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Ethical principles as the basis of governance in the works of Johann Weber *Janus Bifrons* and *Lectio principum*

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Abstract

Our study deals with two works by Johann Weber, a pharmacist and mayor of the town Prešov, in which he tried to create an image of a virtuous ruler and governor who cares about the welfare of his people and the whole country. It is a physiological-political mirror (*Specullum Physico Politicum*) written in German and supplemented by Latin, forming the first part of a political trilogy. In the trilogy, Weber describes the qualities a ruler should possess, likening them to the various parts of the human body. The second part of the trilogy, *Lectio principum*, which is textually more complete and written both in German and Latin. Both are regnal mirrors, and contain ideas about governance in the 17th century.

Keywords: ethical principles, ruling mirrors, values, virtues, Prešov

Introduction

The subject of our research are two works by one of the most important figures of the cultural, social, and scientific life of Prešov in the 17th century, Johann Weber. Several valuable publications have been written about the life and work of this important personality, which are included in particular academic studies and translations (Bartunek, 1984, 1990, 2001, 2012; Brodňanská & Koželová, 2017; Brodňanská, Koželová & Juríková, 2019; Bubryák, 2006; Erdös, 2017; Gluchman, 2017), as well as other popular and educational texts by other authors. The two works mentioned above are part of a trilogy with political themes. The first part, entitled *Janus Bifrons. Seu Speculum Physico-Politicum. Das ist Natürlicher Regenten-Spiegel,* was published in 1662, the second, under the title *Lectio principum*, in 1665 and the third,*Wappen der königlichen Stadt Eperies*, was published in 1668. The common themes and shared genre with the regnal mirrors of the first two works were the reason for their comparison and subsequent analysis in terms of the ethical principles of the seventeenth-century regal personality.

The period of Johann Weber's life and work is a distinct epoch in the transitional phase from feudalism to capitalism, between the Renaissance and the Enlightenment (Böttcher & Geerdts, 1983, p. 131). There is a merging of the ideas of the Renaissance and the following Enlightenment, with an anti-Reformation, metaphysical, and neo-Enlightenment worldview on the rise. The defence of sovereignty as a "divine right" takes centre stage with the interests of the state overriding all other concerns (Staatsräson) (Böttcher & Geerdts, 1983, p. 132). Thinking about the primary national interest is philosophically related to the Stoicism of the ancient philosophers Plato, Pythagoras, and Socrates.

The relationship to God played a fundamental role in the 17th century because it was supposed to help man cope with the hardships of life. The relationship to God as the embodiment of the harmony of the universe was seen as a virtue, irrespective of creed. Patterns and examples of human behaviour in the light of contemporary views began to appear in literature and instead of individual characters, certain stock figures whose thinking and actions were typical of specific social classes, came to the fore. The first half of the 17th century sees a coming to terms with social, political, and ethical-moral issues in the aftermath of war. The theme of the relationship to reality, the relationship to God, the theme of the meaning of human

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existence, occupies a prominent place and reflections on the interrelationships of the social classes fall into the background.

The next stage of development reflects on issues of human history from the perspective of social and religious groups. Some authors begin to sympathize with the views of certain bourgeois or bourgeois-plebeian estates.

Research corpus – Weber's ruling mirrors

Johann Weber (1612–1684), a pharmacist and mayor of the town Prešov, who took office in 1661, evaluated his year in office on Sunday, 5 March 1662 in the main church after the morning sermon. His recitation was published in the same year by Brewer's printers in Levoča. It is a "physico-political mirror" (*Specullum Physico Politicum*) written in German and Latin, which forms the first part of a political trilogy, i.e., a ruler's mirror. At the time of the publication of The Political Mirror, Weber was at the height of his social career. He was the town's mayor and had already held high positions in the town's leadership in the previous years. His numerous connections to the Hungarian nobility are reflected in the work itself, where he mentions, for example, the wife of Palatine Wesselényi, Archbishop Szelepchényi, attending the baptism of his children. As a representative of the city, he often visited Bratislava (Pressburg) and Vienna (Wien), even attending the royal coronation of Emperor Leopold I in Pressburg.

His high status among the society of the time is also evidenced by congratulatory letters from friends and colleagues, e.g., Jan Müller, a German parish pastor in Prešov, who wrote: "May God let you run the office for many years to come, so that justice may be felt far and wide in our dear city! Praise reason in your office, in all the land of Hungary! Written from a sincere heart to his honoured master and friend Johann Müller, German preacher in Prešov" (Weber, 1662). Another original text is the congratulatory letter of David Spielnberger, a doctor and pharmacist from Levoča, who used polysemy in his congratulatory message and humorously linked Weber's surname with his activities: *May Weber*[3] *weave*[4] *our Prešov well until God breaks the thread of his life* (Weber, 1662).

Janus Bifrons, together with *Lectio principum*, can be classified in the context of early modern literature and philosophical themes with secular doctrinal prose and the literary genre of regal mirrors. In the literature, a ruler mirror is defined as a text that contains challenges to the (mostly secular) ruler and refers to the moral regulation of the ruler's behaviour, which is usually justified religiously, but also deals with appropriate action to achieve political goals (Schmidt, 2022).

While in German territory, the writing of ruler mirrors had its tradition since the early Middle Ages, in Hungary, according to Bubryák (2003, p. 230), they appear only sporadically in this period (e.g. Andreas Pannonius) and begin to develop fully only from the 17th century onwards. Several ideas from the above-mentioned author also influenced Weber's work. The Slovak forerunner of ruler mirrors was Martin Rakovský, who published his work *On the Worldly Supremacy* in 1574 (Bartunek, 1984, p. 27).

Weber's reflections on the ethical principles of governance are related to the cultural and social thought of that epoch at the border between the Renaissance and the Enlightenment and, according to Bartunek (2012, p. 192), may have been influenced to some extent by Machiavelli's *The Prince* as well as by Weber's contemporary, John Locke. Bartunek is, however, inclined to think that Weber's real inspiration was "contemporary life itself, knowledge from behind the scenes of practical politics during his diplomatic missions, and certainly a sincere desire to present his views publicly..." His ethical reflections and philosophical orientation were also influenced by professors working at the Evangelical College in Prešov, especially Isaac Caban, Elias Ladiver, and Jan Bayer. These Wittenberg graduates

[3] Weber means Weaver.

[4] The verb *to weave*, translated into German *weben*, is thus a metaphor.

were at the same time pupils of the local teacher Jan Sperling and the atomist Daniel Sennert (Bartunek, 1984, p. 32).

Other sources of inspiration for Weber were the Spanish Franciscan Antonio Guevara with his princely mirror on Marcus Aurelius, published in Valladolid in 1529, and Diego de Saavedra Fajardo, to whom Weber refers several times in his books (Bubryák, 2003, pp. 230–231).

Janus Bifrons. Seu Speculum Physico-Politicum. Das ist Natürlicher Regenten-Spiegel (1662)

In *Janus Bifrons*, Weber describes the qualities a ruler should possess, likening them to various parts of the human body. Weber considers the ruler to be the king, the emperor, but also the leader of the city – the mayor, each of whom is obliged to strictly observe the law. Based on a thorough and detailed description, he analyses all the contemporary ethical principles of the ruler, supported by numerous examples from fables, but also from the Bible and the works of ancient authors. Weber here develops reflections on the religious, political, and ethical legitimacy of his office.

In it, he presents the ideal ruler, points out appropriate behaviour, warns against bad actions that could lead to tyranny and describes the performance of his tasks, each sequence relating to his time in office, and expressing the author's wish to appeal to the putative ruler (king, ruler), especially his, mostly religiously based, ethical principles of governance. The ruler himself may be identified in the text, or the text may refer to the general principles of any ruler for governing the country. The very naming of the genre is symbolic in the sense of control of the 'image in the mirror' by oneself or control of the 'image in the mirror' by observers, i.e., the people. The text is actually an outward presentation of oneself, which is at the same time connected with a description of one's ideas about governance. As he himself says: "Early this morning I presented [...] The Ruler's Mirror, in which I described a righteous and good-doing ruler in the character of a physician, father, pilot, and shepherd, for the reasons I give below" (Weber, 2021, p. 13).

In his *Janus Bifrons*, Weber presents the ideal qualities/virtues of the ruler, i.e., the person responsible for the administration of the state, the county, and the city, likening them to individual parts of the body based on their dominant function, which together form an indivisible unity. If each part of the body performs its function responsibly, the body will function as a unified whole, and by working together it is possible to achieve an ideal country with happy subjects and rulers.

To the different parts, Weber advises the following virtues: the head, as the seat of reason, represents wisdom; the brain, wit, good sense, and alertness; ears, the ability to listen, to decide according to law and not arbitrariness; eyes, openness to God and the strength not to turn one's eyes away from the truth, to watch not only over the subjects but also the wicked; vigilance; watchfulness; the nose, to know oneself, to decide patiently; the mouth, that the ruler must tell the truth, be affable, silent, pronounced promises must be kept, not to speak much but reasonably and intelligibly, the throat and oesophagus represent restraint and moderation; the back bears the weight of official duties, responsibility and humility; the hands symbolize piety in times of peace and war, diligence, protection of subjects, pious with sword in hand; the chest symbolizes protection of subjects, facing the enemy; the breast, honour and piety; the heart, grace, kindness, warmth, compassion, generosity; the spleen: temperance, fighting greed, gallbladder and liver: taming anger and a wounded mind, self-control, stomach: continuous hard work, sacrifice, bladder: handling the burdens of ruling with dignity, intestines: External and internal purity, punishment of vices, kidneys: coherence, strength, invincibility in unity, feet: pillars of support, on which government also rests, observance of both secular and spiritual laws, knees: humility, ridding oneself of worldly luxury, breath: respect for the end of earthly pilgrimage, nobility and virtue, striving to perform good deeds.

These virtues are often repeated and intertwined throughout the text, and their basic purpose is to draw the reader's/listener's attention to their observance according to contemporary ideas of thinking and functioning of man in society, family, city, state. Their common element is piety, obedience and the denial of worldly pleasures and vices (stoicism). It also reflects the dominant interest of the state over the concerns of the individual.

It is a body of language addressed to a large audience, presenting accepted and even required ethical norms that address both the secular and religious realms. In his speech, Weber himself also evaluates and recommends, offering solutions that are good for the listener and with which he has his own good experience. He lectures, looks for alternative solutions, and, also, leaves room for the listener to make his own decision, but in the event of a bad decision, only he himself will be held responsible for it. He informs about things that he thinks may be new or important to the listener, and at the same time he argues and refers to the advice of those who have gone before him and who have been distinguished by wisdom and experience.

On the basis of the value concepts that serve as the basis for comparison, Weber comments on the values that appeal to listeners/readers. The values of the comparison base can be subjective, with one's own tastes playing a large role in this sphere, as well as social and institutional in that they relate mainly to the laws and norms of behaviour. At the same time, all three of these domains (Wagner, 2001, p. 201) are intertwined. Weber does this through various figurative naming, similes, extensive use of aphorisms, ancient and biblical quotations, phraseologies, antithesis within the argument, a symptomatic vocabulary characterized by a large number of nouns, as well as interesting syntax, typical of the work of the time. His text is therefore both scientific and literary at the same time.

Lectio principum (1665)

The *Lectio principum* of 1665 was written on the occasion of Weber's fourth confirmation as mayor of Prešov; in addition, Weber was granted a noble title (Bubryák, 2006, p. 191). The addressees of his second work are mentioned by name in the introduction to the book and are members of the town council – both internal and external (Weber, 2019, pp. 20–21).

In the introduction, Weber develops the idea of the importance of self-knowledge, which he argues forms the ethical basis of any good ruler: "If everyone judged and knew himself and behaved appropriately in his position, profession, office and in the affairs of his own life, there would be excellent order and consequent well-being" (Weber, 2019, p. 23). Unlike the first part of the trilogy, where he describes diseases as a bad state of mind and gives instructions on how to take care of the body, *Lectio principum* focuses mainly on the theme of prevention, intended for the upcoming generation.

Weber here presents his idea of fatherly virtues, offering a kind of guide to an honest way of life (Weber, 2019, p. 37). Dedication to work and duty, according to Weber, brings four kinds of benefit: 1. spiritual, 2. natural, 3. ethical, and 4. refinement of the spirit (Weber, 2019, p. 81). The ethical benefit, according to him, lies in the fact that the ruler sets a good example and discourages loafing. Of other virtues he singles out wisdom, stating that an unlearned king is a crowned beast of burden (Weber, 2019, p. 87), limiting the education of a ruler to the endeavour to acquaint himself with the state of government and state, to distinguish important from less important things, to attain the distinction of learning (Weber, 2019, p. 87). In learning and education, Weber finds the most important instruction in the art of government, for the ideal ruler desires to hold the reins, to work and do deeds, and not only to glory in his own name, [...] but to lead the country and the subject people (Weber, 2019, p. 87). He considers rulership to be the most difficult and strenuous office, and it is the duty of the ruler to serve it. This idea is often repeated in *Janus Bifrons*. He argues that he who holds the government in his hands is the greatest slave (Weber, 2019, p. 116). He considers envy, hatred, slander, faithlessness, ingratitude to be the burdens of ruling.

He reflects on the status of women, who, he believes, through study, perseverance, and exercise, can equal men. He highlights the positive qualities of women and puts them on a par with men, a very progressive idea considering how women were thought of at the time. As an example of an admirable woman, he cites his mother-in-law, Elisabeth von Weston,[5] a poet who excelled at languages and other liberal arts.

According to Weber, the ideal qualities of a ruler are the following: decision-making, power, great seriousness. On these rests the whole weight of government (Weber, 2019, p. 148), with the ruler's decision-making having the three aspects of character, education, and experience (Weber, 2019, p. 163). He regards the acceptance of obeisance from sycophants as a reprehensible quality and one which, according to Weber, may corrupt the reason of every ruler.

He depicts a reasonable ruler sitting on the symbol of Solomon's throne, which he considers a masterpiece. According to Weber, the very construction of the throne testifies to the necessity of a ruler to excel in the arts, wisdom, and decision-making. The throne was built of ivory, which he believes symbolizes integrity. The ivory is lined with gold and signifies permanence. The proverbial six degrees to the throne explain that the ruler should not rush, but on the contrary, consider everything calmly. The two armrests symbolize both divine and secular laws. The representation of lions is symbolic of a fearless heart.

Weber's German-language texts were not an exceptional phenomenon in Slovakia at that time. German-language books began to be published in our country almost immediately after the invention of the printing press. They existed alongside the manuscript form, which, however, was more focused on administrative acts (contracts, business books, chronicles, etc.). Such printed books dealt with mainly religious, educational, and social matters.

The above-mentioned works written in German date back to the second stage of German settlement in Europe in the 16th-17 th centuries, when anti-Habsburg uprisings took place in the present-day territory of Slovakia. The reasons for the settlement were, among other things, more liberal conditions compared to the persecution of Protestants in Germany. It should be highlighted that German was the second official language after Latin in the territory of Upper Hungary from the 16th century (Lichnerová, 2017, p. 11). For this reason, certain sentences in the text are also written in Latin and are given in order to complement the German text. In some cases, however, the author reaches for both languages simultaneously within a single sentence or utterance: "Therefore, we are left with the wise saying of Sirach in chapter 10,2: As is the ruler of the people, so are his officers; and as is the governor of a city, so are they that dwell therein. Qualis Rex, talis Grex. As is the king, so are his subjects"[6] (Ecc 10,2) (Weber, 2021, p. 15).

Research methodology and objectives

The study is based on a qualitative research strategy through the analysis of corpora from the 17 th century by which the first work was translated, initially, intra-lingually (from 17 th century German into contemporary German), then interlingually (from German into Slovak). For the second work, we based our translation on a translation from Latin into Slovak by Brodňanská, Koželová and Juríková (2019). The difficulty of the above analysis lies in the intersection of several fields of expertise – historical, cultural and social, philosophical and linguistic.

The aim of our research was to analyse the translated historical text from the point of view of the ethical principles of a ruler (king, knight-mayor) in the form of virtues, which, according to the author of the text, Johann Weber, each of them should possess in accordance with the contemporary mentality of man against the background of the social conditions of the time.

We followed the same procedure in the analysis of the second work, *Lectio principum*. The two works were then compared in order to find parallels and differences, taking into account,

[5] Also Westonia.

[6] Literal translation: as is the king, so is his flock.

besides their same subject matter, the fact that the works were written within three years of each other.

Weber's ethical principles and the virtuous ruler model

Justice

One of the basic social values is justice, which, as an ethical principle, includes respect for the other person, reflected in respect for his/her rights and equal treatment regardless of his/her social status. Weber reflects on this moral principle particularly in relation to listening to both litigants; the plaintiff and the defendant, referring to a Greek monarch, whose name he did not state: *Don't pass judgment prematurely, before both have been heard* (Weber, 2021, p. 25).

One of the organs that ensure this ethical principle is kept and guarantees the observance and implementation of a certain quantity of regulations are the ears, ears through which the ruler must obey without dividing people according to social and societal status. In the same way, he must listen to the poor as well as to the rich, to the small as well as to the large. The importance of this principle is confirmed by logical-rational reasoning at the level of religiosity, using images from the Bible, as can be seen in the following example: "God has preached in His word: In judgment, take no thought for the person. Hear the small as you would the great" (Deu 1,17). "Incline your ear to the poor without grudging" (Ecc 4,8) (Weber, 2021, p. 25).

Weber suggests in the next section that a good ruler must obey and render judgment based on appropriate laws, which must be legislatively anchored so that they cannot be abused. He draws attention to the words of St. Augustine: "A good judge/ruler does nothing by will but decides only according to the law and the right, and then all is well. If he can appeal to the written law, he can thereby avoid danger. For righteousness strengthens a nation, but sins corrupt a people (Prov 14,34). And these must be punished" (Weber, 2021, p. 28).

Another organ upon which he formulates rules of conduct and mentions the threat of punishment for deviation in that conduct are the hands, which rulers must remember in connection with law and justice. "...for God hath committed unto them the sword, to protect the godly without distinction, and to maintain justice for them; but to punish the wicked" (Weber, 2021, p. 59).

Weber knows that justice is one of the four strong pillars on which a just government is built. He likens these pillars to a four-wheeled carriage. "Just as there cannot be a chariot without four wheels, so there cannot be a republic without justice: wherever justice begins to disappear, there, according to divine prophecy, the country and the people will perish. If kings rule righteously, their power on earth is strengthened and their throne" (Weber, 2021, p. 59). Again, he uses examples from the Bible to support his argument. "David ruled over all Israel, and he ruled righteously over all the people" (1Chron 19,14).[7] "Emperor Trajan wanted the nation to plead with God for his life and well-being, as long as he would be beneficial to all and just to all (Weber, 2021, p. 60).

In this section, he also mentions bribery, which he considers unacceptable for a person in high office. "If the ruler is faithful to justice and resilient, he does not like to accept gifts" (Weber, 2021, p. 60). Bribery is the antithesis of justice because it involves the granting of benefits and thus a violation of the duties of office.

> Among the Thebans, righteousness was depicted without hands as an indication that righteousness does not require the acceptance of gifts, which even God forbids: [...] accept no bribe, [...] Justice, only justice shalt thou pursue, [...] (Deu 16,19).[8] And God complains when the opposite happens: your princes are rebels and companions of

[7] The official translation of the Bible does not correspond to the original.
[8] Two verses from translation 19–20.

> thieves. Everyone is fond of bribes, they pursue gifts; they do not give right to orphans, the widow's dispute does not reach them (Isa 1,23). Woe to those who justify the evildoer for a bribe and take away justice from the righteous (Isa 5,23). Yes, this is forbidden even by our Hungarian land laws (Weber, 2021, pp. 60–61).

It is striking how many parallels we find in Weber's references in the light of today's situation in Ukraine. The ruler must prevent wars so that justice is not lost. He evokes the issue of war and aggression and the associated loss of justice in the kidneys. He states that the ruler must act wisely and thus preserve peace for his subjects. This is because war brings injustice and injustice is the cause of misfortune.

> [...] towns and villages are burned and laid waste, wine and corn are stolen, rows and rows are killed: women are slaughtered, virgins are raped, old men are dishonoured, and young men are incited to vice: many men lose body and soul: sowing and ploughing cannot be done, justice disappears, (war benefits neither law nor fields), loyalty and faith are lost, the last things are stolen, food is destroyed (Weber, 2021, p. 87).

It follows that in Weber's text we can understand the notion of justice from several perspectives. Primarily in the sense of "being just" as a principle of state or social conduct that accords everyone his or her right equally. A second meaning may be "equality" as equal status and equal rights for everyone, but, thirdly, in the sense of "reverence" for a divine principle or majesty that plays an important role in the principle of God's grace, also in the sense of the firmness of faith. At the end of his eulogy, he compared the justice of a ruler/mayor to that of a doctor. "Objective decision-making. Doctors seek happiness and well-being for the noble divine creature, i.e., man, and do not treat him as an unreasonable creature. The rulers must judge every man by the same law and be equally just to everyone" (Weber, 2021, p. 101).

In his second work, *Lectio principum*, he again deals with this ethical principle, specifically in the Prologue, in the Know Thyself section, where he retells Plutarch's story of King Ptolemy (Weber, 2019, pp. 23–24), who discussed with seven envoys the most useful laws in their countries. The messenger from Sicily said that they keep righteousness, love truth, and hate pride. The envoy of the Spartans said of his country that with them [...] one is equal with another. And the Sikyon envoy said that they do not tolerate those who advocate only unjust cases and crooked laws – *ungerechte Sachen und hinckende Händel.* Weber reflects that, in his world, there are surely many more negative examples that exclude justice and are in fact the opposite to it.

In this section, we see a parallel to the first part of the trilogy, where the author interprets justice in relation to equal treatment and fair trial. The following example from *Lectio principum*, where he connects justice with time, differs from the first part. He argues that it is necessary to set aside enough time for it: When he (Bias) was asked what was the hardest of all to measure, he replied: "Of everything in the world, the most arduous is to measure time. For it must be measured so that there is enough for righteousness and for doing good, and not too much for sinfulness and for doing evil" (Weber, 2019, p. 70).

Justice also connects Weber to new beginnings and an understanding of change, which again distinguishes the second instalment of the trilogy from the first. Anyone can make a mistake, but it is necessary to realize the mistake, deal with it, and avoid it in the future. You can always start again and do better: I will put on the new man in righteousness and truth (Weber, 2019, p. 72). At the same time, he recommends turning to the kingdom of God and its righteousness (Weber, 2019, p. 83).

Weber also points out that justice suffers when people do not tell the ruler the truth, but merely fawn on him and approve of his (albeit improper) deeds. "[...] are rubbed in, and justice and law or other things are given space only when it is absolutely necessary" (Weber, 2019, p.

97). It is necessary for the ruler to set aside time to solve problems and not be deceived by the talk of sycophants. He also appeals to the ruler's conscience against abuse of power and ill-treatment of his people.

Here, too, we see a parallel with his first text, as it speaks of many unjust trials:

> [...] that here one has obtained right and justice at the expense of all, there another innocent man has had all his property confiscated, a third has been unjustly chained, a fourth has been mercilessly flogged and dragged to the scaffold, or has been stripped of his office and deprived of his honour, and a fifth, on the contrary, however depraved, was held in the highest esteem and elevated to the rank of a leading citizen, and many an unchaste and shameless wretch full of wickedness was promoted at the expense of all the godly (Weber, 2019, p. 112).

The solution is offered in the form of concessions and the realization of a preference for values and a preference for virtue over gold, justice and equity over injustice, conscientiousness over wickedness, etc.

A parallel to the first text is also found in relation to the "representatives of God", whose task it is to hold fast to truth and righteousness and to protect it "God is a God of truth and justice, and in his Kingdom he suffers no treachery or injustice" (Weber, 2019, p. 203). At the end of the essay (Weber, 2019, p. 241), Weber briefly summarizes the ethical principles discussed by comparing them to the throne on which a ruler sits. He mentions the six steps that lead to the throne – *Die Sechs Stuffen am Stul*. In the context of justice, he appeals to us to avoid haste and over-quick decision-making, mistakes which can harm many innocents.

Abstention

One of the other virtues of a ruler, which Weber commented on rather briefly in his speech, is restraint and moderation. He characterized them in connection with two organs – the throat and the oesophagus. "He can then move on to the throat and oesophagus to remind him of restraint and moderation" (Weber, 2021, p. 40).

Abstention is a polysemic word that in its primary meaning represents "moderation", living a moderate way of life, exercising "restraint and moderation" by not drinking or eating to excess. In addition, we might also mention 'self-control' and, in modern parlance, we might add that one must be a good diplomat. These are all different meanings and connotations, but they have common features.

In his speech, however, Weber himself restricts their significance more or less to the area of debauchery in the sense of excessive drinking in particular.

> Anima sicca, anima prudens. Dry (arid) soul, reasonable soul. He writes about them: Oh, what noble virtues. All these virtues are embodied, in fact, by the Princess and Duchess: yes, the mother and sustainer of health and reason. Oh, how only prettily she adorns the sovereign! How important she is to him!" And he also adds an incident with King Alfonso: "Alfonso, the oft-mentioned king, was once asked why he was reluctant to drink wine and would only take plain water, contrary to the custom of kings and courtiers. He replied: Wine obscures wisdom, and it does not become a king to drown his reason in a small sip, without which a king of honourable name and his eminence cannot rule. To this Weber responds: And since I also drink only water, Alfonzo's answer is not against my will. He used to say: It is better to govern if you care more for the lamp and the oil of wisdom than for Bacchus's jug and drunkenness (Weber, 2021, pp. 41–42).

He therefore considers moderation to be a prerequisite for the well-being of the whole state. It follows that Weber understands the requirements for the personal lifestyle of a ruler/mayor that are strict and require sacrificing one's own indulgences and luxuries.

In this connection, he cites several other examples of irresponsible rulers who cared more for their "wine cellars" than for the prosperity of their people, and many of them publicly proclaimed as much, as the following excerpt shows: "Take no heed, though I should go blind at once, for if I cannot drink, I would rather die" (Weber, 2021, p. 42). These rulers are more concerned about their drinking than the safety of the people. Weber gives the Islamic religion as a model: "And in fact, it is a great shame that in this case the Turks are an example to us Christians, because they lead an orderly life and do not recklessly elect to office one who indulges in drunkenness" (Weber, 2021, p. 42).

At the same time, he appeals to recognized standards and authorities, to the Holy Scriptures: "But we know what God said to the prophet Isaiah (Isa 5,22) woe to the heroes in drinking wine and to the mighty in mixing strong drink" (Weber, 2021, p. 42) and wonders how a man who cannot command himself can rule an entire country or city and ensure their prosperity? Can he pronounce an unjust judgment and thereby injure an innocent man? "A similar thing happened to a Macedonian woman to whom Philip, in a drunken stupor, gave an unjust sentence, so she appealed to the drunken Philip to sober up, in the hope that when he was sober he would pass a more reasonable sentence" (J. Gigas[9] in the Catechism. Sermon). He also notes "that moderation and sobriety are a solid fence that protects against many evils. Obey God, be sober and righteous, and in this way you will serve God and man justly" (Weber, 2021, p. 43). In the conclusion of his reflections, he compares the moderation of the ruler/mayor with the shepherd. "Moderation. A shepherd lives frugally, contenting himself with cheese, bread, milk and water. The rulers are to be frugal" (Weber, 2021, p. 107).

Perhaps the most commonalities are found in the second part of the trilogy in relation to this ethical principle. Compared to the first part, it deals with the topic more extensively and gives more concrete examples and similes. He points out that moderation is important and necessary not only for the ruler but also for the common people. "But moderation is irreplaceable, and so precious that Diogenes may seek it at noonday with a lighted torch, as he once sought men" (Weber, 2019, p. 73). He who does not live frugally is easily defeated.

It again highlights moderation and related self-control through the example of eminent personalities: "For this reason, the wise Emperor Frederick III brought his sons up to embrace moderation, saying: 'If my sons do not renounce wine, I will curse them'" (Weber, 2019, p. 74). At this point he repeats what he mentions in the first part. "My experience is testimony to this. I drank only water and, thanks to God's grace, enjoyed good health until I was fifty years old". In doing so, he appeals to young people to take his example and act as he did. We should also take our cue from the 'unreasonable creatures' who, unlike humans, live frugally: "If you would like a long and healthy life, eat like cats are used to eating and drink in the manner of dogs".

In this section, his medical and pharmacy skills are on full display as he explains in detail the nutritional balance of the body and the consequences should this be disturbed "[...] headache, dizziness, weakness of the stomach, dropsy, eczema, trembling of the hands, purulent eyes, bad breath, toothache, catarrh and inflammation [...]" (Weber, 2019, p. 76). He concludes his reflection by stating that many people, through a lack of moderation, lose not only their bodies, but also their souls.

[9] Johann(es) Gigas (1514–1581), German evangelical theologue, humanist and teacher.

Kindness

Weber requires from the ruler magnanimity, grace or mercy, and kindness, which he is to use in mitigating harsh legal judgments and thus, at the same time, consolidate his throne: "Because the throne of righteousness will not be weakened by this; on the contrary, it will be strengthened and accentuated" (Weber, 2021, p. 70). He associates these virtues with an organ to which he attaches great importance, the heart. A ruler is not to inspire fear in his subjects, but to sympathize with them. He considers punishment for deeds done to be more just than the incitement of fear: real punishment has less effect on the people than fear (Weber, 2021, p. 70). Excessively harsh physical punishment without a hint of mercy is just as disproportionate as standing idly by. The perfect ruler, as a recognized authority, is seen by Weber as a magnanimous, warm-hearted person with a fearless heart and manly courage, who, especially in times of war, should not put his own interests before those of his country and people, but lead them fearlessly and judiciously.

In this context, Weber sees a connection with God and asks him to be gracious and merciful and to protect all people (Weber, 2021, p. 97). The virtue of grace lies behind his comparison of the ruler with the shepherd: "A good shepherd is to shear the flock, not skin it. Princes and lords collect taxes from their subjects every year, but they do not deprive them of all property and food" (Weber, 2021, p. 108).

In the second part of the trilogy, he explains this ethical principle on the basis of temperament, upbringing, and experience, and it is temperament that he sees as decisive in the occupation of ruling positions. He writes about it as follows: "[...] I wish the persons at the head of public offices were sanguine moderates; thanks to an admixture of melancholy juices, let them calm down a little and moderate their violent irritation of the blood" (Weber, 2019, p. 163). He argues that sanguinarians are at once just, generous, and compassionate. On the contrary, he would not like to see phlegmatics or melancholics in leading offices, people who do not have *a merciful spirit* (Weber, 2019, p. 164); cholerics, however, trouble him only partially. Kindness should be in the hearts of all rulers (Weber, 2019, p. 215).

Reading Weber's *Lectio principum*, we see a parallel in the current war in Ukraine. "When Timur captured a town the next day, children and girls in white dresses with olive wreaths were sent to meet him, hoping that their innocence would appease the tyrant's anger and escape his cruelty. But the tyrant's merciless cavalry trampled down all the wreathed and burned the town" (Weber, 2019, p. 224). However, the ruler must be both just and merciful at the same time, preferring kindness and forgiveness to punishment (Weber, 2019, p. 225).

Wisdom

Weber considers the brain to be "the sheathing of the inner senses, [...] which indicate that the rational man remembers the past and observes the present, and what is before him [...] foresees and anticipates by reason" (Weber, 2021, p. 16). The head, as the receptacle of human reason, should, according to Weber, *be* "filled from youth with the brain, and the brain with the reason and wisdom it assiduously acquires in the institution" (Weber, 2021, p. 16). He thus sees the head as also the head of a state or city in connection with the spirit of God and the favour of God. In order to rule wisely, he must listen to the word of God. A wise ruler is one who rules not only with the sword but also with the pen: "a ruler does not only need hunters and horsemen, but he must also have scribes and learned men" (Weber, 2021, p. 17). If the ruler is wise and learned, he need not rely on the opinion of others: "It is a pitiful wisdom that has to rely on other people's judgement!" (Weber, 2021, p. 19).

He again links his observations to biblical quotes that prove that wisdom must grace every ruler. "When Moses wanted the people of God to find a ruler, he said: Bring wise, understanding, and experienced men from your tribes. I will put them at your head" (Deu 1,13) (Weber, 2021, p. 18). However, the ruler must not be misled*:* "If he is silent, even a fool is

considered wise, and he is considered prudent when his lips are closed" (Prov 17,28) (Weber, 2021, p. 20). For Weber, governing wisely also means being able to take the advice of others, especially the older and more experienced (fathers). "Don't miss what the elders say. For they have learned it from their parents, for from them you learn understanding, how to answer rightly when you need to" (Ecc 8,11) (Weber, 2021, p. 23). Weber compares this imperious virtue to seamanship at the end of his writings: "A sailor must steer his ship carefully so as not to hit the rocks, or the ship will be wrecked. A ruler must guide his boat wisely, lest he send it down by his carelessness" (Weber, 2021, p. 110).

In *Lectio principum*, Weber also recognizes the importance of wisdom, for it is through reason that man distinguishes himself from the animals and comes closer to God. Animals also have strength and beauty, but it is through reason that man distinguishes himself from them. "Plato says that the gods could not have shown greater grace to men than to bestow on them reason and justice. If man had not innate intelligence, and if he had not been guided by sound judgment, he would have been worthy of the most abominable reproach among all animals" (Weber, 2019, p. 137).

In this work, he combines wisdom with education and advises parents on how best to educate their children so that they can gain wisdom and know how to use it appropriately. "Do you not think that a man armed with reason is worse than unreasoning animals and wild beasts if he does not follow it?" (Weber, 2019, p. 138).[10] It speaks of the uselessness of accumulating material goods if children do not have enough sense and do not know how to dispose of them properly. It also points out the importance of study and education, again with an appeal to "the proper cultivation of manners", and stresses the need and necessity of reading, for: "books full of advice brazenly show the right way to avoid fraud and all sorts of mistakes" (Weber, 2019, p. 141), although he also draws attention to the right choice of study material for the ruler's needs.

It also emphasises the need for language skills "[...] after all, in our town, three languages – German, Hungarian and Slovak – are infused into the children's breast milk (Weber, 2019, p. 142) and puts Latin first. Weber speaks of the need for constant refinement and "exercising the brain" and devoting oneself to the spirit (Weber, 2019, p. 172).

Openness and piety

The ruler is required to be open, alert to the things and people around him, but also open to God. These qualities are represented by the *eye*. Weber incorporated the image of the Roman God Janus, the god of beginnings and endings, into his description of this virtue. It is a bifrons (with two faces) depicted with one face turned toward the past and the other toward the future. Weber also finds a parallel in vigilance in the Stoic Greek shepherd Argus, who was distinguished for his extraordinary alertness. Weber, however, himself notes that all a ruler needs is one full eye, which must, however, be sharp and precise (Weber, 2021, p. 29). He must keep his eye on the town hall, but also on his subjects. He must also keep an eye on the wicked, lest there be too many of them in the city.

He emphasizes the acceptance of help from others in the form of advice, which a prudent ruler will always gratefully accept. Idleness and long sleep, he says, are a breach of vigilance and a transgression against the office entrusted to him by God: the ruler must also have watchful eyes, which sleep not over duty and slumber not (Weber, 2021, p. 31). He considers Alexander the Great, Emperor Leo in Constantinople and Philip of Macedon, for example, to be personalities worthy of his attention and imitation. Among his contemporaries, he singles out the palatine Francis Veshelieni, who fulfilled his duties "regardless of his state of health".

[10] In this section, Weber also refers to gender equality, even saying that "the female sex in many ways surpasses the male".

Here, too, Weber compares the ruler to a sailor: "If the captain of the ship wants to reach the harbour unharmed, he must ask for help from the patron saint of ships. Hence the saying: He who does not know how to pray, let him go to sea. If a ruler wishes to rule happily, he must supplicate to the king of all kings and lord of all lords" (Weber, 2021, p. 110).

In *Lectio principum*, Weber speaks of piety as a virtue that affects the well-being of the state. The ruler must not go astray, must fulfil God's Commandments and protect them (Weber, 2019, p. 180). He speaks of piety as a 'cardinal' virtue: "He will constantly repeat to himself that piety is a cardinal virtue, and that through it he has the promise not only of a temporal but also of a future life, and that whoever loves God, all things serve him for good" (Weber, 2019, p. 184). He compares the ungodly ruler to a roaring lion and a roaming bear (Weber, 2019, p. 115), who deserves punishment for his ungodly deeds.

He connects his eyes with those counsellors who help, advise, and comfort the ruler at the same time. They form his Christian conscience to the extent that he does not make mistakes and acts for the good of his country, emphasizing the need for unity in decision-making. [...] "for many eyes see more, and together they can see as one eye" (Weber, 2019, p. 160). In connection with the eyes, he reflects on the fact that each one should stand up for his own duties and not interfere with the duties of others: "that the feet should only walk, the eye only see, the ear only hear, and that one should not meddle with another's duty" (Weber, 2019, p. 219). At the same time, it stresses the need to help and support one another.

Responsibility

Weber compares the burden of ruling to Atlas, the giant of Greek mythology who rebelled against the gods of Olympus and had to shoulder the whole of heaven as punishment. Hence Weber also treats this characteristic in connection with the back. The ideal ruler, according to Weber, "must be someone whom God wants to exalt and crown, he must be humble and serve" (Weber, 2021, p. 44).

The three main tasks associated with governing, to rule, to teach and to obey, are also found in Philip Melanchthon. According to Weber, Herodotus was already aware of the burdens and pitfalls of ruling: "[...] the higher a man is in office, the more misfortune he takes on" (Weber, 2021, p. 46). The Emperor, Hadrian VI was also aware of the responsibility of governance when he allegedly had these words inscribed in his tomb: "Here lies Hadrian VI, who experienced nothing more unhappy than that he commanded" (Weber, 2021, p. 48).

Weber considers slander to be a liability to governance, calling slanderers criminal blasphemers and evil tongues. "Ah! These set up difficult obstacles for the pious superiors, which they often have to overcome" (Weber, 2021, p. 49). Weber exemplifies the unfortunate influence of slanderers on the actions of men by means of the well-known fable of the donkey, and states: "It doesn't matter if you carry, drive or sit on the donkey, you won't please everyone. I'll sum it up: there hasn't yet been born a man who pleases everyone" (Weber, 2021, p. 51).

Weber concludes, with regard to slander, that even that must be faced with honour by the ruler and is best overcome by good will and good deeds (Weber, 2021, p. 53). As a reason for his position Weber states; "we will anger God unnecessarily and He will afflict us with heavy punishments" (Weber, 2021, p. 54). He also reflects on the question of the possibility of the non-existence of an overlordship based on the wishes of some people, which he nevertheless considers to be God-given and therefore unchangeable. He defends his view by saying: "[...] what a great thing it is to have a ruler under whose wings one can live peacefully" (Weber, 2021, p. 55). He summarily states that the ruler resembles a sailor because "the shipowner must also put his hand to the work. The ruler is not to fold his arms in his lap and watch others, but to do his best to officiate" (Weber, 2021, p. 109).

In *Lectio principum*, Weber explains the weight of government on the basis of three principles: decision-making, power, and great seriousness (Weber, 2019, p. 148), by which the

state builds, maintains, and improves. At the same time, he warns of the danger that, in Weber's words, when pride and carelessness overwhelm the ruler, the effort made may dissipate: "to learn from the mistakes of others and not to sink the weight of the effort in the mud" (Weber, 2019, p. 98). In the burden of governance, we see a parallel to the first part of the trilogy, although in it he works with the terms service, humility, and obedience. He associates drudgery with private work and with the duties of work, which a good ruler must always keep on top of. Work must be performed zealously and diligently (Weber, 2019, p. 80).

There is also a parallel with the first text in the sense of responsibility which every ruler in the highest office should have, "lest his own mistakes and misrule should bring him down" (Weber, 2019, p. 146). Similarly, it describes the fact that the ruler may not be liked by everyone equally and has to deal with the possibility that some will slander him. "But if the ruler had inflicted the same punishment on all his slanderers and critics of his rule, he himself would have sealed his own fate, and at the end of the year he would have had no one to rule over" (Weber, 2019, p. 126).

Conclusion and evaluation

The interpreted texts show both similarities and differences. The formal difference in the two works lies primarily in the different addressee. While Weber dedicates *Janus Bifrons* to Juraj Selepčeni, the bishop of Kaloc, the recipients of the second work are the members of the city council. At this point it is worth mentioning the inconsistency of dedications in the different editions of the work from the same year. To a certain extent, the text was influenced by this fact in the sense of its more 'ornate' language and more complicated syntax (compound sentences).

The first part of the trilogy feels lively but is sporadically unedited; it contains more quotations but has less of its own commentary and is not always straightforward. In many cases, the text is a sequencing of incidents one after the other, without commentary or further explanation, although the protracted appeal is obvious from their content; or Weber's commentary is one-sentence and either a reference to the Bible or supported by a proverb. The text is written in German and supplemented by references in Latin. The second part of the trilogy is written in a more sophisticated way, based more on psychological knowledge, more reminiscent of instructive and didactic texts, and has a more refined form reminiscent of a "professional" text. It is written bilingually, in German and Latin at the same time.

Parallels between the two texts can be seen in the internal depiction of the ruler, with his inner world being portrayed as more plastic and simpler in the first part than in the second. In both parts, Weber works with complicated associations, which he presents through a huge variety of historical examples. In both, he reflects on the nature of rulership and its origins, and in both texts he formulates the thesis that rulership is (for an organism) a great burden which must be approached responsibly and seriously, and not only for one's own benefit, but for the welfare of all, because the ruler, by his person, represents the whole community. Here, too, we see a parallel to today's political situation in particular, to the need to educate oneself, to be able to choose between appropriate and inappropriate texts, to identify what we might call today a hoax, and to be able to distinguish between sources of (dis)information appropriately. In both texts, Weber also presents himself, and in this symbolic self-presentation he formulates and links time-honoured opinions and experiences. In both of them, he links ethical values and reiterates them in other parts of the texts.

We see a parallel to today in the depiction of war, aggression, and the ruthlessness it brings with it. His descriptions and statements are in many ways similar to today's comments by political leaders in relation to the war in Ukraine. Weber considers the division into social classes to be God-given and therefore immutable. For this reason, his view of women as beings equal to men in this context, though progressive, seems contrastive. From both texts one can sense Weber's personal passion for the function for which he has chosen to make sacrifices.

His ideal ruler is a personification of himself. The fulfilment of his life was a favourable image in the mirror for him, but also for the people around him.

Weber's expertise as a physician and pharmacist is evident in both works. He devotes quite a lot of space in both parts to the human body, but also to the soul, with the first part focusing more on the body and the second on the soul. We can conclude that Weber remained faithful to the subtitle found in the first part, the physiological-political mirror, as evidenced by the presentation of ethical values through description of the organs of the body. He conceived the second part from what, in modern parlance, might be called an 'inner' worldview, that is, from a psychological perspective which combines, in a metaphorical way, the physical and the psychological into a single whole. As an example, consider the effect of medicine on the body and of wisdom on the soul. In both works, he describes a complex of events which he links to the external and internal organs and the psychological side of man.

The virtues of the ruler presented in both works are, in our contemporary understanding, a kind of precursor to the ideologies offered by current world leaders and presidents, in terms of their self-presentation to the outside world. On the other hand, these virtues concerned not only rulers, but every good Christian without social distinction. However, only rulers were under scrutiny, people who were supposed to serve as an example to others.

From an argumentative point of view, in both cases, his is rational argumentation, symptomatic of the period in which the texts were written. In the Enlightenment, arguments based on feelings were considered biased whereas in the age of 'sensibility', purely rational arguments were considered inhumane (Wagner, 2001, p. 341). From today's perspective, Weber's type of argumentation could be evaluated as a moral-ethical type that relies on ethically exemplary and socially respected personalities. The aim of such argumentation is to enhance one's own credibility, while the effect on the receiver is emotional and lasting (Schuh & Watzke, 1983, pp. 139–140). We also find plausible argumentation in the texts, a most common type which is perceived as "common sense" argumentation. Weber, as a representative of the urban intellectual class, emphasizes common human experiences, using generalizations to express his own point of view. He expresses his implicit recommendations through the use of quotations, proverbs, similes, metaphors, and metonymy. The images, their vividness, transport us engagingly to an earlier time when ethical values were not just empty exaggerations. There is a distinct insistence hidden in them, aimed at the reader/listener.

We are of the opinion that although both works have identical elements, they are not wholly identical and differ in form and content in their treatment of similar (the same) issues of ethical principles. To look at the ruler in the way Weber did, to connect setting and circumstance, requires a calculating practitioner with unwavering judgment. Weber's inspiration from ancient authors, contexts that another person could study for years and yet never understand, confirm his vast insight and speak of absolute awareness. They also confirm the fact that he was an intellectual par excellence. In the texts analysed, Weber acknowledged the forces of fate which also controlled his life.

This wild horse is an exuberant human spirit, that is very difficult to soothe because it is restless and burns with the desire to learn and see something (Weber, 2019, p. 108).

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