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HUMILITY AND MODESTY IN THE EARLY MODERN GERMAN UNIVERSITY: STUDENT INSTRUCTION AT HALLE AROUND 1700

Introduction

Even before the University of Halle, in the German state of Brandenburg-Prussia, officially opened its doors in 1694, its founding professors took upon themselves to teach newly arrived students how to behave as junior members of the *civitas academica*. These introductory courses, which would later become known as *Hodegetik* (from ἄγω, «to lead», and ὁδός, «the way»), soon spread beyond the city of Halle. In the course of the eighteenth century, similar lecture series sprung up at other German universities, such as Jena and Leipzig, where they acquired a firm place in the curriculum. Over the course of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, hodegetics courses provided students with what Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling in 1802 called «public and general instruction about the purpose, nature, the whole, and the special objects of academic study».¹ In addition, these hodegetics courses typically offered practical guidance (how to attend lectures, how to take notes), while also telling students how to conduct themselves towards professors, fellow students, landlords, and maids.²

1. F. W. J. Schelling, *Vorlesungen über die Methode des akademischen Studiums*, Tübingen 1803, 5. All translations are our own.

2. J. Lange, *Die Gefahren der akademischen Freiheit: Ratgeberliteratur für Studenten im Zeitalter der Aufklärung (1670-1820)*, Ostfildern 2017, esp. 88-93. See also S. Dany, *Start in die Lehre: Qualifizierung von Lehrenden für den Hochschulalltag*, Munster 2007, 11-15; J. Stary, «Hodegetik oder “Ein Mittel gegen

Unsurprisingly, in a cultural atmosphere dominated by the sometimes overlapping, sometimes conflicting forces known as «Pietism» and «Enlightenment», hodegetics teachers at the University of Halle did not address their students with a single voice.³ Different visions of how an officially non-confessional, yet in practice largely Protestant university should educate the youth translated into different types of student advice. Also, in articulating their views on proper student behavior, hodegetics teachers drew on different theological and philosophical idioms. While Christian Thomasius, one of the university's greatest luminaries, set the tone for many of his successors by emphasizing the need for students to acquire *Klugheit* (prudence), others, such as the theologian August Hermann Francke, insisted that students should rather practice themselves in *Gottseeligkeit* (godliness, piety).

Just how deep these differences ran is apparent from how hodegetics teachers treated the virtue of *humilitas*.⁴ Although all agreed that students should avoid humility's negative counterparts, such as arrogance and pride, they developed different strategies for reaching this goal. Whereas some insisted that *humilitas*, understood in traditional Christian terms as imitation of Christ's humility,⁵ should reign supreme, others distinguished

das Elend der Studierunfähigkeit": Eine historische Betrachtung einem Dauerproblem der Universität», *Das Hochschulwesen*, 42/4 (1994), 160-64; J.-H. Olbertz, «Hodegetik: Hallesche Wurzeln einer universitätspädagogischen Denktradition im Licht der akademischen Freiheit», in G. Jerouschek, A. Sames (eds.), *Aufklärung und Erneuerung: Beiträge zur Geschichte der Universität Halle im ersten Jahrhundert ihres Bestehens (1694-1806)*, Halle 1994, 234-45 and J.-H. Olbertz, «Hodegetik als akademische Morallehre», in K. Jackstel (ed.), *Studien zur Geschichte der Hochschulpädagogik*, Halle 1986, 47-59.

3. On the entanglement of Pietism and Enlightenment in Halle around 1700, see T. Ahnert, *Religion and the Origins of the German Enlightenment: Faith and Reform of Learning in the Thought of Christian Thomasius*, Rochester, NY 2006 and M. Gierl, *Pietismus und Aufklärung: Theologische Polemik und die Kommunikationsreform der Wissenschaft am Ende des 17. Jahrhunderts*, Göttingen 1997.

4. On the medieval backgrounds of humility as an attitude appropriate to teachers and students alike, see S. Negri, «Zur Demut beim Lehren und Lernen», in A. Speer, T. Jeschke (eds.), *Schüler und Meister*, Berlin 2016, 107-34. S. Kivistö, *The Vices of Learning: Morality and Knowledge at Early Modern Universities*, Leiden 2014, 69-73, touches briefly on German academics discussing humility and modesty in the the early Enlightenment era.

between *Demuth* (humility vis-à-vis God) and *Bescheidenheit* (modesty in one's relations to others). As we will argue in this chapter, this distinction and the opposition it elicited reflect a lack of agreement on how Christian piety related to duties of honor in a socially stratified society. Even if no one disputed that students should be good Christians, and therefore «humble» before God, hodegetics teachers disagreed on how important humility was in the social realm, given the diverse make-up of Halle's student population and the importance of «giving honor to whom honor is due» in a society where differences in social standing mattered greatly.⁶

At the University of Halle, and in the state of Brandenburg-Prussia more generally, two factors brought a sense of urgency to this issue. First, administrative reforms in Brandenburg-Prussia fueled a demand for well-educated civil servants. To that end, Elector Friedrich III had founded a *Ritterakademie* in Halle in 1688, which from the start he had likely intended to become a university. Both the *Ritterakademie* and the *Friedrichs-Universität* (1694) that emerged out of it were supposed to prepare well-born students for a career in state service, among other things by socializing them into courtliness.⁷ Consequently, hodegetics courses discussed not only habits conducive to learning or virtues of Christian piety, but also the «prudence» (*Klugheit*) required for navigating the social complexities of early modern court life – with no little potential for friction between these learning objectives. Secondly, because the university was rather successful in recruiting students from noble families – «Noble people in good

5. Rudolf Damerau highlights the *imitatio Christi* motif in his *Die Demut in der Theologie Luthers*, Giessen 1967, 17–53. See also D. Schoeller Reisch, *Enthöhter Gott, vertiefter Mensch: Zur Bedeutung der Demut, ausgehend von Meister Eckhart und Jakob Böhme*, Freiburg 1999.

6. M. Beetz, *Frühmoderne Höflichkeit: Komplimentierkunst und Gesellschaftsrituale im altdutschen Sprachraum*, Stuttgart 1990, 256–58.

7. In fact, this had been Halle's second *Ritterakademie*. The first one, founded in 1680 after French examples by the Huguenot La Fleur from Grenoble, had closed its doors in 1688. M. Taatz-Jacobi, *Erwünschte Harmonie: Die Gründung der Friedrichs-Universität Halle als Instrument brandenburg-preußischer Konfessionspolitik: Motive, Verfahren, Mythos (1680-1713)*, Berlin 2014, 120–39.

numbers, still many barons and counts», observed a hodegetics teacher in the 1730s⁸ – it had to address the issue of how academic citizens from different social backgrounds could relate to each other.⁹ How should a professor greet a student from noble descent? How should a merchant's son dress in class? As Manfred Beetz has argued, the importance that early modern Germans attached to etiquette and social ethics reflects this concern about negotiating duties of honor in a complex social setting.¹⁰

We would like to argue that much the same can be said about hodegetics teachers who instructed their students about *Demuth* and *Bescheidenheit*. They had to figure out to what extent honoring persons of higher social standing was compatible with honoring God. Did humility towards God imply modesty towards others? Did humility imply that all people were equal before God or was humbleness, by contrast, an attitude reinforcing existing social hierarchies? More practical questions also prompted themselves. If the academic hierarchy required even students of noble descent to behave modestly vis-à-vis their professors, to what extent was the university a place where social differences were put between brackets? Was Thomasius right in arguing that professors should treat their students equally, without consideration of social standing, but only as long as classes lasted?¹¹

In this chapter, we will advance two arguments. First, we will show that humility and modesty meant different things to hodegetics teachers like Francke and Thomasius. We will argue that their different conceptions of humility and modesty corresponded to different views on how the religious duty of honoring God related to duties of honor in the social realm. Secondly, we will argue that this lack of agreement did not imply that

8. M. Schmeitzel, *Rechtschaffener Academicus, oder Gründliche Anleitung, wie ein academischer Student seine Studien und Leben gehörig einzurichten habe*, Halle 1738, 429.

9. E. Sagarra, *A Social History of Germany. 1648-1914*, London 1977, 79-94.
10. Beetz, *Frühmoderne Höflichkeit*, 256-58.

11. C. Thomasius, «Christian Thomas entbietet der studierenden Jugend in Halle...», in Id., *Allerhand bißher publicirte kleine deutsche Schriften...*, 3rd ed., Halle 1721, 517-62, at 558. On social standing at early modern German universities, see M. Füssel, *Gelehrtenkultur als symbolische Praxis: Rang, Ritual und Konflikt an der Universität der Frühen Neuzeit*, Darmstadt 2006.

Francke, Thomasius, and later hodegetics teachers such as Martin Schmeitzel actually socialized their students into different kinds of social norms. Although they drew on different theological and philosophical idioms, they all agreed that their students should become devout Christians as well as prudent civil servants. Consequently, the hodegetics teachers differed primarily, not in what they taught, but in how they articulated and justified their moral advice to students in Halle.

August Hermann Francke

When August Herman Francke joined the University of Halle, initially as a professor of Greek and oriental languages (1691), later as a professor of theology (1698), he was already known throughout the German lands for his Pietist leanings.¹² During Francke's tenure at Halle, his Pietist profile became even more pronounced, largely due to the orphanage and schools, later known as the *Franckesche Stiftungen*, that he founded within the city walls. These institutions contributed to no small extent to Halle becoming known as a center of Pietism.¹³ Although the university, which preferably presented itself as a bastion against confessional polemic,¹⁴ did not identify with this image, Francke was not the only university professor whose Pietist inclinations colored his teaching. Like Francke, the theologian Joachim Lange and the physician Johann Juncker, among others, emphasized the need for a «practice of piety» (*praxis pietatis*), that is, the importance of Christian faith pervading all of life, including morals and manners.¹⁵ In their view, students must not only prepare for

12. On Francke's call to Halle, see Taatz-Jacobi, *Erwünschte Harmonie*, 154–68.

13. D. H. Shantz, *An Introduction to German Pietism: Protestant Renewal at the Dawn of Modern Europe*, Baltimore 2013, 117–43; R. L. Gawthrop, *Pietism and the Making of Eighteenth-Century Prussia*, Cambridge 2009, 150–99; K. J. Whitmer, *The Halle Orphanage as Scientific Community: Observation, Eclecticism, and Pietism in the Early Enlightenment*, Chicago 2015.

14. T. A. Howard, *Protestant Theology and the Making of the Modern German University*, New York 2006, 91–92.

15. T. M. Salo, «Joachim Lange: Lutheran Pietist Theologian and Halle Apologist», in C. T. Collins Winn et al. (eds.), *The Pietist Impulse in Chris-*

a future career, but also learn to become pious men, recognizably Christian in how they conducted themselves.

How eagerly Francke wanted his students to live a Christian life is apparent from a 1716 booklet entitled *Einige Regeln und Erinnerungen zur christlichen und gebührlchen Verhaltung auf der Universität*. The first eighteen pages of this advice book, targeted at students who prepared for public life by studying law or medicine, consist of a text written in 1689 by Veit Ludwig von Seckendorff, a German statesman and scholar whom Friedrich III had made chancellor of the intended university at Halle (soon after which he had died, two years before the university had opened its doors).¹⁶ Seckendorff's relatively short text is followed by 31 pages of commentary by Francke himself, in which the editor struck more Pietist tones than Seckendorff had done. For instance, whereas Seckendorff had discussed student behavior from three different angles – Christian morality, courteousness (*Höflichkeit*), and customs (*Gebühr*) – Francke adopted a more exclusively theological perspective. Also, when it came to practical advices, such as how to care for one's body, Francke was not satisfied with Seckendorff's appeal to common sense («You have to learn to observe and experience for yourself what is advantageous or disadvantageous to you».¹⁷ Quoting 1 Corinthians 3, Francke added a theological argument: «If any men defiles the temple of God, him shall God destroy».¹⁸

These differences notwithstanding, Francke recommended Seckendorff's text on various grounds. Not least among these was that the author had been «a man gifted with true humility

tianity, Cambridge 2012, 82–93; C. H. Grundmann, «Pietism, Revivalism, and Medical Missions: The Concern for the Corporeality of Salvation in A. H. Francke, P. Parker, and G. Dowkonnt», *ibid.*, 296–306, at 299.

16. S. Strauch, *Veit Ludwig von Seckendorff (1626-1692): Reformationsgeschichte, Reformation des Lebens, Selbstbestimmung zwischen lutherischer Orthodoxie, Pietismus und Frühaufklärung*, Münster 2005.

17. V. L. von Seckendorff, *Einige Regeln und Erinnerungen zur christlichen und gebührlchen Verhaltung auf der Universität ...*, ed. A. H. Francke, Halle 1716, 18.

18. A. H. Francke, «Anrede an diejenige / welche in der Blüte ihres Alters, jetzt oder zukünftig, auf der hiesigen und denen übrigen Universitäten sich Studirens halber aufhalten...», *ibid.*, 26–56, at 51.

[*Demuth*] and untainted piety».¹⁹ More in particular, Francke portrayed Seckendorff as a man who had had few equals in seventeenth-century Europe when it came to humility, despite the fact that Seckendorff had been judge in the ducal court at Jena and intended chancellor of the University of Halle, among other things. One might argue that, for Francke, Seckendorff served as a specimen of humility precisely because his political and judicial responsibilities («hohe Bedienungen») had not impaired his Christian humility.²⁰ In addition, Francke welcomed Seckendorff's emphasis on prayer as a practice that expressed and fostered humility in Christian believers. Seckendorff's exhortation to a life of prayer, complete with «daily penance and serious resolution and struggle against sin»,²¹ was consistent with Francke's belief that prayer before, during, and after Scripture reading helped Christians receive God's Word «in humble [*demüthiger*] acknowledgment» of their own unworthiness.²² Moreover, Seckendorff's emphasis on penance fitted well with Francke's notion of «penitential struggle» (a genuine fighting against sin, confessing to wrongdoings, and asking God for forgiveness, in the hope of receiving the grace of conversion).²³

Why did Francke value humility so highly? His habit of juxtaposing humility to worldly *Klugheit* (prudence) provides a clue. For Francke, humility and prudence as commonly understood were rather incompatible. Whereas the former stemmed from reliance on God's grace, Francke perceived the latter as being rooted in human self-reliance. He minced no words when criticizing people «who regard themselves as prudent», because for Francke, such self-confidence was a clear sign of these persons «never having tasted or experienced a true conversion [*Veränderung*] of the heart and power of a new birth». ²⁴ No matter how

19. *Ibid.*, 27.

20. *Ibid.*

21. Seckendorf, *Einige Regeln und Erinnerungen*, 8–9.

22. A. H. Francke, *Oeffentliches Zeugniß Vom Werck Wort und Dienst Gottes*, vol. 2, Halle 1702, 7 and 107.

23. H.-M. Kirn, «The Penitential Struggle (“Busskampf”) of August Hermann Francke (1663–1727): A Model of Pietistic Conversion?» in J. N. Bremmer et al. (eds.), *Paradigms, Poetics and Politics of Conversion*, Leuven 2006, 123–32.

24. Francke, «Anrede», 43.

prudent you think you are – Francke addressed his readers in the second person plural – you are «fools for God» as long as you do not ask for Him.²⁵ Likewise, commenting on Psalm 14 verse 2 – «The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand [in German: *ob jemand klug sey*], and seek God» – Francke added in parentheses: «Here you see what true prudence is».²⁶ The interpolation testifies to Francke's belief that seeking God was the only thing that truly mattered, especially for people who were at the point of losing themselves in what is «falsely but commonly known as prudence».²⁷

At first sight, it might seem as if this critique of prudence was inconsistent with what Francke had written about prudence at an earlier occasion. In 1702, in an instruction for Christian tutors, he had distinguished between «worldly prudence» (*Welt-Klugheit*) and «Christian prudence» (*christliche Klugheit*).²⁸ Although the former corresponded to how the term was conventionally used, Francke had argued that only the latter qualified as «true prudence», because it was aimed at God's honor: «Whatever its names, all prudence should have God's honor as aim and purpose, and should use all other things to achieve such holy purpose. When it seeks something else, or sets itself one or another goal on the side, it is to be called falsehood, deceit, hypocrisy, and guile instead of true prudence».²⁹ As commentators have not failed to notice, this had been a clear attempt to 'baptize' the notion of prudence, or to develop a Christian form of prudence that distinguished itself from less explicitly Christian ones by emphasizing that even the most mundane aspects of life – eating, clothing, talking – should testify to one's reliance on God.³⁰

25. *Ibid.*, 32.

26. *Ibid.*, 33.

27. *Ibid.*, 46.

28. A. H. Francke, «Kurtzer und Einfältiger Unterricht / Wie Die Kinder zur wahren Gottseligkeit / und Christlichen Klugheit anzuführen sind», in Id., *Oeffentliches Zeugniß Vom Werck Wort und Dienst Gottes*, vol. 1, Halle 1702, 113–72, at 149.

29. *Ibid.*

30. W. Loch, «Pädagogik am Beispiel August Hermann Franckes», in R. Albrecht, H. Lehmann (eds.), *Geschichte des Pietismus*, vol. 4, Göttingen 2004, 264–308, at 276–79.

However, even if the terminology in 1716 was different, Francke's dissociation from *Klugheit* did not substantially affect the position outlined in 1702. In his commentary on Seckendorff's text, Francke still made the same point: it is foolish for humans to think that they can be wise, or truly prudent, without being pious in the first place.

Put in broader perspective, this suggests that Francke identified with an Augustinian thread that runs through the entire history of *humilitas*. From this Augustinian point of view, firmly defended by the later Martin Luther, among others, humility comes close to being the only attitude appropriate for sinful human beings.³¹ In his early eighteenth-century context, Francke witnessed a variety of attempts to bracket this theological understanding of the human condition – not by denying the human need for grace, but by carving out 'worldly' spaces in which human conduct would not consistently be interpreted *sub specie aeternitatis*. Francke's critique of prudence testifies to his worries about such «secularizing» moves and to his Pietist conviction that Christian humility should permeate all of life.

Christian Thomasius

Whom exactly did Francke have in mind in dissociating himself from *Klugheit*? Although Christian Thomasius, one of the founding fathers of the University of Halle, was not explicitly mentioned by Francke, is it not unlikely that *Klugheit* as propagated by Thomasius was in the background of Francke's text.³²

31. N. Baumann, «Pride and Humility», in T. Toom (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine's Confessions*, Cambridge 2020, 208–26; Damerau, *Demut*, 24–28, 295–314.

32. Thomasius distinguished between wisdom and prudence, though without separating them. Whereas wisdom focused on all things good, prudence dealt with avoiding evil things, such as tendencies (*Affekte*) obstructing good things. For Thomasius, learning to recognize and control such undesirable tendencies, in oneself as well as in others, was a condition for polite and prudent conduct and for the realization of fortune and bliss (*Glück*). B. Meyer-Sickendiek, «Vorformen moderner Ratgeberliteratur: Die neuzeitlichen Klugheitslehren von Machiavelli bis Thomasius», in M.

For one thing, the two men had a long history of collaboration and dispute. In the 1680s, when both had been teaching at Leipzig, Thomasius had defended Francke against orthodox Lutherans who had looked suspiciously at Francke attending so-called *collegia pietatis* (prayer meetings in burghers' homes and students' rooms).³³ At Halle, however, Francke's and Thomasius' understanding had deteriorated. Partly, this had been due to personal factors, such as Francke refusing the sacrament to Thomasius' wife because of her inappropriate clothing style. In addition, however, there had been professional feuds about Thomasius' 1699 critical review of Francke's «Paedagogium» (in which Thomasius questioned Francke's teaching of courtly manners and coercive methods for having children behave piously)³⁴ as well as about Thomasius' teaching of *decorum*.³⁵ In 1713, a dispute about Thomasius' teachings on concubinage escalated the tense situation. In 1716, the year in which Francke was appointed as vice-rector and his hodegetics text appeared in print, the two professors reconciled with each other.³⁶ Nonetheless, as Francke did not fail to observe, Thomasius continued to propagate a view of humility that was fundamentally different from his.

The point was not that Thomasius held humility in lower regard than his colleague. Time and again, he spoke highly about

Niehaus, W. Peeters (eds.), *Rat geben: Zu Theorie und Analyse des Beratungs-handelns*, Bielefeld 2014, 159-78, at 162, 171. C. Thomasius, *Kurtzer Entwurf der Politischen Klugheit / sich selbst und andern in allen Menschlichen Gesellschaften wohl zu rathen / und zu einer gescheiden Conduite zu gelangen...*, Frankfurt 1710, 11.

33. T. Kevorkian, *Baroque Piety: Religion, Society, and Music in Leipzig, 1650-1750*, Aldershot 2007, 147-49, 157-59.

34. M. Hambrock, M. Kühnel, A. Thiele, *Christian Thomasius Briefwechsel. Supplementband: Personenlexikon für Bd. 1*, Halle 2018, 76. Thomasius' review is reprinted in A. Nebe, «Thomasius in seinem Verhältnis zu A. H. Francke», in M. Fleischmann (ed.), *Christian Thomasius: Leben und Lebenswerk*, Halle 1931, 385-420, at 413-20.

35. K. R. Eskildsen, «Christian Thomasius, Invisible Philosophers, and Education for Enlightenment», *Intellectual History Review*, 18/3 (2008), 319-36, at 323.

36. Nebe, «Thomasius in seinem Verhältnis», 385-420; W. Schneiders, «Thomasius politicus: Einige Bemerkungen über Staatskunst und Privatpolitik in der aufklärerischen Klugheitslehre», in N. Hinske (ed.), *Zentren der Aufklärung*, vol. 1, Heidelberg 1989, 91-110, at 93.

Demuth. In his *Von der Kunst vernünftig und tugendhaft zu lieben* (1706), for instance, Thomasius described humility as a truly Christian virtue.³⁷ Elsewhere, he argued «that from the beginning of the world up until our time, true religion has consisted of a humble and simple faith in divine mysteries and in a holy life».³⁸ Judging by his funeral oration on Seckendorff, he might even have agreed with Francke that humility had been paradigmatically embodied by the deceased chancellor of the University of Halle.³⁹

Unlike his Pietist colleague, however, Thomasius urged his readers not to confuse *Demuth* with *Bescheidenheit* (modesty). Although both humility and modesty required people not to place themselves above others, modesty led humans to consider each other as equals, whereas humility encouraged people to see themselves as inferior to others.⁴⁰ Three years later, in his *Drey Bücher der göttlichen Rechtsgelahrheit* (1709), Thomasius drew a similar distinction between humility and modesty. While the former was a religious virtue, «altogether peculiar to Christianity», the latter was the quality of treating others as human equals.⁴¹ Thomasius' commitment to this notion of human equality explains why he, unlike Francke, used *Demuth* only in relation to God. Constantly, he urged his readers to treat other people as equals. Quoting the Christian «Love thy neighbor as thyself», the proverbial «Don't do unto others what you don't want others to do unto you», as well as the legal maxim, «The justice that one administers to others, should also apply to oneself»,⁴² Thomasius had little use for a virtue that reinforced inequality by encouraging people to humble themselves before others.⁴³

37. C. Thomasius, *Von der Kunst vernünftig und tugendhaft zu lieben...*, Halle 1706, 229–30.

38. Thomasius, «Christian Thomas entbietet», 543.

39. C. Thomasius, «Klag- und Trauer-Rede...», in Id., *Allerhand bißher publicirte kleine deutsche Schriften*, 497–516, at 500.

40. Thomasius, *Von der Kunst*, 229–30.

41. C. Thomasius, *Drey Bücher der göttlichen Rechtsgelahrheit...*, Halle 1709, 167.

42. *Ibid.*, 161–62.

43. On Thomasius' understanding of human equality, see M. Kühnel, *Das politische Denken von Christian Thomasius: Staat, Gesellschaft, Bürger*, Berlin 2001, esp. 200–23.

Humility was obviously not the greatest obstacle to this project of furthering equality. Thomasius saw a more serious danger in what he called «presumptuousness» or «haughtiness» (*Hoffart*). Originating in a courtly culture in which social distinctions had to be carefully marked, *Hoffart*, according to Thomasius, led people to think too high of themselves and too low of those around them.⁴⁴ What virtue might serve as a corrective to this vice? Humility did not qualify, according to Thomasius, because it was not sufficiently committed to human equality. The fight against haughtiness therefore required an attitude that challenged human inequality more fundamentally. This is why Thomasius proposed *Bescheidenheit* instead of *Demuth*. Even if humility was appropriate towards God, modesty was what humans needed in the realm of social affairs.⁴⁵

In other respects, too, Thomasius preferred more finely textured ethical categories than Francke. For instance, with regard to the practical issue of how to handle differences in social standing in a classroom setting, Thomasius could not accept Francke's principled view that, *sub specie aeternitatis*, social backgrounds were irrelevant. (As Francke at some point rhetorically asked: Whether you belong to the nobility or not, what does it matter if you don't have God?)⁴⁶ Although Thomasius firmly believed that all students were equal, he did not understand this principle to imply that social customs were of no importance. This is because Thomasius did not perceive manners and customs as threatening ethical conduct per se. For him, dress, speech, and gestures were a matter of *decorum*, not of natural law or ethics in a strict sense.⁴⁷ As such, this outer conduct belonged to the realm of *adiaphora* («indifferent things that were neither virtues

44. Thomasius, *Drey Bücher*, 164.

45. *Ibid.*, 167. Whereas Samuel von Pufendorf had used the word «humility», Thomasius argued that he preferred «modesty» instead.

46. Francke, «Anrede», 32.

47. M. Scattola, «Von der prudentia politica zur Staatsklugheitslehre: Die Verwandlungen der Klugheit in der praktischen Philosophie der Frühen Neuzeit», in A. Fidora et al. (eds.), *Phronêsis – Prudentia – Klugheit: das Wissen des Klugen in Mittelalter, Renaissance und Neuzeit: Matthias Lutz-Bachmann zu seinem 60. Geburtstag*, Turnhout 2013, 227–59, at 252, discusses this typology from Thomasius' *Summarischer Entwurf der Grundlehren* (1699) at some length.

nor vices, yet, indispensable»).⁴⁸ Unlike Francke, whose commitment to a *praxis pietatis* permeating all of life did, in principle, not allow for *adiaphora*,⁴⁹ Thomasius thus combined a firm stance on human equality with a pragmatic attitude towards social stratification and its corresponding economy of honor.

Practically, this meant that modesty prevented him from claiming any prerogatives. Thomasius told his students that they should not flatter him with compliments or address him with «wonderful titles» (even though *decorum* might require the use of such titles in other social settings). The students, in their turn, were expected to show «modesty» in interacting with their professor.⁵⁰ Most importantly, Thomasius assured his audience that he would treat them as equals, addressing them in «direct» and «frank» language, during the course of his lectures, allowing *decorum* to resume its power once the class was over:

Because as long as the state of my lecture lasts, I will forget your status and equity, and will only regard you as students, who all need good admonition and teaching. When I am back down from the lectern, the distinction that one has to make among you because of decorum will apply again.⁵¹

What this shows is that Thomasius and Francke responded rather differently to the twofold challenge that the University of Halle was facing in the early decades of its existence: how to

48. H. Lempa, *Beyond the Gymnasium: Educating the Middle-Class Bodies in Classical Germany*, Lanham, MD 2007, 114. In 1702, Thomasius wrote: «The decorum is the soul of human societies. It is a weakness, but not a vice». Quoted in Kühnel, *Das politische Denken*, 197.

49. Loch, «Pädagogik», 277.

50. Thomasius, «Christian Thomas entbietet», 560–61.

51. *Ibid.*, 577–78. Thomasius used an analogy to make his point more acceptable to (noble) students struggling with the validity of the concept. Generally, he argued, people do not care if they are treated *cavallierement* by another rider or equerry while sitting on their horse, as long as their status and equity are acknowledged by proper courteousness (*Höflichkeit*) afterwards. Similarly, Thomasius asked his students to endure his possibly «improper» behaviour towards them during the lecture, ensuring them that, once the class was over, he would not fail to treat them with all «*honneteté*», in accordance with their social standing. Eskildsen also discusses this suppression of social differences inside and adherence to *decorum* outside of the classroom. Eskildsen, «Christian Thomasius», 326–27.

prepare students for a career in state service and accommodate a socially diverse student body in an academic community committed to equality. While Francke, the Pietist theologian, wanted to give all honor to God, Thomasius tried to distinguish between what it meant to honor God, with all appropriate humility, and what it meant to honor persons of higher social standing – not with humility, but with modesty and with concessions to *decorum*, if necessary. While Francke delivered his hodegetics in a theological key – academic education should aim at *Gottseeligkeit* – Thomasius, like Seckendorff, also sought to pay due respect to courteousness (*Höflichkeit*) and customs (*Gebühr*). Consequently, unlike Francke, who only wanted his students to become God-fearing men, Thomasius also sought to help them become «reasonable people» (*vernünfftige Menschen*).⁵²

Martin Schmeitzel

How did later hodegetics teachers in Halle build upon the foundations that Thomasius and Francke had laid? As Jan-Hendrik Olbertz and others have shown, Halle became home to a rich tradition of hodegetics teaching, which over the course of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries resulted in textbooks by Martin Schmeitzel, Carl Renatus Hausen, Christian Gottfried Schütz, Henrik Steffens, J. G. K. C. Kiesewetter, Johann Georg Mussmann, Carl Kirchner, and Johann Eduard Erdmann, among others.⁵³ Although this chapter is not the place to trace in detail how *Demuth* and *Bescheidenheit* figured in these later publications, we would like to devote a final section to Martin Schmeitzel's *Rechtschaffener Academicus* (1738) to show that Thomasius' distinction between humility before God and modesty towards other people was appropriated even by authors who more explicitly than Thomasius underscored the need for students to become pious Christians.

A former *Hofmeister* (someone who assisted sons of the nobility in their studies and travels) and hodegetics teacher at the University of Jena, Schmeitzel authored several volumes of

52. Thomasius, «Christian Thomas entbietet», 521.

53. Olbertz, «Hodegetik: Hallesche Wurzeln», 236–37.

advice literature.⁵⁴ While the first one, written in 1721, had been directed at teachers and *Hofmeisters*,⁵⁵ his *Rechtschaffener Academicus* – a tome of more than 700 pages, supposedly based on years of hodegetics teaching in Jena and Halle – was directly targeted at a student audience.⁵⁶ Notably, the most important lesson that Schmeitzel transmitted to these readers was that they should exercise themselves in godliness. Although Schmeitzel quoted Thomasius more frequently than Francke, he resembled the latter more than the former in emphasizing that glorifying God «with deepest humility» (*in tieffster Demuth*) was a student's first duty.⁵⁷ Moreover, Schmeitzel followed Francke in encouraging not only church attendance, but also domestic devotion. For purposes of devotion at home, Schmeitzel recommended titles such as Johann Gerhard's *Meditationes sacrae* (1606), Johann Arndt's *Wahres Christentum* (1605–10), and Johann Anastasius Freylinghausen's *Grundleitung der Theologie* (1703) – all well-known and widely used books, of which Francke would have approved.⁵⁸ (Especially Arndt, if not a Pietist himself, was held in high regard among German Pietists, while Freylinghausen was one of Francke's closest followers in Halle.)⁵⁹ So, as far as the rule of godliness was concerned, Schmeitzel seemed to follow Francke's lead.

However, in discussing students' duties towards themselves and other people, Schmeitzel adopted a different tone. He grounded these duties not only in God's commandments, but also in «the teachings of natural law» – a phrase to which Schmeitzel added a reference to Samuel von Pufendorf's *De officio hominis et civis juxta prout ipsi praescribuntur lege naturali* (1673), one of the found-

54. See «Martin Schmeitzel», in *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste*, vol. 35, Leipzig 1743, 302–5 and G. F. Hertzberg, «Schmeitzel, Martin», in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 31, Leipzig 1890, 633–34.

55. Zedler's *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon* mentions *Allectutio I II III Ad Studiosos in Frideric* (1732–1733) and *Anweisung vor einen Lehrer und Hofmeister* (1721), the second edition of which was published as *Rechtschaffener Lehrer und Hofmeister*, Jena 1736. See also M. Schmeitzel, *Die Klugheit zu leben und zu Conversiren, zu Hause, auf Universitäten und auf Reisen*, Halle 1737.

56. Schmeitzel, *Rechtschaffener Academicus*, 5.

57. *Ibid.*, 574.

58. *Ibid.*, 578, n. 7.

59. Shantz, *Introduction*, 30, 41, 119–20.

ing texts of German natural law philosophy. In this context, Schmeitzel, like Thomasius, chose to speak about *Bescheidenheit* instead of *Demuth* when it came to interpersonal relations.⁶⁰ Just as he expected masters to treat their servants «with proper modesty», he wanted professors to present their teachings with «love, modesty, and amenity».⁶¹ Clearly indebted to Thomasius was also Schmeitzel's argument that academic life had to be regulated according to three types of rules: «the rules of godliness [*Gottseeligkeit*], prudence [*Klugheit*], and affluence [*Wohlstand*]».⁶² Moreover, in distinguishing between duties to God, duties to oneself, duties to others, and duties coming with *Wohlstand*, Schmeitzel clearly varied on a Thomasian theme.⁶³

Paradoxically, even when Schmeitzel showed himself so concerned about socially appropriate conduct that he urged his students to care more about «the teachings on decorum»,⁶⁴ Francke's Pietist heritage was not far away. As Schmeitzel had explained his Halle students at several earlier occasions, the goal of university education was to let students familiarize themselves with the «world». Knowing the world, however, was not a goal in itself. In a sudden Pietist move, Schmeitzel explained that «the world is an arena of vanity, vice, and misery. The more a person advances in understanding this, the more he will be brought to God. And the closer he comes to God, the more he senses a real abhorrence for everything that happens among humans and can be observed in the world».⁶⁵ In this line of reasoning, the pur-

60. Like Thomasius, Schmeitzel distinguished between wisdom and prudence, while acknowledging their interrelatedness. Stressing the importance of attaining fortune, he defined prudence as the ability to discern and find means for achieving one's goal, while getting rid of any obstacles. Wisdom, in its turn, was the ability to know good from evil. Schmeitzel, *Rechtschaffener Academicus*, 196–99.

61. *Ibid.*, 345, 381.

62. *Ibid.*, 572.

63. M. Kaufmann, «Die Rolle des Decorum in der Ethik des Christian Thomasius», *Jahrbuch für Recht und Ethik*, 8 (2000), 233–45, at 237.

64. Schmeitzel, *Rechtschaffener Academicus*, 651.

65. M. Schmeitzel, *Zweyte Anrede An Die Herrn Studenten zu Halle*, Halle 1732, 19–20. See also M. Schmeitzel, *Einleitung zur Staats-Wissenschaft überhaupt: und dann zur Kenntniß derer europäischen Staaten insonderheit*, Halle 1732, unpaginated preface («Vorrede»).

pose of learning how to navigate the complexities of social life was not only to achieve happiness or to become a skilled civil servant, but also, more importantly, to enter a learning process that would eventually confirm Francke's *unum necessarium*: the humble awareness that humans can find ultimate joy only in God.

If all this suggests that Schmeitzel eclectically drew on both Francke and Thomasius, not to mention other sources of inspiration, his stance on humility and modesty was nonetheless entirely Thomasian. Like Thomasius, Schmeitzel associated humility with God and modesty with other people. In the *Rechtschaffener Academicus*, *Demuth* only referred to God, whereas *Bescheidenheit* was presented as a virtue necessary in the realm of human affairs.⁶⁶ Moreover, like Thomasius, Schmeitzel used this distinction to legitimize acknowledgment of social difference in contexts where people expected to be treated in accordance with their social position – even if, from a theological point of view, paying honor to higher-placed persons was of little importance.⁶⁷ Instead of challenging courtly manners and mores, Schmeitzel thus crafted a space for them, without denying that humility before God was ultimately more important than modesty vis-à-vis fellow human beings. Like Thomasius, Schmeitzel thereby reinforced the very distinction between religious duties and social obligations that Francke had tried to challenge.

Conclusion

Clearly, then, the University of Halle in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was a place where old ideals of *humilitas*, articulated in Pietist terms by August Hermann Francke, sat in tension with notions of human equality as envisioned by Christian Thomasius as well as with the university's mission of providing the Brandenburg-Prussian state with civil servants well-versed into courtly manners. Although both these tensions and the solutions proposed for them took on different forms, the cases of Thomasius and Martin Schmeitzel show that

66. Schmeitzel, *Rechtschaffener Academicus*, 345, 574.

67. *Ibid.*, 650.

several hodegetics teachers in Halle tried to reconcile the Elector's demands and the exhortations of the Gospel by distinguishing between *Demuth* and *Bescheidenheit*. Unlike humility, which continued to carry theological baggage, modesty was intended as a «worldly» virtue. Also, for Thomasius, modesty was premised on a notion of equality, whereas humility tended to reinforce social inequality. Francke, by contrast, refused to make such a distinction. Consistent with his Pietist conviction that Christian piety should permeate all of life, he urged his students to practice humility, not only towards God, but also towards fellow human beings. Insofar as their *terminology* is concerned, Francke, Thomasius, and Schmeitzel therefore offered their students rather different pieces of advice.

To what extent, however, does this imply that the three men *actually* socialized their students into different kinds of conduct? As we saw above, they all urged their audience to avoid pride and haughtiness, while offering them tools for avoiding status-based conflict. They all wanted their students to treat them with respect, while expecting them to prepare for a career in state service. As distinct as *Demuth* and *Bescheidenheit* were, both notions implied a form of human equality, before God or otherwise, that challenged the foundations of courtly culture and its accompanying economy of honor. Also, on a practical note, as Thomasius did not fail to notice, Francke's stated aversion to courtly culture did not prevent him from teaching courtly manners to his students in Halle. Following Daniel Fulda, therefore, we would like to suggest that Thomasius, Francke, and Schmeitzel differed first and foremost in how they *articulated* and *justified* their student advices in a context where, one way or another, both Christian piety and skills for navigating social inequality were seen as indispensable.⁶⁸ That is to say that the Halle hodegetics teachers drew on different theological and philosophical idioms in explaining to their students how and why they should become

68. D. Fulda, «Communication and Reputation: Correspondences Between the Scientific Cultures in the Eighteenth and Twenty-First Centuries», in A. Holenstein, H. Steinke, M. Stuber (eds.), *Scholars in Action: The Practice of Knowledge and the Figure of the Savant in the 18th Century*, Leiden 2013, 391-412.

both devout Christians and prudent civil servants, thereby developing positions that, although *conceptually* incompatible, *in practice* allowed for considerable overlap.

Seen from this perspective, what is most significant about Halle's hodegetics teachers is not that they disagreed on the meaning of humility, but rather that they attempted, each in their own way, to codify and justify behavioral standards in hodegetics courses and textbooks. «[W]hat was new was that these rules were made explicit and subject to a need for justification». ⁶⁹ Consequently, the case studies discussed in this chapter reveal more than disagreement about *Demuth* and *Bescheidenheit* as such. What is most pertinent is that Thomasius, Francke, and Schmeitzel took different stances on whether a Christian tradition of propagating Christ-like *humilitas* was able to accommodate the social demands of public life in a time of state reform and growing social mobility. Whereas Francke preferred to address the challenges of social inequality in Brandenburg-Prussia in theological terms, Thomasius, soon followed by Schmeitzel, chose to develop an alternative vocabulary (while retaining humility in the realm of private devotion). *Demuth* and *Bescheidenheit* thereby offer us a glimpse on perhaps the greatest challenge of the hodegetics genre: offering students unequivocal moral advice in a time when different theological and philosophical frameworks for explaining and justifying moral behavior competed for hegemony. ⁷⁰

69. *Ibid.*, 411.

70. This chapter stems from a research project on «Scholarly Vices: A Longue Durée History», carried out at the Leiden University Institute for History. Funding was generously provided by the Dutch Research Council (NWO).

ABSTRACT

Anne Por and Herman Paul, *Humility and Modesty in the Early Modern German University: Student Instruction at Halle around 1700*

Humility and modesty meant different things to hodegetics teachers like August Hermann Francke and Christian Thomasius. Their different conceptions of humility and modesty corresponded to different views on how the religious duty of honoring God related to duties of honor in the social realm. However, this lack of agreement did not imply that Francke, Thomasius, and later hodegetics teachers such as Martin Schmeitzel actually socialized their students into different kinds of social norms. Although they drew on different theological and philosophical idioms, they all agreed that their students should become devout Christians as well as prudent civil servants. The hodegetics teachers differed primarily, not in what they taught, but in how they articulated and justified their moral advice.

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