

# Translator's Corner

J. Durban Odhner, Editor

We are pleased to present in this issue of the "Translator's Corner" an article by a worthy Swedenborgiana scholar, Mr. Alvar Erikson, docent (lecturer) of Latin at the Gothenburg University and a neo-Latin specialist and expert (1908-1982).

One of Mr. Erikson's works was the posthumous publication of the Latin writings of Erik Benzelius Jr., an important contemporary of Emanuel Swedenborg and frequently referred to both in his Writings (see *The Swedenborg Concordance*, vol. I, p. 378) and in biographic material (see *Documents*, Index). The actual title of this work was: *Letters to Erik Benzelius the Younger from Learned Foreigners*; a first volume, published in 1979, covered the years 1697 to 1722, a second 1723 to 1743, and we do not have definite information about possible further volumes at this time.

Mr. Erikson also wrote on Paulus Deaconus, the Longobardian historian, and Gregor of Tours, Frankish historian.

## SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE STYLE OF SWEDENBORG

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Alvar Erikson

Emanuel Swedenborg, the Swedish scientist and theologian, passed through a serious crisis in 1743-45 and was not the same man afterwards: instead of being a natural philosopher he became a religious preacher, instead of a searcher a confessor, an initiate.<sup>1</sup> That this new course also involved a stylistic change is something that may not have escaped the careful reader but it has, as far as I know, not been the subject of a formal inquiry. Such an investigation is the purpose of this little paper, which I am submitting as one of the tributes to Franz Blatt, in the hope that it may not be considered to lie outside the interests of this broad humanist scholar, who has taken such pains over research into late Latin.

<sup>1</sup> The latest biography seems to be written by a Swede: Inge Jonsson, *Emanuel Swedenborg*, New York 1971. (Twayne's World Authors Series 127).

To represent the scientific period in Swedenborg's authorship I have chosen *Principia rerum naturalium* from 1734, in particular the first chapter (26 pages, to which "Principia" refers in the following). In addition I have made some inquiries into a previous work, *Miscellanea Observata* from 1722 (I have read pages 63-91), in order to see if the tendencies, discovered in *Principia*, can be traced back to a very much older phase, and also into the remarkable *De cultu et amore Dei* (1745), a poetic prose production that was the last work which Swedenborg wrote before his purely theological period. Of this I have studied the first 29 paragraphs. To illustrate the later epoch of Swedenborg's authorship I have selected *De caelo et eius mirabilibus et de inferno* from 1758. Unless otherwise indicated "De caelo" refers to the first 50 paragraphs. This might have sufficed as Swedenborg's style seems to have stabilized during his later phase and does not vary much. But to ensure that I had not invented any changes I have also included *Deliciae sapientiae de amore coniugiali* from 1768 in my examination, studying in particular the first 54 paragraphs (except those which contain narratives of vision), although some examples come from the remainder of the book.<sup>2</sup>

The first observation to be made is the decrease in the variety of words. This is due chiefly to an augmented repetition of words and phrases within a short space, to a lesser degree to a reduction of the stock of words. Whereas of the first 1000 words of *Principia* about 360 are different and the strongly poetic style of *De cultu* has the extremely high figure of 460/1000, the proportion for *De caelo* is 290/1000 and for *De amore coniugiali* (§§ 27 sqq with the exception of the chapter headings in § 27) about the same: 300/1000. Naturally there are passages—and especially in *De amore coniugiali*—which have a density of words that fully equals that of *Principia*, but the average proportion seems to be as indicated.

I have then studied Swedenborg's usage in the translation of *that* clauses. Out of many possibilities he has chosen two: acc. cum inf. and a *quod* clause with the subjunctive. In *Miscellanea* there is a predominance of the acc. cum inf.: no less than 80 examples as

<sup>2</sup> *Miscellanea observata* is cited from an edition entitled *Opera quaedam aut inedita aut obsoleta de rebus naturalibus. I. Geologica et epistulae*, Sthlm 1907, *Principia* from the original edition of 1734. *De cultu* I have read in an edition of 1883, printed by Murray Gorman in London, *De caelo* and *De amore coniugiali* in editions produced under the guidance of the Swedenborg Foundation in New York (the American Swedenborg Printing and Publishing Society), in 1933 and 1909 respectively.

against 15-20 *quod* clauses. *Principia* involves a change, in the *quod* clauses are slightly in the majority: 36 cases of acc. cum inf. as against 47 *quod* clauses. In *De cultu* the scales are even, 8 as against 8, but there is a total reversal in *De caelo*: only 3 cases of acc. cum ind. (1: *sperans sic ignorantiam illustrari, et incredulitatem dissipari*, 3: *Qui autem dicunt se credere in Divinum invisible* and 6: *et inde non crediderunt Ipsum esse Deum caeli*) but at least 80 *quod* clauses. And this is not just coincidence, as proved by the fact that after § 6 we have to wait until §74 before a new acc. cum inf. turns up. In *De amore coniugiali* the change is still greater: 105 *quod* clauses but only 1 acc. cum inf. (§ 34).

This preponderance of *quod* clauses naturally produces a certain monotony of style. But the author becomes still more monotonous by repeating phrases. For instance, the construction *Quod..., est quia...,* which appears in *De caelo* 1: *Quod hodie immediata talis revelatio existat, est quia ilia est quae per adventum Domini intellegitur*, is extremely frequent, occurring 5 times in *De caelo* and 15 in *De amore coniugiali*. A somewhat strange phrase is *constare potest* (for instance *De caelo* 12: *Ex his nunc constare potest, quod Dominus in Suo habitat apud angelos caeli*). Its use in living Latin is confined to negative and interrogative sentences. But Swedenborg seems to have given it a slight change of meaning and employed it as an equivalent to phrases like *comprehendi potest* and *quisque scire potest*, which also occur. At all events he repeats it 7 times in *De caelo* and 2 in *De amore coniugiali*.

It is also noteworthy that *quod* is not used by Swedenborg in a causal sense; *quia* (often strengthened *ex causa, quia*) and *quoniam* are reserved for this throughout Swedenborg's authorship.

Indirect questions have the subjunctive throughout in the early phase. *Principia* exhibits 27 cases on 26 pages. In *De caelo* and *De amore coniugiali* the situation has changed: *num* clauses still have the subjunctive, but other indirect questions take the indicative with very few exceptions: in *De caelo* 12 times indicative, 1 subjunctive (35: *usque ut nescirent quale esset suum caelum*, where it could be said to be caused by attraction, but Swedenborg in this period seems not to practice those rules), in *De amore coniugiali* 8 times indicative, 2 times subjunctive.

The concessive conjunctions in the earlier period are *quamvis* and *licet*. *Miscellanea* has 4 *quamvis* and 7 *licet*, *Principia* 9 and 5. *Tametsi* never occurs. In *De caelo* and *De amore coniugiali* this is reversed: there is no example of either *quamvis* or *licet* in the whole of these works, whereas in 100 paragraphs of the former *tametsi* appears 15 times and similarly in the latter. In this case the change seems to have

taken place as early as in *De cultu*: 3 *tanetsi*, no *licet* or *quamvis*.

The main sentence after a concessive clause is introduced by *tamen*, strengthened *lamen usque* or *usque tamen*. Sometimes *usque* alone is employed, *Principia* p. 26: *Qualiscumque tamen detur veneratio, cultus aut amor in homine tali mutato..., non usque potest esse sine timore*. The usage of *usque* = *tamen* is greatly enlarged in the later works, and constructions like *et usque, sed usque* and *at usque* are common, e.g. *De caelo* 31: *angeli spirituales naturales et caelestes naturales distincti sunt inter se, sed usque unum caelum constiuunt*.

The omission of *esse* or some more significant verb in relative, interrogative, temporal and causal clauses is a feature that can be said to characterize Swedenborg's style in the later period of his authorship. Examples are: *De caelo* 8: *Inde est..., quod illi qui ibi dicantur in Domino esse* (with which compare 17, 31, 35 bis, 47), 15: *qui non scit quid amor, quid bonum, et quid proximus*, 30: *nam in hominem, dum creatus, omnia ordinis Domini callata sunt*, 76: *simile videt simile, quia ex simili*, and similarly in over 50 cases in the first 50 chapters of the book. For *quod* clauses see § 37 of *De amore coniugiali*: *Quod principaliter Amor sexus*.

The conclusive particles in *Miscellanea* and *Principia* are *ergo*, *ilaque* and *ideo* (*igitur* seems to be missing). *Inde* and *unde* are employed as well. *Ergo* is extremely frequent; in the first chapter of *Principia* it is used about 30 times. This changes in the later period. *Itaque*, *ideo* and *inde* are still common, but *unde* is rare, and *ergo* disappears. I have found it once in the whole of these texts, namely *De amore coniugiali* 88. Instead *quapropter* and *quare* advance, each of them occurring 5 times in *De caelo*, *quare* 13 in *De amore coniugiali*. A common construction is *inde est quod*, an instance that can be added to the examples of abuse of *quod* clauses above: 5 times in *De caelo*, 5 in *De amore coniugiali*. *De cultu* seems to occupy an intermediate position: *ergo*, *quapropter* and *quare* are all employed, but the instances are scarce.

The particles signifying "only" display a curious shift. Whereas *Miscellanea* has 5 *tantum*, 2 *tantummodo* and 1 *modo* and *Principia* 8 *tantum*, 6 *tantummodo*, 1 *solum*, 9 *modo*, 1 *solummodo* and 11 *unice*, *De caelo* and *De amore coniugiali* have dropped *tantum* and *tantummodo* altogether in this sense. The commonest particle is *modo*, *solum* is less frequent. In the parts examined specially, *modo* occurs 6 times and *solum* once in *De caelo*, while in *De amore coniugiali* the figures are 5 and 2. In the latter work I also encountered *solummodo* and *unice*, 4 and 17 times respectively in the whole text. *Tantum* is reserved for the constructions *tantum ... quantum* (very common) and *tantum ut*. The change seems to have begun with *De cultu*: 7 *modo* and 4 *solum*.

Of the strengthening particles, *plane* and *prorsus*, *plane* predominates in *Miscellanea* and *Principia*. In the former text it is very common (I have counted 11 cases), in the latter it is instanced 4 times as against 2 for *prorsus*. In later works the proportions are reversed. A count in the whole of *De amore coniugiali* gave 13 *plane* and 86 *prorsus*. The numbers seem to be about the same in *De Caelo* (no *plane* and 6 *prorsus* in the part studied in particular).

*Scilicet*, which occurs 12 times in *Miscellanea*, 7 in *Principia* and 14 in *De cultu*, is almost absent in the later works; I have discovered it once, in *De amore coniugiali* 78. It is replaced by *nempe* in *De caelo*, e.g. 23: *Inde patet, in quo se distinguunt bina ilia regna, quod nempe sicut bonum amoris in Dominum, et bonum charitatis erga proximum, by videlicet and nempe in De amore coniugiali.*

Of particles with the sense "thereafter" *dein* is far the commonest in the earlier works: over 30 times in *Miscellanea*, 14 in *Principia* as against 1 for *postea*. In *De amore coniugiali*, which I have examined in full, there seem to be over 80 instances of *postea*, 24 of *dein*, 6 *oideinde*, 2 of *posthac* and 2 of *post*. *De caelo* constitutes the transitional stage here: the whole text contains 26 *postea* as against 37 *dein*. *De cultu*, which has *dein* 4 times and *postea* once, evidently prefers *postmodum*: 9 times.

"Likewise" is rendered by *pari modo* (18 cases) and *pariter* (5 cases) in *Miscellanea*; in *Principia* *pariter* predominates (30 cases), *similiter* appears in 2 cases. The situation is reversed in *De caelo* and *De amore coniugiali*: 6 times of *similiter* as against 0 of *pariter* in the former book, 10 times of *similiter* as against 3 of *pariter* in the latter. The change had apparently begun with *De cultu*: 8 *similiter* but only 1 *pariter*.

Of the words for "without," *sine* and *absque*, the former prevails in the earlier works. *Miscellanea* has it 6 times, never *absque*, *Principia* 30 and only 1 *absque*. In *De cultu* the two words are about equal: 4 *sine* and 3 *absque*. In *De caelo* and *De amore coniugiali* *sine* is absent (and this applies to the whole of the texts) but *absque* very common: 3 times in *De caelo* (14, if one goes as far as the first 86 paragraphs), 7 times in *De amore coniugiali*.

There are 7 cases of *omnino* in *Principia* but none at all in the whole of *De caelo* and *De amore coniugiali*.

*Fortassis* is the word for "perhaps" preferred in *Principia*: 16 times, but does not seem to occur either in *De caelo* or in *De amore coniugiali*. Instead *forte* is used but seldom: 3 cases in the whole of *De caelo* (246, 325, 455) and 15 in the whole of *De amore coniugiali*.

Many words are employed to express the sense "every," "every-

body": *quisque, unusquisque, quilibet, quivis*. *Miscellanea* has *quivis* in 3 cases, *Principia* in 9. but *unusquivis* seems to be missing. It first appears in *De cultu*: 9 *quivis* and 8 *unusquivis*, and the tendency holds: *De caelo* 3 *quivis* and 14 *unusquivis*, *De amore coniugiali* 2 and 2.

"As to" is expressed in the earlier epoch by *quod attinet ad*: 4 cases in *Miscellanea*, 4 in *Principia*; in addition, the latter work has *qua* 3 times (e.g. 12: *Sic omnes res in mundo, qua existentiam, invicem a se dependent*). In the later period *quoad* prevails: *De caelo* has it 11 times, *De amore coniugiali* 4, e.g. *De caelo* 1: *per 'solem' ibi, qui obscurabitur, significatur Dominus quoad amorem; per 'lunam' Dominus quoad fidem*.

The last-mentioned case is an example of a phenomenon to which I should like to draw attention in conclusion: curious passages, which we meet only in later works. *Ita* thus has the meaning of "that is" in a sentence like *De caelo* 9: *bonum enim vertunt in malum, et verum in falsum, ita vitam in mortem*. It appears 11 times in *De caelo*; in *De amore coniugiali* I have noted 3 cases.

*Ibi* and *inde* are sometimes used adnominally, for instance *De caelo* 18: *facultates... recipiendi caelum cum omni ineffabili ibi* and 32: *se habet voluntarium sicut comparative flamma, et intellectual ejus sicut lux inde*.

A common phrase is *et quoque* placed before the word to which it belongs, e.g. *De caelo* 1: *datum est mihi esse una cum angelis, et loqui cum illis sicut homo cum homine, et quoque videre quae in caelis*. Compare further 14, 16, 22, 30, 33, 39 and *De amore coniugiali* 27, 28, 30, 33, 34.

*Et sic porro* evidently means "and so forth" in *De caelo* 38: *qui explorat videbit, quod... tales gradus productionis sint, quod nempe ab uno alterum et ab altero tertium, et sic porro*. It occurs also at 65, 97, 110 and so on, *De amore coniugiali* 5, 163, 220. It is instanced already in *De cultu* 3.

In *De amore coniugiali* (28, 36 and 45) we have constructions such as *mox supra ostensum est* with *mox* alluding to something that has just been mentioned. The same sense is found in *De caelo* (148 and elsewhere). Cf. TLL VIII 1553, 77 ff., *Novum glossarium mediae latinitatis* 880, 13 ff., Szantyr 637. *Mox* is apparently used as a substitute for *modo*, which does not occur in this sense (compare p. 625).

Adjectives, converted into nouns, are frequent. Here are some instances of the neuter singular thus employed: *De caelo* 44: *in suo libero*, 44: *in omni iucundo vitae*, 45: *secundum eius quale*.

Thus we see that Swedenborg changed his style considerably. Sometimes the choice of words seems to be arbitrary: the concessive and conclusive conjunctions do not vary stylistically. But the main tendency is away from classical constructions towards unclassical: the almost total disappearance of the acc. cum inf. is one instance,