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"Nature's Work:" Carolus Clusius and His Ties to the Sidney Circle

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Abstract
Philip Sidney's European sojourn (1572-1577) was undoubtedly a formative experience, one that shaped his political and literary development. Unsurprisingly, it has received much commentary. Nevertheless, one rather neglected sphere of influence on Sidney's education that deserves fuller attention is the coterie of high-standing and learned figures based in Central Europe, many of whom Sidney either corresponded with or met in person. This essay will consider the role of Carolus Clusius (1526-1609), a distinguished French botanist employed at the imperial court in Vienna. The influence of Clusius in Sidney's intellectual circle and Sidney's correspondence network will be surveyed, as well as whether Sidney's exposure to the work of Clusius and other botanists, physicians and emblematists would have inspired Sidney's ideas.

Keywords
Philip Sidney, Carolus Clusius (Charles de l'Écluse), correspondence network, Early modern intellectuals, Sidney circle

Philip Sidney's intellectual network in Central Europe

Philip Sidney (1554-1586) is considered one of the most iconic figures of the Elizabethan era. Among his many achievements, Sidney's poetry and prose played a significant role in modernising literary culture during the English Renaissance. In 1572, at the age of seventeen, Sidney left Oxford University's Christ Church College for France on a diplomatic mission that would turn into a three-year tour of Europe. In August of that year, he witnessed first-hand the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre in Paris, an event that had a profound impact on his future political and religious views. During this his first stint abroad, Sidney visited a number of cities in Central Europe including, Frankfurt, Vienna, Pressburg and Cracow. Sidney returned to Europe for a second time in 1577 to conduct important royal business in Brussels, Heidelberg and Prague. His most important European mentor was Hubert Languet (1518-1581), French diplomat and supporter of the Lutheran reformer Philip Melanchthon. Languet served as a kind of social facilitator for Sidney, introducing his young protégé to a number of prominent scholars and dignitaries.

By the beginning of the seventeenth century, the educational trip to Europe known as the Grand Tour had become firmly established among young men of sufficient rank and means.[1] Arguably, Sidney was one of its pioneers, first setting off for Europe in 1572 at least a full generation before the practice became the norm. During his time in Central Europe, Sidney became particularly

1 In the context of the Czech and Austrian nobility, Jiří Kubeš charts the development of the Grand Tour over three eras: during the first phase, (1570-1620) encompassing the Reformation and late humanism up until the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War (1620-1648), young scholars travelled abroad to further their education in the tradition of the *peregrinatio academica*; (1620-1714) the second era, spanning the Thirty Years' War through to the end of the War of the Spanish Succession (1700-1714), was characterised by a preference for travel to Catholic strongholds and the replacement of universities with the fashion for academies in France and Italy; (1714-1750) the final phase saw the emergence of what is considered the classical Grand Tour, typically comprising short journeys around Europe. Jiří Kubeš, *Náročné dospívání urozených* (Nová tiskárna Pelhřimov, 2013), 259-261.

interested in the Bohemian region.[2] He travelled there in 1575, paying visits to Brünn (Brno) and Prague, where he established important friendships with leading dignitaries, politicians and scholars. One such figure was the celebrated Czech astronomer Tadeáš Hájek (1525-1600), who served as imperial physician to both Maximilian II and Rudolf II. Perhaps in an effort to strengthen diplomatic ties between England and the Bohemian nobility, the Sidney family organised for Hájek's three sons a period of study at Christ Church in Oxford,[3] an unusual destination given that most young noblemen from the region rarely strayed beyond the Netherlands, mostly visiting Italy or France. Decades later, travellers from Bohemia would make the trip across the English Channel, notably Baron Waldstein in 1600 and Jindřich Michal Hýzrle of Chody in 1607.[4] But these cases were the exception rather than the rule.[5]

Sidney's European sojourn was undoubtedly a formative experience, one that shaped his political and literary development. Unsurprisingly, it has received much commentary. Roger Kuin sieved through the correspondence to chart Sidney's journey across the Holy Roman Empire, while Robert E. Stillman explored how his association with the followers of Philip Melanchthon, contacts mediated by Languet, came to characterise his pious and poetic philosophies.[6] Brian C. Lockey has argued that the cosmopolitan education Sidney received contributed to a recurring motif in many of his works: the vision of a reimagined Christendom.[7] Of course, any investigation of Sidney's continental rite of passage must be set against the upheavals of the age. As Howard Louthan has observed, Sidney's diplomatic approach to religion was shaped by his immersion in the irenic politics of the Viennese court ushered in during the reign of Maximilian II.[8] This era of tolerance provided new opportunities for public figures, both Catholic and Protestant, and facilitated the emergence of a Christian network that sought peace over division. As Stillman notes, "[m]ulticonfessionalism was a reality in the early modern era."[9]

2 As Roger Kuin observes, the reasons for Sidney's interest were religious as well as political. While in Bohemia, he was introduced to the Bohemian Brethren, a Protestant movement that formed part of a relatively heterogeneous population in Bohemia consisting of both Hussites and Roman Catholics. Sidney would almost certainly have noted how both sides benefitted from the inclusive reign of the imperial court during this time. Roger Kuin, "Philip Sidney's Travels in the Holy Roman Empire," *Renaissance Quarterly* 74 (2021): 819-820.

3 For more, see Kuin, *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, xliv, and Martina Kastnerová, "Johannes Sambucus at the Imperial Court and His Ties to the Sidney Circle," *Sidney Journal* 38 (2020): 8-9.

4 The common purpose of these trips was to visit the Elizabethan court. Hýzrle certainly had no interest in any of the universities, nor in attending the theatre. Compare Martin Holý, "Jindřich Michal Hýzrle z Chodů (1575-1665) a jeho poznávací cesta po střední a západní Evropě v letech 1607 a 1608," in Šlechtic na cestách v 16.-*18. století*, ed. Jiří Kubeš (Pardubice: Univerzita Pardubice, 2007), 35-66.

5 Kubeš, *Náročné dospívání urozených*, Holý, "Jindřich Michal Hýzrle z Chodů…"; Lydia Petráňová, "Příběhy z dob mušketýrů," in *Příběhy Jindřicha Hýzrla* z Chodů (Praha: Odeon, 1979), 7-23.

6 Robert E. Stillman, *Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Renaissance Cosmopolitanism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

7 Brian E. Lockey, "Philip Sidney and Edmund Spenser on Transnational Governance and the Future of Christendom," *Renaissance Quarterly* LXXIV (2021): 369-411.

8 Howard Louthan, *The Quest for Compromise. Peacemakers in Counter-Reformation Vienna* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

9 Robert E. Stillman, *Christian Identity, Piety, and Politics in Early Modern England* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2021), 21. Kuin concurs that "Western Christianity was in a flux of definition itself." Roger Kuin, "Philip Sidney's Travels in the Holy Roman Empire," 807.

Medicine-botany network

One significant detail (especially regarding the aim of this article) is that most members of the Sidney-Languet network specialized in medicine and botany. Hannah Murphy has explored in depth how these closely interwoven disciplines evolved during the new age of early modern medicine in which physicians rose in status to join the ranks of the establishment. This progress was concentrated in the imperial cities of the Holy Roman Empire, principally Vienna and Nuremberg, where the German physician Joachim Camerarius the Younger (1534-1598) practiced and lived. His manifesto *Short and Ordered Considerations for the Formation of a Well-Ordered Medicine* (1571) outlining proposals for the regulation of surgery, pharmacy and midwifery would become "a blueprint for reform in Nuremberg."[10] A botanist himself, Camerarius acknowledged the important role of the apothecary and the practice of dispensing herbal remedies. Nevertheless, he also viewed it as a profession subordinate to the physician within the hierarchy of municipal medical practitioners.[11]

Languet was friends with the distinguished Hungarian physician, poet and fellow Melanchthonian Georg Purkircher (1530-1578) as well as the state physician for the Moravian margraviate Thomas Jordan of Klausenburg (1539-1586). Both Purkircher and Jordan were members of a distinguished set concentrated in Wittenberg and Vienna. This milieu included Clusius, who collected restorative herbs for Purkircher.[12] Although best known as court physician to two Holy Roman Emperors, Hájek also wrote a scholarly treatise on the nature, use and curative effects of beer. He also translated to Czech and published a popular herbarium (1562) by the esteemed Italian physician and botanist Pietro Andrea Gregorio Mattioli.[13] In what is another interesting crossover between the fields, it was Camerarius who revised the German edition of Mattioli's *Kreutterbuch*, a commentary on Dioscorides' encyclopaedia of herbal medicine.

Carolus Clusius (Charles de l'Écluse) (1526-1609)

Carolus Clusius[14] (Charles de l'Écluse) was a Flemish, French-speaking scholar who was friends with Crato, Purkircher and other figures within the Languet-Camerarius network. Clusius' studies took him across western and central Europe, including tenures in Montpellier, the Netherlands, England and the Iberian Peninsula; his work took him to Vienna, Leiden and other localities. Clusius also maintained correspondence with Sidney, Aicholz, Blotius, and Purkircher, and he was befriended by the Camerarius family as well.[15] Although Clusius studied medicine, he never practiced, devoting himself instead to horticulture and botany, finally becoming prefect of the

10 Hannah Murphy, *A New Order of Medicine: The Rise of Physicians in Reformation Nuremberg* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press 2019), 4.

11 Murphy, *A New Order of Medicine*, 4.

12 Kuin, *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, lv-lvi; E. Schultheisz and L. Tardy, "English-Hungarian medical relations in the XVI-XVII century," *Communicationes de Historia Artis Medicinae* 6 (1972), 97-112.

13 Tadeáš Hájek, *De Cervisia, Eivsqve Conficiendi Ratione, Natvra, viribus & facultatibus, opusculum* (Francofvrdi: Apud heredes Andreae Wecheli, 1585); Jagiellonian Library, Krakow, BJ Cam. F. VIII. 24.

14 In keeping with Renaissance convention, I use the Latin form in this article.

15 Sylvia van Zanen, *Planten op papier. Het pionierswerk van Carolus Clusius (1526-1609)* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019), about Sidney 63, Camerarii 64.

imperial gardens at the court of Maximilian II. Just as Johannes Crato (another medicinal botanist) had an influence on Sidney's decision to travel to Poland, Clusius recommended to Sidney that he travel to Hungary.[16] Preceding his studies in medicine and the natural sciences, Clusius was taught theology in Wittenberg by none other than Philip Melanchthon. The botanist was mostly renowned for his work on tulips, while his work on orchids, although equally fascinating, is lesser known.[17] Interestingly, Clusius was also the tutor of one of the older sons of Anton Fugger, who was descended from a well-known family of wealthy German merchants.[18]

Clusius was keen to exchange knowledge, aid in transmitting new discoveries, as well as communicate observations (even regarding species in the New World) with his high-quality translations, as he was excellent in many vulgar languages. One of his great discoveries, albeit an accidental one, was the work of Garcia de Orta (1501-1568), the Portuguese physician and herbalist and friend of the poet Luís de Camões,[19] who was catapulted to fame thanks to Clusius' Latin translation of his *Colloquies on the Simples and Drugs of India*.[20]

Clusius also sent to Sidney a copy of his renowned botanical treatise *Rariorum aliquot stirpium per Hispanias observatarum historia*,[21] a work printed by Christopher Plantin (1520-1589), the author's long-time publisher and fellow member of the Languet-Melanchthon circle.[22] The book features the flora and fauna of Europe and the New World along with detailed descriptions of the *Phalangium americanum* (a genus of harvestman spider), the civet (which also appears in work by the Spanish botanist and physician Nicolás Bautista Monardes) and the locust.[23] For Clusius and other devotees of the natural sciences, these creatures were deemed potentially useful for medicinal practice. It also should be noted that Clusius dedicated his *Simplicium medicamentorum ex novo orbe delatorum* (1582) to Sidney and Sir Edward Dyer. On this basis it is possible to assume Clusius visited Sidney and Dyer in England.[24]

16 Kuin, *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, xlii.

17 Siegfried Künkele and Richard Lorenz, "Die Orchideen in dem Bilderwerk des Carolus Clusius (Libri picturati A. 16-31)," in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der europäischen Orchideen im 16. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1981), 569-576. This work relates to Clusius' translations of botanical treatises by Rembert Dodoens (1517-1585) (from Dutch to French) and Nicolás Monardes (1512-1588) (from Spanish to Latin).

18 Anton Fugger (1493-1560), the third and youngest son of Georg Fugger and grandson of Jakob Fugger. The Fuggers were also connected with Johannes Sambucus and Jan Dubravius as well as other notable intellectual luminaries.

19 Luís de Camões (1525-1580) also wrote the preface to Garcia de Orta's work.

20 Marília dos Santos Lopes, *Writing new worlds: the cultural dynamics of curiosity in early modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), 230; chapter 18 of this book details Clusius as a translator of travel diaries. Pedro de Moura Carvalho, *Science & wonder in 16th century Goa: Garcia de Orta and the Kunstkammer* (Franco Maria Ricci, 2017), 36. For more on Clusius' correspondence network and his knowledge of vulgar languages, see Florike Egmond, "Observing Nature. The Correspondence Network of Carolus Clusius (1526-1609)," in Dirk van Miert (ed.), *Communicating observations in early modern letters (1500-1675): epistolography and epistemology in the age of the scientific revolution* (Warburg Institute, 2013), 43-72.

21 Carolus Clusius, *Caroli Clvsi[i] Atrebatis [...] Rariorvm Plantarvm Historia* [...] (Antverpiæ: Ex officina Plantiniana, Apud Ioannem Moretum, 1601); Jagellonian Library, Krakow.

22 Compare Kuin, *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, xlii and subsequent letters.

23 Carolus Clusius, *Caroli Clvsii Atrebatis Cvræ Posteriores Sev Plurimarum* non ante cognitarum aut descriptarum stirpium, peregrinorumque aliquot animalium Novæ Descriptiones [...] (Leiden: Ex officina Plantiniana Raphelengij, 1611); Wroclaw University Library, post 1 V.

24 F. W. T. Hunger, *Charles de l'Escluse (Carolus Clusius): Nederlandsch kruidkundige, 1526-1609* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1942), 145-147. For more on Clusius' observations and methodology (especially treating specimens), see Claudia Swan,

Clusius in Sidney's Correspondence

Our current research indicates that Clusius' role in the Languet-Sidney circle merits revision. There is evidence to suggest that he, more than most, could have exerted an appreciable influence on Sidney. Slightly younger than Languet and the other notable figures Sidney met, Clusius was similar in age to Sidney's father. The name of Clusius recurs in the direct and indirect correspondence, attesting to his importance and popularity in the intellectual circle that Languet and Sidney frequented. No doubt his Protestantism would have made him an attractive member for the group (not, on the other hand, for Rudolf II, who discharged Clusius following his accession in 1576).

Based on the correspondence, Sidney's most trusted friends in Central Europe were Crato, Clusius, Purkircher and Jordan, each in his own right the epitome of the Renaissance scholar. Such a distinction meant, first and foremost, being a multidisciplinarian with broad knowledge in a variety of fields, an attribute considered key to forming an all-embracing yet hermetic appreciation of nature and its rules. Among their many interests, the members of this quartet specialized in medicine, botany or both. Esteemed public figures all, their personalities as well as philosophical and moral views would have impressed Sidney. Perhaps most importantly, however, the disciplines that they devoted themselves to were very much in fashion among young educated aristocrats of the day. It is certainly plausible that Sidney's literary exploration of the connection between man and nature was indebted to this exposure.

In *The Defence of Poesie*, Sidney draws an analogy between God and poet, between the creator of the natural world and the creator of a "golden world" that transcends nature:

> Only the poet, disdaining to be tied to any such subjection, lifted up with the vigour of his own invention, doth grow in effect another nature, in making things either better than nature bringeth forth, or, quite anew, forms such as never were in nature […][25]

Sidney assumed that whoever understands the laws of nature and the functioning of the human body would be equally able to harness the creative power of the imagination and, moreover, modify, enhance or reverse anything within this second world of poetry.[26]

Clusius wrote at least four letters to Sidney, and his name also appears in other letters exchanged between members of Sidney's intellectual circle. Based on the volume of correspondence alone, Clusius features more prominently than the other Central European scholars with whom Sidney communicated.

The first of Clusius' letters was written at the imperial court in Vienna on 4 December 1575, the final year of Sidney's maiden European tour. The letters Clusius and Sidney exchanged were all written in French, which was rather unusual considering the vast majority of Sidney's correspondence was composed in Latin, the lingua franca among scholars of the day. Apart from Clusius, Languet was the only other person Sidney corresponded with in French. In addition to

Rarities of these lands: art, trade, and diplomacy in the Dutch Republic (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2021), 98, 100-101.

25 Philip Sidney, *Sir Philip Sidney The Major Works*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 216.

26 Compare also the quotation in the Conclusion from Sidney's *Arcadia*.

the formal pleasantries, Clusius delivers news of mutual friends and the state of contemporary political affairs, particularly the election of the King of Poland, a matter he was evidently aware was of great interest to his respondent. Enclosing letters from Purkircher and Languet, Clusius wishes Sidney "good health and a long life, all good fortune and contentment […] ,"[27] greetings that are seconded by his friend and "host Doctor Aicholz."[28] Aicholz's name also features frequently in the correspondence between Clusius and Camerarius. It is clear from Clusius' letter that Aicholz and Sidney were on friendly terms. Sidney might have met Aicholz through either Clusius himself or the humanist Johannes Sambucus (1531-1584), court physician to Maximilian II and companion to Joachim Camerarius the Elder (1500-1574). Sambucus kept Sidney up to date on the political goings-on in Hungary and also introduced him to Clusius, who later accompanied Sidney to Hungary.[29]

As for Aicholz, he appears in *Physica & Ethica*, one of the emblems in Sambucus' magnus opus *Emblemata* (1564). In the explanatory text that accompanies the corresponding emblem (allegorical illustration), Sambucus writes that knowledge of nature, in the spirit of Socrates, can only be obtained through practice and experimentation:

> But her foster-child is Praxis, who follows the dictates of knowledge, and shines fit for legitimate use. This study pleased Socrates, for what is the use of old Philosophy without correct examples?[30]

Fittingly, then, Sambucus accords the most prominent position in the emblem to Aicholz, a general practitioner and botanist who very much practiced what he preached. Moreover, Clusius himself was a supporter of garden experimentation, as remarked upon by Egmond: "Traces can also be discerned of the notion that Nature played with colour, and that the gardener could imitate Nature and attempt to create new plants."[31]

Indeed, this learning-by-doing approach to knowledge is hinted at in *Defence*, in which Sidney extols the unique merits of poetry. Here, in Aristotelian fashion, poetry provides the perfect counterweight to the putative obscurity of philosophy as well as the superficial, illustrative nature

27 "[…] en santé et longue vie, tout heur et contentement, me recommandant humblement à vostre bonne grace." Kuin, *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, 595-596.

28 Charles de l'Écluse to Sidney, Vienna, 4 December 1575. In Kuin, *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, 594-597. A similar greeting is repeated in his letter to Sidney from 19 March 1576 (Kuin, *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, 648). Johannes Aicholz (1520-1588) was a distinguished professor of anatomy, and later dean and rector, at the University of Vienna. Aicholz was subsequently enlisted into the service of Rudolf II as royal botanist at the imperial court in Prague, where with the help of Clusius and yet another physician-cum-botanist Paul Fabricius, he presided over the royal botanical garden. Clusius collaborated with Aicholz on several projects of mutual interest. (Karl Schadelbauer, "Aicholz, Johann Emerich," in *Neue Deutsche Biographie* (NDB). *Band 1* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1953), 117.) Clusius' treatise on Austrian botany was based primarily on observations made at Aicholz's private gardens in Vienna. (Murphy, *A New Order of Medicine*, 133-134.)

29 Katherine Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney. Courtier Poet* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991), 65. See also E. Schultheisz and L. Tardy, "English-Hungarian medical relations in the XVI-XVII century," 97-112.

30 In Sambucus' Latin "Huius alumna sed est praxis, mandata capessens / Notitiae, ac licitis usibus apta nitet. / Socratis haec placuit studio, quid enim sine rectis / Profuit exemplis Philosophia vetus?" Emblems: With Many Images from Ancient Works; by Ján Sambucus of Tyrnavia in Pannonia — Viewer — World Digital Library (wdl.org) (cited on 24 August 2021), 150. For the English translation, see French Emblems: Emblem: Physica & Ethica (gla.ac.uk) (cited on 29 June 2022). See also Arnoud S. Q. Visser, *Joannes Sambucus and the learned image. The use of the emblem in Late-Renaissance Humanism* (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2005), 138.

31 Florike Egmond, "Experimenting with Living Nature: Documented Practices of Sixteenth-Century Naturalists and Naturalia Collectors," *Journal of Early Modern Studies* 6 (2017), 1-29.

of history: "The poet is indeed the right popular philosopher," (467) but "[…] [poetry] is more philosophical and more studiously serious than history" (477).[32] With no negative connotations, Sidney foregrounds the accessibility of poetry, which, in its "universall consideration," trumps the "perticuler," incidental facts of history. For Sidney, the poet has the capacity to be both instructional as well as moral, "[S]ith his effects be so good as to teach goodness and to delight the learners" (830-831).[33]

Sidney's acquaintance with Aicholz can also be inferred from a letter he wrote in Prague on 8 April 1577. Although not entirely conclusive, Clusius was the most likely recipient, considering the content of the letter and that it was again written in French. Tellingly, at the end of the text, Sidney reciprocates his hearty greetings "to the excellent Master Raichholz,"[34] the original *Raccolsio* probably a non-German corruption of the surname.[35]

It is clear that Sidney made serious efforts to keep in contact with this learned circle of physicians and botanists. But what sparked this interest in the natural sciences in the first place? On 19 March 1576, Clusius wrote to Sidney from Vienna, attaching, in his own words, a "little book" dispatched via the Postmaster of Antwerp.[36] It was a modest introduction to what became one of Clusius' most impressive botanical treatises. Published by Christopher Plantin in the same year in Antwerp and opening with the motto *virtute et genio* ("by virtue and talent"), *Rariorum aliquot stirpium per Hispanias observatarum historia,*[37] documents the rare plants Clusius discovered during his travels around Spain. A recently discovered letter sent from London by Sidney dated 21 April 1576 contains the reply to the above-mentioned solicitation which provides clear testimony to Sidney's friendship and esteem for Clusius:

> I do not know by what means I might be able to show how grateful I am in return for the pleasure that I received from you during the time that I was in Vienna, as for this new courtesy of having a book from so far away, so well written, […] the writing of one of my best friends.[38]

In his March 1576 letter , Clusius cites Languet's displeasure with Sidney's idleness as well as the absence of any news from his young charge, adding: "I am sure he will not have forgotten to reproach you with this in the letter he has written you [and] which is enclosed with this one."[39] The ironic tone struck here indicates that Clusius was well aware of Languet's characteristic testiness. Reading further between the lines, it becomes obvious that Clusius was also more than familiar with Sidney's temperament: "You will answer him when it is convenient, but I should be glad if

32 Philip Sidney, *Sir Philip Sidney The Major Works*, 223.

33 Philip Sidney, *Sir Philip Sidney The Major Works*, 232.

34 "Clarissimo Domino Raccolsio". Philip Sidney to ?, Prague, 8 April 1577. Kuin, *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, 727.

35 Compare Kuin, *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, 728.

36 Charles de l'Écluse to Sidney, Vienna, 19 March 1576. Kuin, *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, 647-650.

37 Carolus Clusius, *Caroli Clvsi[i] Atrebatis [...] Rariorvm Plantarvm Historia* [...].

38 Thomas Matthew Vozar, "An unpublished Autograph Letter from Sir Philip Sidney to Carolus Clusius, 21 April 1576," *Renaissance Studies* (21 November 2022): 12, accessed May 31, 2023, DOI: 10.1111/rest.12844.

39 "Ie pense bien qu'il n'aura oublié de le reprocher en la lettre qu'il vous écrit, laquelle va joincte à la presente." Charles de l'Écluse to Sidney, Vienna, 19 March 1576. Kuin, *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, 648.

you would do so as soon as possible, in order to prove him wrong."[40] In his strategic appeal for a speedy response, Clusius proved himself an astute go-between.

A third letter dated 28 May 1576 provides insight into two noteworthy matters. Firstly, Clusius signifies his pleasure that Sidney had received the book mentioned above, as it "was given to you; but even more that it pleased you."[41] Secondly, Clusius mentions "Dr Thaddeus" [Hájek], who left Vienna for Prague accompanying the Emperor.[42]

In a fourth letter, written later in June of the same year, Clusius relays a salute to Sidney by Purkircher: "He toasted you in very good Austrian wine, saying that as soon he got back to his house he will do it in even better Hungarian wine."[43] The familiar, convivial tone on display here shows that the relationship between Clusius, Sidney, Purkircher and Jordan went beyond the intellectual.

About a month before, Languet had written a letter to Sidney dated 28 May 1576, i.e., on the very same day as Clusius. In addition to discussing the election of the King of Poland, a matter that preoccupied both of them, Languet mentions Clusius in connection with arrangements regarding the delivery of a certain portrait to Sidney. This seemingly incidental piece of business sheds light on the connected world that Sidney, Languet and Clusius were engaged in. It seems apparent that Sidney had expressed an interest in acquiring the painting, with Languet having promised to pursue the matter on his behalf. Details of the portrait itself, however, remain a mystery. From the letter, it is not clear who the portrayed person was (perhaps Languet himself), or who possessed the painting.[44] Apparently, Languet was unwilling to purchase the portrait in his own name. Instead, he entrusted the task to Clusius, clearly owing to a degree of discord that existed between Languet and the owner of the portrait, who he calls an ungrateful "wretch" (*nebulo*).[45] Languet had obviously performed a service for the person in question, and quite possibly an agreement had been in place for Languet to receive the work of art. It turns out that the portrait had been promised to Thomas Jordan, a claim Languet summarily dismisses as "the merest fiction."[46] This minor controversy is perhaps most insightful for what it reveals about Clusius, who obviously had the full confidence and trust of Languet and who was clearly considered just the man to resolve such matters.

On each occasion that Languet refers to Clusius, he is introduced as "our friend" or "our Clusius." In Languet's letter to Sidney written on 28 November 1577, Languet informs Sidney that Clusius "has been deprived of the stipend he received from the Emperor" and that he has no "doubt

40 Kuin, *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, 648.

41 "que l'exemplaire de mon liure qu'auoye donné charge de vous enuoyer, vous a esté rendu; mais encores d'advantage, de ce qu'il vous a esté aggreable." Charles de l'Écluse to Sidney, Vienna, 28 May 1576. Kuin, *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, 679.

42 Kuin, *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, 680.

43 "[…] et vous fit raison en vin d'Ausriche [sic] bien bon, disant que de retour en sa maison, il la vous fera de vin de Hongrie encores meilleur..." Charles de l'Écluse to Sidney, Vienna, 8 June 1576. Kuin, *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, 692.

44 Kuin, *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, 675, n. 9.

45 "[…] referre autem gratiam pro accepto benefice, non est moris illi hominum generi." Hubert Languet to Sidney, Vienna, 28 May 1576. Kuin, *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, 671-678.

46 "De Jordano quod dixit, fuit merum figmentum." Kuin, *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, 671-678.

this was done out of hatred for his reformed religion."[47] Languet's evident indignation points to both his respect for Clusius and their confessional alliance. In the same letter, he delivers the sad news of the death of Purkircher from the plague.[48]

The last mention of Clusius, one anything but marginal, comes in a letter written by Languet to Sidney some two years later. Written in Antwerp, Languet relates having met Clusius upon his arrival in the city, delaying Clusius in order to obtain updated news on Sidney's infamous squabble with the Earl of Oxford.[49] The first notable aspect of the letter is that Languet, Sidney's long-time mentor, had to extract the information from Clusius, who seems to have been more informed about the matter. Despite Languet having originally learned of the affair from Sidney,[50] his knowledge of the sequence of events that led to the confrontation seems hazy. Secondly, Clusius seems to have been more sympathetic to Sidney's response:

> I still think it unfortunate that you have been drawn into this quarrel, although I don't think you are in any way in the wrong. You can drive no real glory from it, even if you have demonstrated to everyone your zeal and your nature. Your virtue was needed on another stage.[51]

The "stage" in this instance was the war being waged in the Netherlands. In the view of Languet and others, Sidney was expected to act as a representative of Protestant interests on the Continent, and to use his political skills to smooth controversies between rival parties. He is also urged to be "careful not to be persuaded by fiercer men to cross the lines of your temperate nature."[52]

Conclusion: "Since nature's works be good …"

Based on the frequency and nature of the direct and indirect correspondence, Clusius was an important member of the Languet-Sidney intellectual circle and a close intellectual friend of Sidney. It is likely that their friendship was on more than just an academic basis. Clusius was obviously a much-admired physician and botanist, although his professional career at the imperial court suffered on account of his Protestantism. Languet, who had more than a tendency to sermonize, never spoke of Clusius without the utmost respect.

While the language Sidney and Clusius used was natural and friendly, it was also respectful. Sidney had no German but he did have perfect French, which would have made it easier for him

47 "Nostro Clusio ademptum est stipendium quod ab Imperatore habuit : quod haud dubie odio purioris religionis est factum." Hubert Languet to Sidney, Frankfurt, 28 November 1577. Kuin, *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, 787-797, Clusius: 791.

48 Kuin, *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, 787-797.

49 For background on the quarrel between Sidney and the Earl of Oxford, see Kuin, *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, 922.

50 "Ex ipso, tuis literis certior factus sum, de controversia…" Kuin, *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, 921.

51 "Etiemsi sciam, inverata consuetudine in toto orbe Christiano, nobilitati contumeliosum esse ejusmodi injurias non repellere, ego nihilominus tuæinfoelicitati asscribo, quod pertractus sis in hanc contentionem, quamvis penes te nullam ejus rei culpam residere videam : nihil verægloriæinde referre potes, etiamsi tuam industriam […) Virtuti tuæalio theatro opus erat..." Kuin, *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, 921.

52 "Cave autem, ne à ferocioribus persuasus, innatætibi modestiæfines transilias." Kuin, *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, 921.

to converse with Clusius and to augment the understandings between them.[53] Further, Clusius' generosity and willingness to share his work with Sidney speaks volumes for the esteem in which he was held. The friendship was also mutually beneficial. While Clusius would have realized that Sidney's talent, education and intellect provided fertile soil for his ideas to take root and thus his own scholarly career to grow, Sidney's exposure to the work of Clusius and other botanists and physicians would have stimulated his interest in the natural sciences, including the original, enriching possibilities they offered the poet. Indeed, Sidney's belief in the interconnectedness of nature and art informed much of his discourse on man and his role in the world. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in *Old Arcadia*, which concludes with a meditation on the transience of life. In Sidney's estimation, death is an immutable part of nature's law, to which man is subject. Sounding a tone of worldly stoicism, he poses the question: Why should one fear the final reckoning from which there is no escape?

> Since nature's works be good, and death doth serve
> As nature's work, why should we fear to die?
> […] Let them [eyes] be cleared, and now begin to see
> Our life is but a step in dusty way.
> Then let us hold the bliss of peaceful mind,
> Since this we feel, great loss we cannot find.[54]

Although less poetic and arguably less profound in its philosophy, a precedent can be found in the description to one of Sambucus' emblems: "She [Nature] nourishes a fruitless plane-tree, but the other gives soft fruits, with which you refresh your eyes and dry mouth. We live in uncertainty, comrade, and life is short: may the wise man occupy this period with usefulness."[55]

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53 For more on Sidney's French-speaking contacts, see Kuin, "Philip Sidney's Travels in the Holy Roman Empire 2021," 806.

54 Sidney, *Sir Philip Sidney The Major Works*, 137-138.

55 Johannes Sambucus and Iunius Hadrianus, *Emblemata*, 150. English translation: French Emblems: Emblem: Physica & Ethica (gla.ac.uk) (cited on 29 June 2022).

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