Humanist Networks and Drama in Pre-Reformation Central Europe: Bartholomeus Frankfordinus Pannonius and the Sodalitas Litteraria Danubiana

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Les deux pièces de Bartholomeus Frankfordinus Pannonius (ca.1490 – après 1526, avant 1540) — Comoedia Gryllus et Inter Vigilantiam et Torporem Virtute Arbitra Certamen — sont les seuls textes humanistes dramatiques complets de l’Europe de l’est d’avant la Réforme. Publiés vers 1519 à Vienne, la comédie plautienne Gryllus et le débat moral classicisant opposant Vigilantia et Torpor, ont vraisemblablement été tous les deux présentés pendant la saison du Carnaval par des étudiants de Frankfordinus à Buda vers 1517. Dans cet article, on les examine dans le contexte du drame humaniste allemand, en particulier en lien avec la riche tradition théâtrale et intellectuelle de la Sodalitas Litteraria Danubiana et de son héritière, la Sodalitas Collimitiana, avec laquelle Frankfordinus a construit des liens solides lorsqu’il étudiait à Vienne durant les années 1510. Ses pièces laissent voir les préoccupations littéraires du milieu viennois, en particulier de l’humaniste suisse Joachim Vadian, et poursuivent la tradition dramatique promue par Konrad Celtis. Frankfordinus a adapté à son propos pédagogique les conventions dramatiques du milieu viennois pensées pour la cour, tout en intégrant des éléments du théâtre populaire. En transformant les formes traditionnelles du drame scolaire, Bartholomeus Frankfordinus n’est pas seulement devenu un acteur de la transition des traditions dramatiques médiévales vers les traditions dramatiques humanistes, mais est devenu également un précurseur du drame scolaire protestant de cette partie de l’Europe.

The influence of Italian humanist drama reached east central Europe through intellectual networks associated first with the court of Sigismund (King of Hungary, 1387–1437, and of Bohemia, 1419–37; Holy Roman Emperor, 1433–37) and later with that of King Matthias of Hungary (1458–90). Among the Italian
humanists who spent extended time in central Europe was Pier Paolo Vergerio the Elder (1370–1444/5), the author of the first known humanist comedy, *Paulus* (ca.1390). Upon her marriage in 1476, King Matthias’s second wife, Beatrice of Naples, brought with her a rich theatrical tradition, musicians, and players from Naples and from the court of her brother-in-law, Ercole d’Este, in Ferrara. Following Matthias’s death in 1490, the imperial court of Maximilian I (King of the Romans, 1486–1519; Holy Roman Emperor, 1508–19) became the centre of theatrical activities in the region. Apart from the influence of these royal courts, the various branches of the humanist literary society, the *Sodalitas Litteraria Danubiana*, modelled on the “Platonic Academy” of Florentine, Neapolitan, and Roman humanists under the direction of the German humanist Konrad Celtis (1459–1508), were instrumental in transforming native dramatic traditions into the classical mould. In conjunction with local schools and university centres, the eastern outposts of Celtis’s foundation — the *Sodalitas Litteraria Danubiana Ungarorum* based in Buda and the *Sodalitas Litteraria Vistulana* in Cracow — played an important role in the promotion of classical and Italian humanist plays.

The legacy of Celtis’s initiatives is also manifest in the only extant humanist dramatic texts from east central Europe in the pre-Reformation period, namely the *Comoedia Gryllus* and *Inter Vigilantiam et Torporem Virtute Arbitra Certamen* (alternatively entitled *Inter Vigilantiam et Torporem Dialogus*) by the humanist schoolmaster of Buda, Bartholomeus Frankfordinus Pannonius (ca.1490–after 1526, before 1540). Published around 1519 in Vienna, both the Plautine comedy *Gryllus* and the classicizing moral debate between Vigilantia (Vigilance) and Torpor (Laziness) were most likely performed during the Carnival season by Frankfordinus’s students in Buda after his return from Vienna around 1517. While studies by Tibor Kardos and Antal Pirnát focus on the connection between Frankfordinus’s plays and the Italian and vernacular Hungarian traditions, more recently Farkas Gábor Kiss has situated the plays within the context of German humanist drama, relating it to the dramatic scene in Vienna. In this paper, I will further explore Frankfordinus’s relation with the multifaceted theatrical and intellectual tradition of the *Sodalitas Litteraria Danubiana* and its heir, the *Sodalitas Collimitiana*, with which he built up extensive ties during his studies at the University of Vienna in the 1510s. I will demonstrate how Frankfordinus’s plays highlight the Erasmian literary preoccupations of the Viennese sodality, particularly that of Swiss humanist
Joachim Vadian (Joachim von Watt, 1484–1551), and continued the dramatic tradition promoted by Celtis since its inception. Frankfordinus adapted the predominantly court-oriented dramatic conventions of the Viennese sodality to pedagogical purposes, while integrating elements of the popular theatre of German urban communities in Hungary and elsewhere in central Europe. By reshaping traditional forms of school drama, Frankfordinus became not only a transitional figure between medieval and humanist dramatic traditions but also an early precursor of Protestant school drama in the region.

As his full humanist name indicates, Bartholomeus Frankfordinus Pannonius was born in Buda to a family of German origin around 1490. Although long debated, it is now generally accepted by German and Hungarian critics that he is identical with Bartholomeus Bartholomei de Buda who studied in Cracow in 1510/11 and with Bartholomeus Franck Budensis, who was listed as *magister artium* within the Hungarian nation at the University of Vienna in 1515. In Cracow, Frankfordinus was likely associated with the *Sodalitas Litteraria Vistulana*, which operated in the Hungarian *bursa* (student residence) and in Vienna with the *Sodalitas Collimitiana*. Frankfordinus's Viennese connections are further revealed in three extant letters dated from Buda in 1518, all addressed to Vadian, who studied in Vienna under Celtis. Vadian began lecturing at the university in 1508 and, after Celtis’s death, took over his master's chair as professor of rhetoric. In the 1510s, Vadian was at the centre of the *Sodalitas Litteraria Danubiana*, which from 1513/14 onwards was titled *Sodalitas Collimitiana* after its hospes (host), Collimitius or Georg Tannstetter (1482–1535). Significantly, the figures whom Frankfordinus names as their mutual friends in his letters to Vadian were all graduates of the University of Vienna and members of the *Sodalitas Collimitiana*: Tannstetter himself, Johannes Aicher, Victor Gamp (1489–1535), magister Wolfgang Pidinger, and a certain Bohemus, who is identified with Wolfgang Heiligmair. The royal surgeon and archivist, Tannstetter, and the jurist Gamp (university rector in 1516) belonged to Vadian’s inner circle and their names appear regularly in his correspondence.

Around 1517 Frankfordinus returned to Buda, where he worked as a schoolmaster. In a letter to Vadian, he complains that he has no time for his friends because he is distracted by his numerous tasks at school, presumably at the famous parish school of the Blessed Virgin Mary (*Schola Ecclesiae Beatae Mariae Virginis*), which belonged to the town’s German community. Vadian
himself visited the school during his stay in Buda in 1513, where customarily Viennese graduates of humanist erudition were responsible for the education of students in the higher grades. Among Frankfordinus’s predecessors and immediate successor are Pangratius Rorbeck (headmaster from 1480), Ulrich Tobriacher (from 1512), and the reformer Simon Grynaeus (from 1520/21), who were all closely linked not only to the royal court at Buda but also to the Sodalitas Litteraria Danubiana.17 In Buda, Frankfordinus continued to cultivate his friendship with his fellow students in Vienna. Both Johannes Kresling (1489–1549), the priest of St. George chapel, and Konrad Cordatus (Conrad Cordatus or Conradus Herts ex Wels, 1483–1546), celebrated preacher at the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, occupied ecclesiastical positions in the vicinity of Frankfordinus’s school in the town’s German quarter.18

Soon after Grynaeus’s arrival, however, Frankfordinus left Buda in 1522, possibly because of the growing hostility towards Luther’s sympathizers.19 According to Gustav Hammann, he was accompanied by his friends Kresling and Cordatus, who, as wandering preachers, became ardent propagators of the Reformation in the German towns of Upper Hungary (today Slovakia).20 Frankfordinus composed his last extant letter addressed to Georgius notarius in Selmecbánya (Schemnitz, Banská Štiavnica) in 1522; in it, he alludes to Rome (revertor a Babylone) and Lutterus noster in the vein of early reformers and familiarly greets Cunradus noster (Kondrad Cordatus). On the basis of scarce documentary evidence, Hammann asserts that Frankfordinus abandoned the burdensome life of the schoolmaster and pursued a career in civil administration. Having obtained the position of notary of Selmecbánya, Frankfordinus became possibly a Lutheran preacher in the region.21

Frankfordinus’s connections with leading Viennese humanists are reinforced in the prefatory material attached to his 1516 edition of Johann Reuchlin’s Latin translation of Batrachomyomachia. Frankfordinus’s work — a re-edition of Vadian’s earlier publication of the text (Vienna: Hieronymus Vietor, 1510) — contains a commendatory poem by Kaspar Ursinus Velius (1490–1539).22 Ursinus, a humanist of Silesian origin, was also actively involved in the humanist society formed around Vadian.23 Ursinus paid special tribute to his friends Vadian, Tannstetter, and Gamp and commemorated their meetings and the festive banquets of the sodales in several poems.24 Like Vadian and Tannstetter, Ursinus maintained connections with Hungarian humanists later
in his career and influenced the intellectual life in Buda by disseminating the teachings of Erasmus and Reuchlin at the court of Louis II (1516–26).25

Furthermore, the choice of the dedicatee of Frankfordinus’s dialogue, György Szatmári (ca.1457–1524), bishop of Pécs and Lord Chancellor of Hungary, must have solidified Frankfordinus’s own ties to Vadian.26 A descendant of a wealthy German family, Szatmári was a follower of Vadian in Hungary along with the Hungarian jurist and statesman, István Werbőczy (Stephanus Verbeucius, ca.1460–1541), a copy of whose famous law-book, *Opus tripartitum* (Vienna, 1517), Frankfordinus purchased and carefully annotated shortly before he left Vienna for Buda.27 Szatmári was a generous patron of the humanists and a supporter of members of the Buda *contubernium* during the reign of the Jagiellon king Vladislav II (1490–1516) and later belonged to the humanist circle around Louis II and his wife, Mary of Austria.28 As part of the Hungarian delegation at the First Congress of Vienna in 1515, Szatmári visited the university, where he was greeted with an oration by Kresling.29

Through his personal connections at the universities of Vienna and Cracow, Frankfordinus was exposed to the rising interest in the dramatic arts brought about by the advancement of the new literary culture in the region in the first two decades of the sixteenth century. The first known production of classical plays north of the Alps was organized by Celtis’s former disciple at the University of Cracow, the Silesian humanist commonly known as Laurentius Corvinus (Laurentius Rabe, ca.1462–1527), whose students at the St. Elizabeth parochial school in Breslau (Wrocław) performed Plautus’s *Aulularia* and Terence’s *Eunuchus* at the local town hall in 1501.30 In the same year, *Comoedia de optimo studio scholasticorum* by Heinrich Bebel (1472–1518), Corvinus’s disciple in Cracow, was presented at the University of Tübingen.31 By the turn of the century, however, the focal point of central European humanism shifted from Buda and Cracow to the University of Vienna, which enjoyed an unprecedented renaissance under Maximilian I. In Vienna, Celtis continued promoting theatrical productions by staging, like his disciple Corvinus, student performances of *Aulularia* and *Eunuchus* in the university’s assembly hall during the winter semester of 1502/03.32 The lasting influence of these performances is demonstrated by the Viennese publication of *Aulularia* in 1515 and its staging in the local Latin school of the Upper Hungarian town of Eperjes (Preschau, Prešov) in 1518, the first recorded Plautine performance in the Hungarian Kingdom.33 Apart from these performances, the most notable
literary achievement of the Viennese Sodalitas was the rediscovery of the plays of the tenth-century nun Hroswitha (Hrosvit) of Gandersheim, first published by Celtis in 1501. The renewed interest in Roman dramatists did not cease with Celtis’s death but persisted throughout Frankfordinus’s studies in Vienna, as demonstrated by the intensive publications of humanist comedies. Johann Reuchlin’s *Scaenica Progymnasmata* was printed in 1514, Giovanni Armonio Marso’s *Stephanium* in 1515 and 1517, and Leonardo Bruni’s *Poliscene* in 1516. The play *Stephanium*, an adaptation of Plautus’s *Amphitryon* and *Aulularia*, was particularly admired by contemporary humanists for its faithful revival of the spirit of ancient comedies. It was Rudolf Agricola Junior in the company of Vadian and Ursinus who published Marso’s play and possibly lectured on it at the university during his Viennese sojourn from 1515 to 1517. Besides humanist comedies and the edition of Plautus’s *Aulularia* (1515), Seneca’s six tragedies (1513) and Erasmus’s Latin edition of Euripides’s *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia* (1511) appeared in Viennese printing houses. This conspicuous preference for Plautus and Seneca is also evident in Vadian’s *De poetica et carminis ratione* (Vienna, 1518), in which he places the Latin playwrights at the forefront of the ancient dramatists. Echoing humanist values customarily applied to Terence, Vadian highly praises Plautus in particular for his elegant language, moral guidance, and innovative spirit.

With its *palliata* setting, plot, characterization, and language, Frankfordinus’s comedy *Gryllus* is the most self-consciously classicizing play produced by the associates of the Viennese Sodalitas Collimitiana. It exemplifies the precepts of elegant speech (*Latinitas*) and the rules of conduct (*mores*) emphasized in Vadian’s appraisal of Plautus and advocated in his circle. In fact, Wilhelm Creizenach suggests that Frankfordinus was inspired by Ursinus’s lost Plautine comedy *Zelotypus*. In his dedicatory letter to George, Margrave of Brandenburg-Ansbach (Georg der Fromme, 1484–1543), nephew of Vladislav II, and governor of his son, later Louis II, Frankfordinus expounds his desire to emulate the ancient comic writers and reiterates the conventional definition of comedy by the fourth-century grammarian Donatus’s paraphrase of Cicero (*speculorum ac paradigmatum totius humane vitae*). Formally, *Gryllus* is modelled on Plautus’s *Captivi*, which, as its epilogue announces, lacks the morally dangerous topic of youthful love, thus lending itself to didactic student productions:
Spectatores, ad pudicos mores facta haec fabula est, 
neque in hac subigationes sunt neque ulla amatio 
nec pueri suppositio nec argenti circumductio, 
neque ubi amans adulescens scortum liberet clam suum patrem, 
huius modi paucas poetae reperiunt comoedias, 
ubi boni meliores fiant.41

*Gryllus* is composed in prose rather than the verse form used by more self-conscious playwrights.42 It is introduced by an argument and a Plautine prologue summarizing the plot, which is loosely organized in scenes without act divisions. In the familiar Athenian setting, the exclusively male characters are typical figures from Roman comedies: two old men (*senes*), their young sons, and servants. The conventional characterization of the *senex* figures and the young men (whose affectionate relationship with their fathers is devoid of the customary generational tension) is enlivened by the title character, Gryllus. He recalls the popular jester-parasite of the sixteenth century, who travelled from one community to the other and was seen more in bourgeois than in aristocratic circles.43 The Plautine plot, elaborated in a Terentian manner with doubling of the fathers and children, reiterates the familiar theme of lost and found sons: Haliarcus’s son Apollides fell into servitude ten years prior, due to the carelessness of the slave Haliactes; Clearchus lost his five-year-old son, Aethicus, while offering sacrifices to the gods during the feast of Apollo (a motif taken from Plautus’s *Menaechmi*). Apollides is, however, liberated and unknowingly purchases Aethicus from a Sicilian merchant. Upon returning to Athens, the young men are recognized by Gryllus and thereafter by their fathers. Following the joyful reunion, Gryllus, accompanied by two *lorarii*, Serpus and Lingo, schemes to seize the fugitive slave Haliactes — in the hope of obtaining rich rewards and endless invitations for dinners. At the end he is outwitted by Haliactes, who, having changed his identity to a free man, eventually thrashes Gryllus, and thus the comedy concludes with Plautine slapstick. Despite its unified setting, the great leap in time between the third and fourth scenes undermines the precepts of verisimilitude and the logically structured plot advocated by Donatus in his Terentian commentaries. Moreover, the main action of the play, the loss and recovery of young children, is not administered by cunning tricksters (as in the *Captivi*) but by blind Fortune, assisted by careless servants and fathers. As the play progresses, providence
gradually takes over the structural function of Fortune in the play. Apart from Haliactes's trickery (a commonplace device of feigned identity), which comes after the resolution of the conflict, the plot is propelled by unexpected turns of events and ultimately by the providence of the gods. Consoling Clearchus for the loss of his little son, Haliarcus meditates on the will of the gods and their just punishment of impious people. This theme is later repeated in the recovery scene by Apollides, who reminds young and old alike that their life is ultimately governed by fate and providence (112).

The Plautine influence is most evident in the language of the play, which is superimposed on trickery. The lively conversations, the vivid Latin phrases, Gryllus's hyperbolic speeches and inflated monologues display a particular indulgence in Latin colloquialism. Imitating the abundant puns, verbal trickery, and skillful rhetoric of the characters of *Captivi*, the string of dialogues *sub comediae formula* in *Gryllus* thus provide an effective means of Latin language practice, a key feature of programmatic humanist comedies. Furthermore, by means of sophisticated textual allusions to the comic dialogues of Greek historian and essayist Plutarch's *Gryllus* and the first-century sophist Lucian's *The Parasite*, Frankfordinus transforms the Plautine comedy into a moral lesson ingrained in the classical as well as the Christian traditions. By placing Gryllus at the centre of his play and assigning him two set speeches in character (19–27, 55–60), which served as preliminary rhetorical exercises (*progymnasmata*) for students, Frankfordinus condemns the morally debased sophistry of artless rhetoric, a focus of humanist pedagogy.

The title character's name is derived from Plutarch's comic dialogue of Gryllus in which one of Circe's enchanted pigs (personified by *Gryllus*, the “Grunter”) attempts to convince Odysseus of the moral superiority of animals, based on the faculties of courage, temperance, and intelligence. Odysseus was a popular figure in theatrical productions in ancient Greece, and the Circe episode, as well as the theme of observing life from an animal's perspective, appears in plays that often parody the hero's preoccupation with food, sex, and wealth. As Lucas Herchenroeder points out, the dialogue itself is rooted in the performance culture of antiquity, merging traditions of comedy and philosophical debates. Apart from spoofing popular philosophical themes advocated by the Cynics, Plutarch extends his criticism to rhetoric in his representation of the sophist pig engaged in a rhetorical contest with the epic hero and paradigmatic speaker, Odysseus. In Plutarch's dialogue, the comic
Effect is enhanced by the complex pun associated with Gryllus’s name, which alludes not only to his swinish existence but also to a coarse Egyptian dance and a particular style of caricature painting characterized by grotesque figures, also called gryllus. The latter, according to Pliny the Elder, may derive from a stage trickster bearing the name of Gryllus. The covert reference to Aristotle’s lost rhetorical treatise also entitled Gryllus augments the comic scenario of Plutarch’s dialogue by evoking the traditional philosophical debate on whether rhetorical ability is a natural skill or a learned art acquired from instruction. Ultimately, as Herchenroeder asserts, “Gryllus’s sophistry is a brutalization of educational refinement, a ridiculous caricature of detachment and rhetorical abstraction.”

The theme of linguistic deficiency is also satirized in Lucian’s comic dialogue The Parasite, another classical source evoked by the title character of Frankfordinus’s play. First translated into Latin by the humanist pedagogue Guarino da Verona (1374–1460), Lucian’s The Parasite parodies the Socratic method of Plato’s dialogues and represents philosophers and rhetoricians as incompetent parasites whose established art is surpassed by the Parasitic. Thus language, as a cultural and moral signifier, is central both to Plutarch’s and Lucian’s dialogue. Frankfordinus similarly links sophistry to moral debasement, a theme that recurs frequently in early German humanist drama intended for students. However, instead of presenting the linguistic debate between the representatives of scholastic and humanist rhetoric, Frankfordinus addresses the subject indirectly within the context of ancient comic dialogues by two Greek authors who enjoyed (along with Homer) exceptional popularity among German humanists.

Like the parasite Ergasilus from Captivi and the servant Geta from Marso’s Stephanium, Gryllus is typified not only by linguistic dexterity but also by gluttony. His gluttony and somewhat coarse and farcical language resemble the late medieval German Shrovetide or Carnival plays (Fastnachtspiel). While Gryllus is eager to set an instructive example (exemplum) for other servants by capturing and rebuking the slave Haliactes for neglecting his duties, he himself turns into the duly tricked and farcically punished figure of Gluttony. This allegorical association typical of morality plays is not uncommon in humanist dramatic pieces directed to students; it occurs, for example, in Jakob Wimpheling’s Stylpho (1480). The punishment of the gluttonous Gryllus, executed at the end of the play with a Lucianic twist by the deceitful Haliactes,
must have been particularly topical, since student productions customarily took place during the Carnival season.

Characteristic of German humanist plays, a strong sense of Christian godliness permeates the otherwise classically moulded comedy. The Christian morality of the play is emphasized by references to the approach of Lent and by the principal theme of the play, the necessity of maintaining a pious relationship with the gods. Sharply contrasted with Gryllus’s speeches glorifying his parasitic art, the comedy is framed by Clearchus’s moralizing lamentation about man’s neglectful attitude towards the gods in times of prosperity:


Seeking reconciliation in his old age through sacrificial offerings, Clearchus repeatedly warns the younger generation not to forget their religious duties, including attending church services. These sentiments are later echoed by Haliarcus ("sic diis forte placitum est, ne, dum filios efflictim deperimus, eos negligamus" ["perhaps the gods wanted it thus lest we neglect them while we love our sons exceedingly"], 52) and punctuated by the fact that they all proceed to worship before their celebratory dinner at the end of the play (120). Whether the dedicatee of the play, George of Brandenburg, who was regarded by many as not only a patron of actors, musicians, and dancers at the Jagiellon court and a supporter of early reformers but also a corrupting influence on his ward, the young Hungarian king, also savoured the moral message aimed at Frankfordinus’s students is impossible to tell. Nonetheless, he must have enjoyed the subtle interplay between the chaste comedy, as Haliactes defined the play (castis hanc moribus comoedus egit comoediam), and the playful Lucianic irony, enhanced by the fugitive slave in his closing lines: “Servus is frugi non est, qui quasi e promptuario, fallacias callidas, ut lubet, prompte promere nequirit, quo corium salvet suum. Di boni, quantas hoc tergo plagas, quot flagra sustinussem,
After all, George of Brandenburg's own views were represented (and perhaps satirized) by Gryllus himself, who in a mock-Ciceronian outburst bemoans the changing morals of young people ashamed of acting and the vanishing of great jokes and foolish fun:

Dii immortales, quam nunc omnis prorsus alientatis est moribus iuventus! Pudet nunc etiam exercere histrioniam, ita nullus adest quaestus histrionicus. Summus iocus, summa ineptia desire; foenarari foeneratores, pro sapiente quisque morionem agitat. Proh cives Athenienses, vestram imploro fidem, fiduciam ac, quam iam diu tenuistis, sospitem rempublicam, in vos ipsos non pedibus, sed consilio gradimini. Quorsum nunc iuvenes, decor patriae, quorsum, indoles bona morata moribus! Inversa perversaque cernis omnia.59

As in the comedy of Gryllus, in his brief dialogue entitled Inter Vigilantiam et Torporem Certamen Frankfordinus demonstrates an author's ability to reshape a variety of sources into a new form of humanist dialogue. While contemporary Hungarian vernacular dialogues, mostly prose translations of fifteenth-century Latin religious poems presenting the allegorical debates of the Body and the Soul or Life and Death, appear mostly in non-dramatic contexts as exempla, the dramatized altercation of Vigilantia and Torpor is tinged with Plautine slapstick and Lucianic satire.60 In her opening set speech in character, Vigilantia does not present herself as a morality character familiar from old paintings (non ex pigmentis veterumve tabulis) but intentionally replaces her customary depiction with images from the classical Greek painter, Appeles (1). Death is transformed into the classical Lethe, Love into Cupid, and the gods are presided over by Jupiter. Torpor himself combines features of Komos (Drinking) and Hypnos (Sleeping), the two gods accompanying Erasmus's Folly.61 Blending humanist and popular traditions, Frankfordinus transferred the medieval altercatio, the antagonism of personified abstractions and the trial motif, to an educational setting with a broader appeal.62

Frankfordinus, moreover, wove together themes borrowed from student dialogues and from the politically charged morality plays popular among the central European humanists associated with Celtis's circle and the imperial court in the first two decades of the sixteenth century.63 The choice of subject matter in Certamen was a fitting New Year's gift and may have been a special tribute
to the dedicatee Szatmári, who, during the First Congress of Vienna, attended Benedictus Chelidonius’s (Benedikt Schwalbe, ca.1460–1521) dramatized debate of *Voluptatis cum Virtute disceptatio* performed at the imperial court before Maximilian I’s granddaughter, Princess Mary (future queen consort of Hungary and Bohemia and later Governor of the Habsburg Netherlands), whose betrothal to the young Hungarian Prince Louis was celebrated during the royal meeting. Chelidonius borrowed the motif of the debate of Voluptas (Desire) and Virtus (Virtue) from contemporary allegorical plays composed in honour of Maximilian I. These humanist debates preserved the basic structure of conflict-dialogues (*altercatio*, *disceptatio*, *certamen*) by presenting the confrontation of Virtue and Vice in a manner of law court procedures to be resolved by a prominent member of the imperial family. But while retaining a balanced antithesis of plea and counter-plea, they transformed the familiar contest of virtue and vice into the classical allegory of Hercules at the crossroads (*Hercules in bivio*), thus creating suitable *ludi Caesaris* for Maximilian I’s and his family’s aggrandizement.

The classicized version of the debate of Virtus and Voluptas was introduced by Sebastian Brant (1457–1521) in his *Narrenschiff* (1494) and expanded by Ingolstadt humanist and playwright Jakob Locher in the final chapter of his Latin edition of Brant’s work (*Stultifera nauis*, 1497). Locher’s *Concertatio uirtutis cum uoluptate* was first staged by Joseph Grünpeck in his *Comedia secunda*, a dramatization of the debate between Virtus and Fallaciacaptrix, which was judged by Maximilian I, in whose presence it was performed at Augsburg in 1497. Grünpeck’s play was later imitated by Viennese humanist Johannes Pinicianus in his *Virtus et Voluptas*, staged at the imperial court in 1509. As in Chelidonius’s play, it was Maximilian’s grandson, the young Prince Charles (Archduke of Burgundy and future Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor), who ruled over the quarrelling parties in Pinicianus’s debate.

Although Frankfordinus’s dialogue lacks the solemnity and panegyric of the debates directed to the aristocratic audience of Maximilian I’s court, it nevertheless resembles them in its theme and structure. Vigilantia’s lengthy moralizing opening speech restates common warnings against laziness and lust but then quickly turns into a farcical encounter with a sleeping *monstrum*, personified by her great rival Torpor (1–6). Thereupon begins their heated debate, which leads to physical combat. Their prose conversation is full of mockery, scorn, and puns and displays the same indulgence in colloquial Latin
as does the comedy of Gryllus. The whole dialogue resembles a Plautine scene rather than the sober debates of Virtus and Voluptas, and shares elements with the vernacular Shrovetide plays. The carnivalesque atmosphere is further enhanced by the concluding entrance of Virtus, who, as a judge (iudex), forces Torpor to take an oath of loyalty in the form of a mock profession of faith, swearing to fighting cockerels (31–42). The familiar triangular structure of the classicizing moral dialogues of Virtus and Voluptas is here upset by Virtus’s belated appearance. She interrupts an impassioned fight instead of announcing her sentence on the basis of reasoned arguments presented by the opponents. If, according to the model of the Virtus and Voluptas plays, Szatmári was to envision himself in the role of Virtus and was expected to pass a final judgment of the play, he certainly needed the Saturnalian spirit that Frankfordinus in the play’s dedicatory letter commends him to assume.

Instead of expounding differing views on the virtues of vigilance and laziness, in Torpor’s protracted awakening Frankfordinus elaborates a common motif of student colloquies on the morning routines of rising and dressing, a motif exploited to similar moralizing comic effect in Vergerio’s student comedy Paulus.66 That Szatmári, as a patron, was appreciative of humanist dialogues on topics derived from student colloquies is attested by the Hungarian humanist and Vadian’s associate Bálint Hagymási’s (Valentinus Cybeleius Varasdiensis, ca.1490–after 1517) Opusculum de laudibus et vituperio vini at aquae (Hagenau, 1517), a learned exposition of the common debate between wine and water, which was published shortly before the appearance of Frankfordinus’s plays.

The most likely source of inspiration for Vigilantia’s encounter with the monstrous Torpor is, however, Bartolomeus Coloniensis’s Dialogus mythologicus.67 A revised version of this popular educational textbook for Latin language practice, which was most likely circulated in Buda as well, was published by Adrianus Wolphardus (1491–1544) in Vienna in 1512.68 While studying at the University of Vienna, the Transylvanian humanist Wolphardus became Vadian’s close associate and a member of the circle forming around his master.69 Although it is unclear whether Frankfordinus had any personal connection with Wolphardus, both his letter to Vadian and the debate of Vigilantia and Torpor allude to the Dialogus Mythologicus.70 Wolphardus’s edition contains an animated dialogue between Bartolomeus, Davus, Dromo, and Sidonius. Their entire comically hyperbolic and rhetorically embellished debate, typical of student dialogues, is presented in the slapdash manner of
casual conversation. The *Dialogus Mythologicus* also starts with a heated debate between Bartolomeus and Sidonius, the embodiment of laziness who, instead of minding his duties, is sleeping like a dead *monstrum*. After Bartolomeus's long and frustrated attempt to awaken him with terrible noise and scorning, Sidonius finally gets up and immediately starts quarrelling with Bartolomeus. In their argument they imitate Plautus, whom Wolphardus commends as the supreme master of eloquence in his preface, echoing Vadian's comments in *De poetica*.

With his subject matter for his humanist dialogue, however, Frankfordinus not only appealed to his students but also to his learned friends in Vienna and in Szatmári's circle for which the printed edition of the dialogue was clearly intended. With lighthearted references to the lost paintings of Pythagoras, Aristotle, and the “divine” Cato, and through textual references, Frankfordinus draws grotesque portraits (or *gryllos*) of philosophers through the character of Vigilantia, subtly parodying Aristotle, the moralizing Cato, and Pythagoras in a Lucianic manner. Most conspicuously in his choice of subject matter, Frankfordinus satirizes Aristotle’s *De somno et vigilia* (On Sleep and Waking), which forms part of the Greek philosopher's three essays on sleep and dreams that belong to the collection of short treatises known as *Parva Naturalia* since the late thirteenth century. *De somno* was one option for cursory lectures in natural philosophy to be delivered by graduates for the benefit of undergraduates at the faculty of arts of early modern universities. Whether Frankfordinus himself selected *De somno* for lecturing at the university cannot be ascertained. Nevertheless, the most evident allusion to Aristotle’s treatise in *Certamen* is Torpor’s recollection of his dream, forcefully interrupted by Vigilantia:

> Miser ego, quam grave somnium habui et optime certe: risum movebo spectatoribus. Vultis, ut dicam somnium? Sed dicam! Cum iamiam delitescerem, videbar lautis ferculis interesse musaeoque stipari, non tamen ipsis frui potuisse, venientem mulierculam meque lacessentem et, nescio, quo coniurationis genere, post plagis misere adficientem. Et, ni fallor … hem dexteram, quam tumet

Here Torpor mockingly addresses issues key to the Aristotelian concepts of dreaming and the imagination. By placing his painful encounter with the “little woman” in the centre, he reiterates Aristotle's definition of dreams as “an appearance (*phantasma*) in sleep,” which in the rationalist tradition was
interpreted as “the phantom item appearing to the sleeping person.” In the opening argument of De somno, Aristotle explains that waking and sleeping states are psychophysical conditions belonging both to the body and the soul. This concept is comically enacted when Torpor demonstrates to the audience his wounds acquired from the “little woman” while he was asleep. In his complaints, Torpor takes dreams, in David Gallop’s words, as “a mode of perceptual awareness during sleep” and ignores the self-contradiction inherent in De somno; that is, in sleep all ordinary perception is suspended. Unlike Aristotle’s concept of dreams, however, the gluttonous Torpor’s phantasma takes the form of delicious dishes, expressing the state of affairs he would like to attain but never has a chance to realize.

Throughout his comic altercation with Vigilantia, Torpor is repeatedly scorned for his beastly appearance and swinish existence (18–19, 43). He personifies the monstrous animal instincts of laziness and gluttony from which he has been forcefully cured by Virtue and Vigilance. Thus the Plutarchan debate on animal morality, previously raised in the comedy of Gryllus, is reintroduced in Certamen. The thematic connection between Gryllus and Certamen is further elaborated through an allusion to the portrait of Pythagoras, whose reincarnation features famously in Lucian’s dialogue The Dream, or The Cock. Lucian’s philosophizing cockerel (Pythagoras reincarnate) is often compared with Plutarch’s sophist grunter, Gryllus. As leading debaters of their respective dialogues, both animals serve as satirical foils to humans and, in the ancient tradition of animal fables, mock human deficiencies with their sophistry and superior rhetorical skills. This association with Lucian’s cockerel is further emphasized by the textual parallel between the dialogue and Frankfordinus’s play. Just as Torpor is unwillingly awakened from his sleep by Vigilantia, Lucian’s protagonist, Mycillus, is alarmed by the Cock at the beginning of the dialogue. In both cases, the unwelcome encounter and loud resentments end in comic altercation.

Allusions to roosters in Certamen appear more concretely at the end of the dialogue when Torpor swears to fighting cockerels as a pledge of his conversion. Although cockfights were customarily part of student celebrations and most likely occurred during the festivities when Certamen was staged by students, the reference would have certainly evoked Vadian’s Mythicum syntagma among Frankfordinus’s humanist friends. Vadian’s semi-dramatic work about the rhetoric contest between fighting hens and cockerels with capons as arbitrators
was based on Vadian's prior experience at Frankfordinus's school in Buda.\textsuperscript{78} Similar to Frankfordinus's plays, Vadian's dialogue connects academic satire and classical comedy with farcical Shrovetide plays. It satirizes the nature of academic, particularly scholastic, disputations in the form of a judicial action between the hens and cockerels, which is ultimately resolved not by the capons but by the parasite Lichenor. In his farcical epilogue, like a Lucianic parasite Lichenor concludes the court case with a pronouncement of an invitation to a dinner and drinking party, where ironically the debating hens and cockerels are dished up as delicacies. Characteristic of student dialogues, the theme of gluttony emerges at the end of Vadian's work, yet, unlike Gryllus, Lichenor is not penalized, but triumphs with his sophistry in a carnivalesque spirit.

As editors of \textit{Batrachomyomachia}, the mock-heroic battle of the frogs and mice parodying the \textit{Iliad}, both Vadian and Frankfordinus had engaged in the Erasmian \textit{lusus}, the techniques of humanist \textit{joco-serium} for which Lucian was touted as an effective ancient model, as Erasmus expressed in his dedication of \textit{The Cock} to Christopher Urswick: “He has a way of mixing gravity with his nonsense and nonsense with his gravity, of laughing and telling the truth at one and the same time … And the result is that, for profit and pleasure combined, I know of no stage-comedy or satire which can be compared with this man's dialogues.”\textsuperscript{79}

Just as Lucian fused comedy with philosophical debates in his dialogues, Frankfordinus seasoned his humanist student plays with satire and allusions to ancient philosophical dialogues composed in the tradition of paradoxical encomia.\textsuperscript{80} Lucian’s \textit{The Parasite} and \textit{The Fly}, to which Frankfordinus refers in the dedicatory letter of the \textit{Batrachomyomachia}, were commended by Erasmus as supreme classical models not only for mock encomium but also for \textit{lusus}, which the Dutch humanist considered essential to the study of letters.\textsuperscript{81} In both the dedications of \textit{Batrachomyomachia} and \textit{Certamen}, Frankfordinus invites his humanist patrons to immerse themselves in this Erasmian intellectual recreation. He turned his comedy and moral dialogue into profitable and pleasurable examples of these cultivated \textit{ludi}, or literary pastime (\textit{ocium literarum}), as Frankfordinus defines his \textit{certamen} with which he undoubtedly intended to refresh the minds, in the middle of serious studies, of his students as well as his fellow humanists. His predilection for Lucian may have been inspired by his friend Ursinus, who, along with Philipp Melanchthon and Erasmus, contributed to the Greek-Latin edition of Lucian’s dialogues.
published in Nuremberg in 1517. Lucian certainly enjoyed great popularity among German humanists and his dialogues were adapted to drama, notably by the German playwright Jakob Locher in his semi-dramatic dialogue poem *Poemation de Lazaro medico* (1510) and by Heinrich Bebel in his *Comoedia vel potius dialogus de optimo studio scholastorum* (1501).82

While Frankfordinus’s plays clearly reflect upon the intellectual preoccupation and Erasmian humanism of the Viennese sodality, they also bear the marks of the pious morality of the emerging Reformation which first defined and ultimately divided the members of Vadian’s circle. After Maximilian I’s death, the cohesive force of shared interests in the *studia humanitatis* was rapidly replaced by religious alliances and, with the spread of Protestantism in the region, the *Sodalitas Collimitiana* became polarized along confessional lines and eventually dissolved in 1521. Although Frankfordinus maintained his contacts with the Viennese literary society from Buda through his correspondence with Vadian, shortly after the publication of Frankfordinus’s plays many personal relationships broke up within the inner circle as a result of the members’ differing religious views. Vadian left Vienna in 1518 and went to St. Gallen, where, as a devoted supporter of the Swiss Reformation and a friend of Zwingli, he worked as a physician, losing his contacts with the Catholic Gamp and Ursinus. Consequently, the humanist school drama represented by Frankfordinus’s comedy and dialogue assumed a fundamentally new role in the hands of the reformer schoolmasters of central Europe. With his humanist plays adapted to Christian morality, Frankfordinus paved the way for the next generation of Protestant masters and playwrights who played a leading role in shaping Hungarian vernacular drama in the second half of the sixteenth century.83

**Notes**

1. I am grateful to James P. Carley, Alexandra Johnston, Farkas Gábor Kiss, Balázs Nagy, Robert Ormsby, and the anonymous readers for *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme* for their most valuable suggestions, and to Iona Bulgin for verifying the text for accuracy.

2. Pier Paolo Vergerio moved to Hungary in 1418 on Sigismund’s invitation and stayed there until his death in 1444. See more on Vergerio’s influence on Hungarian


6. Despite the fact that the University of Cracow played an important role in the promotion of humanist drama, the first recorded performance of a humanist play, the German Jakob Locher’s Iudicium Paridis, was staged by students in King Sigismund’s court in 1522. The first extant neo-Latin drama in Poland, the
**Boleslaus Secundus Furens**, was composed only in the second half of the sixteenth century (before 1588) by Joannes Joncre.


10. His family probably originated from Frankfurt-am-Oder, which had extensive relations with Hungary from 1477 onwards. His approximate date of birth is based on Kaspar Ursinus Velius's dedicatory poem to *Batrachomyomachia* (1516), in which Ursinus refers to Frankfordinus as *iuvem modestum*.


17. Like Frankfordinus, Grynaeus was Vadian’s lifelong friend and Tobriacher had strong ties with Tannstetter and Vadian, the latter of whom praised him highly for his hospitality and erudition in the prologue of his satiric dialogue *Mythicum syntagma, cui titulus Gallus pugnans* (1514).


23. In a letter to Vadian, Ursinus refers to Frankfordinus as his friend (“iucundissimum mortalem, meo nomine peramice”). Vargha, Bartholomeus, p. 4, n. 8.


31. Bebel was Corvinus’s student at Cracow from 1492 to 1494; after his studies in Basel, he became professor of poetry and rhetoric in Tübingen. Glomski, p. 28.


33. The humanist archbishop and book collector Johannes Vitéz de Zredna (ca.1408–1472) owned a copy of Plautus’s plays. The Roman playwright is also listed in King Matthias’s famous Bibliotheca Corviniana. See more on the Plautine tradition in Hungary in Edit Tési, Plautus Magyarországon, PhD thesis (Budapest: University of Budapest, 1948).


35. The Poliscene of Leonardo Bruni was one of three Italian plays that were reprinted and translated in Germany between 1500 and 1520: see Douglas Radcliff-Umstead, The Birth of Modern Comedy in Renaissance Italy (Chicago: University of Chicago

36. Divided into five acts and scenes, introduced by an argument and a Terentian prologue, and composed in iambic senary (the benchmarks for classically inspired humanistic plays), *Stephanium* was first performed in 1502 in Venice, where humanist playwrights such as Armonio, Tomasso Mezzo, and Bartolomeo Zamberti enjoyed a favourable atmosphere at the end of the fifteenth century. It became one of the most admired and discussed plays, especially in Germany and Poland. See more on the contemporary reception of the play in Radcliff-Umstead, p. 34. For a critical edition of the play see Graziella Gentilini, ed., *Il teatro umanistico veneto: La commedia* (Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1983), pp. 71–115.

37. Agricola left Cracow (where he previously received his bachelor of arts degree) in 1514 and passed through Buda and Esztergom before he arrived in Vienna in 1515. In the seat of the Hungarian archbishop, Esztergom, he presided over the cathedral school. See more in Glomski, p. 30. On the annotated copy of Marso’s comedy (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek 40 E. 15. Rara.), see Kiss, “Dramen,” p. 299.


41. “Spectators, this play was composed with due regard to the proprieties: here you have no vicious intrigues, no love affair, no supposititious child, no getting money on false pretences, no young spark setting a wench free without her father’s knowledge. Dramatists find few plays such as this which make good men better” (1029–1036). Paul Nixon, ed. and trans., *Plautus* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 567.

42. This can be partly attributed to Frankfordinus’s lack of skill in versification. As Pirnát points out, however, plays were characteristically composed in prose in Hungary throughout the sixteenth century. Pirnát, pp. 534–36.

43. Radcliff-Umstead, p. 75.
44. Kiss provides a detailed comparison between the *Captivi* and *Gryllus* in “Dramen,” pp. 307–09.


46. Kiss refutes Kardos’s translation of Gryllus as “cricket,” and proposes instead the sixteenth-century interpretation of Plutarch’s Gryllus as an emblem of the dirty pig devoid of positive human values. He also suggests that Frankfordinus may have come across Johann Eck’s oration entitled *De Germania exculta contra Grillos* in his *Orationes tres non in elegantes* (Augsburg: Johann, Miller, 1515) in which Grylli are associated with the opponents of the New Learning in Germany. Eck (1486–1543) visited Vienna in 1516, where he befriended Vadian, Tannstetter, and Gamp. Kiss, “Dramen,” pp. 306–07.


51. As an exemplary stylist of colloquial Greek and a moralist, Lucian enjoyed great popularity among humanists. His dialogues were valued as school texts as they were considered a Greek counterpart of the plays of Terence and Plautus.


53. See, for example, Jakob Wimpheling’s *Stylpho* (1480), Johannes Kerckmeister’s *Codrus* (1485), Heinrich Bebel’s *Comoedia de optimo studio iuvenum* (1501), and Tilmann Conradis’s *Comedia Teratologia* (1509).


55. When he is saturated at the end, Geta depicts his inebriety with vivid images: see 4.1.635–69, also 2.3.403–17.

56. “Those of you inside, take care of the household properly while I go to regain the favour of the gods. We should please them at least in our old age, since, when we are young, as if we can only thank ourselves for our life and fortunes, we share very little of our goods with the gods, unless we are afflicted with troubles. I too used to play dice in my youth, so at least in my old age, I should handle my goods well. Follow me, my son, so that when you are young, you get used to doing good, a habit that is difficult to sustain. Make sure the vessels are clean and spotless. My Aeticus, do you have everything? Chalice? Water? Wine? Bread?” (14–15). This and the following translations are mine.


58. “A servant who cannot, at will, pull some clever tricks quickly out of his repository to save his skin is worth nothing. Good gods, how many floggings on my back and how many whippings I would have had to endure if I hadn’t changed my identity skillfully” (137–38).

59. “Immortal gods! How the youth nowadays have utterly changed their morals. They are ashamed of acting, thus there is no profit in the dramatic arts. Gone are the great jokes and fun; the usurers are lending money and everybody plays the fool instead of being wise. Oh, Athenian citizens, I implore you for your faith and trust that, if you have until now preserved the safety of the republic, don’t march against yourself, but live prudently. Where are your good nature and morals, o youth, ornament of our country. What chaos and confusion I see everywhere” (19–22).


65. In Chelidonius’s play, the young Nicholas, Count of Salm (Nicolaus zu Salm, Jr., 1459–1530) played the role of Prince Charles. On the function of the Virtus and Voluptas plays in the glorification and image building of central European patrons, see Glomski, pp. 111–12.


67. Dialogus Mythologicus Bartholomaei Coloniensis dulcis iocis, iucundis salibus, concinnisque sententiiis refertus atque diligenter nuper elaboratus (Vienna: Hieronymus Viento and Johann Singriener, 1512).

68. See more on textbooks used in humanist schools in Hungarian towns in Mészáros, Az iskolaügy története, pp. 196–202.


70. Ritoók points out that Frankfordinus likely consulted this practical collection for letter writing, because the introductory sentences of his first letter to Vadian closely resemble the style of Bartolomeus Coloniensis’s fictitious letter. See Ritoók, “Budai polgárok könyvei,” pp. 313–14.


74. “O, how wretched I am! What a heavy dream I had, but it was certainly wonderful. I will make the spectators laugh. Would you like me to tell you my dream? Well, I will tell it. When I already hid away, I seemed to be surrounded by splendid dishes at the seat of the Muses. Yet I could not enjoy them, as a little woman came up to me and did not leave me alone. And I don’t know by what conspiracy, she miserably beat me up. And if I am not mistaken … look how swollen my right arm is” (21–22).

75. These appearances (objects and particularly persons), in Aristotle’s view, as David Gallop points out, were “affected by traces from waking perception” and were a “sort of replay of previous waking experience, sometimes bizarrely scrambled as a result of psychological disturbance.” See more in Gallop’s introduction in his edition of *Aristotle on Sleep and Dreams* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 1990), p. 19.


77. Cockfights were also part of student festivities held traditionally on the day of St. Gall. Vilmos Frankl, *A hazai és külföldi iskolázás a XVI. században* (Budapest: Eggenrerger F. Magyar Akadémiai Könyvárúsz, 1873), p. 87.

78. Cf. preface to Vadian’s *Mythicum syntagma* in Mészáros, *A XVI. századi városi iskolánk*, p. 18, n. 16.


Quoting Erasmus’s *Praise of Folly*, Frankfordinus mentions specifically Lucian’s dialogue *The Fly* in the dedicatory letter of *Batrachomyomachia* (2–3). See Erasmus Roterdamus, “Moriae Encomium,” in *Opera Omnia* IV-3, ed. Clarence H. Miller (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1979), p. 68. The Greek essayist’s popularity among the members of the *Sodalitas Litteraria Danubiana* is further attested by the Lucian edition (*Aliquot exquisitae lucubrationes*), which appeared in Vienna in 1527 with the commentaries of Celtis’s close associate, Johannes Cuspinian (1473–1529). See also Dietrich von Plieningen’s (c. 1450–1520) editions of Lucian’s *The Dream or the Cock*, as well as his German translations of Lucian’s dialogues, both published in 1515.
