

The Social Role of an Enlightened German Philosopher: Christian Wolff (1679–1754) in His Correspondence with Ernst Christoph Count of Manteuffel

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Referring to Christian Wolff's letters to the Count of Manteuffel, his maecenas, I want to show how the philosopher Wolff had to present himself (dependant on the expectations of his addressee) as a specific social or intellectual type in order to propagate reliably what he and his adherents called the 'truth' of his philosophical worldview.¹ Based on my analysis of Wolff's correspondence with Manteuffel, I will focus on the question how in Wolff's case the social role of the philosopher was determined and had to be performed in order to establish a successful enlightened culture and science politics.

Introduction: Christian Wolff and His Correspondence with Ernst Christoph Count of Manteuffel

Christian Wolff was already a famous and successful philosopher when, in April 1738, his correspondence with the former Saxon diplomat and spy at the Habsburg Court Ernst Christoph Count of Manteuffel began.² At this time, Manteuffel was still close to the Prussian Crown Prince Frederick, the future

¹ As for a broad discussion of the philosopher's identity in Early Modern Europe, see Condren et al. 2006 (Ideas in Context, 77). By referring to the concept of persona the editors intend to analyse the intellectual work a individual had to perform in order to be considered philosophical by their contemporaries. They explicitly are not concerned with the sociological aspect of being a philosopher in Early Modern Europe. In Wolff's case, I am much more interested in exploring the social role and social knowledge of a philosopher within a given individual framework, here Wolff's correspondence with Manteuffel, in order to shed light on the intersection between different areas of expertise, namely, Wolff's philosophical expertise and Manteuffel's networking and diplomatic skills.

² For Manteuffel's biography, see Seydewitz 1926 (Aus Sachsens Vergangenheit, 5); Bronisch 2010 (Frühe Neuzeit, 147), 30–71. For his activity as a Habsburg spy, see Pretsch 1970. For the correspondence between Wolff and Manteuffel, see Döring 2002. Wiesbaden 2002, 60–63; Bronisch 2010, 213–214; Neumann 2012, 57–102. A selection of Wolff's correspondence with Manteuffel was edited and interpreted by Heinrich Ostertag, cf. Ostertag 1910a. Ostertag 1910b.

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Frederick the Great, whom Manteuffel tried to influence to Wolff's benefit as well as in terms of the principles of Wolff's philosophy.³ Wolff himself was then still professor of logic and metaphysics at the Hessian University of Marburg where he had been employed since 1724.⁴ Before that, Wolff had taught mathematics and philosophy at the University of Halle. Owing to struggles between Wolff and pietistic theologians in Halle, especially Joachim Lange, who had accused Wolff of fatalism and atheism, he was forced into exile by the Prussian King Frederick William I on pain of the death penalty in 1723. It was forbidden to teach Wolffian philosophy at Prussian universities until the ban on Wolff's philosophy was lifted by the same King, Frederick William I, in 1736. In 1740, Wolff was fully rehabilitated by Frederick the Great. In December 1740, he returned triumphantly to Halle and to its famous enlightened University, the Fridericiana founded in 1694. Both, the rehabilitation of Wolff's philosophy in Prussia in the spring of 1736 and his reinstallation in Halle, were partly the results of massive efforts by so-called Wolffians, especially Manteuffel and the Berlin provost Johann Gustav Reinbeck, to try to establish a specific Wolffian enlightenment at the Prussian court.⁵

Moreover, the political engagement of the Count of Manteuffel on behalf of Wolffian philosophy finally led to the most comprehensive exchange of letters within Wolff's entire correspondence as far as is known. Even Wolff's famous correspondence with Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz between 1704 and 1716 was not at all as extensive as his intense exchange of letters with the Count of Manteuffel between 1738 and 1748.⁶

In fact, we know of about 130 correspondents exchanging letters with Wolff, mostly men and women of letters like the French-Italian astronomer Jacques Cassini, Voltaire, Johann Heinrich Samuel Formey or the famous Marquise du Châtelet. Since Wolff's correspondence is still a terra incognita and thus remains to be researched, it is hard to tell what proportion of his letters have come down to us. To date, including his letters to Manteuffel, we have knowledge of about 820 letters written by Wolff, of which 284 were addressed to Manteuffel, which makes Wolff's correspondence with Manteuffel more than one-third of his entire known correspondence.⁷ Compared to his exchange of letters with

3 Cf. Droysen 1910, 1–34; see also Bronisch 2010, 72–122.

4 For a short sketch of Wolff's biography, see Drechsler 1997, 111–128.

5 Cf. Hinrichs 1971, 434–441.

6 Cf. Gerhardt 1860.

7 The transcriptions of the Wolff-Manteuffel-correspondence are now open to the public via the Internet: Middell and Neumann 2013. (*Signaturen* MS 0345, MS 0346, MS 0347). First part: Letters No. 1 to 150 (11.05.1738 to 30.12.1743). Second part: Letters No. 151 to 314 (5.01.1744 to 24.03.1747). Third part: Letters No. 315 to 488 (26.03.1747 to 5.11.1748), <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bsz:14-qucosa-106475>.

other correspondents, Wolff's correspondence with Manteuffel is not only concerned with an educated discussion of philosophical, theological and scientific topics, but also on culture politics: Manteuffel's broad network of correspondents and his diplomatic skills served Wolff as a medium for disseminating and legitimizing the 'truth' of his philosophical knowledge.

Hence, in order specifically to determine the social role of the enlightened philosopher Christian Wolff, his correspondence with Manteuffel may serve as one of the most welcome primary sources and fields of research. Manteuffel was, from a political point of view, the most important Wolffian in the late 1730s and 1740s. As a former smart diplomat and politician, well educated in classical antiquity and in philosophy, he had established a network of correspondents in all the important realms of society – a network of scholars, professors, students, scientists, politicians, officials, aristocrats, European courtiers and publishers. In his relationship with Wolff, Manteuffel consequently made use of his networking skills and social expertise not only to support Wolff's philosophy, but also to supply Wolff personally with help and information of almost every description (i.e. manuscripts, books, newspaper articles, journals, copies of letters, official support in private matters etc.). In his letters he managed to involve Wolff, who, from 1740 onwards, had been quite isolated at the University of Halle from ongoing debates, in the Republic of Letters concerning discussions about culture, science, theology, politics and, of course, philosophy of law, metaphysics and logic. In this specific context, Wolff, seen as an individual enlightened philosopher, found himself confronted with broad expectations concerning his duty toward society. His attitude was strictly measured by the moral, hermeneutical and scientific principles he himself had framed and elaborated in his philosophical work as well as by the strict moral standards to which Manteuffel subscribed.

In what follows, I want to give two examples of Christian Wolff's ethos as it appears in his correspondence with Manteuffel. First, I refer to a project which was mainly initiated due to the social responsibility Manteuffel ascribed to Wolff: the project and concept of a popular philosophy for women (*Philosophie des Dames*). Second, I refer to Wolff's lack of knowledge in how to deal with the Prussian court concerning the dedication of the second part of his *Philosophia Practica Universalis* to the Prussian King Frederick William I.

Philosophy for Women, or the Philosopher's Responsibility for Social Welfare

Soon after Wolff had praised Count Manteuffel for supporting his philosophy in his first letter to the Count on May 11, 1738, he quite suddenly, in a letter to Manteuffel on May 28 of the same year, proposed to write a “philosophy for women”, simply because he had heard, as he says, that once in a while even women have the wish to philosophize.⁸ However, it was not by chance that Wolff brought up the plan of writing a *Philosophie des Dames*. He must have known that the Count would be enthusiastic about the idea of a popular philosophy for women. Maybe the Berlin provost and Wolffian theologian Johann Gustav Reinbeck, who had been corresponding with Wolff since at least 1736 and who was also a close friend of Manteuffel's, had drawn Wolff's attention to the fact that the Count was seeking to spread Wolffian philosophy among aristocratic circles in particular. As the famous example of Gabrielle Émilie Le Tonnelier de Breteuil, Marquise du Châtelet-Laumont, better known as Émilie du Châtelet, shows, aristocratic women showed a tremendous interest in contemporary science, mathematics and philosophy. Even though they did not always engage in publishing themselves as Émilie du Châtelet did, many of the *Dames* were eager for information in the broad field of the enlightened sciences, and they were no less eager to promote scientific research and experiments.⁹ Moreover, the famous relationship between Émilie and Voltaire was a striking example of a fruitful connection between a socially privileged and intellectually highly gifted aristocratic woman and a persecuted and famous poet and philosopher.

So, by encouraging the *Dames* to philosophize on their own it seemed very likely that a popular Wolffian philosophy for women would lead to a larger dissemination of Wolff's ideas at the German and other European Courts. Since Manteuffel, was absolutely convinced of the truth of Wolff's philosophy, which once was strictly persecuted, stigmatised and regarded as villainous by the theologians in Halle, he felt himself obliged to make the ‘truth’ generally accessible beyond its theological and dogmatic bounds, particularly to those who were in charge of political leadership. Since the ‘truth’ of Wolff's

8 Cf. Wolff to Manteuffel, May 28, 1738; University Library of Leipzig, Ms 0345, 6r: “Da ich vernehme, daß auch hin und wieder die Dames zu philosophiren Lust gewinnen, könnte ich Jhnen einen sehr großen Dienst thun, wenn ich für Sie eine Philosophie schreibe, da Sie via vere analytica in Lesung derselben die ihnen nützlichen Begriffe gleichsam aus sich selbst und von sich selbst durch den Gebrauch ihrer Kräfte heraus wickelten, so daß Sie alles für ihre eigene Gedancken hielten, die Ihnen einkämen [...]” (“Because I have heard that once in a while women have the desire to philosophize, I could be of great service to them, if I wrote a Philosophy for them. By studying it and by using their own capability, they would by themselves develop particularly those concepts, which are useful to them. So they would gain the impression, that everything they conceive would only be the result of thinking their own thoughts alone [...].”)

9 For Émilie du Châtelet, see Hagengruber 2012. As we know from Wolff's correspondence with Manteuffel, the Marquise du Châtelet also exchanged letters with Christian Wolff. In fact, it was the Prussian Crown-Prince Frederick, who, convinced of Wolff's philosophical method, communicated the French translations of Wolff's *Deutsche Logik* (*German Logic*) and Wolff's *Deutsche Metaphysik* (*German Metaphysics*) to Voltaire and Émilie du Châtelet in 1736/1737.

philosophy was also considered as constituting a specific method of thinking on one's own by following the rules of logic and geometrical demonstration (*mos geometricus*), its dissemination was expected to have a strong dialectical and pedagogical impact on the rational education of aristocrats and princes, an impact, which also involved a knowledge of morally correct behaviour – for the rules for morally correct behaviour could simply be founded and constituted by rational reasoning in terms of Wolffian philosophy. Because of this, one seriously had to account for the fact that, as Manteuffel and Wolff believed, the appropriate social agents of education still were – women. Thus, if women were philosophically educated, aristocratic men would be brought to learn philosophical knowledge and methodology themselves almost automatically. The cooperation of philosophical and political elites would lead to the establishment of a rationally founded social ethics and politics with a strong leaning towards social welfare and individual *bonheur*. These, at least, were Manteuffel's hopes and expectations: If women began to philosophize, society would soon become morally better. Since correct reasoning led to moral certainty, which itself promised to bring forth the refinement as well as the felicity of human society, the philosophical expertise of an enlightened philosopher like Wolff had by necessity to be the basis of a broad pedagogical movement beginning with and continued by the elites of society themselves, that is, aristocrats, princes, sovereigns and kings on the one side and academics and officials on the other side. Because Manteuffel thought that Wolff was one of the greatest philosophers ever, he considered it Wolff's duty and responsibility to engage fully in the philosophical education of society by writing a popular philosophy for women in the form of a casual fictional correspondence with a young aristocratic lady. The more gifted a philosopher was, the stronger was his duty toward society.

No wonder then that Manteuffel was enthusiastic about Wolff's idea of a "Philosophie pour l'usage du beau sexe".¹⁰ In his letter to Wolff on June 16, 1738, he unmistakably underlined the importance and usefulness of the *Philosophie des Dames* project for society.¹¹ Manteuffel implored Wolff not to abandon his valuable plan.¹² His main argument was based on idea of the central role of women in society. Nevertheless he extended his argument beyond the bounds of German society to humanity as a whole. For encouraging women to acquire knowledge of what is good and

¹⁰ Wolff to Manteuffel, May 16, 1738; University Library of Leipzig, Ms 0345, 7r.

¹¹ Ibid.: "J'oserois même soutenir, qu'après Vôtre Théologie Naturelle, Vous n'aurez peut-être jamais conçu et exécuté de projet, qui soit plus réellement profitable, et; dans un sens; plus important pour la Société."

¹² Ibid.: "C'est pourquoi je Vous conjure, pour l'amour des dites contrées, et pour l'amour de tout ce que Vous cultivez avec le plus d'affection; j'entens la raison et la vérité; de ne pas abandonner un ce [si] beau dessein."

what is true on their own, implied at the same time making truth accessible to men. Above all, it even involved teaching humankind as a whole what is good and what is true.¹³

Convinced of Manteuffel's arguments and in order to realise the *Philosophie des Dames* project, Wolff actually began to conceive of a first fictional letter to a young aristocratic lady in November 1738 by explicitly referring to the Count's main argument.¹⁴ He emphasises, that, until women begin to philosophize, humankind will not achieve its aim of a blissful human society. Moreover, it is the female elite, namely, aristocratic women, that must do the pioneering work of rational education in order to build the moral framework of a better society.¹⁵ Thus, the role of the philosopher, as fulfilled by Wolff by following the Count's advice, consisted in philosophically instructing the social elites. It gave expression to the optimistic conviction that by rational thinking the leaders of society would automatically be led to establish a politics of truth and moral good aiming at the universal welfare of humankind – a kind of pragmatic social utopia which should be the practical ideal of the philosopher's and his aristocratic disciples' work.

Yet, the project of a *Philosophie des Dames* began and also ended with Wolff's above mentioned fictional letter to a young aristocratic lady. Although the project was discussed in the correspondence between Wolff and Manteuffel up until May 1739, due to the fact that Wolff was keen to accomplish his philosophical lifework, the fictitious correspondence was never continued. Instead it was the Wolffian Jean Henri Samuel Formey, secretary of the Prussian Academy of Sciences in Berlin, who, from 1746 to 1753, published the six volumes of his *La Belle Wolfienne*.¹⁶ It is very likely, that Manteuffel himself encouraged his friend Formey to conceive of a popular representation of Wolff's philosophy in French. It is known from letters of the Count to Formey that he was eager to bring forth French translations of Wolff's main works in order to make them generally known. Since Formey actually translated Wolff's philosophical works, like for instance the *German Metaphysics*, and made his translations part of his *La Belle Wolfienne*, he was quite happy to go along with Manteuffel's intentions. However, Formey's work was not written as a

13 Ibid.: "En un mot, mettre les femmes en état de connoître le bon, et le vrai, c'est, je le repète, le faire connoître en même tems aux hommes; c'est instruire insensiblement tout le genre humain."

14 See the edition of Wolff's fictional letter in: Ostertag, 1910b, 27–32.

15 Wolff to a fictitious young aristocratic lady, November 29, 1738; University Library of Leipzig, Ms 0345, 39r; Ostertag 1910b, 27–28: "Sie sehen eine Wahrheit ein, die bisher wenige unter den Weltweisen erkannt, daß als dann erst das menschliche Geschlechte werde glückselig werden, wenn das weibliche Geschlechte wird anfangen zu philosophiren, und erkennen, daß die Damen, welche die Geburt und besondere von der milden Natur mitgetheilte Qualitäten distinguiren, den Anfang machen müssen, als deren erlauchtes Exempel mehrerer Eindruck in die Gemüther der anderen machen kan, als die gegründetesten Ausdrückungen der subtilsten Weltweisen."

16 Formey 1746–1753. For Formey's biography, see Hayes 1994. For Formey's correspondence network, see Häselser 2003.

fictional exchange of letters between a Wolffian philosopher and a young aristocratic lady, but as a kind of novel that set out the arguments of Wolff's philosophy in a popular manner.

The Know-How of Dedicating, or Wolff's Lack of Pragmatic Social Intelligence

When Wolff was about to finish the second part of his *Philosophia practica universalis*, he thought of dedicating it to the Prussian Crown Prince Frederick or, alternatively, to Frederick's father, Frederick William I, King of Prussia. As he was uncertain which alternative to choose, the King or the Crown Prince, Wolff asked Manteuffel for his advice.¹⁷ Owing to Wolff's request, the Count subsequently conferred with Johann Gustav Reinbeck about the case. Reinbeck was well connected with the royal family and thus had the necessary insights and information in order to provide the kind of well-grounded advice for which Wolff had asked. Both, Manteuffel and Reinbeck, came to the conclusion, that, given the political circumstances, it would be best if Wolff dedicated the final part of his *Philosophia practica universalis* to the King of Prussia and not to the Crown Prince.

Since we do not find any hints in the letters themselves, we can only guess which reasons finally led Manteuffel and Reinbeck to their conclusion.¹⁸ Apparently the rehabilitation of Wolffianism in Prussia in 1736 had changed the King's mind about Wolff and his philosophy, which he had himself condemned some fifteen years earlier forcing Wolff into exile on pain of the death penalty. Moreover, Wolff's ongoing success as an academic teacher of philosophy in Marburg must have impressed the Prussian King, who was now less sceptical about Wolff's philosophy than before. So it seemed to be the right moment for Wolff and the Wolffians to hope for even more support and protection from the Prussian Court, providing that Wolff addressed the King properly.

Dedicatory letters were traditionally a very delicate matter and had much to do with political intuition.¹⁹ They normally sought the protection, support and promotion of the works by the princes, kings and aristocrats to whom they were dedicated. So the dedicatory practice required a thorough psychological argumentation which took the personality of the addressee carefully into account. If handled with careful consideration, dedicatory letters could then be an efficient and

¹⁷ Wolff to Manteuffel, February 11, 1739; University Library of Leipzig, Ms 0345, 49r–50r.

¹⁸ Manteuffel speaks of changing times, new political constellations and the present conjuncture without specifying them in more detail; see Manteuffel's letter to Wolff, February 20, 1739; University Library of Leipzig, Ms 0345, 53r: "Le tems et les constellations aiant extremement changé depuis, nous trouvons que ce qui eut pu produire alors de très bons effets, en feroit peut être de tout contraires dans cette conjonction presente."

¹⁹ For the functions of dedicatory letters in Early Modern Times, see Schramm 2003; Moennighoff, B. 2008, 337–352; Paoli 2009; Philipp 2010, 231–268; Bloemendal 2011, 203–215.

powerful instrument of culture politics. They could at the same time help to advance the future career of their authors. Hence, the question of to whom and how to dedicate Wolff's main ethical work was by no means negligible. Since Wolff had no insights into the Prussian Court and was not as experienced in diplomacy as Manteuffel, he found it difficult to deal with the reigning political elites as far as dedicatory practice was concerned, where his philosophical expertise could be of little help to him. So he strongly welcomed the advice Manteuffel gave him in a letter dated February 20, 1739.

In this letter the Count emphasized that, given the circumstances and under the condition that Wolff followed Manteuffel's instructions accurately, nothing more useful to the good cause of truth could be imagined than to dedicate the second part of the *Philosophia practica universalis* to the current King of Prussia.²⁰ In what follows, Manteuffel outlined the structure and the content he thought the dedication should have in order to provide the desired effect on the King.²¹ It was most important that the King was not made to feel responsible for his condemnation of Wolff and his philosophy in 1723. Instead the blame was to be assigned to those who, like Joachim Lange, had accused and were still accusing Wolff of atheism and fatalism. Moreover, Wolff had to make the King believe that the content of the *Philosophia practica universalis* was in accordance with the King's own sentiments. He should make clear that his philosophy could provide the best arguments with which to stand up against the so-called freethinkers and atheists whose philosophies were considered morally and socially dangerous. Here again it was the social responsibility of the philosopher which had to come into play in order to convince the King of the moral advantages of Wolff's philosophy with respect to social order and moral behaviour.

Apart from these specific arguments there were yet other aspects to be kept in mind, some of them matters of style, some of them concerning the King's education. So, although the dedication had to be written in Latin, Manteuffel recommended that it also be translated into German, due to the King's bad understanding of the Latin language. This was certainly the best way of making sure that the King did actually read the dedicatory letter from beginning to end.

²⁰ Manteuffel to Wolff, February 20, 1739; University Library of Leipzig, Ms 0345, 53r: "[...] nous avons finalement conclu que vous ne sauriez rien imaginer, qui puisse être plus utile à la bonne cause |: j'entens celle de la verité :) que de dèdier vòtre nouveau livre a S[a] M[ajesté] le Roi de Prusse; pourvuque vous veuillez bien vous y prendre de la maniere qui suit [...]."

²¹ *Ibid.*, 53v–54r.

Wolff took all of Manteuffel's instructions seriously into account and wrote two different versions of the dedication which he then sent to Manteuffel and Reinbeck, who had offered to do the editing work.²²

In a letter to Manteuffel on March 29, 1739, Wolff accepted the Count's and Reinbeck's emendations. On April 18th, he finally sent a copy of the *Philosophia practica universalis*, including the Latin dedication and its German translation, to the King. Whilst Wolff was still in the process of composing the dedicatory letter, a remarkable event occurred which sparked an increase in Frederick William I's interest in Wolff's philosophy and shows that Manteuffel and Reinbeck had wisely interpreted circumstances at the Prussian court. On March 7th the King released a cabinet order addressed to those who wished to be trained as reformed preachers. They were told to study "philosophy and rational logic, for example that of professor Wolff, to attain to distinct and precise terms and definitions in the entire field of theology".²³ Thus, Wolffianism became a crucial part of Prussian culture politics, and Wolff's method of thinking would become a substantial part of theological education.

As a matter of fact, the Wolffians considered this rescript addressed to reformed theologians as an outstanding sign of the King's favour for Wolff's philosophy. So they were not at all surprised that Wolff finally received a positive response to his dedication. In a letter dated May 8, 1739, Manteuffel congratulated Wolff on the approval of his dedication at the Prussian court. The mission was successfully completed, the dedication had the desired effect on the King's mind "en faveur de vòtre philosophie".²⁴ Frederic William no longer regarded Wolff's philosophy as theologically dangerous. On the contrary, from now on he seemed to be convinced that Wolff's philosophical principles were compatible with the Christian faith and social welfare.

Yet, the success of Wolff's dedication had an unexpected negative side-effect. It simply consisted in the King offering Wolff the position of professor of philosophy at the Prussian University of Frankfurt on the Oder. He apparently wanted Wolff back in Prussia. This was a generous offer. But for several reasons it was unacceptable to Wolff, who preferred Halle instead of Frankfurt

²² For the two versions of Wolff's dedicatory letter, including Manteuffel's emendations, see the University Library of Leipzig, Ms 0345, 58r–58v, 62r–63v. For the printed version see, Wolff 1739, a2r–b2v. Some of the most noticeable emendations concern the expressions 'divine Majesty' (divina Majestas) and 'Your most holy name' (Nomen Sanctissimum Tuum) used by Wolff in the first draft of his dedicatory letter. The terms 'divine' and 'most holy' were deleted by Manteuffel and Reinbeck. Comparing Manteuffel's instructions with the finally printed dedicatory letter, apparently shows that Wolff exactly followed Manteuffel's advice.

²³ For the German text, see Straßberger 2010, 351.

²⁴ Manteuffel to Wolff, May 8, 1739; University Library of Leipzig, Ms 0345, 68r.

on the Oder.²⁵ Moreover, he could not simply leave Marburg for Frankfurt on the Oder without appearing ungrateful to his present employer Frederick I of Sweden, also Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel, whose father Charles had offered Wolff a privileged position at the University of Marburg, when Wolff had been expelled from Halle in 1723. However, Wolff couldn't possibly ignore Frederick William's generous offer. Thus, despite this quite important success for Wolffianism in Prussia, the new situation caused some remarkable and unforeseen problems for Wolff himself. How should he respond? How could he refuse Frederick William's offer without displeasing the King? On the other hand, how could he accept a recall to Halle without displeasing Frederick I of Sweden, his present employer? Unable to cope with the King's offer properly, Wolff again asked Manteuffel for advice: "Ich bitte also, Euer Excellence wollen mich mit Dero Rath erfreuen."²⁶ And again, Manteuffel, Reinbeck and the entire circle of Wolffians in Berlin rallied to Wolff's support using their networking and diplomatic skills. This finally led, about 15 months later, to Wolff's triumphant return to the Academia Fridericiana in Halle in December 1740. The story of Wolff's return to Halle is a very complex one and is still to be told. Though it began with the desired success of Wolff's dedication of the second part of the *Philosophia practica universalis* to the King of Prussia, the dedication itself was not written with the intention of suggesting that the King bring Wolff back to Prussia. However, this clearly demonstrates how influential the politics of dedicatory practice could be.

Some Conclusions on the Social Role of the Philosopher Christian Wolff

Manteuffel considered Wolff's philosophical expertise the theoretical foundation of the philosopher's moral responsibility for human society, which at the same time was meant to be a practical guideline for the conduct of Wolff's own life.²⁷ Thus, in order to be credible Wolff was expected to meet the moral and intellectual standards he himself had set out in his theories. But this was not as easy as one might at first think. In fact, in the case of the highly ethical *Philosophie des Dames* project, theory alone did not work. Quite the contrary, in order to put his philosophy for the welfare of human society into practice, Wolff apparently needed a sounding board for his ideas, namely, Manteuffel and his idea of how a philosopher could and should be of use to society.

²⁵ Wolff to Manteuffel, May 13, 1739; University Library of Leipzig, Ms 0345, 70v: "Es gefällt mir Franckfurt eben nicht, und würde mir lieber gewesen seyn, wenn es Halle wäre."

²⁶ Ibid. "Hence, I ask Your Excellency to gladden me with Your advice."

²⁷ Only once during the correspondence was Manteuffel deeply sceptical about Wolff's moral integrity.

In conceiving of a popular philosophy for women, Wolff made use of almost every single argument Manteuffel had mentioned on this subject in his letters. No wonder then that Wolff considered the *Philosophie des Dames* project to be a task entrusted to him by Manteuffel. So we might say that, in the context of the Wolff-Manteuffel correspondence, Manteuffel played the role of the moral cosmopolitan, skilled diplomat and practical advisor provoking Wolff to fulfil his duty as a philosopher in society and, in order to do so successfully, providing him with his own vast knowledge of society.

While Wolff, with Manteuffel's cooperation, had no problems of conceiving of morally and pedagogically valuable projects like the *Philosophie des Dames*, he definitely found it difficult to deal with political elites. In order to be successful with respect to the politicking that surrounded culture and science politics, he needed – apart from a readiness to argue his case and a certain ability in the art of self-promotion as well as media competence, which he certainly had²⁸ – diplomatic skills, which he certainly did not. In Early Modern Times intellectual elites strongly depended on their diplomatic and political skills. If, as in Wolff's case, they lacked this specific kind of pragmatic social intelligence, they were in dire need of mediators and advisors, like, for example, Manteuffel, who then played a crucial role in culture politics and career management not only concerning Wolff's personal biography, but also concerning the philosophical movement of Leibniz-Wolffianism in Europe.²⁹

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²⁸ See Neumann 2013, 260–286.

²⁹ To cite but one example: Manteuffel used his contacts at the court of the Danish king in order to propagate Leibniz-Wolffian philosophy in Denmark.

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