33] The Aeneas figure is thus
intimately linked to the parable of the sower, and the two canonical influences
accordingly join forces to portray how Christian could only assume the role
of an Aeneas – a role which tradition would expect to result in kingship and
dynastic greatness – through exhibiting his Lutheran piety. Incidentally, this
piety is also what moves the narrative along: following the small-scale
Reformation effectively begun by Christian, God in his gratitude has Frederik
chosen to be king of Denmark-Norway. While this is in fact a chronological
falsification from the pen of Sascerides – the Reformation in the duchies did
not in fact happen until after Frederik's coronation, and by then it was
Christian who invited Johann Wenth to spread the word[34] – the manoeuvre
emphasizes the narrative importance of earning God's favour through piety.[35]
Moreover, it provides Sascerides with an opportunity for introducing one of
the most well-known motifs from the Virgilian canonical archive.

2. When Aeneas met Dorothea

Craig Kallendorf has remarked that "it is difficult to imagine a Virgilian epic
without a Dido story",[36] and Christian's withdrawal to Schleswig-Holstein
after his father's coronation provides an opportunity for Sascerides to use the
tragic romance between Aeneas and Queen Dido of Carthage in book four of

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[32] Sascerides, *Epicedium*, vv. 161–166 (fol. Br).

[33]   Non minus ad nati spectare videntur honorem,
        Cuius ea instinctu cæpta fuere pio.
      Per natum pater edoctus veracia passim
        Erigi, et extingui dogmata falsa iubet.
    Sascerides, *Epicedium*, vv. 219–222 (fol. Bijr).

[34] Andersen 1979–1984.

[35] Cf. Paul Gwynne on the lack of historical veracity in the poetry of Johannes Michael
Nagonius: "The poet's purpose [. . .] is not historical veracity. In keeping with panegyric
tradition, historical events are reshaped into an ideal pattern". Schirg & Gwynne 2015, 30.

[36] Kallendorf 2014.

Virgil's epic as the canonical background on which to add further nuances to his new Aeneas. But instead of a new tragedy, we are presented with an image of exemplary Lutheran bliss as Christian, now a duke, sets about ordering his estates and marries the pious Dorothea of Saxe-Lauenburg, who bears him five children. The familiar Dido motif is thereby turned into a representation of how the new Aeneas starts a family and becomes the *Hausvater* or head of a Lutheran household. Since the family was regarded as the nucleus of Lutheran society, the passage consequently serves to display more of Christian's Lutheran virtues, this time in relation to the temporal world.[37]

The passage should not, however, be seen simply as a negation of the well-known Dido motif in favour of a Lutheran emendation. Rather, the motif from the Virgilian archive supplies the subtext necessary for Sascerides to further demonstrate that the single most important trait of his new Aeneas is his piety. Educated readers who would certainly recognize the canonical model would also have identified the differences between the old and the new Aeneas, thus appreciating that the addition of Christian's exemplary piety, demonstrated to excess in the preceding episode, is what effectively converts tragedy into bliss and the new Aeneas into a good *Hausvater* – and, in turn, an exemplary Lutheran. Both levels of signification are needed to construct this edifying image of Christian, and Sascerides thus enforces the principle he presented in his proem by promoting Lutheran doctrine by way of a classical motif. But this fusion of canonical subtexts has yet another consequence: as Lutheran doctrine taught that the office of *Hausvater* was the source of all worldly authority, Christian's abilities as the head of a household can be seen as a guarantee of his capabilities as the king that a reader would expect the Aeneas figure to eventually become.[38]

3. Aeneas and the Game of Thrones

The sudden death of King Frederik propels the narrative forward with the prediction that "horrida bella" (horrible wars) now threaten the kingdom.[39] The phrase "horrida bella" is used twice in the Aeneid to announce the grue-some fighting awaiting Aeneas in books seven to twelve – first spoken by the Sybil in Cumae in book six (*Aen.* 6.86), then repeated by the poet as he opens book seven to reveal the bloody content of the final six books (*Aen.* 7.41) –

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[37] The importance and responsibilities of the *Hausvater* in Lutheran social theology can be seen in the exhaustive treatment of the Fourth Commandment (Honour your father and your mother) in Luther's *Deudsch Catechismus* (Luther 1529, fols. XVIIr–XXVIv). This topic is also treated in Stopa 2018; Holm 2018; Koefoed 2018 as well as in Borggaard 2019.

[38] Luther 1529, fols. XVIIr–XXVIv.

[39] Illiusque fluens gelido de corpore sanguis

 Ciuibus orbatis horrida bella notat". Sascerides, *Epicedium*, vv. 229–230 (fol. Bijr).

and Sascerides thus exploits the connotations of the conspicuous phrase to alert the attentive reader to a leap in the canonical model from the Dido story to the war for power over Latium.

In this part of the Aeneid, Aeneas is destined to triumph over Turnus, who in opposing the divinely favoured hero has defied the will of the Fates. Sascerides uses the same basic model to describe Christian's struggle against Christopher of Oldenburg in the Count's Feud. Christian is the champion of God; Christopher, who, like Turnus, displays his heedless fury by attacking the pious hero without the customary declaration of war, is doomed to fail together with his allies in the attempt to conquer the Danish throne. There is, however, an obvious difference between the two. Whereas the Aeneid presents a divine polyphony characteristic of classical epic – some gods support Aeneas, others Turnus – only the One True God is present in the *Epicedium*.[40] This change from divine pluralism to a single almighty God makes it possible for Sascerides to add a Biblical layer to the martial narrative, and this addition shapes the traditional war account by illustrating how Christian's exemplary confidence in God leads him to exhibit a very un-Virgilian clemency towards his enemies. When approached by the demoralized Hanseatic city of Lübeck, one of Christopher's allies, Christian is happy to make peace with his enemy, sure in the belief that he has no need to show cruelty as long as he places his trust in God, a sentiment which echoes Psalms 40:5.[41] The Biblical allusion is thus used to evoke the by now well-established image of Christian as a new Aeneas characterized above all by piety; and the depiction of Christian as morally surpassing Virgil's hero reinforces the importance of this Lutheran virtue still further. This becomes poignantly clear when Christian victoriously captures Copenhagen and the defeated Christopher kneels before him in supplication. This recalls the very end of the Aeneid, where the victorious Aeneas bestrides the suppliant Turnus, who

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[40] Tobias Gregory argues that while the shift from Roman polytheism to Christian monotheism could necessitate alterations to the divine scene, some divine interaction was still necessary in works emulating Virgil (Gregory 2006, 4–12, 56–101). Within a monotheistic context, divine support could thereby gain a moral significance: "When one side is represented as beloved of the One True God. . . epic conflict becomes a struggle between heaven and hell, godly and infidel, truth and error", Gregory 2006, 12. Vegio and Vida emphasized this by allowing Satan and his minions to become divine actors on the side of evil.

[41]   Territa tum pacem venit exorare Lubeca,
  Quam quoque supplicibus non grauis ille dedit.
 Nec minus et, capto si quid pro Rege valerent,
  Concedit, quoniam spes Deus eius erat.
Sascerides, *Epicedium*, vv. 273–276 (fol. Biijr).
 Cf. Psalms 40:5, here in the translation of Luther: "WOl dem / der seine hoffnung setzt auff den HERRN" (Blessed is the man, who puts his trust in The Lord), Luther 1545, fol. CCXCIXv.

commends his life to his victor's mercy. But whereas Aeneas cuts his enemy down in a fit of passion, Christian shows mercy and allows Christopher to return home unscathed. Sascerides is thus using the final scene of the Aeneid as an anti-heroic background on which to superimpose the image of a victor who not only triumphs because of exemplary piety, but can afford to show mercy because he, in accordance with Psalms 40:5, places all his trust in God. In time this would become one of the mottoes of the king.[42]

Presenting a Lutheran ideal through a classical motif

It should by now have become evident that Sascerides has created a cultural memory of Christian III in which the deceased king has become a morally emended (read: Lutheran) version of Virgil's canonical hero: something that is achieved by presenting Christian as acting in accordance with Biblical doctrine in otherwise Virgilian situations.[43] However, taking a step back from the individual episodes, we can further see how Sascerides in fact uses his two canonical archives to modify the narrative on a deeper level, so as to construct a narrative that exploit the significations of the Aeneid while simultaneously allowing Biblical elements to radically alter the very *raison d'être* traditionally associated with the Aeneas figure.

To humanists, one of the most significant aspects of Virgil's epic was the divine prophecy that gave rise to and supported Aeneas' role as future king and dynastic founder. Not even halfway into book one, Jupiter reveals to Venus that it is already written in the book of fate that Aeneas is to resettle the Trojan race in Latium and thereby found the Roman race and establish an empire unlimited by time or space. Prophecies of this type were popular in humanist epics, as the Virgilian theme could be used to legitimize a ruling dynasty's claim to power: they too had been divinely chosen to rule, and they too would usher in a Golden Age.[44] Yet nowhere in the *Epicedium* is it suggested that Christian was predestined to become a new Aeneas, and there is little that foreshadows any dynastic greatness. Instead, Sascerides has built a new foundation for his new Aeneas as he reinvents the divine action of his

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[42] One of Christian's mottoes was "Zu Got mein trost allein, Sonst andern kein" (My trust is in God alone, I require nothing more). On this motto, see Bording 1559, fol. B4r and Thomesen 1560, 47.

[43] Vegio similarly improved on Aeneas to make him the embodiment of Renaissance *virtù* in his supplementary thirteenth book of the Aeneid, cf. Putnam 2004, xiii.

[44] Prominent examples are Riccardo Bartolini's *Austrias* (Schaffenrath 2015, 65; Schaffenrath 2016), Francesco Filelfo's *Sphortias* (Kallendorf 2014), and Gianmario Filelfo's *Cosmias* (Haye 2016). The theme also played a central role in the epyllia of Johannes Michael Nagonius, who thus prophesied greatness to a number of European ruling houses (Gwynne 2012, in particular 65–89). Such prophecies are closely related to what Gombrich has termed the "Vergilian formula", cf. Gombrich 1961; Gwynne 2012, 64–65.

pseudo-epic by linking the success of the Aeneas figure to Christian's Lutheran piety, as seen most strikingly when the parable of the sower is used to transform Christian into a "nouus Æneas" whose position rests upon merit and personal agency.[45] Since the parable with its theological connotations requires active devotion to be shown *before* divine assistance can be received, Christian has to earn his position, rather than passively accepting it as a divine mandate. This change should not be seen as a negation of the Virgilian model, however. Rather, it reveals how drawing on both canonical archives allows Sascerides to turn Christian's biography into a Lutheran Aeneid by exploiting the potential contained in the two works.

As a canonical archive, the Aeneid contains many elements with predefined significations, most notably the character of Aeneas, who is inextricably associated with divinely sanctioned kingship. But the epic's dual position as both archive and functional memory means that the familiar story-line itself can become a meaningful element that can be exploited. We know the ending, we recognize the protagonists, and we remember the main points that make up the narrative – in the case of the Aeneid*,* these being the divine prophecy and the escape from Troy, the tragic detour in Carthage, and finally the divinely aided ascent to power in Italy. This means that once the storyline is moved from the archive into a new functional memory (as from *fabula* into *syuzhet*), it matters less how one event leads to another – and by what means – as long as the events are there in the right order, because the basic meaning and expectations associated with the structure are preserved. Incidentally, preserving the "correct" order makes the omission of an episode all the more conspicuous by its absence, as with the prophecy, which Sascerides con-sciously omits from his work. It is this meaningful structure that Sascerides exploits in the *Epicedium* to give special meaning to his portrayal of Christian's journey towards kingship. While the biographical data of the deceased king provides almost all the material for the actual narrative, the functional memory follows a well-known structure which, as soon as Sascerides had likened Christian to Aeneas, would have awoken a certain set of expectations in the reader. What the Biblical allusions subsequently do is to fill in the gaps, so to speak, and connect the individual episodes in the canonical structure supplied by the Aeneid. In Virgil's epic, fate and divine will carry Aeneas from one episode to the next;[46] in the *Epicedium*, it is

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[45] Cf. Gregory 2006, 4.

[46] Aeneas is often described in the passive as being *driven* or *carried* by fate, see e.g. *Aen*. 1.32 where he and his men are described as *acti fatis* (driven by fate); *Aen*. 1.382 where Aeneas describes how he left Troy and *data fata secutus* (followed the fate I had been given); and *Aen*. 3.7 where Aeneas reveals that they set sail *incerti, quo fata ferant* (uncertain as to where destiny might take them).

Christian's piety that again and again enables him to progress along the Virgilian path, just as it was his exemplary piety that initially earned him the privilege of assuming the role of Aeneas and then, in turn, won him the divine support necessary for him to fulfil our expectations by being crowned king.

As I have demonstrated above, the Biblical allusions also serve the general purpose of emphasizing just how pious Christian actually was. Whenever Christian exhibits his piety in a Virgilian situation, the presence of the religious subtext simultaneously illustrates Christian acting as an exemplary Lutheran: he embraced the Gospel at a time when no one else did, he exhibited everyday piety as a *Hausvater* at the head of a family, and he spared his enemies by relying on the will of God rather than violence. In the proem, Sascerides had indicated how he planned to use classical motifs to promote Lutheran orthodoxy, and it is not without reason that he portrays Christian as an example worthy of emulation via the Virgilian narrative. During the early Reformation, it was crucial that temporal rulers were pious Lutherans: they were expected to promote Lutheranism, and to ensure the orthodoxy of their subjects.[47] In the *Enchiridion theologicum*, Hemmingsen explains why the rulers' own piety was the key to achieve this goal:

> Pietate […] prælucet subditis, ac in omni humanitatis officio eisdem anteit: unde fit, ut quemadmodum subditi legem ut iustissimam uitæ normam intuentur, ita exemplum normæ principem ipsum ob oculos statuentes, eiusdem pietate tanquam stimulo ad omnia humanitatis officia incitentur [...]
> Regis ad exemplum totus componitur orbis.[48]

> With his piety, [the prince] lights the way for his subjects, and with it he guides them in every human office. The result is that just as subjects look upon the law as the most righteous precept for life, so they place their own prince before their eyes as a living example of that precept and are roused towards every human office with his piety as their goad [...]

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[47] Svend Andersen even refers to the princes as "emergency bishops" called upon to oversee the reformations in Northern Europe, cf. Andersen 2018, 191. See also Wolgast 2014, 398–401.

[48] Hemmingsen 1557, Epistola dedicatoria, fols. *2v–*3r. Cf. Claudian, Panegyricus de quarto consulatu Honorii Augusti, 299–300. Sascerides shared this view and reproduces the sentiment of his influential colleague in the preface to his Epicedium, stating that no divine gift is better than a king who governs with piety, since "Eius ad exemplum totus fit iustior orbis" (the whole world becomes more righteous after his example), Sascerides 1559, fol. A2r. The passage in question contains several intertextual references to a similar passage in the Epistola Nuncupatoria to Sascerides' Odarum, siue Carminum Sacrorum Libri IX (Sascerides 1557, 4). The Epistola, however, lacks the rewritten sentence of Claudian, and its presence in the preface to the Epicedium may therefore be a testament to the influence of Hemmingsen and his Enchiridion.

The whole world arranges itself after the king's example.

Given that a Lutheran ruler was expected to govern by his own pious example, we can see how Christian's exemplary piety deserved to be the driving force behind his development as a new Aeneas. Since Christian had demonstrated that he could light the way for others – as he had in fact, as a sower of the Gospel, already done – he was more than fit to be king. His exemplarity conduct earned him the favour of God, who rewarded him for his diligence by lending him the support necessary to fulfil Aeneas' canonical destiny.[49] But could Christian's piety also secure his dynasty a longevity equal to that of Aeneas' Roman lineage? The answer appears to be no. Instead, the *Epicedium* seems to suggest that just as Christian had become a new Aeneas by virtue of his exemplary piety, so his successors – in lieu of the missing prophecy – must earn God's continued support by following Christian's example and governing with such sincere piety that they too would be able to light the way for their subjects.[50]

Conclusion

The canonical motif of Aeneas and his journey to become king and founder of the Roman Empire evidently provided Sascerides with a potent model with which to portray Christian's ascent to the Danish throne. Combined with Biblical allusions laden with religious meaning, the resulting narrative becomes even more significant than the sum of its parts. What emerges from this fusion of two canonical archives is a transformation of the pagan Aeneas figure that promotes central doctrines of Lutheranism by presenting them as essential to kings hoping for divine support.

When Sascerides composed his culturally meaningful memory of Christian III, he was consciously exploiting the abundance of connotations available in the archive of canonical literature that could be invoked through imitation to provide narratives with additional layers of meaning visible to those who are part of the same cultural tradition. To access these layers of meaning, as I have attempted to do, it is necessary to be aware that texts which hold a special cultural significance can act both as active memories and as passive archives, or what I have termed canonical archives. As a Lutheran, Sascerides naturally turned to the two archives that were central to the Lutheran *Respublica litterarum*, and he used elements from both to add

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[49] Cf. Hemmingsen 1557, fols. R4v–S6r, where he argues that God rewards people not as payment for a service provided, but as the gratuitous reward for a duty performed with exceptional care and diligence.

[50] Sascerides seems to add a dynastic tail to this point using an allusion to King Hezekiah of the Old Testament in the second half of the main narrative, but this lies beyond what can be sufficiently covered here.

meaning to his work. Individual episodes were thus framed in a Virgilian storyline while made to display Lutheran piety through allusions to the Bible. The two influences were woven together to create larger narrative structures that relied on an intricate interaction between multiple levels of canonical meaning. As a result, not only does the Lutheran Aeneid contained in the *Epicedium* provide a guide for kings on how they may best secure divine support; the composite narrative also demonstrates how imitation creates meaning in texts by exploiting the cultural memories with which canonical archives are filled.

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