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Chapter 8

“Our Swedish Moses and Saviour”: The Use of Biblical Leaders as Power Legitimization in Reformation Sweden

The Vasa-regime that seized royal power in the kingdom of Sweden during the early sixteenth century was in urgent need of a power legitimization that could both correspond to well-known traditional symbols and narratives but also at the same time legitimize the new regime and its adherence to the Lutheran Reformation. The use of Old Testament kings and leaders such as David, Jehoshaphat, Joseph, and Moses could thereby function as typologies relating to the Jerusalem Code. However, through relating these Old Testament kings with their responsibility for the peoples’ spiritual needs and with their distinctive biblical foundation, the Jerusalem Code was transformed and adjusted to early modern Lutheran political culture, emphasizing the king’s responsibility for the Church and for the people’s spiritual well-being and the lack of biblical foundation for the Catholic sacramental culture (for example, mass in Latin, pilgrimage, and the use of sacramentals). It could also be argued that the frequent use of figures such as Moses and Joseph was a significant part of the Jerusalem Code in Sweden, signifying both the importance of humility and God’s providence in the secular government.

Introduction

In the kingdom of Sweden the introduction of the Reformation coincided with a national political revolution. The process towards establishing a national Protestant church was to a large extent governed by the political and economic needs of King Gustav Vasa (r. 1523–60) whose regime marked Sweden’s leave-taking from the

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Fig. 8.1: King Gustav Vasa of Sweden with a ceremonial sword, symbolizing the king's responsibility to defend the law of God (*Lex Dei*) and the Swedish law (*Lex Svedsiae*). The picture is painted in a law codex at the National Library of Sweden.

Nordic union that had existed since 1397. During his reign there was established both an independent and hereditary kingdom and a nationalization of the church which, even though it never became formally confessionalized during his reign, still was politically, economically, and legally subordinated to and in many ways integrated with secular power. Furthermore, a theological power legitimization was important for Gustav Vasa whose newly established regime was continuously being questioned from powers both inside and outside the nation. With this regime as well as in many other European kingdoms, the Reformation functioned as a way to legitimize governmental power. A common assumption is that the governments' administrative expansion during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was enabled through the fact that the church, both in Catholic and Protestant countries, was reduced.¹ It has even been claimed that the confessionalization process gave rise to a "sacralization" of the king's persona.² However, in relation to this perspective it could be held that even before the Reformation, the secular power was in need of divine sanction. In medieval Europe we find that the king had an almost sacral role and was regarded as more than a human being.³ To be a king of "God's grace" was

1 See Börje Harnesk, "Inledning," in *Maktens skiftande skepnader. Studier i makt, legitimitet och inflytande i det tidigmoderna Sverige*, ed. Börje Harnesk (Umeå: Institutionen för historiska studier, Umeå Universitet, 2003), 9; Paul Kléber Monod, *The Power of Kings: Monarchy and Religion in Europe, 1589–1715* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 7.

2 See Heinz Schilling, "The Reformation and the Rise of the Early Modern State," in *Luther and the Modern State in Germany*, ed. James D. Tracy (Kirkville: Sixteenth Century Journal Publications, 1986), 26–27; "Confessional Europe," in *Handbook of European History 1400–1600: Late Middle Ages, Renaissance and Reformation*, eds. Thomas A. Brady Jr., Heiko A. Oberman, and James D. Tracy (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 656–58.

3 See for example Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957). In the study of early modern political culture in Sweden, it has become common to focus on questions regarding power legitimization related to royal power. Here many of the impulses come from cultural history and related research traditions, see for example Marc Bloch, *The Royal Touch: Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973); Allan Ellenius (ed), *Iconography, Propaganda, and Legitimation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); Clifford Geertz, "Centers, Kings and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolics of Power," in *Rites of Power: Symbolism, Ritual and Politics since the Middle Ages*, ed. Sean Wilentz (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985); Monod, *The Power of Kings: Monarchy and Religion in Europe, 1589–1715*; see also the introduction to this research field in Mikael Alm, *Kungsord i elfte timmen. Språk och självbild i det gustavianska enväldets legitimitetskamp 1772–1809* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2002), 21–24. On Early Modern royal propaganda, see Alm, *Kungsord i elfte timmen*. 21–24. Peter Ericsson, *Stora nordiska kriget förklarar. Karl XII och det ideologiska tilltalet*, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Studia Historica Upsaliensia (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 2002); Malin Grundberg, *Ceremoniernas makt: Maktöverföring och genus i Vasatidens kungliga ceremonier* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2005); Cecilia Nordberg, "Guds ställföreträdare förmedlad. Kungens i kröningspredikan från Gustav I till Karl XIV Johan", in *Gud, konung och undersåtar. Politisk predikan i Sverige under tidigmodern tid*, ed. Peter Ericsson, Opuscula Historica Upsaliensia (Uppsala: Historiska institutionen, Uppsala Universitet, 2007), Fredrik Söberg, "Karl X

rather the starting point for medieval royal power, and this was also why the coronation was important.⁴

Furthermore, it is not probable that a new regime, like that of Gustav Vasa, would use a completely new way of legitimizing its authority. In discussions on power legitimization it is emphasized, that in order to gain credibility as a ruler, you are more or less obliged to relate to established norms, symbols, and rules of conduct. A sole individual cannot breach this gathering of symbols in a culture or transform them without being left out of this culture. If a ruler does this, he will lose his power or at least expose it to severe trials. Instead, a connection to well-known symbols can be used to gain power.⁵

In this article it will be argued that during the early Vasa dynasty, we find a recurrent narrative related to Old Testament leaders, such as Moses, Joseph, and David, who all serve as typologies for a leadership where power struggles and sometimes also suffering serve as expressions of God's providence which ultimately aims to deliver the people, either from evil enemies such as Danish kings or from the Catholic church.

However, this narrative was not introduced by Gustav Vasa into Swedish political culture. In Ericus Olai's *Chronica regni Gothorum* (c. 1471) the author uses biblical narratives as a way both to legitimize and to de-legitimize Nordic regents. In the chronicle, most of the Danish union kings are likened with the Philistines or with the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar and his evil commander Holofernes whom we meet in the Book of Judith. The author also compares the Swedish leader Engelbrekt's rebellion against the union of King Eric of Pommerania (1382–1459) in the 1430s with the Jewish rising against the Seleucid Empire as related in the books of the Maccabees. Furthermore,

Gustavs kröning. Legitimering av kungamakten via det religiösa budskapet,” in *Gud, konung och undersåtar. Politisk predikan i Sverige under tidigmodern tid*, ed. Peter Ericsson, Opuscula Historica Upsaliensia (Uppsala: Historiska institutionen, Uppsala Universitet, 2007). concerning the power legitimization found in the ideology production that actors like the clergy through their preaching could provide see for example Ericsson, *Stora nordiska kriget förklarar*, 73–132; on the church as an ideological supply for the government, see also Tobias Wirén, “Ideologins apparatur: Reproduktionsperspektiv på kyrka och skola i 1600- och 1700-talens Sverige” (Institutionen för historiska studier, Umeå Universitet, 2006).

⁴ See Martin Berntson, *Mässan och armborstet. Uppror och reformation i Sverige 1525–1545* (Skellefteå: Artos, 2010), 363.

⁵ David I. Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics, and Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 4–5; Mats Hallenberg, “Kungen, kronan eller staten? Makt och legitimitet I Gustav Vasas propaganda,” in *Maktens Skiftande skepnader. Studier i makt, legitimitet och inflytande i det tidigmoderna Sverige*, ed. Börje Harnesk (Umeå: Institutionen för historiska studier, Umeå Universitet, 2003), 22–23; see also David Beetham, *The Legitimation of Power: Issues in Political Theory* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1991).

Ericus Olai also compares the upheaval against Eric of Pommerania with God's intervention when he heard the complaints of the Israelites in Egypt.⁶ In accordance with this typology, in his struggle against the Nordic union, Engelbrekt is indirectly depicted as a new Moses, as someone chosen by God to deliver the people from oppression. According to Biörn Tjällén this biblical narrative, that is the use of Moses and the Maccabees, was used to legitimize the uprising against the Union king.⁷ As in biblical times, a righteous rebellion was performed against a tyrant who oppressed the people. However, this was not only a legitimization but also an illustration of God's providence. Engelbrekt's successful rebellion was interpreted as an expression of divine intervention, as a part of God's plan for the Swedish kingdom.⁸ Nonetheless, it should also be emphasized that even outside Sweden during the late medieval period Moses was used as a typology for kings. According to the coronation ceremony in *Pontificale Romanum* the bishop prayed for the king to be loyal like Abraham, gentle like Moses, fortified like Joshua, humble like David, and wise like Solomon.⁹

With regard to this use of Old Testament kings and leaders such as Moses and David as ideals or role models for contemporary kings in the benedictions during the coronations or in late medieval propaganda (such as in Engelbrekt's rebellion) it can be argued that such ideals were part of a Jerusalem Code that was familiar in the political culture of the sixteenth century. As will be argued, during the Reformation it became possible to enforce this kind of typologies. As a presumption for thus study, I suggest that these narratives were expected to be well known among the recipients of royal propaganda and that there existed a common assumption, that this Jerusalem Code, in this case the description of righteous (and sometimes also non-righteous)

6 Biörn Tjällén, *Church and Nation: The Discourse on Authority in Ericus Olai's Chronica Regni Gothorum* (c.1471) (Stockholm: Historiska institutionen, 2007), 104.

7 Olle Ferm and Biörn Tjällén, "Ericus Olai's Chronica Regni Gothorum," *Mediaeval Scandinavia* 14 (2004), 86.

8 Ferm and Tjällén, "Ericus Olai's Chronica Regni Gothorum," 88; Tjällén, *Church and Nation*, 105. In fact, a similar narrative had been used in the early fifteenth century, when a cleric from the diocese of Linköping expressed his hope that, just as Judas Maccabaeus rose up against the Seleucids, a group would rise against the Danish regime, Ferm, "Ericus Olai's Chronica Regni Gothorum," 88. In the chronicle known as *Sturekrönikan* (c.1500) the author implies that Sten Sture the elder, in his military struggle against the Danish king, was inspired by God. However, God's support of the Swedes is not explicitly related to any biblical narratives but rather to the burning sword of Saint Eric, made visible in the sky, see Margaretha Nordquist, *A Struggle for the Realm: Late-Medieval Swedish Rhyme Chronicles as Ideological Expressions* (Stockholm: Department of History, Stockholm University, 2015), 128.

9 Pontificale romanum summorum pontificum jussu editum a Benedecto XIV et Leone XIII recognitum et castigatum, (Laudate Dominum Liturgical Editions), https://introibo.net/download/buecher/pontificale_romanum.pdf, 107. This benediction is also mentioned in the Swedish Catholic Olaus Magnus's *Description of the Northern People* (1555), Olaus Magnus, *Historia om de nordiska folken* (Stockholm: Gidlund, 1982), 643; see also Chapter 5 (Arne Bugge Amundsen), 72–95.

biblical kings, had a normative value and revealed God's plan with both the Israelites and the people of Sweden, a narrative that would be more fully developed during the seventeenth century.¹⁰

As is well known, Old Testament rulers were frequently used as role models for early modern Protestant kings. In Denmark as well as in other parts of Europe, the most significant of these Old Testament kings were David and Solomon, as well as the kings Hezekiah and Josiah. King Josiah became important for Protestants not least due to the fact that he initiated a reform in the cult in Jerusalem and was therefore regarded as a precedent for kings who supported and initiated the Reformation in their realms.¹¹ While King David, for example, was also important in Sweden, it will be argued that the recurrent use of Moses and Joseph was a significant part of the Swedish Jerusalem Code.

Gustav Vasa became in 1521 leader of a rebellion against the union king, the Danish Christian II (r. 1513–23 (Denmark) and 1520–23 (Sweden)), whose regime had been associated with, for example, the Stockholm bloodbath in November 1520, when almost a hundred people, including burghers, noblemen, and two bishops, were executed – an event that could be regarded as a manifestation of the triumph over the Swedes after some years of wars with the nationalistic party in Sweden led by the regent Sten Sture the younger (1493–1520). At the time of the bloodbath, Gustav Vasa had been brought as prisoner to Denmark from where he escaped to Germany where he set about plans to rise against Christian II.

During the first twenty years of his rule, Gustav Vasa was usually very careful not to expose his support for any theological confession too explicitly. Especially during his first ten years of rule, while giving support to Lutheran preachers, he emphatically repeated that there was no “new faith” in the kingdom.¹² Consequently, we do find a tension in the power legitimization of Gustav Vasa, between on the one hand a necessary connection to traditional norms and on the other hand the need to legitimize the new regime which did interact with Reformation theologians.¹³ During the rule of

¹⁰ See Chapter 7 (Nils Ekedahl), 119–45.

¹¹ Graeme Murdock, “The Power of Kings: Monarchy and Religion in Europe 1589–1715,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 29, no. 4 (1998), 1046–47; Tarald Rasmussen, *Hva er protestantisme* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2017), 16; see also the introduction to this volume (Eivor Andersen Oftestad), 38.

¹² Berntson, *Mässan och armborstet*, 323–30.

¹³ There exist only a few studies on power legitimization and reformation in Gustav Vasa's rule, for example Kurt Johannesson, “Retorik och propaganda vid det äldre vasahovet,” *Lychnos* 1969–1970 (1971); and Hallenberg, “Kungen, kronan eller staten?”; see also Martin Berntson, *Klostren och reformationen. Upplösningen av kloster och konvent i Sverige 1523–1596* (Skellefteå: Norma, 2003), 283–89; “Reformationstida bilder av kristnandet i Sverige,” in “Vi ska alla vara välkomna”. *Nordiska studier tillägnade Kristinn Jóhannesson*, ed. Henrik Janson Audur G. Magnúsdóttir, Karl G. Johansson, Mats Malm, and Lena Rogström (Göteborg: Meijerbergs institut för svensk etymologisk forskning, Göteborgs Universitet, 2008); Berntson, *Mässan och armborstet*, 356–64.

Gustav Vasa we actually see a recurrent use of certain biblical typologies and narratives. However, the way of relating the reign of Gustav Vasa to role models found among the kings in the Bible took various forms and can be separated into two basic categories. First, biblical leaders were used to legitimize and also de-legitimize infringements in the church, for example. Second, biblical leaders relating to the life story of Gustav Vasa were used to reveal God’s providence with both the people of Israel and of Sweden.

Biblical Leaders Legitimizing and De-legitimizing Infringements in the Church

From the 1520s, kings mentioned in the Bible were used to legitimize Gustav Vasa’s right to be king despite the fact that he had attained the throne through warfare and despite his increasing attempts to make infringements on the church, for example through confiscations of monstresses, chalices and silver plates from saints’ shrines, the dissolution of monasteries, etc.

During the early Reformation, Old Testament kings were used to legitimize some infringements against the ecclesiastical institutions. An early example is related to the confiscations of silver in churches and monasteries during the years 1523 and 1524. In response to the opinion articulated by the brethren in Vadstena abbey who called the confiscations “sacrilege”, the royal chancellor Laurentius Andreae (1470–1552) claimed in 1524 that it was impious to protect the church’s money when the people were threatened by enemies, and compared Gustav Vasa’s confiscations with the rules of the Judean kings Joash and Hezekiah who took treasures from the Temple in Jerusalem to protect their people (2 Kgs 12: 17–18, 18:13–16). Even though these kings were not blamed for their acts in the Bible, the brethren had the nerve to blame a Christian king that acted in the same manner.¹⁴ In this discussion, Laurentius Andreae presented an ecclesiology influenced by Lutheran theology:

I agree that the church is the house of God, but not because God lives in it, but because the believers gather in the church to hear the word of God. What the house is for the people, the same goes for the money. It is thus impious, when a danger threatens the people, to claim that you should save the church money, arguing that the enemies might refrain from their attacks, while the poor neighbour, whom Christ commanded us to love and for which he has died, still suffers from hunger and thirst. Does the Lord perhaps care more about rocks and bits of wood than humans?¹⁵

¹⁴ HSH 17: 208.

¹⁵ “Quod ecclesia domus dei est fatear ad bonum intellectum non quod deus illam inhabitat qui non habitat in manufactis sed quia ibi ecclesia fidelium ad ea que dei sunt precipiendum hoc est

Consequently, according to Andreae, the confiscations of silver from churches and monasteries had biblical foundations related to the righteous Judean kings. The narrative of these kings was used in order both to present an alternative ecclesiology and to legitimize the confiscation of church property.

However, a similar biblical narrative was also used by the opponents of his policy. The confiscations were criticized by Bishop Hans Brask (1464–1538) in Linköping who compared them with how King Belshazzar in the Book of Daniel misused the treasures that his predecessor Nebuchadnezzar had stolen from the Temple in Jerusalem, and was punished by losing his rule for seven years. Just like Belshazzar, Gustav Vasa would be punished by God because of his confiscations.¹⁶ However, for some reason the bishop seems to have confused the Babylonian kings. According to the Book of Daniel, it really was Nebuchadnezzar who confiscated treasures in the Temple in Jerusalem (Dan 1:2) which were later desecrated by Belshazzar (Dan 5:2–4), but it was not Belshazzar who lost his rule for seven years but Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 4:29). This mistake was used by Gustav Vasa who claimed that according to the text, Belshazzar was punished because of pride and extravagance, not because he had desecrated treasures from the Temple. Even though Belshazzar knew what had happened to Nebuchadnezzar, he disdained God and desecrated the treasures through which the service of God was upheld in the Temple. As a consequence, he was punished. According to the king, neither Nebuchadnezzar nor Belshazzar was punished because of their confiscations, since God valued people over silver and gold. The gold and silver that was confiscated from churches and monasteries in Sweden were not taken in order to desecrate the divine, like Belshazzar had done, but rather in order to help the inhabitants in the kingdom. Silver and gold were used to serve the people¹⁷:

So it is clear for everyone who bothers to read the words in Daniel that neither Nebuchadnezzar nor Belshazzar were punished because of treasures made of silver or gold, because God values people more than gold or silver, but [were punished] because they ridiculed him, so dismay was

precipue ad audiendum verbum dei conuenire consuevit. Quapropter sicut domus propter homines ita etiam pecunia propter homines est. Ea de causa impius conuincitur qui vbi populo discrimen imminet argento ecclesiarum parcendum putat ut hostibus fortassis vel furibus in direptionem seruetur & pauperes proximi nostri quos christus diligi precepit & pro quibus mortuus est usque ad penuriam famis & sitis grauari debeant numquid domino de lapidibus & lignis magis quam de hominibus cura est,” HSH 17: 208.

¹⁶ The letter from Brask is referred to in the king’s reply, GR V: 168. On this discussion, see also Berntson, *Klostren och reformationen*, 307–08.

¹⁷ GR V: 69–170. This interpretation could be criticized since it does not do full justice to the text in Dan 5, where it says that Belshazzar was punished because of his paganism and his dismissal of the true God which was expressed in his desecration of the vessels from the Temple in Jerusalem.

the reason for their punishment and not gold or silver. But the gold and silver that has been taken from churches and monasteries here in Sweden were not taken in order to disgrace God like Belshazzar did, but to help the common man in the kingdom.¹⁸

Just like Laurentius Andreae, in his discourse on the biblical kings, the king claimed that the Service of God meant moral behaviour, something which could justify the confiscations from ecclesiastical institutions as long as the resources were used for a morally justifiable aim. The biblical kings and what they tell about God’s providence was in both the king’s and his opponents view regarded as normative for contemporary rulers. Since a certain way of acting was performed by Hezekiah, for example, it was also allowed for later righteous kings to perform the same policy. The punishment of non-righteous kings, such as Belshazzar, could also be used to present moral normative behaviour in a negative way. It was therefore necessary to gain power over the interpretation of such narratives.

Legitimizing the King as a New David or Moses: A Narrative of Suffering and Triumph

From the late 1530s the Swedish king began to use the biblical narratives in such a way as to more closely associate his own rule with biblical rulership and consequently also identify – for good or ill – the Swedish people with the Israelites.¹⁹ As has been emphasized, this typology was not new. It could rather be regarded as a revival of a fifteenth-century narrative in which rebellions against the union king were legitimized through analogies with Moses and the Maccabees. During the seventeenth century, for example in coronation sermons, this way of identifying the kingdom with ancient Israel as a way to connect the inhabitants with the state became quite common. According to this narrative, the king was described as a successor to the pious monarchs in the Old Testament – just like the Old Testament kings, the king was elected by God (and not by the people).²⁰ Despite the use of Old

18 “Szå är nw clartt aff Danielis ordt then ther will eller tagha siig szå stortt omak på och läsa them öffuer, att huarken Nabuchodonor eller Baltazar worde straffade for the gyldenne och silff clenodier Ty gud achter menniskiona mera än gull eller silff vtan for then hånnett som honum skedde aff them, så atth gudz forszmedilsze war szaken till theris straff, och ecke gull eller silff, Men thet gull och silff, szom her i Sverige aff kirkior och closter tagit är, är ecke tagit i then ackt, ath man skulle göra gudj ther naghon wanheder med szom Baltazar gjorde vtan hielpe then menigeman i riikit”, GR V: 169–70.

19 See Chapter 7 (Nils Ekedahl), 119–45.

20 See Nils Ekedahl, *Det svenska Israel. Myt och retorik i haquin spegels predikokonst*, Studia Rhetorica Upsaliensia (Hedemora: Gidlunds Förlag, 1999), 214–23; see also Nordberg, “Guds ställföreträdare förmedlad. Kungens i kröningspredikan från Gustav I till Karl XIV Johan,” 20, 33.

Testament leadership, this seventeenth-century perspective is not so obvious in, for example, Olaus Petri's (1493–1552) sermon at the coronation ceremony in 1528, when he described how a righteous king should behave. Just like the kings David and Solomon, the king was according to Olaus Petri entrusted to protect the true preaching of God's word and to protect the souls of the people. This exhortation was in the sermon connected to the introduction of the Reformation. It is argued that in the same manner as the king punishes evil bailiffs (*fogder*), he should also supervise bishops and clergy in his country when they neglect their duties, primarily the preaching of the Word of God "as they should",²¹ implying that it was the king's duty – for the sake of the Swedish people's souls – to uphold the decisions from the Diet in Västerås two years earlier, to preach only "the pure Word of God". In this sermon, unlike later sermons during coronations in Sweden, the king is not explicitly understood as God's substitute on earth. Rather, he is equated with his people. He is explained to have the same origin and be under the same juridical authority, and will deal judgments irrespective of ancestry and position. He is not king for his own sake but to protect God's peasantry (*allmoge*) and his fellow brethren. The emphasis on the king's equality with his brethren should be regarded as a way to legitimize the ruler.²² In the sermon, Olaus Petri also used the words in Deut 17:15, where God exhorts the Israelites to set a king over them who God will choose, one from their own brethren who is not a stranger to them. The message is therefore that this king was born in Sweden and is familiar with the customs and practices of this people, and will only see to the benefits of his own country and his fellow men.²³ In his sermon Olaus Petri describes how the land was plagued by foreign people, and how God by his grace gave them a king that saved them from their enemies and created calmness in the land. Consequently, the rule of Gustav Vasa is a warrant to keep this calm. Even though the sermon does not describe Gustav Vasa in person as God's substitute, his royal office as a king is instituted by God.²⁴

However, the kingship ideology is rather different in Gustav Vasa's own propaganda from the late 1530s. At this time the king began more openly to counter Catholic tendencies among the nobility and clergy. Gustav Vasa had been ruling for almost twenty years, and by this time he would have been more confident in his position than ever before. It had been decades since a Swedish king had ruled for such a long coherent time. Even though there had been some uprisings against his regime during the first ten years of his rule, the last seven years had

21 Olaus Petri, *Samlade Skrifter*, ed. Bengt Hesselmann vol. 1 (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1914), 321.

22 The sermon, entitled "En Christelighen formanig til Sweriges inbyggare vthropat j Vpsala offuer högmectig förstes konung Götzstaffz cröning 1528," is printed in Petri, *Samlade Skrifter*, 313–29.

23 Nordberg, "Guds ställföreträdare förmedlad," 52.

24 Nordberg, "Guds ställföreträdare förmedlad," 57.

been relatively calm. Concerning the church, the king had ceased to hold economic and juridical rights over it, but during the 1530s he had been anxious not to hasten the Reformation process too quickly. The change of attitude toward the more explicit Lutheran stand seen around the year 1540 had many causes, but one important factor is Gustav Vasa's change of chancellors. In 1538 the German official Conrad von Pyhy (c.1500–53) became head of the royal chancellery and in 1539 Georg Norman (d.1552/53), who was recommended by both Luther and Melancthon, was appointed as superintendent of the Swedish church. These German officials provided the kingdom with new continental ideals on absolute power over society and church. For example in his presumed Church Order from 1541 Norman portrayed Gustav Vasa as a new Joshua, the leader who brought the people from the desert and into the beloved land, who was called to fulfill the work begun during his predecessor St Eric, indicating that King Gustav should be more honoured than the twelfth-century saintly king.²⁵

This perspective is present in a royal proclamation from the king to inhabitants in the province of Uppland in February 1540.²⁶ The letter commenced with the king reminding the people of how kindly he had governed them during his reign. In a manner similar to the holy Moses among the children of Israel, he had liberated them from the Danish tyrant Christian II. Before his regime, the country was apathetic, the fields were unploughed. He also reminded them about the Danish king Christian's cruel regime, of how the people had been betrayed by the bishops, until the king himself, through God's power in his own person and with a small army, rebelled against the cruel murderer and tyrant Christian. After this followed a good peace and the fields bloomed. However, despite all this, the people were not grateful. Now people seemed to think about themselves as schooled and as better learned than the king and other good people in the kingdom, as if they thought they were doctors in exegetics. According to the speech, they wanted to push forward their own rules and teaching and cling to the treason of the old bishops and “papists” rather than the true living God and his gospel. Against these attempts to teach the king how to rule and how to believe, he firmly replied: “No, not like that. Watch your houses, fields, acres, wives, children, animals, and kettle, and don't put us on any trials or speak against our rule or against the religion.”²⁷ Since the king was on God's and justice's behalf, and by all natural reasons, a Christian king on earth, he placed rules and orders for all his subjects. If they wanted to avoid his stern repercussion and anger, they should obey and hear his royal decrees, in both worldly matters and in religion

25 He was also designated as a leader called to Misspelled: “fulfill” the work of his predecessor Saint Eric. According to Norman, Gustav Vasa should therefore be revered more than Saint Eric, see Åke Andrén, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria 3. Reformationstid* (Stockholm: Verbum, 1999), 97.

26 The letter was issued in Uppsala many weeks previously, 8 December 1539, GR XII: 252–59.

27 “Neij icke så, Wackter i edre huss Akker, engh, hustruer, barn, få och booschaff, och setter oss inthet måll, eller teell vdij wort regimente, eller religionen,” GR XII: 256.

(Fig. 8.1). In this speech, Moses is mentioned only initially, but the whole narrative used is based on the story in Exodus, of how the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness and longed to return to the pots of meat in Egypt.

Old Testament kings and leaders such as Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and Joshua are also referred to in a royal speech to the estates at the Diet in Västerås in 1544. By this time the king's evangelical stand and the visitations that followed in the early 1540s had met resistance from peasants in southern Sweden, in the provinces of Småland and Östergötland. The uprising known as the Dacke rebellion lasted from 1542 to 1543 and was eventually won by the king. During this rebellion the peasants had demanded old traditions concerning both taxes as well as the old Latin mass and sacramentals such as anointing oil and holy water. Furthermore, the confiscations of church silver were criticized. This conservative stance made the king even more determined to quell the older beliefs and the papists in the country.²⁸

In his speech the king proclaimed that the peasants had been betrayed by preaching about holy water, salt, palms, wax, masses in Latin, cult of saints, and pilgrimage. They had been told that there should be more power in these ceremonies than in the Holy Gospel, in honest faith in Christ, in mass in Swedish, and in love of authorities and their neighbours.²⁹ However, these ceremonies were “delusions” (*villfarelser*) invented by humans and were not even mentioned in the Bible. Rather, the Bible said that the king was elected by God to defend the right teaching concerning God. In the speech the king gave examples from the “pious and holy kings and princes” (*the fromme och helige konunger och furster*) in the Old Testament, like Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, David, Jehoshaphat, Ezekiel, and Cyrus the Great.³⁰ It is well worth noting that leaders such as Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and Joshua are actually designated as “kings and princes”.

According to the speech, the Bible mentioned multiple righteous kings but did not mention saints at all.³¹ On the basis of the Bible, it was declared that these misuses were against the word of God and dangerous for their souls, and therefore should be abolished.³² No one was obliged to obey these ceremonies, but only to indulge in the true knowledge of God, which included a firm belief in God and love of their neighbour, godliness, obedience, and unanimity. It was upon these things

²⁸ Berntson, *Mässan och armborstet*, 330–33.

²⁹ SRA 1:1, 342.

³⁰ SRA 1:1, 343–44.

³¹ Consequently, the clergy and educated people have gathered together with the king and discussed the articles that the common man is annoyed about and deluded about. These articles are: the abolishment of mass in Latin, carrying monstrances, the use of holy water, and the reduction of some “saints days,” SRA 1:1: 347.

³² SRA 1:1: 349–50. It was papists and “zealots” who had introduced ceremonies and rituals into the mass and the hours, through which they had led people from the right path. They have done this to gain more offerings and interest from simple folk, against what is instituted by God, and only because of their own greed.

that their souls' and lives' beatitude and welfare were dependent, not upon holy water and other "misuses".³³ Here the righteous kings were used in combination with the theological notion of *sola scriptura*, denoting that what was not founded in the Bible could not claim the same divine authority as could institutions such as kings elected by God to give providence to His people. Consequently, in comparison with Olaus Petri's coronation sermon, in which the king's legitimacy was based on his origin among the ordinary people, here the king is elected by God to defend the right faith in the same manner as Moses and David. In this speech the Jerusalem Code functioned as what church historian Berndt Hamm has termed a "normative centering", that is a tendency during the late Middle Ages and the Reformation to create a clearer concentration in the sprawling piety culture, to what was deemed as most necessary for salvation,³⁴ implying that obedience to the king was more important for salvation than traditional church piety.

During these years a similar typology was used in the main symbol of royal power at this time. On Gustav Vasa's ceremonial royal sword (*rikssvärd*) of 1541 we find similar allusions to biblical leaders in their painstaking road to triumph and deliverance of their people. This sword was ordered through the German merchant Claus Heyder, and was bought in Augsburg in 1541 to function as ceremonial sword.³⁵ On each side is depicted Gustav Vasa's shield of armour.³⁶ On one side of the blade, after the text "Im E(rsten)m// Pu(ch m)ose//A(m 37 C)ap:", follow episodes from the life of the Old Testament Joseph. We find how Joseph recounts his dream (Gen 37:5–11), is thrown into the cistern (Gen 37:24), is sold to the Midianite merchants (Gen 37:28), runs away from Potiphar's Wife (Gen 39:12), and is imprisoned by Potiphar who has been informed about Joseph's presumed assault on his wife (Gen 39:16–20) (Fig. 8.2). Furthermore, we find Pharaoh dreaming about the fat and meagre cows (Gen 41:1–7), the brothers

³³ SRA 1:1: 362–63. The papists and the bishops have through this teaching enhanced rebellions and betrayed the people for several hundred years with things invented by humans that go against God and his scripture, for example masses for the souls, indulgences, pilgrimage, worship of saints, holy water, salt, wax or candles, monastic life, and other forms of "devilish imaginations" (*djävulsspökelser*), only for their own benefit and shameful greed, SRA 1:1: 363–63. Neither the recipients of this proclamation nor their fathers had known what was the true Service of God and what God really demands. Bishops and clergy should perform spiritual things, just like the first bishops in Sweden, Saints Sigfrid, Ansgar, Henrik, David, and others, SRA 1:1: 364–65.

³⁴ See Berndt Hamm and Robert James Bast, *The Reformation of Faith in the Context of Late Medieval Theology and Piety: Essays by Berndt Hamm*, Studies in the History of Christian Thought 110 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 1–46.

³⁵ Rudolf Cederström, *De svenska riksregalierna och kungliga värdighetstecken* (Stockholm: Livrustkammaren, 1942), 87.

³⁶ The following account is based on Rudolf Cederström, Karl Erik Steneberg, and Livrustkammaren, *Regalieutställningen i Livrustkammaren*, Livrustkammarens Utställningar 6 (Stockholm: Livrustkammaren, 1938), 180.

arriving in Egypt to buy grain (Gen 42), and Benjamin being accused of stealing the silver cup (Gen 44:14–17). The last motifs in the story of Joseph, found close to the sharp tip of the sword, depict how the patriarch Jacob goes to Egypt (Gen 46), how his coffin is carried away (Gen 50:7–11), and finally Jacob's grave at Machpelah (Gen 50:13).

Fig. 8.2: Engraving reproducing the incised decoration on Gustav Vasa's ceremonial royal sword (*rikssvärd*) of 1541. To the left, Joseph flees from Potiphar's Wife (Gen 39:12). In the middle, the royal emblem with the three crowns. To the right, Joseph is put in prison by Potiphar (Gen 39:16–20). The Royal Palace (Kungl. Skattkammaren), Stockholm.

The motifs on the other side of the blade commence with the text “Im Andern // Puch Mose // Am 3 Capi:”, after which we follow the life of Moses, beginning with him being called by God in the burning bush, his staff being transformed into a snake (Exod 4:3) (Fig. 8.3), his encounter with the Egyptian priests (Exod 7:10–12), the plagues of Egypt (Exod 7–11), Pharaoh's army perishing, and finally the Israelites crossing the sea (Exod 14:26–30).

Fig. 8.3: Engraving reproducing the incised decoration on Gustav Vasa's ceremonial royal sword (*rikssvärd*) of 1541. To the left, God appears in the burning bush before Moses who stands to the right, his staff being transformed into a snake (Exod 4:3; 7:10–12). The Royal Palace (Kungl. Skattkammaren), Stockholm.

It is generally assumed that the motif corresponded to Gustav Vasa's own life story, depicting how Joseph after hard trials reaches power and honour and how Moses delivers his people from Egypt.³⁷ Consequently, the theological message conveyed on the sword is of the significance of humility, struggle, and simplicity as parts of God's providence with righteous and eventually triumphant kings and their people. The fact that Gustav Vasa had not reached the throne through royal descent but had rather been raised to power leading a rebellion against a tyrant king after being imprisoned, exiled, and discouraged by his people, was consequently not obscured in the propaganda but rather was used to present his rule as a part of God's plan, as a foundation for the king's double redemptive work. Since Gustav Vasa's own shield of armour is depicted on the sword, it is probable that it was not only bought for him but was in fact ordered for its special purpose.³⁸

This narrative involving the king's simplicity and his painstaking struggle toward deliverance also appears in the king's last speech, delivered at Stockholm castle in June 1560. In this speech the king reminded the estates about how he had wandered around in simple clothes in their woods and stables forty years earlier, and through the help of God, who often uses a simple power to defeat stubborn hearts, he was helped just as God had used the young and simple David, when he was serving as his father's shepherd, and gave him victory against the mighty Goliath, later raising him to royal glory.³⁹ In the speech David is explicitly used to explain how God has helped an unworthy man such as the king, but not for his own sake, "but for your sake, you good Swedes, so that in your hearts you should know to give him an eternal thanksgiving."⁴⁰ Here David is used in the same way

37 See Cederström, *De svenska riksregalierna och kungliga värdighetstecken*, 87–88; Andrén, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria 3. Reformationstid*, 57. Lena Rangström, *Dödens teater. Kungliga svenska begravningar genom fem århundraden* (Stockholm: Livrustkammaren, 2015), 26. The sword belongs to the royal regalia in the Treasury in the Royal Palace in Stockholm and is under authority of the Legal, Financial, and Administrative Services Agency (Kammarkollegiet).

38 Cederström, Steneberg, and Livrustkammaren, *Regalieutställningen i Livrustkammaren*, 6, 180.

39 Peder Svart, *Åhrapredikning öfver then fordom stormechtigaste, oöfverwinnerlige och högloffligaste furstes och herres K. Göstafs, Sweriges, Göthes, Wändes etc konungz och faders christelige lijk* (Stockholm: Sylvester Phrygius, 1620), 83–84.

40 ". . . vhan för edre skuld j gode Swenske, på the tatt j aff hietet skulle weeta honom een ewigh tacksägelse," Svart, *Åhrapredikning öfver then fordom stormechtigaste*, 84. The speech is not preserved in its original form but is referred to in Bishop Peder Svart's funeral sermon. However, even though these words are not derived from an original source, it is not unlikely that they were actually included in the king's speech. According to the account of the final days of the king, the vicar in Stockholm is said to have reminded the king about his last speech, where he compared himself with David by referring to the simplicity of the king when he came to power, just like David when he had tended his father's sheep, HH 20: 137. Furthermore, in the acts from the diet, we have a short script with summaries of the propositions which were supposed to be delivered to the estates at the Diet, and this list commences with the king reminding them about the repulsive situation that faced the kingdom in the days of King Christian II in a time when no one other than Gustav

as Joseph and Moses, as examples of God's providence in raising a simple person to kingship in order to save his people.

In the funeral sermon for Gustav Vasa, in Uppsala cathedral on 21 December 1560, this discourse was used by Bishop Peder Svart who emphasized that God often torments his people and make them undergo sufferings before they are elevated to glory. This happened to the pious Joseph, who was sold to the Egyptians before he became a prince, and this also happened to Moses, who fled to Midian for years before he became leader of the Hebrews. According to the sermon, God had acted in the same way with Gustav Vasa. Just like Joseph, Gustav had been a prisoner, and just like Moses he had been exiled, and in his exile had been tormented by rumours of how his people were oppressed by the Danes.⁴¹ Similarly to Moses, he met resistance from his own people when he returned to his land. Just like Moses who tried in vain to reconcile the two fighting Hebrews (Exod 2:13–14), “our Swedish Moses and saviour” (*thenne vår Swenske Mosi och förlossare*) had severe problems in uniting the Swedes against the Danish oppression.⁴²

As may be noted, in his sermon Bishop Svart was actually referring to the motifs in Gustav Vasa's ceremonial sword of 1541, indicating that the king's simplicity and his struggles in life should not be regarded as signs of weakness or illegitimacy but rather as proof of his righteousness.⁴³ The correspondence

came to the rescue, and how he later helped his subjects to both spiritual and corporeal welfare by giving them the correct and unadulterated knowledge of God, SRA 1:2: 672–73.

⁴¹ Svart, *Ährapredikning öffwer then fordom stormechtigaste*, 57–58.

⁴² Svart, *Ährapredikning öffwer then fordom stormechtigaste*, 60. However, he began his struggle against the oppressor Christian II, who was in alliance not only with the emperor but also with other princes in Europe and in liaison with “the mighty and huge Goliath and Antichrist, the pope in Rome” (“then wäldighe store Goliath och Antichrist påwen j Room”), *ibid.*, 62, thus once again indirectly comparing Gustav Vasa with King David.

⁴³ In the sermon the king was also compared with King Solomon. According to Bishop Svart, the king lay beyond all else in his wisdom. Therefore the words from the Queen of Sheba to King Solomon were also applicable to King Gustav, that his wisdom and wealth far exceeded the rumours she had been told in her country (1 Kgs 10:7), Svart, *Ährapredikning öffwer then fordom stormechtigaste*, 70. Yet, the king regarded himself merely as a humble servant, thereby carrying the same spirit that inhabited the heart of King David when he said, after seeing the angel of the Lord standing between heaven and earth with a drawn sword in his hand, stretched out over Jerusalem, “even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed; but as for these sheep, what have they done?” (1 Chr 21:16–17; in the sermon strangely attributed to 1 Sam 23). It was through this humble spirit that the kings send out letters to the church leaders and exhorted them to admonish the people to penance and repentance, Svart, *Ährapredikning öffwer then fordom stormechtigaste*, 82. At the end of the sermon, the bishop concludes that the king now leads a better life, together with the angels, the prophets, holy kings, apostles, martyrs, and with all the chosen. Furthermore, his bodily remains, together with the remains of his two deceased queens, are transported to the cathedral, in a way that he himself had decided in accordance with examples given by holy fathers and patriarchs, as with Moses and Abraham, Svart, *Ährapredikning öffwer then fordom stormechtigaste*, 86. Svart is especially concerned about how Abraham bought his grave in Hebron and how

between the motifs on the ceremonial sword of 1541 and the funeral sermon is enhanced by the fact that it was probably this sword that was ritually used during the funeral by the Lord High Constable Svante Sture who, standing before Prince Eric (1533–77), loudly proclaimed that King Gustav was dead while three times turning the sword and pointing its sharp tip to the floor. After delivering the sword to the successor Prince Eric the latter was instructed to use it and to rule in the same manner as his father. The ceremonial rendition of this sword, with its Old Testament motifs, signified the transference of royal authority to the new king, Eric XIV (r.1560–68).⁴⁴

The line of arguments in the sermon and the sword is that the similarities between the rule of Gustav Vasa and the rulership of righteous biblical leaders such as Moses, David, and Solomon, prove that the deceased king was elected by God in his great providence to rescue His people from oppression and torments. The ceremonial rendition of the sword to the royal successor could be regarded as the transference of this narrative to future kingship.

Later Use of the Narrative of Deliverance

The narrative of the hardship which righteous biblical kings may have to endure was also actualized in Archbishop Laurentius Petri's sermon during Eric XIV's coronation in June 1561. Besides emphasizing the importance of people showing obedience to the secular authorities – which was made with reference to biblical kings who had cared for true religion, such as David, Josiah, Hezekiah, and Jehoshaphat⁴⁵ – he also explained that all authority must also meet difficulties and worries and that it is

he and Sara were buried there, later together with Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph: Gen 23; 49; 50:24; Heb 11:22; Exod 13:19; John 24:32.

44 Cederström, Steneberg, and Livrustkammaren, *Regalietställningen i Livrustkammaren*, 6, 177.

45 In the sermon kings such as Saul and Jeroboam were also mentioned, who due to their neglect concerning the right religion, saw the land being punished by various plagues. God cared for the land more preferably when David and other righteous kings, which included even pagan kings such as Nebuchadnezzar and Christian kings as Constantine and Charlemagne, sought God's glory and suppressed idolatry. If a ruler does this, his rule will be sustained just like David's, Laurentius Petri, *Een christeligh predican om werldzligh Öffuerheet* (Stockholm: Amund Laurentzon, 1561), 11–14, 17. Here Moses appears not as a ruler but more as the law-giver and judge, for example in his advice for judgements in Deut 23 and in receiving advice from his father-in-law Jethro, to select capable men to be appointed as judges for the people (Exod 18:22), Petri, *Een christeligh predican om werldzligh Öffuerheet*, 23, 27. To emphasize the virtue of bravery, he gave as an example how David went into battle with Goliath, who had terrified the Israelite army, thus giving them back their courage, and he attacked the enemy bravely (*manligha*). According to Laurentius Petri people tend to adapt to living examples which appear before their eyes rather than according to words or orders, Petri, *Een christeligh predican om werldzligh Öffuerheet*, 61.

impossible to be a ruler unless he receives comfort and strength from God. This was exemplified with Moses complaining about the hardship of ruling over the people (*almogha*) of Israel in the desert, that he was unable to carry all the people by himself, a burden that was too heavy for him (Num 11:14).⁴⁶ Still, despite all efforts, the regent does not receive any gratitude but rather reprisals, hatred, and persecution. Laurentius Petri related this to King David as he complains in Ps 34 and 120 about the rebellion performed by his son Absalom. Consequently, many princes were not joyful when they were called to government. While Saul hid himself (1 Sam 10:21), Moses was skeptical about being leader of the people (*almogha*) of Israel and bringing them out of Egypt (Exod 3:11) – for even though he was called by God with words and signs, he strived to escape, claiming that he had not the talent for ruling (Exod 4:10).⁴⁷

Even though this narrative on God's providence related to problems facing biblical leaders does not seem to play a dominant role in royal propaganda during the rest of the sixteenth century,⁴⁸ it was sufficiently alive to be used at the Reformation jubilee in 1621. In Sweden there were no official celebrations commemorating Martin Luther in 1617 – instead the Reformation was celebrated in 1621 in memory of Gustav Vasa's election as regent in 1521. Consequently, the celebrations were dominated by the memory of Gustav Vasa's double redemptive work, in liberating the kingdom from both the Danes and the Catholic Church. The celebrations also fulfilled the political function of giving prominence to his grandson King Gustav II Adolf who had inherited the throne in 1611 and had been crowned in 1617. The connection to the Reformation was of utmost importance for the young king since his uncle, the former Swedish King Sigismund of Poland, who had been deposed as king by Gustav II Adolf's father Karl IX in 1598, still had claims on the Swedish throne. The fact that King Sigismund was a Catholic had been widely used by Karl IX during the civil war that ended with Sigismund's defeat. Therefore, the preservation of the Evangelical faith, which Gustav II Adolf's grandfather and namesake had brought into the country, could be regarded as a basic theological foundation for his rule.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Petri, *Een christeligh predican om werldzligh Öffuerheet*, 62.

⁴⁷ *Een christeligh predican om werldzligh Öffuerheet*, 64–65.

⁴⁸ Because of his short reign (1560–68) Eric XIV did not develop grand narratives about his regime in the same way as his father had done. As a king he was deposed by his younger brothers, and in 1568 his brother Johan III took over the rule. Unlike his father, Johan III did not allow any chronicler to describe his life, but in his propaganda he was described as a liberator from tyranny and oppression represented by the rule of his older brother, Lars-Olof Larsson, *Arvet efter Gustav Vasa: en berättelse om fyra kungar och ett rike* (Stockholm: Prisma, 2005), 302. The funeral sermon for Johan III in February 1594, held by Archbishop Abraham Angermannus, is not preserved, but we do know that he preached about Job 19:25, "For I know that my redeemer liveth," SRA 3:1: 272.

⁴⁹ On the jubilee of 1621, see Carl Axel Aurelius, *Luther i Sverige. Svenska lutherbilder under tre sekler* (Skellefteå: Artos, 1994), 18–22.

According to the royal edict issued before the jubilee, certain biblical texts were to be read and preached in the churches in the kingdom during the days of celebration. The edict stipulated that these texts, all of which were from the Old Testament, were to be read and preached in the towns' churches (in the countryside, at least two of the readings were mandatory). During the morning on the first day of celebration the text was from Exod 1, the story about the fraud and tyranny that the Israelites suffered under pressure from the "impious Pharaoh," and at noon the people should hear about the exodus from Egypt through the ocean and the destruction of the Egyptian army (Exod 14). At vespers the story was read about how the children of Israel "with a loud voice and with timbrels gave thanks to God on behalf of the liberation out of the Egyptian house of bondage" (Exod 15).⁵⁰ During matins the text was derived from 2 Chr 19–20, telling how King Jehoshaphat reformed both church and politics and about his wars against the children of Moab and the Ammonites. During the second day of celebration the morning readings were from Deut 8, where the Lord reminds the Israelites how he led them in the wilderness to humble and test them and to discern whether or not they would keep his commandments. During the third day the text came from Deut 11, verses 8–9 with God's exhortation to Israel to observe all the commandments he had given them so that they should have the strength to walk into the Promised Land, flowing with milk and honey, and live there for a long time.⁵¹

As Carl Axel Aurelius has concluded, the overall aim of these biblical texts is to develop the theological significance of the theme of the jubilee: Gustav Vasa's double redemptive work. The preachers were also expected to explain the Swedish Reformation and interpret both Gustav Vasa's and his grandson's regime in light of God's redemptive acts with ancient Israel. This was expected to give the listeners insights into how both subjects and authority would reach a rightful relation to God.⁵²

In the court chaplain Johannes Botvidi's sermons during the celebrations he also emphasized the similarities between the Moses story and Gustav Vasa's lifetime achievement. In his exposition of Exod 14, he connected the story of how the Israelites were saved from the Egyptian army with God's way of helping their forefathers from the Danish oppression a hundred years ago. A significant part of this story is how Gustav Vasa actually suffered in his struggle: "What he suffered when he was abducted from the kingdom, and how he came back again, is wondrous to read."⁵³ In

50 "Quemadmodum enim Moses, cum filiis Israel & voce & tympanis Deo gratulatur, pro admiranda liberatione e domo servitutis Aegyptiacae," *Analysis sacrorum textuum in Festo Jubilæo Gostaviano* (Stockholm, 1621), Bb3.

51 "Quemadmodum enim Moses," *Analysis sacrorum textuum in Festo Jubilæo Gostaviano*, Bb4.

52 Aurelius, *Luther i Sverige*, 23.

53 "Hwadh han här öffuer leed, ther han bleff bortfördh aff rijket, och huru han kom igen, är vnderligt til at läsa," Johannes Botvidi, *Tree jubelpredikningar, om then reformation, som skedde för hundra år sedan vthi sverige, bådhæ i regementet och religionen, genom . . . K. Göstaff Erickson, . . . hållen anno 1621* (Stockholm: Christoffer Reusner, 1622), 15.

Botvidi's exposition this story reveals God's omnipotence, how he deposits and exalts kings, and how he gives kingdoms to whomever He wants.⁵⁴ This perspective also recurs in the exposition of Deut 11, where Moses exhorts the people to praise God and follow His commandments because of the providence He has shown, in relation to how God miraculously helped Gustav Vasa: "Was it not a miracle and the Lord God's deed, that an empty-handed prisoner would execute all this against such a potentate who not only owned enough land and kingdoms, but was also allied with the prime rulers in Christianity at that time?"⁵⁵

The miraculous aspect of Gustav Vasa's story actually indicated that it was part of God's plan which cannot be defeated, for no one will be able to fight against God (Acts 5:39). In his exposition of 2 Chr 19–20 Botvidi emphasized that, just like Jehoshaphat, Gustav Vasa had not only supplied the land with necessities but also brought order and righteousness when he reformed the religion. In his work to bring God's word into the light again, he had consequently acted as God's instrument.⁵⁶

The discourse about Gustav Vasa receiving divine "inspiration" is related by Aurelius to Lutheran theology, based on the thought that God acts from various *virī heroici*, especially through certain regents who are given inspiration and thereby create great deeds.⁵⁷ However, as we have seen, a similar narrative was used both before and during the Reformation; even the Swedish leaders in the fifteenth century were actually thought to be inspired by God in the same manner as the Old Testament kings. Even though this code was transformed through the Lutheran confessionalization, especially through the idea that the king – rather than the de-generated church – represented the true spiritual continuity in the kingdom, the sole use of Old Testament leaders such as Moses as typologies for secular rulers was not fully dependent on Lutheran theology.

Conclusion

In this article it has been argued that the use of Old Testament leaders as typologies for contemporary kingship was important for Early Modern Swedish regents in their power legitimization. These narratives could be used in many ways. They could justify singular infringements in the church, but biblical stories of the deeds of non-righteous kings

⁵⁴ Botvidi, *Tree jubelpredikningar*, 15.

⁵⁵ "War thet icke itt mirakel och Herrans Gudz wärck, at en fånge tomhänder skulle sådant vthrätta, emoot en sådan potentat, som icke allenast hadhe land och rijker nogh, vhten ock war befryndad, medh the förnämste herrer i Christenheten på then tiden?" Botvidi, *Tree jubelpredikningar*, 33.

⁵⁶ Botvidi, *Tree jubelpredikningar*, 25, 27, 30.

⁵⁷ Aurelius, *Luther i Sverige*, 31–32, 36.

could also be used to de-legitimize the same infringements. Since the theological value of these typologies was shared by both Catholics and Evangelicals, the transformation of them into Early Modern Lutheran rulership ideologies made it possible to legitimize the new regime through the use of the familiar code.

Specific attention has been directed toward the use of biblical narratives of righteous biblical leaders who through struggle, rebellion, and sometimes even suffering acted as inspired by God, as His instruments on earth to carry out His divine plan of deliverance of His people. In a theological perspective a narrative of the hardships faced by for example Moses, Joseph, and Gustav Vasa could be used to emphasize the impact of humility, and the acceptance of labours and hardships as part of God's plan in His divine providence, something that could inspire both subjects and authorities. However, since the late fifteenth century until the early seventeenth century this narrative was primarily used for political reasons. It served to legitimize rulers such as Engelbrekt and Gustav Vasa who had reached power not through royal descent but rather through rebellions against a lawfully chosen king. Furthermore, it emphasized that a seemingly instable government could be regarded as an exponent of God's providence. During his later reign Gustav Vasa was not only inspired by Moses and David for example, but also, as it were, merged with them. Now they functioned not only as a legitimization of royal authority, but also as a de-legitimization of Catholic institutions. Just like leaders such as Moses and David, the king is chosen by God for a higher cause, in order to deliver His people from the evilness of both Danes and Catholics. The political moral is therefore that despite temporary weakness and struggle experienced by the leader, he was actually chosen as God's instrument to rule the realm, and just like the Israelites, the Swedes ought to respect this holy rulership in order to create order in the land floating with milk and honey.

Fig. 9.0: Model of the aedicula surrounding the Holy Sepulchre, brought from The Holy Land to Denmark in 1674. National Museum (Nationalmuseet), Copenhagen.