

1993

Johannes Magnus' Latin Letters: A Critical Edition with Introduction and Commentary

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Publication Info

Published in *Scandinavian Studies*, Volume 35, 1993, pages 583-585.

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■ Brita Larsson. *Johannes Magnus' Latin Letters: A Critical Edition with Introduction and Commentary*. Studia Graeca et Latina Lundensia 3. Lund: Lund UP, 1992. Pp. 193. SEK 205.

Undeservedly, Johannes Magnus (1488–1544) will always live in the shadow of his brother Olaus, a distinguished historian and author of the *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus*. Yet Johannes, too, enjoyed a fruitful literary career, as author of the *Historia metropolitanae ecclesiae Upsalensis* (Rome, 1557), the *Historia de omnibus Gothorum Sueonumque regibus* (Rome, 1554), six letters in Swedish, and—the focus of this book—some sixty-five letters in Latin. In this superb publication, Brita Larsson has conveniently collected and meticulously edited the Latin letters. Those familiar with Humanist Latin and with Reformation history in Scandinavia will at once recognize the value of her undertaking.

An extensive introduction to Johannes's life and works follows a brief bibliography, accurate for the most part. Larsson covers Johannes's career,

from his birth in Linköping, to his studies in Rockstock, Louvain, Cologne, and Perugia (ca. 1517–20), his service as envoy to Rome under Sten Sture (1517), his election as archbishop of Uppsala (1523, only confirmed ten years later), and his exile in Gdansk (1526). After surveying the addressees of the Latin letters, Larsson offers a list of thirty-seven manuscript sources that includes a concordance to twenty-eight prior editions. In the meticulous paleographical analysis that follows, she then identifies Johannes's script. Arguing that Johannes dictated the letters to Olaus, Larsson highlights four stylistic differences between Olaus's and Johannes's idiom.

Next follows a lengthy and fascinating account of Johannes's latinity: his orthography (such as it can be determined), his unconventional morphology (predominantly Johannes's bizarre preference for the pluperfect in place of the perfect), syntax (comp. + *quo* instead of *quam*, *super* + abl., the inconsistencies of verbal mood, *an* . . . *an* for *utrum* . . . *an*, etc.), and vocabulary. Missing from this fine discussion is the possibility of native Swedish substrate or French/Italian scholastic influence in Johannes's writing. A subsequent investigation of style includes analyses of elaborate and simplistic letters, words of address, and rhetorical adornments (*alliteratio*, *anaphor*, *congeries*, *litotes*, *amplificatio*, *cursus*, *deprecatio*, *exclamatio*, *homoiteuton*, *polyptoton*, etc.). My only criticism of this section also pertains to the edition: Larsson does not compare the phraseology of the letters to that of Johannes's historical writings. The comparison would have exposed Johannes's stylistic mannerisms. Correspondingly, an *apparatus fontium* in the edition could have usefully winnowed out Johannes's idiosyncracies. (To her credit, Larsson does provide some sources in the *apparatus criticus*, but there is no *index locorum*). It seems clear that Larsson is uniquely qualified to pursue such work in a future publication.

The edition of Johannes's letters itself certainly supersedes all previous editions. It is clearly laid out, well-punctuated and lineated. Prefacing each letter are invaluable *précis*, sometimes two pages long, which summarize the historical setting and list sources. My only quibble with this part of Larsson's work concerns a few emendations here and there. While some are judicious, others may not be. For example, *confugite* for *confugere* in XI.48, *Magis enim vos . . . desperatis vestris legibus et iudiciis ad vim, ad manus, ad arma confugite*, seems otiose. Peccadillos such as this should not discredit the many cogent emendations and corrections this editor has supplied. She has, in all fairness, recorded every other variant from other editions.

Finally, this book concludes with a glossary and three indexes (of persons, places, and the letters themselves). Larsson writes that "the purpose of the glossary is to supplement Georges' *Ausführliches lateinisch-deutsches Handwörterbuch* [sic]. I do not find this purpose worthwhile, given some of the grade-school entries: *antistes* ("bishop"), *articulus* ("issue"), *Biblia* ("Bible"),

calix ("chalice"), *capella* ("chapel"), etc. Presumably by her own choice, Larsson omits such fascinating rarities as *bibacitas* ("thirst") and *scommata* ("taunts"). Nevertheless, readers will be able to look up some unfamiliar vocabulary here, as well as unorthodox constructions.

This book is an accomplishment. Brita Larsson and Lund University Press deserve recognition for giving Johannes Magnus a biography separate from his brother's.

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