

## Building an empire in the Republic of Letters: Albrecht von Haller, Carolus Linnaeus, and the struggle for botanical sovereignty

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### Abstract

The eighteenth-century republic of letters was in many ways affected by strategies and concerns which fundamentally contradicted its core norms. This study analyses one such instance, the drawn-out conflict between the prominent botanists Albrecht von Haller and Carolus Linnaeus, by looking into the representations of Swedish and Hanoverian botany in the influential review journal *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen*. At the same time, the article highlights an instance of the often cumbersome and complex transfer of scholarly teachings across national and linguistic borders, as well as the far from straightforward reception of a preeminent scholar in an important hub of knowledge, Göttingen, during the second half of the eighteenth century.

### Keywords

Republic of Letters; Botany; Carolus Linnaeus; Albrecht von Haller;  
*Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen*

## Construindo um império na República das Letras: Albrecht von Haller, Carl von Linné e o combate pela soberania botânica

A República das Letras do século XVIII foi afetada de múltiplas formas por estratégias e preocupações que contradiziam essencialmente as suas normas fundamentais. O presente estudo analisa um de tais casos, o longo conflito entre os destacados botânicos Albrecht von Haller e Carl von Linné, examinando as representações da botânica sueca e da hannoveriana na influente revista *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen*. Ao mesmo tempo, o artigo destaca uma instância particular da transferência, amiúde complexa e trabalhosa, de conhecimentos acadêmicos através de fronteiras nacionais e linguísticas, assim como o recebimento, pouco aberto, de um estudioso proeminente num dos focos centrais do conhecimento, Göttingen, na segunda metade do século XVIII.

### Palavras-chave

República das Letras; Botânica; Carl von Linné; Albrecht von Haller;  
*Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen*

## Introduction: the politics of letters

The early-modern world of learning has traditionally been referred to as a republic of letters, i.e., a transnational conglomeration of scholars joined by information transactions, friendships and shared values.<sup>1</sup> During the eighteenth century, the concept of *Res publica literaria* denoted occurrences on the national level as well as a universal community with an ancient history.<sup>2</sup> The republic of letters was largely an imagined community – an idea, an ideal, an ideological construct – characterised by principles of equality, meritocracy, reciprocity, cosmopolitanism, and loyalty to the truth.<sup>3</sup>

In spite of their high standards, the denizens of the republic often were not able to ward off the political and social realities they had to cope with on an everyday basis. In Germany, the geographical focal point of this article, men of letters commonly functioned as civil servants, a state of affairs that made them dependent on the rulers and prone to safeguard the established order.<sup>4</sup> In addition, they were subjected to the longstanding practice of elite patronage, which reasonably had analogous consequences for their outlook on society.<sup>5</sup> The Holy Roman Empire has not for nothing been considered a non-radical, mercantilist, and paternalistic movement distinguished by a far-reaching compromise between the educated stratum and the powers that be.<sup>6</sup>

The republic of letters was also affected by internal political strategies and concerns which contradicted its core norms. For instance, the prevalence of individual inclinations and preferences threatened the value of impartiality that was professed by

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<sup>1</sup> Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 16, 18; Anne Goldgar, *Impolite Learning: Conduct and Community in the Republic of Letters 1680–1750* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 6–7, 24–5.

<sup>2</sup> Goodman, 15–6; Sverker Sörlin, *De lärddas republik: Om vetenskapens internationella tendenser* (Malmö: Liber-Hermod, 1994), 15–7.

<sup>3</sup> For this aspect of the republic of letters, see Goldgar, 2; Sörlin, 17; Goodman, 18, 23.

<sup>4</sup> Hans Erich Bödeker, & Ulrich Herrmann, “Aufklärung als Politisierung – Politisierung der Aufklärung: Fragestellungen,” in *Aufklärung als Politisierung – Politisierung der Aufklärung*, ed. Hans E. Bödeker, & Ulrich Herrmann (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1987), 1–14, on 5, 8; Eckhart Hellmuth, & Wolfgang Piereth, “Germany, 1760–1815,” in *Press, Politics and the Public Sphere in Europe and North America, 1760–1820*, ed. Hannah Barker, & Simon Burrows (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 69–92, on 69–70; Benjamin W. Redekop, *Enlightenment and Community: Lessing, Abbt, Herder, and the Quest for a German Public* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), 35–6.

<sup>5</sup> For the institution of court patronage in the Holy Roman Empire, see Bruce T. Moran, “Patronage and Institutions: Courts, Universities, and Academies in Germany: an Overview: 1550–1750,” in *Patronage and Institutions: Science, Technology, and Medicine at the European Court, 1500–1750*, ed. Bruce T. Moran (Rochester: Boydell, 1991), 169–83.

<sup>6</sup> Jonathan B. Knudsen, *Justus Möser and the German Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 4, 8, 11–3. A similar perspective has been advocated by Peter-Eckhard Knabe, *Die Rezeption der französischen Aufklärung in den ‘Göttingischen gelehrten Anzeigen’ (1739–1779)* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1978), 259.

learned periodicals and underpinned their credibility.<sup>7</sup> It goes without saying that personal idiosyncrasies and conflicts could have tremendous impact on the scholars and institutions which composed the *Res publica litteraria*, not least on the review journals acting as “central banks and stock markets for accumulating and exchanging academic capital”<sup>8</sup>.

The purpose of this article is to analyse one case where the actions of members of the republic of letters conspicuously failed to meet its elaborate code of conduct, above all its insistence on impartiality and love of truth. The article investigates the discord between two famed eighteenth-century scholars, the Swiss Albrecht von Haller (1708–1777) and his Swedish colleague Carolus Linnaeus (Carl von Linné, 1707–1778), by looking into the representations of Swedish botany in a major review journal, *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen*. Based at the Hanoverian university town of Göttingen, *Anzeigen* was one of the most influential, renowned, and popular learned periodicals publicised in the German-speaking world, and enjoyed good reputation in other parts of Europe as well.<sup>9</sup> The journal was issued by the local scientific society, *Königliche Gesellschaft zu Göttingen*, and constituted a key component of Hanover’s erudite press, which left a substantial imprint on the scholarly world and helped elevating the professors of Göttingen’s Georgia Augusta University to arbiters of international knowledge.<sup>10</sup>

The choice to probe into the scientific and personal warfare between Haller and Linnaeus derives from the circumstance that their protracted dispute clearly illustrates the phenomenon of empire building in the republic of letters. Indeed, a contemporaneous Swedish observer aptly declared that the two combatants “resembled Caesar and Pompey. One, our Linnaeus, suffered no equal, and the other, Haller, suffered no superior – or vice versa”<sup>11</sup>. Linnaeus at times articulated a self-image which resonated with this statement. In a letter to his disciple Johann Andreas Murray (1740–

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<sup>7</sup> Goldgar, 110.

<sup>8</sup> For review periodicals as central banks and stock markets, see William Clark, *Academic Charisma and the Origins of the Research University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 373. For a German example of this *modus operandi*, see Pamela E. Selwyn, *Everyday Life in the German Book Trade: Friedrich Nicolai as Bookseller and Publisher in the Age of Enlightenment 1750–1810* (University Park [PA]: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 288–9.

<sup>9</sup> For the status of *Göttingische Anzeigen*, see Knabe, 8; Sten Lindroth, *Kungl. Svenska Vetenskapsakademiens historia 1739–1818*, (Stockholm: Kungl. Vetenskapsakademien, 1967), I: 1, 192; Gustav Roethe, “Göttingische Zeitungen von gelehrten Sachen,” in *Festschrift zur Feier des 150jährigen Bestehens der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1901), 571–3.

<sup>10</sup> For the influence of the Göttingen press, see Clark, 247; Martin Gierl, & Franz Profener, “Der ‘Bürger’ und die ‘Klapperschlange’: Die Göttinger Pressegeschichte von den Anfängen bis zur preußischen Zeit,” in *Göttingen: Geschichte einer Universitätsstadt*, ed. Ernst Böhme et al. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987–2002), II: 979–1048, on 1015; Luigi Marino, *Praeceptores Germaniae: Göttingen 1770–1820* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), 258–9.

<sup>11</sup> Wilfrid Blunt, *The Compleat Naturalist: A Life of Linnaeus* (1971), new edition (London: Frances Lincoln, 2001), 121–2.

1791), a Swedish-born professor at Georgia Augusta University and an avid *Anzeigen* reviewer, who will be discussed more at length below, Linnaeus designated Murray as one of the generals that would lead the 'Flora's army', i.e., Linnaeus' troops in his belligerent bid for the botanical *imperium*.<sup>12</sup> In line with this, a participant in the Linnaean botanical excursions at Uppsala likened the body of pupils to an army and their teacher to a commander-in-chief, a position Linnaeus himself readily accepted.<sup>13</sup>

Göttingen was one of the arenas where the transnational contest for German and European sovereignty in the field of botany played out. During the 1760s, the Georgia Augusta University witnessed a war of deputies between Haller and Linnaeus, who enrolled their students and disciples to do their fighting for them.<sup>14</sup> Considering that Göttingen University was the most important and well-known German institution of higher education from 1750 onward, and that periodicals in the Holy Roman Empire frequently turned to *Anzeigen* for inspiration and news, the Hanoverian centre of learning formed a crucial theatre of war.<sup>15</sup> *Anzeigen* was deeply enmeshed in the conflict, since Haller and Murray made sedulous contributions to the journal and were responsible for the majority of its appraisals of the Linnaean system. Moreover, *Anzeigen* devoted a large amount of space to Linnaeus and his teachings, as compared to the number of reviews that it dedicated to his compatriots, as well as to the attention that Linnaean matters were given in other German periodicals.<sup>16</sup>

By looking into the botanical war between Haller and Linnaeus in Göttingen, the article also sheds light on the often cumbersome and complex transfer of scholarly teachings across national and linguistic borders, as well as on the far from straightforward reception of a preeminent scholar in an important hub of knowledge during the second half of the eighteenth century. As will be shown in the following, the 'politics' of learning, in the form of doctrinally motivated resistance and appropriation, can be intrinsic to such processes of transnational mediation.

<sup>12</sup> Carolus Linnaeus to Johann Andreas Murray, Uppsala, 1769-10-04, <http://linnaeus.c18.net>, L4282.

<sup>13</sup> Lisbet Koerner, *Linnaeus: Nature and Nation* (Cambridge [MA]: Harvard University Press, 1999), 42, 49.

<sup>14</sup> Gerhard Wagenitz, *Anfänge der Botanik an der Georgia Augusta im Spannungsfeld zwischen Haller und Linné* (Göttingen: Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, 2001), 3, 9.

<sup>15</sup> For Göttingen's status, see Rainer Baasner, *Georg Christoph Lichtenberg* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1992), 3, 25. For the uses of *Anzeigen* by other journals, see Ulrich Hunger, "Die Georgia Augusta als hannoversche Landesuniversität: Von ihrer Gründung bis zum Ende des Königreichs," in Böhme et al., ed., 139–216, on 168.

<sup>16</sup> This claim is based on a survey of about two dozen German eighteenth-century journals available at <http://www.ub.uni-bielefeld.de/diglib/aufklaerung/zeitschriften.htm>, among others *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* (1765), *Hamburgisches Magazin, oder gesammelte Schriften, zum Unterricht und Vergnügen, aus der Naturforschung und den angenehmen Wissenschaften überhaupt* (1747), *Physikalische Belustigungen* (1751), and *Stats-Anzeigen gesammelt und zum Druck befördert von August Ludwig Schlözer, Königl. Kurfürstl. Hofrath und Professor in Göttingen; der Akademien der Wissenschaften in St. Petersburg, Stockholm, und München, Mitglieder* (1782).

### ‘Great men’ and botanical systems

Before moving on to the analysis of the *Anzeigen* representations of Linnaeus and the Linnaean system, it is necessary to briefly introduce the main actors, Haller, Linnaeus, and Murray, as well as to outline the reasons for the civil war within the botanical realm. Haller was not just a celebrated botanist, but also an eminent physiologist who conducted research on the sensibility of nerves and the irritability of muscles.<sup>17</sup> His abundant corpus includes poems, novels, reviews, letters, and scientific tomes like the Swiss flora *Historia stirpium indigenarum Helvetiae inchoata* (1768).<sup>18</sup> Haller studied at several European cities, among them Leyden, where he attended lectures by the medical authority Hermann Boerhaave (1668–1738). In 1736, Haller was appointed professor of anatomy, surgery, and botany at Georgia Augusta University, a position which he kept until 1753, when he returned to Switzerland.<sup>19</sup>

Akin to Haller, Linnaeus was a prolific writer, whose botanical, medical, and zoological treatises were issued in numerous editions. The Swedish botanist studied at Lund and Uppsala and then embarked on a study tour to the Netherlands, where he made Boerhaave’s acquaintance and published his ground-breaking work *Systema naturae* (1735). He became professor at University of Uppsala in 1741 and successfully used his chair to promote the sexual system.<sup>20</sup> Sten Lindroth has depicted Linnaeus as a promulgator of a botanical orthodoxy built around a “sexual gospel”, who did not tolerate deviations from his fundamental dogmas. The Linnaean system was taken to separate the real botanists from the charlatans and to be paramount to the continued development of botany – without its natural history would inevitably succumb to chaos.<sup>21</sup> Needless to say, Linnaeus was a controversial figure at home as well as abroad; his teachings were discounted by Louis Leclerc de Buffon (1707–1788), Julien Offroy de La Mettrie (1709–1751), and Johann Georg Siegesbeck (1686–1755), to name some of his more ardent opponents.<sup>22</sup>

Johann Andreas Murray was the son of Andreas Murray, a Prussian-born pastor of Stockholm’s German Congregation. After studying in Uppsala, Johann Andreas and his brother Johann Philipp were appointed professors at Georgia Augusta University, an advancement which gave them a central role in the vibrant, scholarly networks that

<sup>17</sup> Richard Toellner, *Albrecht von Haller: Über die Einheit im Denken des letzten Universalgelehrten* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1971), 128–30. See also Wagenitz, 5.

<sup>18</sup> Heinz Balmer, *Albrecht von Haller* (Bern: Paul Haupt, 1977), 19, 25, 27, 31–3; Toellner, 30–1.

<sup>19</sup> Balmer, 7–12, 14, 17, 21–2.

<sup>20</sup> Linnaeus’ stay in the Netherlands and his career at home are discussed in Elis Malmeström, *Carl von Linné: Geniets kamp för klarhet* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1964), 74, 86, 102–4.

<sup>21</sup> Sten Lindroth, “The Two Faces of Linnaeus,” in *Linnaeus: The Man and His Work*, ed. Tore Frängsmyr revised edition (Sagamore Beach [MA]: Science History Publications, 2004), 22, 27–30.

<sup>22</sup> Gunnar Broberg, *Homo sapiens L.: Studier i Carl von Linnés naturuppfattning och människolära* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1975), 37–8, 41–3, 79–82, 88–9, 170–4; Lindroth, 5, 23, 29–31; Malmeström, 88–90, 108–9, 115–6.

connected Hanover and Sweden during the eighteenth century.<sup>23</sup> This was especially true for Johann Andreas, who became the Göttingen agent of the Royal Academy of Sciences in Stockholm.<sup>24</sup> In Uppsala, Murray had attended lectures by a number of prominent Swedish scholars, such as Linnaeus, whose system he whole-heartedly endorsed and to whom he retained a life-long allegiance.<sup>25</sup> Historians have generally portrayed Murray as a devout, or even orthodox, Linnaean disciple and spokesman.<sup>26</sup> The two professors maintained a vivid correspondence and a close friendship throughout the years; for example, Linnaeus was honoured with godfathering one of Murray's children.<sup>27</sup>

For a time, Haller and Linnaeus were also correspondents and friends, although Haller had initially discarded the Linnaean system. The relationship was, however, tainted by tension and suspicion. Complications arose already in 1737, and during the mid 1740s, Haller attacked the Swedish botanist in the *Anzeigen* predecessor, *Göttingische Zeitungen von gelehrten Sachen*, since he was – or at least perceived that he had been – singled out for repeated criticism in Linnaeus' *Flora suecia* (1745). In spite of the fact that Haller publicly denounced Linnaeus' self-image and attitude toward colleagues, as well as the binary nomenclature, the conflict was resolved when Linnaeus humbled himself to his Swiss correspondent. In 1749, the exchange of letters nonetheless ceased, never to be resumed again.<sup>28</sup> The scientific rivalry translated into a reciprocal sensitivity to rumours, which eventually ruined the friendship and resulted in open hostilities. During the period from 1750 to 1753, Haller made his son Gottlieb Emanuel publish a series of anti-Linnaean treatises, while a disagreement on Haller was the reason for a French scholar, Henri Missa, to abruptly leave Uppsala, where he had journeyed to study with Linnaeus.<sup>29</sup> Yet, Haller and Linnaeus occasionally recognised one another and showed each other respect in their botanical works.<sup>30</sup>

Aside from the personality-related factors, the conflict was informed by deep-seated differences in the understanding of botany and, ultimately, the world. Firstly, in

<sup>23</sup> Hans-Jürg Kuhn, "Johann Andreas Murray, 1740–1791," in *Göttinger Gelehrte: Die Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen in Bildnissen und Würdigungen 1751–2001*, ed. Karl Arndt, Gerhard Gottschalk, & Rudolf Smend, (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2001), I: 46; Rudolf Smend, "Johann Philipp Murray, 1726–1776," in Arndt, Gottschalk, & Smend, ed., I: 38; Christian Callmer, "Svenska studenter i Göttingen under 1700-talet," *Lychnos* 1956, 1–30, on 11, 22.

<sup>24</sup> Lindroth, 196.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Murray, *Andreas Murray 1695–1771: En personhistorisk studie av Robert Murray* (Stockholm, 1980), 88–90, 119, 124.

<sup>26</sup> Kuhn, 46; Wagenitz, 15; Heinz Goerke, "Linnaeus' German Pupils and their Significance," *Svenska Linnésällskapets Årsskrift* 1978, 223–39, on 225.

<sup>27</sup> Carolus Linnaeus to Johann Andreas Murray, Uppsala, 1774-09-16, <http://linnaeus.c18.net>, L5026.

<sup>28</sup> Balmer, 45–6; Broberg, 172; Malmeström, 88–9, 110–1. See also Claudia Profos Frick, "Gegründete Kritik – ein unentbehrliches Amt in der gelehrten Welt": Albrecht von Hallers literarisch-wissenschaftliche Kritik in den *Göttingischen Gelehrten Anzeigen* (Berne, 2005), 239–40, 300.

<sup>29</sup> Malmeström, 117–20, 136.

<sup>30</sup> Balmer, 46–7; Lindroth, 48.

contrast to Linnaeus, Haller did not conceive of any consistent hierarchy between the various levels – class, order, species – within his system. Secondly, Haller’s system was ‘natural’; he strove to reveal the multitude of connections among plants and to pay attention to as many of their features as possible, not just a few characteristics selected *a priori*, like the sexual organs. Thirdly, Haller refused to abandon the traditional, polynomial nomenclature and adopt Linnaeus’ binary names, an approach which over time rendered him isolated and obsolete in botanical circles.<sup>31</sup> The civil war in the republic of botany thus emanated from a variety of partly overlapping conditions: the logic of interchanges between ‘great men’, the wariness and self-concept of the individuals involved, and highly dissentient approaches to science as well as to the natural world.

Haller was the last and most long-lasting editor (1747–1753) of *Göttingische Zeitungen*, and contributed extensively to the journal after its name change and annexation by the *Königliche Gesellschaft*. Haller’s continuous, strong commitment to *Anzeigen* has sparked claims that in a number of respects he remained the *de facto* editor of the periodical until his death in 1777.<sup>32</sup> At any rate, the prolific Swiss botanist exerted heavy influence on *Anzeigen* and no doubt constituted its chief reviewer, a status which led many contemporaries to regard the journal as his project.<sup>33</sup> What is more, for almost three decades Haller was in charge of the Swedish review section, a task that subsequently passed on to Murray.<sup>34</sup> For this reason and because of Linnaeus’ nationality, the present article focuses on the *Anzeigen* appraisals of Swedish texts; it also includes the representations under heading ‘Göttingen’, since many of Haller’s works were reviewed there.<sup>35</sup> Haller’s standing as the foremost contributor to the journal provided him with a hefty megaphone to propagate his views and tenets, while his enduring responsibility for the Swedish reviews constituted an excellent platform for attacks on Linnaeus. As we shall see, when Murray succeeded Haller as head of the Swedish review section, he used this position in very much the same way, albeit to promote rather than to counteract the Linnaean system.

<sup>31</sup> Wagenitz, 6–7, on 6; Heinrich Zoller, “Das Missverständnis um Hallers botanische Leistung,” in *Albrecht von Haller 1708–1777: Zehn Vorträge gehalten am Berner Haller-Symposium vom 6. bis 8. Oktober 1977* (Basel: Birkhäuser Verlag, 1977), 97–110, on 101–4.

<sup>32</sup> Karl S. Guthke, *Haller und die Literatur* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962) 30; Profos Frick, 20–2; Roethe, 654.

<sup>33</sup> Wilfried Enderle, “Britische und europäische Wissenschaft in Göttingen: Die Göttingischen Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen als Wissensportal im 18. Jahrhundert,” in “*Eine Welt allein ist nicht genug*”: *Großbritannien, Hannover und Göttingen 1714–1837*, ed. Elmar Mittler (Göttingen: Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, 2005), 161–84, on 164; Guthke, 30; Profos Frick, 52.

<sup>34</sup> Lindroth, 194, 197.

<sup>35</sup> When there was need to identify the author of a review, I turned to either Wolfgang Schimpf, *Die Rezensenten der Göttingischen Gelehrten Anzeigen 1760–1768* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982) or the digitalized copies of *Anzeigen* at Göttingen university library, <http://gdz.sub.uni-goettingen.de>. As from the annual volume of 1769, the copies have marginal notes, which establish the identities of reviewers and are usually jotted down in close connection to the review headings. For a discussion about the digitised annual volumes, see Guthke, 41–2.

### The anti-Linnaean polemic

Haller's evaluations of Linnaeus and his teachings amounted to an anti-Linnaean polemic, typified by a sharp, unforgiving tone and taunting or brusque diatribes. During the 1750s, several reviews raised objections to the Linnaean doctrines. An appraisal published a couple of years after Linnaeus' *Philosophia botanica* (1751), where the Uppsala professor stipulated that his nomenclature and system were the only valid foundations for all botanical endeavours, intimated dissatisfaction with his classifications. However, the critical remarks were to some extent balanced by positive ones; Linnaeus was said to be famous, while the reviewed text – a dissertation that the Swedish botanist had presided over – was described as comprehensive. Directly afterwards, a review of an anti-Linnaean letter by Gottlieb Emanuel Haller (1735–1786) assaulted the binary nomenclature, while Linnaeus was represented as inconsistent and his names were portrayed as too arbitrary and insufficiently rooted in nature. In this case, there were no extenuating comments to take the edge off the concentrated and austere criticism.<sup>36</sup>

The *Anzeigen* review of Linnaeus' *Species plantarum* (1753) was likewise disapproving. Even though the book was depicted as important and substantial, and the author was taken to display certain magnanimity toward his opponents, for the most part the appraisal criticised the Uppsala professor. For instance, the journal reported that the classifications were erroneous and patently contradicted empirical observations, that Linnaeus had not changed his mind on some topics no matter how good the arguments against his standpoints were, and that he had modified several of his tenets, a statement which made him look ambivalent and incompetent. Although *Anzeigen* at one point noted that Linnaeus classified like Haller, on two other occasions the journal established that Linnaeus deviated from his Swiss colleague, who was supposed to be in the right.<sup>37</sup> The criticism implied a distinct aversion for Linnaeus' personality, since character traits arrogance and obstinacy were added to his presumed scientific flaws.

At times, the anti-Linnaean polemic took on an ironic guise, as when one review expressed pleasure over Linnaeus' restoration of families which he had previously discarded and that otherwise could have easily disappeared from sight to the detriment of botany, because of the general habit to unquestioningly accept the views of great men. The journal hoped that Linnaeus would successively get to know more true families by their real attributes and that he would restore them as true families in accordance with nature.<sup>38</sup> The description of Linnaeus as a great man was hardly seriously intended, considering that it figured in conjunction with a sentence that informed the readers about the fallacy of his earlier position and suggested that his scientific achievements were marked by arbitrariness. This also puts the remarks concerning true and natural

<sup>36</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 44 (1753): 415–7; for *Philosophia botanica*, see Lindroth, 28.

<sup>37</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 80 (1754): 701–4.

<sup>38</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 70 (1756): 591–2.

families in an ironic light, since they too followed a monologue-like and critical exposition, lacking any unambiguously positive representations. Moreover, *Anzeigen* maintained that Haller had previously defined many of the species that Linnaeus had not identified until recently, an assertion that endowed Haller with a further advantage over Linnaeus and fashioned him as more clear-sighted than his enemy.<sup>39</sup>

The *Anzeigen* anti-Linnaean polemic went on during the 1760s and can be found in some reviews from the beginning of the decade; the reviewed texts originated from Haller and were assessed either by the Göttingen scholar Abraham Gotthelf Kästner (1719–1800) or by Haller himself.<sup>40</sup> Kästner's reviews of Haller's works did not exhibit any overtly unfavourable opinions when it came to Linnaeus, who was mostly represented in neutral terms, although an account of a couple of comments which Haller had made about Linnaeus indirectly described him as a scholar out of touch with the natural order. It is also possible to discern an anti-Linnaean tone in the recapitulated notion that Linnaeus' faulty classifications of orchids depended of his place of residence, which according to Haller had confined the great Swedish natural historian to dried specimens that were difficult to separate from one another.<sup>41</sup>

Haller's reviews of his own publications, on the other hand, bear witness to a decidedly anti-Linnaean mind-set. Here, Haller explicitly communicated the reasons for his refusal to acknowledge the Linnaean families: "They are in part inaccurately defined, and in part the division goes [...] against the analogy, and the natural connection of the families"<sup>42</sup>. Haller, on the contrary, reportedly characterised an orchid in compliance with nature, which meant that he paid attention to the natural interconnections, as opposed to his Swedish colleague. Haller also announced that he himself differentiated categories that Linnaeus had confused. Even though Haller stated that Linnaeus was knowledgeable and his mistakes were compensated for by his many merits, while his blunders had to do with the fact that he did not have access to the plants in question, the reviews imparted a predominantly negative image of the Uppsala professor.<sup>43</sup> Haller, in contrast, emerged as a well-informed scholar, who cleaned up after Linnaeus and unlike him adhered to nature instead of an artificial system in want of a foothold in the real world.

Occasionally, *Anzeigen* evinced a more malignant and austere stance on Linnaeus. Haller's appraisal of a new edition of *Systema naturae* (1759) conveyed some positive value judgements about the book, which allegedly was the most exhaustive work available and a result of indescribably extensive labour.<sup>44</sup> However, the favourable

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 591.

<sup>40</sup> Schimpf, 82, 87.

<sup>41</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 48 (1761-62): 425-6; and 24 (1760): 210.

<sup>42</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 96 (1760): 827.

<sup>43</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 96 (1760): 825-8; and 116 (1761-62): 1001-2.

<sup>44</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 153 (1760): 1326-7; for the identity of the reviewer, see Schimpf, 82.

comments were clearly outweighed by the harsh reproaches of its originator. Haller proclaimed that the Swedish botanist had failed to abide by his own rules and classified beyond all order, while severe criticism befell on the constant name changes, which made the book a treasury for all those who did “not know Linnaeus’ fluctuating newest names, as they appear only here”<sup>45</sup>. The journal noted that the author rarely mentioned his colleagues and that he had reserved to himself the right to transform their plant designations. The review was not, however, held to be an adequate forum for an investigation into whether Linnaeus had “denied all other plant experts, except for himself, all credit” and whether he would “exclude all the families” that had “not passed through his own hands”<sup>46</sup>.

A number of dissertations presided over by Linnaeus were subjected to pungent commentaries. One dissertation was taken to incorrectly invoke Haller to support its content; another was represented as impudent to the great men who had utilised the inch scale, which the respondent deprecated. Linnaean medicine was for once exposed to criticism when some medical classifications were depicted as incomplete and erroneous.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, *Anzeigen* claimed that Linnaeus entertained magical beliefs and that one of the dissertations comprised a reprehensible name: “But what is this barbaric name, and must one then always have dictionaries at hand, when one reads the k[night Linnaeus], [in order] to understand these names meaningless and trivial by themselves?”<sup>48</sup>. All these appraisals proceeded from Haller, who consequently did not confine himself to scolding texts formally composed by Linnaeus.<sup>49</sup>

During the mid 1760s, Haller’s and the *Anzeigen* anti-Linnaean polemic visibly escalated. A new edition of *Species plantarum* received a partially favourable treatment, as the Göttingen journal informed that the book had been exceptionally expanded and that it rendered useful observations from all kinds of places.<sup>50</sup> Nevertheless, the positive exposition soon gave way to a severe reckoning with the Swedish botanist: “Still, the scornful declaration against his critics ensues in the foreword. But has Mr. v[on] L[inné] never provoked less respect, by obliterating all names of all authors, except for a very small number, even when they are obviously better?”<sup>51</sup> Had Linnaeus not suppressed and ignored all discoveries made by scholars who had not fully adopted his system? Had Linnaeus not, even when his own knowledge was scant, judged others exceedingly hard? Had he not – in spite of the fact that changes had occurred in the reviewed text – for the longest time refused to admit the truth in regard to various plant families? The readership was exhorted to realise that either Linnaeus’ poor confidence in his

<sup>45</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 153 (1760): 1327.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 119 (1761–62): 1025–8.

<sup>48</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 124 (1763): 1008.

<sup>49</sup> Schimpf, 82–3.

<sup>50</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 85 (1764): 681–2; Schimpf, 83.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 681.

colleagues or his not altogether objectionable empiricist ideal had made him leave out many species that were not unfounded.

The remainder of the review repeats a sequence of familiar arguments: Haller had already said what Linnaeus was saying, Linnaeus' views were inconstant, Linnaeus was in the wrong, Linnaeus was incompetent and ungenerous, several plants were wanting, etc. *Anzeigen* stated that while Linnaeus usually did not even mention his colleagues by name, now he had given Haller the rare honour of publicly assailing him with respect to a topic, on which the journal so far had not been able to attribute Linnaeus with faultiness.<sup>52</sup> Through his calls for broad-mindedness and tolerance, Haller indirectly placed himself above Linnaeus – a haughty, narrow-minded, and petty botcher, who rejected men of greater knowledge, among them his rival in Switzerland.

The new edition of *Species plantarum* was discussed in another review by Haller, who stuck to the course he had entered upon, where Linnaeus' inadequate classifications, frequent changes of mind, exclusion of plants, and disregard of other scholars constituted the principal themes.<sup>53</sup> Although the journal proclaimed that a more detailed survey of the book would have been to the delight of the readers and that Linnaeus was diligent and brilliant, *Anzeigen* also maintained that these qualities needed to be supplemented by a slightly enhanced capability to trust fellow, more southerly (i.e. continental), botanists; Linnaeus should recognise that botany, too, was a republic. The positive remarks seem marginal in relation to the massive, anti-Linnaean polemic, which culminated in the representation of Linnaeus as a dictatorial-minded anomaly in the republic of letters.

The juxtaposition of a few favourable comments and an array of negative value judgements can be found in one more review by Haller from the mid 1760s.<sup>54</sup> An appreciation of certain aspects of Linnaeus' botanical achievements was once again combined with a criticism of his mistakes, ignorance, and confusion of categories. Linnaeus was represented as presumptuous, since he reportedly censored the truest of plant families and laid claims to have reformed botany, an image which prompted *Anzeigen* to point out that he had fetched his key tenets from earlier scholars. The conventional protests against Linnaeus were accordingly complemented by character trait lack of originality. In addition, the journal emphasised that Haller did not belong to the Linnaean school of thought and that he worked independently, had published texts before Linnaeus did, and often was in disagreement with his Swedish colleague.

The *Anzeigen* and Haller's anti-Linnaean polemic forged ahead with undiminished strength during the latter half of the 1760s. A couple of reviews from 1768 contained acutely critical observations, which were only to some degree balanced by

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 682–5.

<sup>53</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 86 (1764): 689–92; Schimpf, 83.

<sup>54</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 146 (1764): 1181–3; Schimpf, 84.

positive estimations.<sup>55</sup> The journal was pleased with a number of improvements, but declared that several of Linnaeus' positions remained unaltered, that the author had done injustice to a botanist who was passed over in silence, and that he had failed to reach the proper conclusion from his material. *Anzeigen* noted Linnaeus' dissatisfaction with the conduct of fellow scientists and took the opportunity to question his own demeanour:

“The complaint is harsh, but might not one attract that sort of enmities, when one just commends oneself and one's cult? And suppresses the right of invention among those who are not subjected to oneself, even when they are the only sources? We do not like harsh treatments of really deserving men, and prefer that one makes allowances for some deficiencies.”<sup>56</sup>

Linnaeus and his disciples were represented as a dogmatic coterie, which enviously guarded its unilateral, botanical orthodoxy, whereas *Anzeigen* and Haller came across as open-minded, nuanced, and unaffected by cantankerous antagonisms.

Notwithstanding the gradual influx of pro-Linnaean sentiments in *Anzeigen*, Haller's anti-Linnaean polemic persisted until his death in 1777. The reviews of Linnaeus' works thus continued to be marred by the lines of reasoning outlined above.<sup>57</sup> For instance, Haller reiterated his autonomy vis-à-vis Linnaeus: “In [terms of] the families Mr von H[aller] deviates a lot from Mr v[on] Linné”<sup>58</sup>. Other scholars were exploited in the unceasing polemic, as when the reviewers Haller and Johann Friedrich Gmelin (1748–1804), a Göttingen botanist, based their criticisms of Linnaeus on texts by the Swedish natural historians Gustaf von Engeström (1738–1813), Charles de Geer (1720–1778), Anders Jahan Retzius (1742–1821), and Johann Gottschalk Wallerius (1709–1785).<sup>59</sup> Gmelin's appraisal of Wallerius laid down that Linnaeus had classified against nature, but also accommodated a favourable evaluation of the Uppsala professor. Haller's reviews of de Geer and Engeström were devoid of any moderating statements, while his assessment of a dissertation presided over by Retzius alleged that the Swedes

<sup>55</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 96 (1768): 781–2; No. 100, 1768, 820–1; Schimpf, 86. For other reviews characterised by anti-Linnaean polemic, see *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 86 (1765): 696; 98 (1767): 783–4; 85 (1768): 678; and 27 (1769): 262–3. Almost all these reviews were penned by the philologist Christian Gottlob Heyne; one of them [85 (1768): 678] was written by Haller. See Schimpf, 84–7.

<sup>56</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 96 (1768): 781.

<sup>57</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 3 (1770): 21–4; 153 (1772): 1307–9; 23 (1773): 188; and *Zugabe zu den Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 18 (1775): cxlix–x.

<sup>58</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 152 (1774): 1297–9, on 1298.

<sup>59</sup> For de Geer, see *Zugabe zu den Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 18 (1773): cxlvi; *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 42 (1777): 329–32; for Engeström, see 121 (1777): 974–5; for Retzius, 126 (1777): 1015; for Wallerius, *Zugabe zu den Göttingischen Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 36 (1778): 574–5. Haller's opposition to Linnaeus might have also been the reason he appreciated the anti-Linnaean French natural historians Michel Adanson and Buffon. For Buffon, see *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 98 (1767): 783; Schimpf, 85. For Adanson, see *Zugabe zu den Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 18 (1775): cl.

had benefited from botany, although “the dependence on great men even abolishes all use of the eyes”<sup>60</sup>. The remark most likely alluded to Linnaeus, who was briefly mentioned in an adjacent passage. As before, the epithet ‘great man’ was used ironically, since the trust people put in Linnaeus supposedly led them astray and hampered the search for truth.

Haller’s death and the rise of pro-Linnaean argumentation in *Anzeigen* meant that all kinds of criticism of Linnaeus became less common in the journal, where the Linnaean credo got its definite breakthrough around 1780. When Linnaeus’ son, Carolus Linnaeus the younger (1741–1783), confuted some of his deceased father’s observations, *Anzeigen* in a somewhat excusing manner pointed out that Carolus Linnaeus the elder was as inexperienced at investigating dried plant specimens as were the botanists with whom he disputed, including Haller. Apart from this, only minor critical comments – about Linnaeus’ system not being natural and him being guilty of an unreliable classification – were expressed by the reviewers, the Göttingen Linnaeans Johann Beckmann (1739–1811), Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752–1840), and J. A. Murray.<sup>61</sup>

### Syncretism and pro-Linnaean argumentation

As mentioned above, apropos the Göttingen ‘war of deputies’, not all professors and *Anzeigen* collaborators held a negative opinion of Linnaeus by the mid eighteenth century. Several of the teachers at the Hanoverian university, among them the physicians Blumenbach and Johann Gottfried Zinn (1727–1759), demonstrated a more benevolent attitude toward the Linnaean doctrines, a circumstance which clearly had an impact on the representations of Linnaeus and his system in *Anzeigen*.<sup>62</sup> The anti-Linnaean polemic never totally engulfed the journal, or even Haller, who at times appears to have viewed his rival in a more redeeming light. In an appraisal of one of his own works, Haller reported that he, in his capacity as author of the reviewed text, assumed a sceptical attitude toward the Linnaean system. He also, however, informed the readership that his book had furnished all plants with Linnaean names and that it highlighted the herbs which were missing in an edition of *Species plantarum*.<sup>63</sup> The review hence to some extent defused the botanical controversy, since Haller chose to call the attention to his employment of Linnaean names rather than to merely criticise Linnaeus. The same approach distinguished Haller’s review of a Linnaean dissertation

<sup>60</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 126 (1777): 1015.

<sup>61</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 33 (1781): 259–60; 93 (1781): 738; and 152 (1781): 1218.

<sup>62</sup> For Zinn, see Peter Forsskål to Carolus Linnaeus, 1754-07-13, <http://linnaeus.c18.net>, L1784. For Blumenbach, see Marino, 132. Linnaeus’ relationship to Göttingen is also touched upon in Petrus Collin to Carolus Linnaeus, 1757-10-17, <http://linnaeus.c18.net>, L2253; Peter Forsskål to Carolus Linnaeus, 1755-02-23, <http://linnaeus.c18.net>, L1867.

<sup>63</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 84 (1768) 665–8; Schimpf, 86.

in medicine, whose respondent claimed that his results diverged from those of the Swiss botanist: “yet we find the accord [to be] exceptionally great”<sup>64</sup>.

Haller’s attempts to mediate between his and Linnaeus’ systems were not unique in *Anzeigen* or at Georgia Augusta University, whose professors were not foreign to syntheses of disparate botanical ideologies.<sup>65</sup> *Anzeigen*’s announcement that Zinn heeded both Haller and Linnaeus during the mid 1750s constituted an early manifestation of this syncretism, which became more commonplace in the journal during the 1770s.<sup>66</sup> A review from 1775 divulged that a Göttingen botanist paid regard to Haller as well as to Linnaeus,<sup>67</sup> while a review of J. A. Murray from 1777 – written by the reviewed author himself – proclaimed that his work applied Haller’s, Linnaeus’, and J.F. Gmelin’s uncle Johann Georg Gmelin’s (1709–1755) botanical systems.<sup>68</sup> In his assessment of a text by Haller,<sup>69</sup> Murray announced that the review would mainly use the Linnaean names in order to be concise, but that it would nonetheless, as a matter of precaution, compare Linnaeus to Haller. A similar effort to simultaneously satisfy Haller and Linnaeus can be discerned in an appraisal Murray made of one of his own works,<sup>70</sup> since *Anzeigen* stated that although the reviewed author had employed Linnaeus’ system as far as possible, some plants could only be understood with the aid of Haller’s teachings. Murray obviously tried to effectuate a compromise which would appeal to his friend and powerful *Anzeigen* colleague, Haller, as well as to his mentor and master Linnaeus.<sup>71</sup>

Within the framework of the analysed reviews, a group of Göttingen professors throughout the years emerged as influenced by Linnaean principles. Linnaeus served as point of reference in a reviewed work by Zinn during the 1750s,<sup>72</sup> albeit not without qualification, since the Hanoverian physician found faults with Linnaeus’ classification criteria. The journal neutrally noted that Beckmann and the historian Johann Christoph Gatterer (1727–1799) were followers of the Uppsala professor, and that Beckmann published Linnaean writings, information which came from Gatterer and Beckmann as well as from Haller, who in this setting did not attack his Swedish antagonist.<sup>73</sup> In 1772, when the *Anzeigen* anti-Linnaean ethos had begun to be smoothed by a more pronounced pro-Linnaean stance, the journal appraised a Göttingen dissertation which sided with the Linnaean system and continuously argued in favour of its attachment to Linnaeus rather than to any of his fellow botanists, such as Michel Adanson (1727–

<sup>64</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 47 (1760): 416; Schimpf, 82.

<sup>65</sup> For such syntheses, see Wagenitz, 10, 13.

<sup>66</sup> For Zinn, see *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 8 (1755): 65–6.

<sup>67</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 8 (1775): 729–30; and 24 (1775): 193–4.

<sup>68</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 28 (1777): 217–8.

<sup>69</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 3 (1770): 17–8.

<sup>70</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 89 (1770): 771, 774.

<sup>71</sup> For the friendship between Haller and Murray, see Lindroth, 196–7.

<sup>72</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 8 (1755): 65–6; and 137 (1755): 1253.

<sup>73</sup> For Gatterer, see *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 47 (1765): 377; for Beckmann, see 64 (1767): 505; and 114 (1772): 977–9. For the reviewers, see Schimpf, 80, 85.

1806).<sup>74</sup> *Anzeigen* refrained from questioning the Linnaean orientation of the respondent, a lacuna which can be explained by the fact that Murray, not Haller, was behind the review.

On the other hand, some of the professors at Georgia Augusta University also seem to have attempted to distance themselves from Linnaeus. In a review of one of his own works, the naturalist Johann Christian Polycarp Erxleben (1744–1777) established that he viewed Linnaeus' publications as registers and not as handbooks of natural history.<sup>75</sup> In an analogous review context, Beckmann stipulated that he did not wholeheartedly embrace Linnaeus' system and that he objected to a Linnaean classification, which the Swedish botanist would presumably have changed had he had access to the information that Beckmann possessed.<sup>76</sup>

At times, *Anzeigen* portrayed Linnaeus in a predominantly positive and courteous way even while Haller's anti-Linnaean polemic had the upper hand in the journal. A review from the mid 1750s described Linnaeus as an untiring botanical reformer and argued that his tendency to bring out dissertations which he had presided over under his own name elevated their value.<sup>77</sup> Although these estimations might well have had an ironic tinge, as far as can be judged they conveyed a favourable image of Linnaeus, whom a number of reviews from the mid eighteenth century represented in unequivocally positive terms. *Anzeigen* claimed that a dissertation on scientific travel which Linnaeus had presided over was excellent, that his *Species plantarum* listed the best drawers, that the Uppsala professor had penned a remarkable foreword embellishing a Göttingen periodical, and that Linnaeus' adversaries in a Swedish debate about grain had advanced an ill-founded outlook.<sup>78</sup> The review of an edition of *Systema naturae* from 1758 displayed positive representations and a diplomatic criticism of Linnaeus, who was once again depicted as indefatigable, while the reviewed work was taken to be to the point and the questioning of its classifications was guarded.<sup>79</sup> The *Anzeigen* assessment of a new edition of *Flora Suecica* found that Linnaeus had propagated Sweden's extensive love of nature to many a scholar and that his book was comprehensive and meticulous.<sup>80</sup> Even though the review commented about Linnaeus' confusion of plant categories, the reproaches were conciliatory, evidently because Linnaeus was considered to have complied with the *Anzeigen* classificatory desiderata; the journal referred to "a fortunate change that we little by little, in accordance with our wish, perceive in Mr Linné". The remark thus turned *Anzeigen* into a yardstick for and an arbiter of Linnaeus' botanical endeavour, which recalls the rhetoric of the anti-

<sup>74</sup> Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen 91 (1772): 769–70.

<sup>75</sup> Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen 49 (1772): 409–11.

<sup>76</sup> Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen 58 (1772): 491–3.

<sup>77</sup> Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen 27 (1754): 230–1.

<sup>78</sup> Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen 148 (1759): 1296; 3 (1757) 31–2; 20 (1757): 187; and 123 (1758): 1167.

<sup>79</sup> Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen 80 (1759): 692–6.

<sup>80</sup> Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen 28 (1757): 277–9.

Linnaean reviews but nevertheless did not occur in a context characterised by that kind of criticism.

It is reasonable to assume that Haller, who managed the coverage of Sweden during the 1750s, provided several of the benevolent statements. This hypothesis is strengthened by the fact that some reviews attributed to Haller and published during the largely anti-Linnaean 1760s stopped short of polemising against Linnaeus. These reviews were neutral and descriptive, but occasionally comprised favourable value judgments and diplomatic criticism. For instance, Linnaeus was represented as a famous and well-informed authority on method and regarded to be a good deal more rigorous than Boerhaave.<sup>81</sup> This indicates that the erudite ideal of impartiality might in a real sense have affected the representations of the Swedish botanist. Additionally, Haller's positive renderings of Linnaeus can be ascribed to the lasting, mutual respect between the two men of learning and to the varied intensity of scientific altercations over time, in particular when conflicts are highly protracted.

The *Anzeigen* transition to a prevalent pro-Linnaean argumentation and an idealisation of Linnaeus was initiated during the late 1760s, when J. A. Murray began voicing his Linnaean sympathies in a more overt manner. One motive for Murray's review of a book by the Swedish entomologist Carl Alexander Clerck (1709–1765) allegedly was that it had been recurrently acknowledged in *Systema naturae* and that many who read Linnaeus undoubtedly would like to acquaint themselves with Clerck's text.<sup>82</sup> Murray noted that Linnaeus had ensured the quality of the reviewed work and had lent his cabinet of natural curiosities to its author. In his capacity as originator of publications which were appraised by either himself or his brother Johann Philipp, Murray was now represented as a follower of Linnaeus; for example, *Anzeigen* made known that Murray did not dare to disavow the spurs of a worm "since one [ein] von Linné affirms to have discerned them".<sup>83</sup>

In 1770, a review by Murray of one of his own books for the first time invoked the pupil–teacher relationship between himself and Linnaeus.<sup>84</sup> This implies that Haller's grip over the journal was weakening and that Murray felt he could use Linnaeus as a legitimising or aggrandising resource, a new feature in the *Anzeigen* reporting on the Uppsala botanist. The change was probably connected to Murray's consolidation of his position in Hanover and the republic of letters toward the end of the 1760s, when he was appointed regular professor at Georgia Augusta University. Moreover, in 1770 the philologist Christian Gottlob Heyne (1729–1812) replaced the Orientalist Johann David Michaelis (1717–1791), a confidant and friend of Haller's, as

<sup>81</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 105 (1760): 898–901; and 90 (1764): 727–8; see also 47 (1760): 414–6; 31 (1769): 301–3; and 41 (1773): 344. For the identity of the reviewer, see Schimpf, 82–3.

<sup>82</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 11 (1769): 110–1.

<sup>83</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 82 (1768) 654, 656; and 64 (1769): 577–8; Schimpf, 92.

<sup>84</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 89 (1770): 774.

chair of the *Königliche Gesellschaft*. Heyne simultaneously supplanted Michaelis as editor of the Göttingen journal, a change which helps explain why the anti-Linnaean polemic ceased to dominate the representations of Linnaeus, i.e., Haller's close ally was no longer in charge.<sup>85</sup> Heyne gained power independently of Haller, who back in 1753 had arranged for his protégé Michaelis to take over the editorship of the journal.<sup>86</sup> Even though Haller remained an important reviewer up to his death seven years later, these factors probably made it harder for him to exert a determining influence on *Anzeigen*.

In spite of that, the battle for the journal was not yet won by Murray, who kept bringing up his relationship to Linnaeus, but also exercised a measure of caution and sometimes distanced himself from his mentor. In a review from 1772, Murray proclaimed that he, in his capacity as the author being reviewed, did not deny the advantages of his teacher, but admitted that it could be difficult to find certain plants in Linnaeus' works.<sup>87</sup> *Anzeigen* maintained that Murray did not fully share Linnaeus' opinions and that the Hanoverian botanist called several Linnaean classifications into question. At the same time, the journal announced that Murray's belief in the Linnaean nomenclature had been bolstered through a recent visit to Sweden and that the tireless Linnaeus' lone responsibility for the arduous botanical classification meant that all the plants which he had omitted were nameless, because most readers contented themselves with consulting his works only. *Anzeigen* furthermore declared that Linnaeus only disregarded definitions by other scholars when they appeared unreliable or vague.

Haller's small-minded, dogmatic Linnaeus, who constantly made mistakes, was a far cry from Murray's clear-sighted botanical reformer, who regardless of his errors came across as a leading scholarly authority. In conjunction with this, Haller was indirectly subjected to severe criticism, since the classifications he accused Linnaeus of neglecting automatically fell under the category of unreliability and vagueness in the above-mentioned review. An attack on Haller can be detected in yet another review by Murray, who claimed that the order brought about by Linnaeus' system benefited botany, which had suffered from a fad for novel systems – among them obviously Haller's.<sup>88</sup> The representations reinforce the impression of an on-going displacement of power within the journal, whose pro-Linnaean argumentation increased in volume and scope as the 1770s progressed. Murray was not the only reviewer to manifest a positive attitude toward Linnaeus during this decade, as the expanding dominion of the Linnaean credo was emphatically recognised in an appraisal by Erxleben: "As everywhere else, the Linnaean families are now stated by the insects and shellfishes"<sup>89</sup>.

<sup>85</sup> For Murray, see Kuhn, 46. For Heynes' take over of *Anzeigen's* editorship, see Enderle, 164.

<sup>86</sup> Profos Frick, 282.

<sup>87</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 85 (1772): 713–6.

<sup>88</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 40 (1774): 329.

<sup>89</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen*, 101 (1773): 866.

The pro-Linnaean argumentation was amplified in Murray's benevolent treatment of Linnaeus' *Systema vegetabilium* (1774), a section of *Systema naturae* which the reviewer himself had adapted into a stand-alone tome. *Systema vegetabilium* was said to be as pleasant for botanists as Linnaeus' affection towards his pupil Murray was for Murray. *Anzeigen* asserted that Linnaeus had given the Göttingen scholar his personal, improved and updated copy of *Systema vegetabilium*. Concurrently, the Linnaean system was deemed to be all-encompassing and irrefutable; nothing could deviate from it without violating nature itself.<sup>90</sup> Murray again positioned himself close to Linnaeus, ideologically as well as socially, while the room for syncretism and alternative teachings was decisively reduced. Even so, Murray and the journal continued to disassociate themselves from Linnaeus, for example, by pointing out that Murray did not agree with Linnaeus on everything.<sup>91</sup>

Haller's demise marked the beginning of a process that led to the exclusion of his botanical achievements and to Linnaeus being hailed as the undisputed master of botany. An appraisal by Murray from 1778, published just after Linnaeus' death, admonished the insufficiently skilled natural historians who, unlike the deceased, carelessly added plants to the Linnaean system.<sup>92</sup> Murray also found that no professor in Uppsala had ever taught with greater esteem and dignity than Linnaeus. Another review from the same year and by the same *Anzeigen* contributor briefly noted that one of Murray's works recorded Linnaeus' death in a spirit of reverence and gratitude.<sup>93</sup>

A somewhat later exposition devoted significantly more space to the life and qualities of the departed Linnaeus.<sup>94</sup> In this review, also from 1778, Murray stated that he, in his capacity as the author being reviewed, regretted the considerable loss botany had suffered through the deaths of its three foremost scholars Linnaeus, Haller, and the French natural historian Bernard de Jussieu (1699–1777). Nonetheless, the focus rested entirely on Linnaeus; Haller was all but left out of Murray's narrative, while even Jussieu was discussed at greater length. Murray represented Linnaeus as a prolific universalist and an illustrious man, who offered a key to all sciences related to natural history and whose death was all the more unfortunate given all the new-fangled discoveries which had not yet been incorporated into his system. The Göttingen professor dreaded the repercussions of the anarchy that would ensue before someone with an empirical mind and a solid foundation for his reputation brought Linnaeus' long and auspicious enterprise to its completion. The criticism directed at the deceased botanist was notably mild and apologetic. Although Murray at one point mentioned that Linnaeus had described a plant defectively, the reviewer relativised the misstep by

<sup>90</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 79 (1774): 673–4. For *Systema naturae* and *Systema vegetabilium*, see Goerke, 226.

<sup>91</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 66 (1776) 557; and 28 (1777): 219.

<sup>92</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 154 (1778): 1244–6.

<sup>93</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 40 (1778): 314.

<sup>94</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 45 (1778): 361–4.

alleging that one of his colleagues might have been the source of error. The exalted, towering Linnaeus was portrayed as an unfinished demiurge and a magnificent organiser, who begun ordering a chaos that now threatened to recapture lost ground. The Linnaean system was, in consequence, represented as the only route forward for botany, which from the *Anzeigen* point of view had become nearly synonymous with Linnaeus' doctrines.

According to a review from 1779, the Swedish scholar Retzius had obtained his knowledge in natural history solely through conversations with Linnaeus and by reading books by the Uppsala professor; twenty hours of talks with Linnaeus had reportedly been more useful to him than two years of formal instruction.<sup>95</sup> In the same year, Murray's assessment of a work by the Hanoverian physician Ernst Gottfried Baldinger (1738–1804) erected a virtual medical canon, where Haller – as opposed to Linnaeus and Murray's Göttingen colleague Rudolph Augustin Vogel (1724–1774) – was not included.<sup>96</sup> The Swiss scholar was hence barred from the sanctuaries of both botany and medicine as soon as he had exited the worldly stage. Even though rival authorities like Haller did not disappear completely from the *Anzeigen* pages, the Linnaean system was promptly transformed into a self-evidently true teaching, whose postulates were regularly confirmed, revised, and elaborated on. Insofar as the Uppsala botanist was criticised, the objections struck at details in his system, not at Linnaeus himself or the Linnaean system as such.<sup>97</sup>

*Anzeigen* and Murray devoted nine pages to the commemorative speech on Linnaeus given at the Royal Academy of Sciences and echoed its palpable idealisation of him. The journal announced that King Gustavus III illuminated the departed with his radiance by being present as the oration was delivered. *Anzeigen* maintained that Linnaeus exhibited an astute spirit and magnanimously abstained from answering to his foes, that he was extremely industrious, put a rather overlooked scientific discipline in order, and managed Uppsala's botany and medicine in a splendid way. The readers learned that Linnaeus acquired more followers than any other botanist, that to his credit he had many disciples with ample experiences of traveling, and that he was rewarded and honoured for his efforts, not least by the royal court in Stockholm. The journal proclaimed that there would always be just *one* Carolus Linnaeus, one of the greatest men of the century, endowed with a personality that rendered embellishing addenda superfluous.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>95</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 159 (1779): 1273–4.

<sup>96</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 11 (1781): 81–2.

<sup>97</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 23 (1779): 179–80; 44 (1780): 361–4; 120 (1780): 981; 175 (1786): 1753; and 181 (1786): 1818.

<sup>98</sup> *Zugabe zu den Göttingischen Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 22 (1779) 337–8, 341–3. The oration was reviewed on pages 337–45. Linnaeus' contributions to Sweden, Swedish medicine and the University of Uppsala were discussed in two earlier appraisals, at least one of which was authored by Murray; See *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 64 (1774): 537–8; *Zugabe zu den Göttingischen Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 2 (1777): 26–7.

Interestingly enough, none of the reviewers discarded the collective voice of the Göttingen journal in order to distance themselves from or position themselves close to Linnaeus until *Anzeigen* and Georgia Augusta University had conclusively adopted his system. The first time a contributor inserted himself into an appraisal of the Swedish botanist was in 1781, as Murray recollected his visit to Uppsala when Linnaeus was still alive.<sup>99</sup> The seeming neutrality entailed by the collective voice of *Anzeigen* was to all appearances a vital resource in Haller's and Murray's struggle for botanical supremacy in the journal.

In 1782, a new phase in the *Anzeigen* pro-Linnaean argumentation commenced when Murray and the journal embarked on an offensive against the botanists who kept resisting Linnaeus' trivial names. *Anzeigen* stipulated that the names had been accepted by most men of learning, above all by French natural historians, and that criticism which had been levelled at them, because they were not always able to accurately capture plant characters, was unreasonable.<sup>100</sup> In accordance with Linnaeus, the journal acknowledged that the Uppsala professor had not invented the trivial names; it was, however, he who had turned them into universal categories. The defence of the trivial names was combined with a customary flattering of their reformer; *Anzeigen* stated that botany would have been confused and complicated without Linnaeus' indispensable contribution, and that his magnanimity was laudable and constituted a much more efficient weapon than any counterattack. *Anzeigen* and Murray argued that the trivial names were not altogether conditional and that Linnaeus had sometimes been too willing to accommodate existing plant descriptions instead of inventing better names. The journal furthermore informed the readership that Murray in his capacity as author being reviewed brought Linnaeus' *Philosophia botanica* to a close by setting down various botanical precepts.<sup>101</sup>

The notion that Murray was perpetuating the Linnaean project recurred in an assessment from 1784, where the reviewer proclaimed that he had improved and enlarged *Systema vegetabilium*.<sup>102</sup> Linnaeus' enemies were once again reproached, while Murray restricted the prerogative to amend the Linnaean system to Linnaeus the elder, Linnaeus the younger, competent disciples and other Linnaean natural historians. Murray thus fashioned himself as Linnaeus' heir and at the same time ventured to regulate botany by defining who was allowed to modify the Linnaean teachings, an approach which underlines the lasting importance of personal agendas in the reporting on Linnaeus and the botanical realm.

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The name scribbled in the margin of the 1777 review is severely blurred, which makes it impossible to establish the identity of the reviewer.

<sup>99</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 15 (1781): 115.

<sup>100</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 130 (1782): 1049–51.

<sup>101</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 26 (1783): 249–51.

<sup>102</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 108 (1784): 1081–3.

The *Anzeigen* idealisation of Linnaeus persisted until the mid 1780s, when Linnaeus was represented as – among other things – an ideal for and a redeemer of natural history.<sup>103</sup> A review by Beckmann of one of his own texts imparted unfamiliar anecdotes about “the immortal Linnaeus, his [Beckmann’s] former teacher and friend [...] which will certainly be pleasant for anyone, who wants to know this great man accurately”<sup>104</sup>. Beckmann’s positioning of himself close to Linnaeus held potential to enhance the repute of the reviewer/reviewed author and to reproduce his network ties to Swedish Linnaeans, as did Murray’s endeavours in the same direction. When Kästner in a review from 1785 incidentally branded the Swedes as Linnaeus’ compatriots,<sup>105</sup> Göttingen’s and the *Anzeigen* botanical transformation had plainly gone too far so as to make the journal automatically identify Sweden with Linnaeus. The noticeable silence that subsequently surrounded Linnaeus can be interpreted as a sign that his doctrines had become approved to such a degree that no further justifications of them were believed to be necessary in *Anzeigen*.

### Conclusion: building an empire in the Republic of Letters

To sum up, the *Anzeigen* representations of Linnaeus and his system underwent three interrelated and gradual developments over time: an ideological shift from anti-Linnaean polemic to pro-Linnaean argumentation, an actor-oriented shift from Linnaeus’ rival Haller to his increasingly authoritative deputy Murray, and a journalistic shift from division to unity. These prolonged and overlapping processes ushered in a downright idealisation of Linnaeus, whom Murray apparently used to advance his own standing in the republic of letters and at Georgia Augusta University. The slow but steady growth of pro-Linnaean sentiment in the journal corresponded to a broader Linnaean movement in Germany during the second part of the eighteenth century, when for example a Linnaean society was founded in Leipzig.<sup>106</sup>

The *Anzeigen* anti-Linnaean polemic typically came from Linnaeus’ adversary Haller, who according to a contemporary Swedish observer, took every opportunity to castigate his opponent.<sup>107</sup> Haller’s demise marked the end not just of the *Anzeigen*

<sup>103</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 47 (1783): 461.

<sup>104</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 113 (1783): 1129–30.

<sup>105</sup> *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 189 (1785): 1911–2.

<sup>106</sup> Henry E. Lowood, *Patriotism, Profit, and the Promotion of Science in the German Enlightenment: The Economic and Scientific Societies, 1760–1815* (New York: Garland, 1991), 283–6. See also Goerke, 238.

<sup>107</sup> Johan Henrik Lidén, “Johan Henrik Lidéns resdagbok”, *Uppsala University Library*, X397, II: 194. Linnaeus was quite aware of Haller’s ceaseless campaign against him, which made the Uppsala professor discontinue his subscription of the *Königliche Gesellschaft’s* transactions, *Commentarii Societatis Regiae Scientiarum Gottingensis* (1752), since he had been exposed to criticism there. See Carolus Linnaeus to Johann Andreas Murray, Uppsala, 1773-08-10, <http://linnaeus.c18.net>, L4885; Carolus Linnaeus to Johann Andreas Murray, Uppsala, 1766-01-24, <http://linnaeus.c18.net>, L3518.

scientific syncretism and fundamental, implacable objections to Linnaeus, but also – in the longer run – of the moderate scrutiny of his teachings. During the first half of the 1780s, the journal and Murray assaulted the enemies of the Linnaean creed in a manner reminiscent of Haller's previous attacks on his Swedish rival. After his death, Haller was mostly ignored in the reviews that dealt with Linnaeus; the Swiss scholar was even excluded from the botanical and medical canons that the *Anzeigen* representations indirectly construed. This is to be contrasted with the situation in another erudite German periodical, *Journal zur Kunstgeschichte und zur allgemeinen Litteratur*, where an anonymous article from 1778 paid homage to both deceased botanists.<sup>108</sup> The article was most likely penned by the editor, Christoph Gottlieb von Murr (1733–1811), who had been an acquaintance of Haller as well as Linnaeus and hence occupied an intermediate position much like Murray did in the Hanoverian context.

The *Anzeigen* reviews of Linnaeus' works clearly failed to live up to the high standards set by the republic of letters. Neither Haller nor Murray was an impartial arbiter of knowledge, who dispassionately sought for objective truth. Rather, both appropriated the journal in order to blatantly propagate their own ideological convictions, which were intimately bound up with their respective relationship to Linnaeus. *Anzeigen* functioned as a tool for heavy-handed empire building, not as a vessel of civil discourse in an atmosphere of equality and meritocracy. As in the case of the Roman civil war between Caesar and Pompey, the struggle between Haller and Linnaeus signified the breakdown of communication and 'republican' values in the face of unilateralism and belligerent aggression. In both instances, personal interests and the glory of great men carried more weight than the lofty ideals of the commonwealth; to suffer no equal or superior was more important than to suffer the bonds which the rules of the community imposed on those vying for power and status, in the *Res publica litteraria* as well as in the *Res publica Romana*.

Last but not least, the slow and complicated reception of Linnaeus in Göttingen was intimately associated with Haller's doctrinally infused resistance to the teachings of his Swedish rival, while the ultimate acceptance of Linnaean botany only occurred once a disciple of Linnaeus got the upper hand in *Anzeigen*. In the case of Linnaeus' Hanoverian breakthrough, then, the politics of learning overall constituted a substantial and sustained impediment in the transnational transfer of ideas within the republic of letters.

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<sup>108</sup> "Briefe der Ritter von Haller und von Linne," *Journal zur Kunstgeschichte und zur allgemeinen Litteratur* 6 (1778): 241–2. <http://www.linnaeus.c18.net> lists a Christopher Theophil von Murr, who lived in Nuremberg, where *Journal zur Kunstgeschichte* was published. It is reasonable to assume that this Murr is identical to Christoph Gottlieb von Murr, since their life spans are the same.

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