

**THE DRAMATIC IDEAS OF HANS VON RÜTE**

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**THE DRAMATIC IDEAS OF HANS VON RÜTE**

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## CHAPTER I

### THE REFORMATION IN BERN

From January the seventh to the twenty-sixth, 1528, the city fathers of Bern, Switzerland, sponsored a great religious disputation between the supporters of the Roman Church and supporters of the new Protestant Church. Prior to this disputation, the city of Bern had been dependant on the Bishop of Luzern for questions of religious matters. However interest and support for the new protestant faith had been growing swiftly. The center of this interest and support in Switzerland was Zurich. Here on the first of January, 1519, Zwingli began his first sermons. These were based entirely on the scripture of the New Testament. By 1525, he had completed his preaching of the New and commenced with the Old Testament. The impact of Zwingli's preaching spread far beyond Zurich. The resulting schism in religious belief led to an attempt to re-establish religious unity.

Zur Herstellung dieser Einhelligkeit in der ganzen Eidgenossenschaft sollte die längst geplante eidgenössische Disputation in Baden durchgeführt werden, und<sup>1</sup> zwar im Einverständnis auch mit Bern und Basel.

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<sup>1</sup>  
Wilhelm Hadorn, Die Reformation in der deutschen Schweiz (Frauenfeld/Leipzig: Haessel Verlag, 1928), 109. Quotes from this text will henceforth be given in parenthesis within the body of this study.

The disputation started on the nineteenth of May and lasted until the eighth of June, 1526. Zwingli, fearful of his life, did not take part in the debate. Therefore the protestant forces were deprived of the support of their leader as well as the support of the stronghold of Protestantism, the city of Zurich.

Kurz, die Badener Disputation war von Anfang bis zur Ende eine katholische Demonstration, die nur dazu abgehalten wurde, die als selbstverständlich vorausgesetzte Wahrheit der katholischen Lehre gegenüber der Zwinglischen Irrlehre öffentlich zu promulgieren und die Rechtslage für eine Verurteilung der evangelischen Prädikanten zu schaffen.  
(Hadorn, 111)

The victory of the catholic supporters and their leader, Doctor Eck, was thus predicable and two weeks after the end of the disputation, the delegates declared the teaching of the neue Lehre and all of Luther's books henceforth forbidden. In Zurich, Zwingli and his followers ignored the decisions of the delegates. "Damit niemand im unklaren sei, was Zürich zu tun gedenke, wurden jetzt auch die letzten Altäre und Kirchenzierden entfernt." (Hadorn, 113)

The delegate from Bern, Berchtold Haller, did not vote on the final decisions of the disputation. His instructions had been only to attend and report the results of the proceedings to the city fathers in Bern. Haller returned dejectedly to Bern to report the outcome. He was

now faced with the choice, either to read the mass again or to resign his position and leave Bern. He decided on the latter and appealed to the city fathers. "Da nahm die Burgerschaft entscheiden für ihn Partei und zog in hellen Haufen gegen das Rathaus um seinen geliebten Prädikanten zu schirmen." (Hadorn, 116) This had been Haller's "Hier stehe ich; ich kann nicht anders." Following this overwhelming sign of support, Haller proceeded to set aside the mass and the six guilds of the city followed him, setting aside also the church calendar. The greatest opponents of the reformation in Bern, Stein, ~~Mülina~~ and Erlach, as well as other supporters of the old faith, lost their positions and were forced to leave the city for their own safety. "Der neue Rat nahm die Durchführung der Reformation nach dem Vorbild Zurich's energisch an die Hand." (Hadorn, 119) Most important however, the city fathers decided to hold their own religious debate. Doctor Eck refused to debate the heretics; Murner reviled the protestant supporters from the security of his hiding place in Luzern. Thus a

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<sup>2</sup>  
 Jakob Baechtold, Niklaus Manuel (Frauenfeld: Verlag von Huber & Co., 1878), xxxiv. Quotes from this text will henceforth be given in parenthesis within the body of this study.

situation similar to the one in Baden developed. One side was deprived of its leadership and a herald, openly partisan, was appointed. The growing control of the protestant forces over the disputation was shown by the appointment of Niklaus Manuel as the herald. Manuel had written numerous attacks on the Roman Church, including the caustic report of Eck's and Farber's trip to the disputation in Baden. Again, as had been the situation in Baden, the outcome of the disputation was predicable. Bern officially declared in favor of the reformation and, along with Zurich, became a leading center of the new faith in Switzerland. On the seventh of February, the mass was officially set aside and the religious images were removed from the churches in the city. On the twentieth of the same month, a general plebiscite was held on the decisions of the disputation; "die Mehrheit sagte Ja und Amen und damit kam die Kirchenreform formell zum Abschluss".

(Baechtold, NM xxxv) The Lord's Supper, according to the evangelic order, was immediately instituted in the city. No one attended mass in the Münster. On the following Sunday, the organist played, instead of the "Magnificate", the song: "O Du armer Judas, was hast du getan, dass du deinen Herrn also verathen hast" and closed up the



instrument, which was destroyed shortly thereafter.

(Baechtold, NM xxxv) A few days after the end of the disputation, the altars were removed from Saint Vincent's Church, the images burned, the church decorations melted down. Bern was now ein' feste Burg of the new faith.

## CHAPTER II

### HANS VON RÜTE

Shortly after the dramatic victory of the new faith in Bern, and at sometime between 1528 and 1531, Hans von Rüte sought religious refuge in that city. Very little, if indeed anything, is known about Rüte's life before his arrival in Bern. Solothurn is commonly held to be his native city.

Was die Solothurn Herkunft Rütes betrifft, schreibt mir Herr Staatsschreiber Amiet, dass das Solothurner Ratsprotokoll von 1521 (Bd. 10, S. 25f. und 34f.) eine Angabe enthält, die dafür zu sprechen scheint. In jenem Jahre lebte zu Solothurn ein Hans von Rüti als Beamter des St. Ursenstiftes, "der Chorherren Pfänder" genannt, also eine Art Schuldenbot. Er ist vielleicht der Vater des Dichters. 3

As can readily be seen however this conclusion is not based on very sound evidence. The name Rüte is a very common one and there are no facts, for instance, which would exclude the possibility that this "Hans von Rüte" was a relative, perhaps not even that. If it is indeed true that Rüte was from Solothurn, then he might have studied under a prominent humanist of that city, Melchior

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Jakob Baechtold, Geschichte der deutschen Literatur in der Schweiz (Frauenfeld: Verlag von Huber & Co., 1919) Anmerkungen, 80. Quotes from this text will henceforth be given in parenthesis within the body of this study.

Dürr. Dürr had studied in Pavia and Paris and had lectured on Homer at the University of Basel.<sup>4</sup> Here again, however, there are no facts to support such a statement or to exclude the possibility that Rüte received his education in one or more other cities. That Rüte, as a youth, had received some form of an advanced education is evidenced by his reception and activities in Bern.

Whatever the facts may be about Rüte's youth and his education, we are, on the other hand, well informed on his activities in Bern and later in Zofingen. Shortly after his arrival in Bern, Rüte obtained a position as clerk to the Privy Council as well as citizenship. In 1531, approximately two or three years after his arrival, Rüte was appointed to membership on the Greater Council, where he consequently served as Secretary of Taxes and Justice (Korn- und Gerichtsschreiber) until his departure from Bern in 1555.

Rüte was married twice. The first time probably in Bern. There were two sons and a daughter by this first marriage. It is very unfortunate that Baechtold, the major source of information about Rüte's life, did not

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Josef Nadler, Literaturgeschichte der deutschen Schweiz (Leipzig/Zürich: Grethlein & Co., 1932), 196. Quotes from this text will henceforth be given in parenthesis within the body of this study.

furnish more information about this first marriage. Such information might have shed greater light on Rüte's life both before and after his arrival in Bern. Perhaps, however, this question can be answered in part by the following quote concerning the election of members to the Greater Council.

Der Grosse Rat aber wurde von Zeit zu Zeit durch den kleinen Rat und die aus seiner eignen Mitte genommenen Sechzehner bis auf die Zahl von 299 ergänzt, wobei jedem Mitglied der beiden Wahlbehörden einen oder zwei als verbindliche betrachtete Vorschläge zu machen gestatten war, d.h. seinen Sohn, Schwiegersohn, oder sonstigen Anverwandten zu ernennen. 5

Is it not possible that an advantageous marriage accounts then for Rüte's reception in Bern, i.e. his receiving citizenship soon after his arrival as well as a position as a clerk to the Greater Council, and finally his appointment to the Greater Council itself all within two to three years after his arrival in Bern? Such a conclusion as this, like those concerning Rüte's father, his education, and his youth must remain unsupported until more specific information is uncovered.

In 1555 Rüte left Bern to accept a position in

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Meyers Grosses Konversations-Lexikon, Sechste Auflage, Zweite Band, (Leipzig/Wien: Bibliographisches Institut, 1907), 710.

Zofingen as Stiftsschaffner. Rüte's second marriage took place a year later in that city. His second wife was a Margaretha Bodmer. While in Zofingen, Rüte maintained correspondence with his former colleagues in the Berner councils. An original of his letter, dated January, 1558, to the Schultheiss and Rat of Bern has been preserved. A few months after this letter Rüte died in Zofingen on March 23, 1558.

## CHAPTER III

### NIKLAUS MANUEL AND HANS VON RÜTE

Literary histories of Switzerland consistantly name Niklaus Manuel (1487-1530) as the most outstanding dramatist of the reformation. "Manuels Dichtungen, fast alle in der kurzen Spanne zwischen 1522 and 1526 verfasst, sind die dichterisch bedeutendsten Schöpfungen der Reformation in der Schweiz." <sup>6</sup> Baechtold called Manuel "unser bedeutendster Dramatiker" (Baechtold, 250) and later elaborated:

Ein Zeitgenosse Gengenbachs ist Niklaus Manuel, weitaus die prächtigste schweizerische Dichter- und Künstlergestalt des ganzen Jahrhunderts, in ihrer Vielseitigkeit, als Dichter, Maler, Architekt, Krieger und Staatsmann an die grossen Meister der italienische Renaissance erinnernd. (Baechtold, 282)

Manuel was deeply involved in the religious, political and literary activities on behalf of the reformation in Bern and the surrounding areas. It was he who first introduced the religious polemics of the reformation into the drama in Bern. His first play, "Papst und Priesterschaft" was performed in the Kreuzgasse in 1523. A second play, "Papst und Christi Gegensatz" was performed

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<sup>6</sup> Emil Ermatinger, Dichtung- und Geistesleben der deutschen Schweiz (München: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1933), 151. Quotes from this text will henceforth be given in parenthesis within the body of this study.

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on the following Sunday. It was little more than a Nachwort or Anhang of the first play and was very short. Manuel's third play was the "Ablasskrämer" of 1525. The last, "Barbali" was written the following year. Through his literary, religious and political activities, Manuel helped prepare for the ultimate victory of Protestantism in Bern. He belongs to that generation of dramatists who presented their attacks on the Roman Church, its hierarchy and its dogmas openly in their literary efforts. This generation concerned itself primarily with the propagation of the new faith in the face of opposition by the established Roman Church.

The form of Manuel's first two plays is that of the religious-polemic-tendence Fastnachtspiel so common in the early sixteenth century. These plays are more highly representative of Manuel, the artist, than of Manuel, the dramatist. They are at best Reihendramen presented pictorially with an accompanying commentary. Manuel's third play, the "Ablasskrämer", is considered by most literary historians to be his best.

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The problem of dating these two plays is best discussed by Ferdinand Vetter in his book: Niklaus Manuels Spiel evangelischer Freiheit (Leipzig: H. Haessel Verlag, 1923), 24-27. Here he corrected indicates the date to be 1523 in contrast to Baechtold's dating them in 1522 (see Baechtold, NM, cxxx).

Dasselbe ist mit einer Keckheit, mit einem lachenden Humor und einer lebensvollen Natürlichkeit hingeworfen, dass wir unter der besten Erzeugnissen der Reformationssatire nicht viel ebenbürtige Gegenstücke finden. (Baechtold, 287)

Manuel's last play, "Barbali" of the following year, Baechtold referred to as "ein blosses Gespräch- und Lesestück". (228) These last two plays reveal an increasing maturity of Manuel, the dramatist; unfortunately, however, Manuel ceased all literary activities in 1526.

Hans von Rüte (? - 1558), on the other hand, is consistently identified in these same literary histories as a younger contemporary and follower of Manuel and as a secondary dramatist. Rüte is often incorrectly identified as Manuel's dramatic heir. Thus Ermatinger: "In Bern verwaltete Manuels Erbe, wenig ebenbürtig, Hans von Rüte, (198) and Nadler: "Aber was fortwirkte, war die Reihe, die Niklaus Manuel eröffnet hatte.", i.e. Rüte. (185) It is necessary to point out from the very beginning of a study such as the present one that Rüte was not Manuel's dramatic heir, nor did Rüte continue to develop the tradition of the Fastnachtspiel exemplified by the dramas of Manuel. Several points need to be considered in respect to this statement. First, Manuel's plays were written



between 1523 and 1526. He ceased all dramatic activities in 1526.

Die geistige Bewegung der Zeit hat Manuel zum Dichter gemacht. Wie die kirchliche Erneuerung im wesentlichen durchgeführt war, soweit sie sich durchführen lies, hat der Dichter die Feder niedergelegt. Wie er seine Ideen als Dichter verkündigt hatte, fand er es lohnender, als Staatsmann an die Neuordnung und Befestigung der Lebensformen mitzuwirken. (Ermatinger, 151)

Second, Manuel died in 1530. It has yet to be determined exactly when Rüte arrived in Bern. Rüte's first play was performed in 1531, a year after Manuel's death. Finally, and most important, the two dramatists used the drama for distinctively different purposes. They were thus members of different generations of reformation dramatists. While Merker would assign them to the same generation, the so-called third generation, ca. 1520 to 1550, it is impossible to defend such a generalization based on a study of the works of these two dramatists. If indeed one does accept this time period as comprising the third generation of writers in the age of humanism and reformation, it is then necessary to indicate an important difference

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Paul Merker, "Das Zeitalter des Humanismus und der Reformation" in Aufriss der deutschen Literaturgeschichte, H. A. Korff und W. Linden, (Leipzig/Berlin: Teubner Verlag, 1933), 61-82.

among the protestant writers, namely, those who led the fight to establish the new faith and those who followed after its establishment. Manuel thus belongs to the former and Rüte to the latter. It is necessary to make this distinction based on the content and purpose of an author's work rather than on chronology. Rüte's purpose was to protect the gains made by the new faith and to educate the newly gained following in the tenants of the new faith as well as ~~the~~ the moral and social behavior which was now expected of them and thereby to prevent them from being led astray. That Rüte was not Manuel's dramatic heir is further substantiated by the answer to the question: What influence did Manuel have, if any, on Rüte's dramas? Rüte's first drama, "Abgötterei", 1531, shows a great influence by Manuel. "Anklänge an Manuel sind häufig. Sogar von dessen Devise, dem "Schweizerdegen," macht Hans von Rüte Gebrauch. Auch die Namengebung: Seltenleer, Schnaberäss, Kussdenpfennig, Ohneboden ist von jenem entlehnt." (Baechtold, 312) In his first drama, Rüte had attempted to follow in the tradition of the Fastnachtspiel as exemplified by the early works of Gengenbach and Manuel. However, as Rüte matured as a dramatist, Manuel's influence declined or disappeared completely. What influence Manuel

had had on Rüte's first play was no longer suited to the purpose, the style or the structure of Rüte's later plays which were, with the exception of the "Osterspiel", 1552, two-day biblical Massendramen.

## CHAPTER IV

### RÜTE'S DRAMATIC ACTIVITIES

Rüte took an active part in the religious as well as the political life in Bern. His religious activities, however, unlike Manuel's, were limited to the drama. Following Manuel's death in 1530, Rüte's religious-didactic plays dominated the dramatic scene in Bern from 1531 to 1555. "Mit den bescheidenen Bühnennitteln seiner Zeit wohl vertraut hielt Rüte die Pflege der Bühnenkunst zu Bern allein in Händen." (Nadler, 185) The exact number of Rüte's plays has not yet been determined. Creizenach indicated a total of ten.

In Bern hat Hans von Rüte, der Dichter des Fastnachtspiel von der Päpstlichen Abgötterei, auch weiter hin den Schauplatz beherrscht und von 1538-55 fünf grosse und vier kleine geistliche Spiele aufführen lassen. 9

Uniquely for such a thorough scholar, Creizenach did not list these plays nor cite any evidence to support the above statement. Most sources, however, do agree on at least six: "Abgötterei", 1531, "Joseph", 1538, "Gedeon", 1540, "Noe", 1546, "Osterspiel", 1552 and "Goliath", 1555. The last five are possibly the "fünf grosse" plays mentioned, though

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<sup>9</sup> Wilhelm Creizenach, Geschichte des neueren Dramas (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1965), Bd. II, 243. Quotes from this text will henceforth be given in parenthesis within the body of this study.

the "Osterspiel", unlike the others, is not a two-day drama. As for the "vier kleine" plays, the author of this study remains in the dark as to how or why Creizenach supported his statement.

Rüte's first play, "Ein Fassnachtspil der ursprung, haltung, und das End beyder, Heydnischer und Bapstlicher Abgöttereyen allenklich verglychende" was performed in 1531 in Bern. As has already been pointed out, this play was greatly influenced by Manuel. Rüte, like Manuel, attacked the Roman Church. A variety of different character types reveal their false practices, especially in the worship of saints. "Aber statt seines Vorbildes genialen Witz und köstliche Lebendigkeit gibt er umständliche Gründlichkeit und derbe Schimpferei." (Ermatinger, 198-9) Rüte compared, in a derogatory manner, the practice of saint worship in the Roman Church with the pagan worship of gods and goddesses by the ancient greeks and romans. Rüte's "Abgötterei" is a veritable handbook of the saints and pagan gods and goddesses. It is composed of scenes contrasting and comparing the pagan mythology with the practice of saint worship in the Roman Church. These scenes follow one another without any real dramatic order and are only loosely connected to one another.

The play is written in free knittelverse and there appear lines containing as few as seven and as many as sixteen syllables. Rüte's Erstlingswerk, "Abgötterei" is an imitation of that type of religious-polemic Fastnachtspiel exemplified by the first two plays of Manuel. It is a Gesprächspiel in the early style of Gengenbach and Manuel.

Rüte's second drama, "Die Hystoria des gotforchtigen jünglings, Joseph", 1538, shows a great improvement in dramatic technic and maturity. With this play, Rüte began to write a whole series of two-day biblical dramas based on the Old Testament. Only once would he leave this source; the "Osterspiel", 1552, was based on the fourth and fifth chapters of Revelation in the New Testament. The Bible, especially the Old Testament, was a favorite source for dramatists of the reformation. The Old Testament is, by and large, the history of the Jews' defence of their faith against both internal and external attempts to corrupt and destroy it. This was just the situation which the protestant dramatists felt to be taking place in their own time. The "true faith" was being corrupted by the Papacy and its pagan practices. For this reason the Old Testament provided the ideal material for their purposes. The biblical story of Joseph

was first dramatized in Germany by a Magdeburger, Joachim Greff in 1534. The following year, Cornelius Crocus, a Jesuit priest in Amsterdam wrote a latin Joseph, which gained widespread fame and was frequently imitated. Rüte was one of these imitators. "So hat gleich Hans von Rüte ganze Szenen aus Crocus übersetzt." (Baechtold, 312) However Rüte dramatized the entire story of Joseph, while Crocus had limited himself to the events with Potiphar's wife. Even Birck's "Joseph" was limited to the arrival and following events in Egypt. Rüte's "Joseph" is his only play whose influence was felt beyond Bern and Switzerland. "Das Stück Rüttes ist zwei Jahre später von Jakob Ruf und von dem Kölner "Joseph" 1540 benutz worden." (Baechtold, 313) "Nach Werner in Anz. f. d. Alt. 15, 44ff. hatte sogar der Pole Rej in seinem 1545 in Krakau aufgeführte "Joseph" das Stück Rüttes benutzt (?)." (Baechtold, Anmerkungen, 80)

Rüte's second two-day biblical drama, "Die Hystori wie der Herr durch Gedeons hand sin Volck von siner finden gewalt wunderbarlich erlösset hab" appeared in 1540. It was Rüte's first completely original work. It will well serve to illustrate the development of Rüte's dramatic ideas, which is the ultimate purpose of

this study; therefore it will be discussed in greater detail later in this study.

In 1546 Rüte wrote, and had performed, his fourth drama, "Wie noe vom win überwunden durch sin jüngsten Sun Cham geschmächt, aber die eltern beid, Sem unnd Japhet geehret, den sägen unnd fluch inen eroffnet hatt". "Noe" is Rüte's most interesting drama. It is the most volkstümliches of all his dramas. In it Rüte revealed himself as a true polyhistorian. The history and culture of Switzerland are presented in intimate relationship with the history of Noah and the flood.

In den endlosen genealogischen, geographischen, land- und hauswirtschaftlichen Gesprächen ist gelegentlich eine hübsche Naturschilderung oder eine reizende Treuherzigkeit. Anmutig ist, wie der Verfasser die Berge und Weiden des biblischen Landes verbernet; die Arche hat sich auf den Alpen niedergelassen, sie ist aus Weisstannenholz gezimmert. (Ermatinger, 200)

"Statt des Narren eröffnet der Teufel das Spiel mit der ironischen Aufforderung ans Publikum, jedermann solle schwatzen und schreien, so dass man kein Wort verstehen möge." (Baechtold, 315) Immediately afterwards, in the prologue, the herald relates the old fable about the father, son and donkey, which was first translated into German by the Berner dominican priest and translator of the Aesops fables, Ulrich Boner. Here Rüte dealt with the question of



the drama as well as any modern dramatist might; one viewer wants a serious play, another to be entertained, and a third satire. In his use of the story of the father, son and donkey, Rüte pointed out that it is not possible to satisfy everyone's desire. In the prologue Rüte also mentioned the most important ideas concerning the drama as contained in the prologue to the "Anabion" by Sapidus. (Creizenach, 251) Rüte revealed his familiarity with the tenants of the classical roman comedy. At the same time he defended, almost apologetically, the short-comings of his own plays. "Rüte im Prolog zum Noah erkennt wenigsten an, die Behandlung eines Stoffen in klassischer Manier sei etwas Höheres, denn er in seinem rasch hingeworfenes Stück nicht habe nachstreben können." (Creizenach, 250-1) The number of actors in "Noe" swells enormously. "Hans von Rüte hat in seinem Noe nicht nur Noah und seine Söhne, sondern auch seine Enkel und Urenkel nebst deren Frauen auf die Bühne gebracht." (Creizenach, 181) "Noe" also contains the only Zwischenspiel to be found in Rüte's dramas.

Noe versammelt bei Sonnenaufgang das Volk zu einem grossen Erinnerungopfer für den Bund, den Gott mit ihm geschlossen. Bei dem folgenden Mahle wird ihm „hofierungsweise über den Tisch“ das kleine Spiel „von der guten und argen Menschen Uebung vor der Sindflut“ gehalten, also ein Zwischen-spiel eingeschaltet. (Baechtold, 315)

Nor did Rüte miss the opportunity to propagate the new faith.

Lamech wird vorgeführt als ein Mann, der grossen Wert auf die Opfer legt, der Pfaffe rühmt ihn dafür und tadelt die Nachkommen Seths, die da meinen, man müsse durch den Glauben selig werden. (Creizenach, 244)

"Noe" has the greatest variety of any of Rüte's plays. In addition to the devil's prologue and the story of the father, son and donkey, there is a Zwischenspiel as well as numerous musical interludes with songs and dances. The play ends in a manner modern sophisticated audiences might consider naive. It is, however, beautiful simple and effective.

Die Kinder Chams aber werden aufrührerisch und beschliessen, unter Nimrod im Lande Sinear einen Turm, der bis an den Himmel reicht, zu erbauen. Bis dieser fertig sei—fügt die Schlussrede launig hinzu—könne der Zuschauer nicht warten. Ein jeder möge deshalb an seinen Ort gehen. (Baechtold, 316)

It is difficult to agree with such statements as: "Aus dem neunten Kapitel der Genesis hat Rüte ein schwerfälliges, handlungsarmes Spiel breitgetreten." or "Wer glauben möchte, die Sache sei wenigsten mit einigem Humor behandelt, sieht sich getäuscht." (Baechtold, 315) Of all of Rüte's dramas, "Noe" is the liveliest. Indeed, of all his dramas, this one would seem to have had the greatest appeal to the Schauspielfreudigkeit of a sixteenth century

audience in Switzerland.

An Osterspiel, "Ein Kurtzes Osterspiel zu Bern durch Jung gesellen gehandelt, uff dem Sontag Quasimodo nach Oster" was Rüte's fifth play. It was performed in honor of the newly elected officials.

Joh. Hallers Chronik meldet zum Jahre 1552 (S. 10): "Den 24. April spielen die zum Schmieden das 41 und 5. Kapitel der Offenbarung Johannis zu Barfussen, zu Ehren dem Schultheiss Nägli, auch Venner Zülli und Junker Beat Ludw. v. Mülinen, so neulich erwähnt waren. (Baechtold, Anmerkungen, 82)

Its title does not refer to that genre of the theater known as Easter plays but rather only to the time of its performance. Other than its name, it bears no resemblance to such plays. It is, in fact, only a dramatization of the fourth and fifth chapters of Revelation in the New Testament. Even to classify it as a drama is difficult. Whole parts are written to be sung to the accompaniment of music. Ermatinger classified it as "ein Oratorium oder eine geistliche Oper". (201) Likewise Baechtold: "Ganz Partien des kurzen Textes sind offenbar als Singspiel eingerichtet." (316)

Rüte's last known play is "Die Histori, Wie David der Jüngling den Risen Goliath umbbracht un erlegt hat". Though Rüte was almost apologetic about the short-comings of his plays in comparison to the classical roman comedies

in the prologue to "Noe", he certainly did not hesitate to defend the importance and value of his plays in the prologue to "Goliath".

Rüte hat seinen Texten, sei es wegen ihres litterarischen, sei es wegen ihres moralischen Werts Bedeutung genug beigemessen, um im Prolog zum Goliath die Zuschauer aufzufordern, sie möchten mehr auf die Wörter achten als darauf wie die Darsteller „verbutzet und zugerüstet“ seien. (Creizenach, 252)

Again the tendency towards local color in Rüte's plays is reflected in "Goliath" by the use of the Alphorn. Näf traced the source for this drama back to Zwingli's son-in-law, Gualther. (185) Though this play was not available to the author of this study, he believes, none-the-less, that Rüte, perhaps aware of Gualther's work, perhaps even stimulated by it to write a drama based on the same topic, based this play, as he had his other biblical dramas, very closely on the Bible.

## CHAPTER V

### "GEDEON"

#### The First Day

Prologue: (A2a) The first herald explains the serious nature of the play: "Das die kurzweil hie handlent wir/ Zuo lob und eer dem Herren Gott". So that no one should believe the play to be a product of the author's imagination, Rüte points out that the play is based on the sixth and seventh chapters of the Book of Judges.

Argument: (A2a-A3a) The second herald relates the story of Gedeon in order that there be no misunderstanding just which story the play is based on. He also requests the audience to listen attentively.

Section One: Part One: (A3b-A6a) Joas, Gedeon's father and the leader of the Esrites, is brought the news of a new midianite invasion. Gedeon reads the letter which the messenger brought. It is from the city of Jezreel and advises Joas and his people to flee to the mountains, that they are doing likewise. Sophar, Joas' servant, is sent to gather the people together that they might be informed of the danger. Joas and Gedeon, accompanied by their servants, ride off to meet the assembled crowd near the city gate.

Part Two: (A6a-B4a) The letter is read to the crowd. They cry out to the Lord in despair, asking the cause for the years of misfortune and suffering under the hands of the invaders. A prophet then reveals to them that they, themselves, are to blame. They have disobeyed the First Commandment and committed idolatry. Recognizing their guilt, the people pray for forgiveness. Joas sends the people home to prepare for the flight to the mountains. "Hienach ist ein klaeglicher gesang gsungen/ worden/wie an eim andern ort volgen wird"

Section Two: Part One (B4a-B8b) An angel appears to Gedeon and informs him that the Lord has chosen him to free His people from the invaders. Gedeon is hesitant and asks for a sign. The angel tells him to prepare an offering. The offering is consumed by flames, whereupon the Lord speaks to Gedeon reassuring him. The Lord commands him to destroy Baal's altar and sacred grove, to erect in its place an altar to the one and only true God. Gedeon sends his servant, Phara, to fetch some faithful men to help him carry out the Lord's command.

Part Two: (B8b-C8b) Gedeon and his servants destroy the altar and grove and erect a new altar on which they burn an offering.

"Hie volgt der truer gsang" (C8a). This is possible the same song which the stage directions mentioned earlier. After the song is sung, another follows: "Als Gedeon den syg behalten unn/ sine find mit der hilff Gottes erschlagen/ ward/ das nochvolgent gesetz gesungen" (C8b).

Section Three: Part One: (D1a-D5a) On the next morning, the followers of Baal discover the destruction and the remains of Gedeon's offering on the new altar. The Caplan reports: "Ich weis nit gwisslich/wer than hat/ Aber das gschrey ist in der stat/ Unsers herren sun Gedeon/ Syg frūsalb zwoelfft abher kon" (D3a). The followers of Baal leave for Joas' house to confront Gedeon. Zamri is sent ahead to gather armour and weapons for his master, the Schreyer, the leader of the crowd. Two riders arrive in the city (Erst Lantman and Der ander Landman). They decide to dismount and discover the cause of the uproar.

Part Two: (D5a-E3a) The crowd arrives at Joas' house and demand that he hand over Gedeon.

Wer handlet wider gmeinen stand  
 Den sol man rütten von dem land  
 Wer widers mer im glouben thuot  
 Der hat verlorn sin lyb und bluot  
 Wer falt von Baal/und Eyd bricht  
 Der sol ummkon und werden gricht (D7b)

Joas calms the crowd, reminds them of the Law of Moses, forbids them to revenge Baal. If Baal is truly a God,

he will revenge himself. The crowd agrees. Joas tells the people to go home, close up the city and set the watch. He also tells them to prepare their weapons but that the city will not be evacuated for a while yet. The two riders, who had arrived in the city at the start of the uproar, comment on the developments. The first suggests that all idol worshipers should be driven out of Israel. The second agrees: "Das Gott volgen/sy recht allein/ All ander glouben valsch/unrein/ So woellents doch selbs goetter machen/ Wer recht verstat/muoss iren lachen" (E3a).

Part Three: (E3a-E4b) Gedeon thanks his father. Joas then asks Gedeon if he had indeed destroyed Baal's altar and sacred grove. Gedeon tells him of the appearance of the angel and the Lord and of the Lord's command. Joas praises the Lord.

"Gsang Gottlobend"

Closing Speech by First Herald: (E5a-b) The first herald suggests that since everyone is tired, the rest of the play will be continued on the next day. However, in order that the time not be wasted until then, he points out several things to be remembered and thought about.

Closing Speech by the Second Herald: (E5b-E6a) The second herald invites the audience to return tomorrow and advises them that the second part of the play has "die hüpstere gstalt".



## The Second Day

Prologue: (E6a) The herald review the developments of the play up to this point in ten lines. He also requests the audience to listen and remain quiet until the end of the play.

Part One: (E6a-E8b) Joas review the events of the previous day. Gedeon informs him that he intends to gather the tribes of Israel to fight the invaders. Joas gives his blessings and prays for victory.

"Gsang"

Part Two ?: (E8b-F8b) This part is concerned with the gathering of the army. For this reason, the author of this study has ~~assigned related scenes to part two (?)~~. Gedeon comments on his new position as the Hauptmann and what is therefore expected of him. A spy who had been in the enemy camp arrives with a scroll he has stolen. In it is revealed the great number of the enemy gathered before them. Gedeon calms the fears of his followers, ~~revealing~~ revealing to them the appearance of the angel and the Lord and of the Lord's promise to help him free them from the invaders hand. "Ein zeichen" (F4b). Gedeon sends out riders to the other tribes asking them to join him for the coming battle. Jether, Gedeon's son,

reads the letter contained in the scroll calling for the allies of the enemy to help them destroy the Jews.

Das die schelmen/aller Welt find/  
 Die us Egypt entrunden sind  
 Und mit gwalt kon in Canaan  
 Darzuo sy doch kein recht hand ghan  
 Einmal muossent uss grüttet werden/  
 Und ir nam ussgeloest von der Erden (F5a)

Gedeon then reads the number of the enemy listed in the scroll:

Oreb	22 000	
Zeb	16 000	
Sebe	19 000	
Salmana	17 000	
Moabiter hilff	20 000	
Amalechiter sampt andern/	26 000	
Ammoniter	15 000	
	<u>135 000</u>	(F5b)

Gedeon commands his army to assemble. (Musical interlude ? "Trummetter blosst uff" (F6a).) The army first votes by a show of hands to accept Gedeon as their leader. Then the army is counted: eight thousand men from Zabulon, the same number from Naptalim, six thousand from Aser, and ten thousand from Manasse. The Israelites are outnumbered almost five to one. Gamaliel accounts that since it is late, everyone should return to their camps.

Part Three ?: (F8b-G5b) This part is centered around the miracle of the sheepskin. Gedeon prays to the Lord for a sign that Israel will truly be freed by His help. A sheepskin will be left out on the ground overnight;

if it is wet the following morning but the earth dry, then he will be convinced. Gamaliel and Assriel discuss the worthiness of Gedeon to be their leader. The next morning, Phara comments that the night had been as hot as had it been day and the sun shining, that there is no dew on the ground. Gedeon sends him to fetch the sheepskin. It is soaking wet. Gedeon is still doubtful, however, and asks the Lord for another miracle. The opposite should occur on the following morning. Gamaliel and Assriel discuss the growing fear among the army that Gedeon is not God's appointed and that he will lead them to defeat. The following morning, Jether comments on the dampness of the temperature. Though everything is covered by a heavy dew, Gedeon discovers the sheepskin is dry and is finally convinced that the Lord has indeed chosen him.

"Gsang" (G5b).

Part Four ?: (G6a-~~M2a~~) This part is concerned with the growing fear amongst Gedeon's army. A sergeant of the guard brings a prisoner to Assriel. The prisoner promises to tell them about the enemy camp in return for not being harmed. Assriel agrees, assures him he will be treated well. The prisoner tells them of the great army assembled before the Israelites. Assriel expresses his fear of a certain defeat. A messenger arrives with a

letter from the tribes which did not join Gedeon. It urges the army to return home, that the task they have taken on is too great and that they face certain defeat. Gamaliel believes it is better to die in battle, that the Lord did not assemble this army under Gedeon without a purpose. Phadassur, however, feels it is wiser to follow the suggestion in the letter, that if God were on their side, they would already have peace, that since so many are gathered against them, it is a sign that God is going to punish them. Whoever wishes to escape this punishment should return home. The two Landsmänner comment on Phadassur and Gamaliel. They decide to remain and fight on the side of Gedeon and the Lord.

Part Five ?: (H2a-14a) This part is concerned with the reduction of the army. God commands Gedeon to allow those who are afraid to return home. He wishes to show that the victory will not come to them by their own strength but only through His help.

Das Israel nit wider mich  
 Erheben und doerfft ruomen sich  
 Und also spraechen alle zyt  
 Ich Israel hab than den stryt/  
 Mit miner macht überwunden/  
 Mich selbs erloesst/ fry gmacht/ entpunden  
 Dann haettents schon funden anlass  
 Mich zeverachten über dmass  
 Mit glimpff zverlassen mine pott  
 Und bald zsuchen ein andern Gott/ (H2b)

Gedeon has the army assembled. (Musical interlude ?  
 "Trummetter blass uff hartiglich/ Das alles volck harfuege  
 sich" (H3a).) Those who are afraid are allowed to return  
 home without loss of honor. "Ein gstüchel" (H4a). The  
 two Landsmänner comment on the departure of the faint-  
 hearted. Gamaliel reports that twenty-two thousand have  
 left and only ten thousand now remain for the battle. The  
 Lord tells Gedeon that the number is still too ~~great~~, that  
 he must further reduce the army. Gedeon is instructed to  
 lead the army to the well at which time the Lord will tell  
 him who must return to their homes. Gedeon instructs his  
 servant, Phara:

Heiss einen nach dem andern trincken  
 Hab acht woelche nit nider sincken  
 Noch die knü biegen uff das land  
 Sonders ins wasser stossent dhand  
 Und schoepffent es darmit in mund  
 Wie von natur laepet ein hund/  
 Die sittig trincken mit eim wort/  
 Die sündet mir all an ein ort/  
 Aber (merck eben) alle die  
 Mit bognen knüwen trinckent hie  
 Suffent wie anders vech gar schnell  
 Die selben all ouch sundrig stell (H8a)

When this is done, Gedeon is commanded by the Lord to send  
 home those who drank on their knees. He does so. The  
 remaining three hundred swear an oath of allegiance to  
 Gedeon. The Lord now instructs Gedeon to go by night  
 into the enemy camp with his servant, Phara. They darken

their faces and depart.

Part Six ?: (I4a-I7b) This part is centered around the events in the enemy camp. The enemy guard is being changed. One of the guards is uneasy about the coming battle and warns: "Gar oft gross huffen gschlagen sind/ Von wenig lüten sag ich dir" (I5a). Gedeon and Phara arrive in time to hear him tell of his dream. The Recemwechter interpretes the dream.

Ich weyss schon was der troum bedüt  
 Und mit namen sunst anders nüt  
 Dan das wirt komen Gedeon  
 Der wider uns zuo veld lyt schon  
 Der Israheliter hauptman/  
 Und uns mit sinem schwert erschlan/  
 Dann gwüss der Herr/als war ich laeben  
 Hat im in sin hend übergeben  
 Dise Madianiter all  
 Also das ir gantz laeger fall. (I6a)

After hearing this Gedeon and Phara leave. On the way back to camp, the Lord appears to Gedeon and instructs him how he is to prepare his army for the battle. Each soldier is to be given a horn and a candle inside a jug to hide the light. They are to surround the enemy camp by night, break the jugs and blow the horns. God will then put the fear of the Lord into their hearts and the enemy will flee.

Part Seven?: (I7b-L6a) This part is centered around the battle and Gedeon's victory. Gedeon separates

the army and instructs them as the Lord commanded. A Priest leads them in prayer. As soon as the enemy camp is surrounded, Gedeon gives the signal. "Blasent, brechent die krueg und schryent." (K3a) (An interlude?) In vain the kings Zebec and Salmana call out to their gods for help. When none comes, they admit the powerlessness of these gods and the superiority of the God of the Israelites. "O Gedeon wir gsend ietz wol/ Das man üwern gott eeren sol/" (L1a). The two kings beg Gedeon for mercy and promise to reject their false gods and accept the God of Israel. Gedeon, however, instructs his son, Jether, to kill them without hesitation. Phara gives their royal robes to Gedeon. Zebec and Salmana curse their gods for having deserted them and denounce them as false gods. Gedeon again tells Jether not to hesitate, to kill them. King Zebec begs: "Herr Gedeon wir bitten uch/ Das ir uns bwysind eer und gnad/ Und selbs toedent und richtind grad" (L4a). King Salmana does likewise: "Ich pit ouch wie Zebec hert/ Erschlachent uns mit üwerm schwert" (L4a). Gedeon grants them this and kills them himself. Eleazar, the priest, comments on the battle, emphasizing that it was the work of the Lord alone that brought them victory.

He then calls for a celebration: "Diser Tag sol vol freüden sin/ Wir wend ein lied dem herren singen/ Land ein triumphisch gschrey erclingen." (L6a).

Triumph Gedeonis: (L6a-b) At the end of which there is a musical interlude: "Hieruff ein hoffblasen/mit po/ sunen/ trumeten/und herrbaugten." (L6b).

Closing Speech by the Herald: (L6b-L8a) The herald reviews the four major aspects of the story and points out the lessons to be learned from them. He expresses the hope that the audience and the city fathers, in whose honor the play was presented, will understand that the players did their best. "Wir haettent lieber ghandlet guot" (L8a). The audience is then dismissed with the words: "Hie mit nem üch got in sin huot." (L8a).



## CHAPTER VI

### THE COMPOSITION OF "GEDEON"

"Gedeon" is not one but two plays. Each has a different purpose and consequently a different composition. The first play is a dramatization of the bible lesson; the second a dramatization of the life of Gedeon, centered around the battle with the Midianites. In the first play, the first day's performance, Rüte remained very true to his stated source for the play, i.e. the sixth and seventh chapters of the Book of Judges. In the second play, however, he included sections from chapter eight. He did not use these in the same manner in which they are to be found in the Bible. That is to say, the battle for which the army was reduced to three hundred, armed with jugs, candles and horns (Judges 7: 16-23) was not the battle at which Gedeon captured and executed Kings Zebec and Salmana. That battle is described in chapter eight, verse ten thru twenty-one.

The first play is highly structured and reflects a strong influence of the humanist latin drama. An influence which undoubtedly is a result of Rüte's use of Crocus' "Joseph" as a model for his own "Joseph two years earlier. In his "Joseph" Rüte first incorporated the chorus into his dramas to indicate a break or interuption

of the action. It was used to signal the completion of a particular section of the play. It was reflective of the events which had preceded it, in a word, a summary of the dramatic mood particular to that section of the play. This is exactly how the chorus is used on the first day in "Gedeon". It is not however how the chorus is used on the second day. This is seen very clearly by a study of the use of the stage directions. On the first day the three major sections are followed by a specific type of song to reflect the dramatic mood it attempts to summarize. Thus at the end of the first section: "Hienach ist ein klaeglicher gesang gsungen/ worden/wie an eim andern ort volgen wirt" (B4a); at the end of the second section: "Hie volgt der truwer gsang" (C8a) and at the end of the third section: "Gsang Gottlobend" (E4b). The stage directions for the chorus on the second day are quite different: "Gsang" (E8b) follows a short section which only served to review the events of the first day in order to make the transition into the events of the second day. Again after the miracle scenes is found simply: "Gsang" (G5b). The second play ends with a "Triumph Gedeonis" (L6a-b) followed by: "Hieruff ein hoffblasen/mit po/ sunen/trumeten/und herrbaugten." (L6b). There is little doubt that these serve

only to indicate an interruption and do not have the purpose of a summary as the chorus does in the first play. The second play also abounds in theatrical stage effects: "Ein zeichen" (F4b), "Ein gstückel" (H4a), "Ein Donder" (H8b) as well as several musical interludes: "Trummetter blosst uff" (F6a) and "Trummetter blass uff" (H3a), and finally the battle scene which is represented by the cacophonous interruption: "Blasent, brechent die krueg und schryent" (K3a) which also separate the pre-battle scene from the post-battle scene, the surrender and death of the Kings Zebbee and Salmana. No texts are given for the songs which is unusual. The fact that there are no texts would seem to suggest that popular church songs were used.

Now to consider the internal structure at closer range. It must be mentioned that this study will be limited to the first play only. The second play is no more than one scene after the other without consistent structural division between them. The first play is, however, highly structured. It is divided into three sections; each section has two parts which take place in different loci or locations. Section one takes place at (1) Joas' house, where the news of the invasion is brought by a rider and (2) at the city gate, where the people are gathered to hear the news. Section two takes place at

(1) the oak tree, where the angel and the Lord appear to Gedeon and (2) at Baal's altar and sacred grove. Section three takes place at (1) Baal's altar and sacred grove, where the destruction of these is discovered and (2) at Joas' house, where Gedeon is accused and defended. The scenes at each location are further divided by the departure of a stage figure, several stage figures or everyone on the playing area. Section one is thus further divided into the following scenes: (1) A3b-A5a, the news of the invasion, (s) A5a-A6a, Gedeon's monologue and (3) A6a-B4a, the scene at the city gate. At the end of each scene there is a departure which marks the scene change: for (1) Sophar is sent off to call the people together, for (2) Joas and Gedeon ride off with their servants to meet the assembled crowd at the city gate and for (3) everyone leaves the playing area. Section two is likewise divided: (1) B4a-B8a, the appearance of the angel and the Lord to Gedeon at the oak tree, (2) B8a-b, Gedeon's monologue and (3) B8b-C8a, the destruction of Baal's altar. Again there is a departure to indicate the change of scenes: for (1) Phara leave to get servants to help Gedeon destroy the altar, for (2) Gedeon and his servants leave for the altar to destroy it and for (3) everyone leaves the playing

area. Similarly, section three: is divided into three parts within two loci: (1) D1a-D4b, the discovery of the destruction, (2) D4b-D5a, the Landsmänner arrive in town and comment on the uproar and (3) D5a-E4b, Gedeon is accused and defended. Here again the departure of a stage figure or several stage figures or everyone marks the change in scenes: for (1) the crowd leaves Baal's altar to go to Joas' house to confront Gedeon, for (2) the departure of the Landsmänner to follow the crowd and for (3) Joas sends the crowd home. Thus the structure of the first play is now clear. There are three main sections. Each section takes place in two loci and is further sub-divided into three scenes. The first scene takes place in the first loci. The second scene is a monologue in sections one and two and a dialogue in section three. These serve to indicate the passing of time between the change of the loci. The third scene takes place in the second loci. There is a departure of one or more stage figures to mark the change of scenes. At the end of each section everyone leaves the playing area and a song is sung. Rüte was well aware of the classical structure of plays into sections (Handlungen), these into loci and scenes. The general outline follows

closely the demands of the humanistic theater.

Terence

Prologue

Argument

Protasis

Epitasis

Catastrophe

Rüte -

Prologue

Argument

Section One

Section Two

Section Three

Rüte presents in the first section, the protasis, the news of the invasion to introduce the problem and situation; in the second section, the epitasis, the appearance of the angel and the Lord as well as the destruction of Baal's altar and sacred grove which provides the action which leads up to the third section, the catastrophe, the accusation and defense of Gedeon whereupon the problem is successfully solved.

## CHAPTER VII

### RÜTE'S USE OF THE HERALD

As has been pointed out in the previous chapter, "Gedeon" is actually two plays. Each has a different purpose and a different structure. Any study of Rüte's use of the herald must take this division into consideration.

During the first day, both the first herald, A2a and E5a-b, and the second herald, A2a-A3a and E5b-E6a, belong entirely to that middle ground, the gray world between the world of the theater and the world of the spectator. Their lines are directed at the audience and they have no immediate role in the play itself. The most important factor, however, about Rüte's use of the herald in "Gedeon" is that there is a clear and distinct difference in the purpose assigned to them in the first play.

The first herald, henceforth referred to as Herold, has the typical duty of a herald in the biblical drama of the reformation. His function is a high moral and spiritual one. He is both a teacher and a preacher of the new faith.

Im biblischen Drama der Reformationszeit kommt ihm eine wesentliche moraltheologische Bedeutung zu. Er ist in seinem strengen Ernst ein Symbol für den

religiösen und sittlichen Gehalt des Spiels. Er weist auf die Erhabenheit und den heiligen Ernst des Geschehens und lässt erkennen, was sich als christliche und moralische Nutzenanwendung für jeden Stand aus dem Spiel ergeben wird. Die Aufführung wird zeigen wie sich der Zuschauer als Christ, Mensch und Bürger zu verhalten hat. 10

Thus in "Gedeon" the Herold greets the audience and immediately calls their attention to the serious religious purpose of the play.

Namlich/das niemands mein noch acht  
 Das es drum werd ghalten und gmacht  
 Das wir suochint vil ruom und Eer  
 Noch drum/das man uppigkeit leer  
 Noch das man woell jemandt fatzen  
 Verachten/schenden/bleiden/tratzen/  
 Niemand wirt gmeint noch angetast/  
 Waeder nachpur/burger noch gast/  
 Sonders soellent ir glouben mir  
 Das die kurtzweyl hie handlent wir  
 Zuo lob und eer dem Herren Gott  
 Und ob wir zhaltung siner pott  
 Reitzen und züchen moechtent dlüt  
 Anders soellent ir dencken nüt  
 Dann unsers spil ist nit erdicht  
 Sonders ein warhafftige gschicht/  
 In helger gschrift der Bible gründt  
 Flyssig beschriben und verkünt  
 In der Richter Cronick und buock  
 Am sechsten und sybenden suoch. (A2a)

Again at the end of the first day's performance, the Herold reveals himself in the role of a preacher and teacher as well as a good shepherd of his flock.



Als ich ongerd den Krig umb sich  
 So dunckt an üwern wysen mich/  
 Ir syent mued hie zstan/und hellig  
 Und waer üch anmuetic und gfellig  
 Das dise kurtzvil haet ein end  
 Drumm wir einmal uffhoeren wend/  
 Und was ubrigs sparen bis morn/ (E5a)

However he admonishes the audience: "Lassent die zyt nit sin verlorn/ Sonders bhaltent dis spils verstand/" (E5a). He then indicates six specific points of the biblical lesson which has just been presented which they are to ponder over and learn from.

In "Gedeon", Rüte has used a second herald, hence forth refered to as Ander Herold, in the first play. The use of a second herald, often in the figure of a Narr, became increasingly popular in the second half of the sixteenth century. The herald #1 would greet the audience while the second herald, a Narr or Argumentator would explain the course of events and the actions of the play as well as serve as Ruhegebieter. Taking into consideration the religious nature of "Gedeon", one can now grasp the different purposes which Rüte assigned to his heralds. The first herald raises the play to a high moral, pedagogical and theological sermon in which the essence of christian salvation and ethical behavior is visibly presented to an audience. The second herald, though he

doesn't have such a high purpose, none-the-less has an equally important function. As the Argumentator, he explains the play to the audience.

Damit aber mengkliche verstand  
 Woelche gschicht wir fürgnomen hand/  
 Für üwer gsicht und oren ztragen/  
 Wil ichs mit wenig worten sagen/ (A2a-b)

He is also responsible for securing the audiences's attention before the play can begin.

Drumb lang an euch unser pitt  
 Euch woell der wyl verdriessen nit  
 Sonders flyssig zehoeren gfallen/  
 Es wirt erschisslich sin euch allen. (A3a)

Similarly at the end of the first play, the second herald performs the same practical role. First he reminds the audience to return tomorrow and advertises the second play.

Morn fuogent noch widerumm har/  
 Morn wirt sich das spil enden gar  
 Wunder werdent ir gseen und hoeren  
 Wie Gott der Welt macht kan zerstoeren  
 Un sin armen schirmen vor gwalt  
 Der letst teil hat die hüpstere gstalt (E6b)

Then he dismisses them: "Nun züchent hin hand hüt verguot/  
 Gott halt üch all in siner huot/" (E6b).

## CHAPTER VIII

### RÜTE'S USE OF STAGE DIRECTIONS

In "Gedeon" there is a paucity of stage directions. The majority of the stage directions are contained within the play's dialogue. The lack of stage directions in "Gedeon" reflects an influence of the humanistic drama. An influence, as mentioned in the study of the composition, which is very great in the first play but only slight in the second play. The second play reflects the influence of the volkstümliches drama which generally contains a wealth of stage directions.

There are three types of stage directions in "Gedeon". These can be classified according to (1) the size of the type, (2) the boldness of the print and (3) their location in the text. The first type, A, are in bold print and larger type. They are used to identify a speaker and to further identify a speaker's actions. The second type, B, are in regular type and print. These appear after the completion of a character's lines, either centered or indented to the right. A variation of this type, BB, also appears in the stage directions, usually during a character's lines, centered, or indented to the right. That this type is not part of the dialogue is shown by its obvious disruption of the meter and rhyme.

Type B is used to indicate an activity after completion of a speaker's lines. Type BB is used to indicate an activity taking place during a speaker's lines. The third type, C, are in bold print and larger type or a combination of this and regular type. Each type of stage direction has sub-divisions according to its purpose. Type A is used to indicate (1) the stage picture, i.e. the number of actors on stage, (2) an actor's movements before speaking, (3) an activity not involving motion, (4) an actor's location, (5) to whom an actor is speaking and (6) lines spoken en-masse. Type B is used to indicate (1) an actor's movements after completion of his lines, (2) response to a request or a command, (3) the interruption by a chorus, (4) a departure, (5) stage effects and (6) lines spoken en-masse. Type C is used to indicate (1) departures, (2) arrivals and (3) the interruption by a chorus.

The above classifications are based on the most obvious differences between the stage directions, namely: size, boldness and location. These three types of stage directions also have a structural function within the play. Type A never overlaps with types B or C. Type B appears to overlap with type C, at least at first glance. There is, however, an important difference in their function in

those areas in which they appear to overlap, namely the indication of departure. Type B always refers to the departure of one or more actors from the stage but type C refers to the departure of all the actors from the stage. This distinction, however, is true only for the first play which is more highly structured and therefore the stage directions are necessarily of greater importance. During the first play, as was indicated in the study of the composition of the plays, the chorus is used to indicate the end of an action, at least in the first play. During this play, a type C stage direction is always used to clear the stage for the chorus which follows immediately or very shortly after such a stage direction. In all other areas types B and C overlap but here there is a clear and distinct difference in their usage. In summation, Rūte has used type A stage directions to indicate actions prior to speaking, type B or BB to indicate actions during or after speaking and type C to indicate the clearing of the stage at the end of an action prior to the chorus. There is a much stricter observance of these distinctions during the first play than during the second.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE STAGE FOR RÜTE'S "GEDEON"

Rüte's "Gedeon", according to the information on the title page, was performed in Bern by young citizens on the seventh day of March, 1540. It was probably performed at the same location as the plays of another Bern dramatist, Niklaus Manuel. It had long been the tradition in Bern for the schoolmaster to set up his chair in the open air and to drill his students in the correct manner of speaking Latin. This was in the Kreuzgasse near the large cross after which the street was named and where the two main streets of old Bern crossed between the Leutkirche and the Rathaus. It was here too that on a Sunday in 1523, a wide platform was erected against a background of the decorative Bürgerhäuser, which were to represent the city of Rome. The area from the clock-tower gate to the platform was closed off and reserved for the performance.<sup>11</sup> Baechtold noted previous performances in the Kreuzgasse: 1514, 1515, 1522. (Anmerkungen, 218, 285) The stage for Rüte's "Gedeon" was divided into several playing areas. The first of these is Joas' house. It was

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11

Ferdinand Vetter, Niklaus Manuels Spiel evangelischer Freiheit (Leipzig: H. Haessel Verlag, 1923), 13-14.

a raised structure similar to the one mentioned above for Manuel's play. The strongest evidence for this is found in the text,

Des Fürsten bhusung hat vier porten  
Die versechent an allen orten  
Huffent üch glychlich in vier teil  
So mag der vogell mit keim heil  
Uns entrünnen uss diserm schlag  
Nun schickent üch/syg keiner zag/ (D5b)

Again, as for Manuel's play, an area of the old city was reserved for the performance. However, the requirements of Rüte's "Gedeon" would seem to indicate that it was not the area from the clock-tower gate but rather from the gate in the Nideck tower. This gate was the second playing area. Because of the numerous actors, the horses and the space requirement for an audience, this area in front of the Nideck tower would seem better suited for presenting such scenes as the gathering of the crowd to hear the news of the invasion, the gathering of Gedeon's army, the drinking and separation of his army and the battle. This is, however, only a reasonable guess as the stage directions provide extremely limited aid for a reconstruction of the stage for "Gedeon".

## CHAPTER X

### REFLECTIONS OF 16TH CENTURY SWITZERLAND IN "GEDEON"

Rüte made no attempt to recreate accurately and historically the land of the Bible in his play. Instead, as was the tradition, he tried to relate the biblical story of Gedeon to the everyday life of the times and thereby make its lesson more powerful and relevant.

Wie die Maler der Zeit die Gestalten und Vorgänge der biblischen Geschichte gern in naiver Weise vom Standpunkt ihrer volktümlichen Gegenwartserfahrungen aus wiedergeben, so werden in der Dichtung antike Helden, biblische Figuren, altdeutsche Recken und ritterliche Herren gleichmassen verbürgerlicht. 12

The first and most obvious anachronism is the numerous usage of horses: A3a, "Was dütet der schnell rytendt knecht", A6a, "Rytet zuo inen sine vil knecht blei/ tend inn euch Gedeon", F4b, "Drumm ryttend uss vor allen dingen". Judges, chapter six, relates the fact the Midianites had been raiding in Israel for some seven years. During this time they had taken away all the livestock from the Israelites. In addition to this the chief source of transportation during Gedeon's time (ca. 2,00 B.C.) was the camel. These had been domesticated by the Midianites, an important

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12

Paul Merker, "Das Zeitalter des Humanismus und der Reformation" in Aufriss der deutschen Literaturgeschichte, H. A. Korff und W. Linden, (Leipzig/Berlin: Teubner Verlag, 1933), 63.



reason for their ascendancy over the Israelites. There are also numerous references to fire arms: C3b, "Ich gloub das im ietz ein or süss", H4a, "Ein gstückel" and H5a, "Der wolts mit schleebüchsen erschiessen". Even a form of medieval torture is mentioned: D4b, "Man soelt inn rehten mit eim rad". A sign of Rüte's local pride in Bern is the reference to the recently completed (1527) Zeitglockenturm, the pride of all Bern: C3b, "Die zyt glock wird bald mitnacht schlan". Throughout the play there are references to the swiss tradition of democracy and general plebicites: C6a, "Hand all uff", likewise D4b, E1a and F7b are all voting scenes. Another tradition, oath swearing, can be found in the text: I3a, "Drumm wend wir schweren einen eyd/" and the stage direction: I3a, "Hand uff dfinger". In this scene the three hundred remaining soldiers swear an oath of allegiance to Gedeon before the battle.

The most important purpose of the play is to portray the struggle between the true faith, representing the new faith, and the false faith, representing the old faith, the Roman Church. As could be expected, there are numerous references to this struggle. The Roman Church is presented as being just as much the enemy as the Turks:

C3b, "Und groeste not ist vor der tür", and C5b, "Also das nit allein die find/ So uns oft ins land gfallen sind....Sonders das ouch der geistlich find". The Roman Church has lead the good Christians astray by their pagan idolatry: C5b, "Inn gmacht zvergessen Gottes gsatz/ Durch siner pffaffen lüg und gschwatz// Hat Israel zuo sünden gmacht". Rüte attacked the Roman Church for creating idols to fill its purse at the expense of the faithful.

Wie sind doch dmoenschen so starrblind  
 Torechter dann die jüngen kind/  
 Das sy fellent ein boum im wald  
 Und den bhouwent mit ysen bald/  
 Die spaen darvon bruchents yns für  
 Das übrig macht man costlich thür  
 Mit hüpschen farben strycht mans an/  
 All spelt man wol verkleyben kan/  
 Und stelt mans dann uff ein altaar  
 Und waenents vil lüten fürwar  
 Es komm darin ein geist/ein ding/  
 Das dem holtz goettlich wesen bring

....  
 Es kompt aber den pffaffen wol  
 Die füllent darmit yr büch vol/  
 Hand guoit pfründ von dem gouchen spil (C4b)

For the same reason Rüte attacked the practice of making pilgrimages: D1a, "Es ist vil volcks schon uff der fart/  
 Das bringt allerley opffer har". In the end however these idolatrous forces must perish: C6a, "Gott wirt die pffaffen wol ergatten/ Und selbs straffen umb ire sünd/".

It is only to be expected that the military life and tradition of the swiss Söldner should abound in such a

military story as "Gedeon". There is only one mention of booty, the royal robes of kings Zebec and Salmana; it is however very noteworthy. It reflects a religious and moral as well as a national and political sentiment. Even the simplest farmer is made a king by true faith and obedience to God's will. the reformation forces will defeat the foreign and pagan invaders, the Roman Church. "Auf neue Mode gekleidet zu sein, bedeutet fortan auch, fremdes Adel besiegt zu haben."<sup>13</sup> Thus Phara hands over the royal robes of the defeated kings to Gedeon as an honor to Gedeon.

Naement/bhaltend das koestlich kleyd.  
 Herr Gedeon der kungen leyd  
 Und rechter lon ist uwer glück  
 Die kleinot und guldine gschmück  
 Werdent üch/Herr/zieren vil bass  
 Uss froemdem landen khompt üch das (L2b)

Rüte makes a clear distinction, however, between the Christian soldier, who only fights to defend his faith and his country, and the professional soldier, who fights for the love of battle and personal gain. An example of the latter is Zamri, a follower of the false god, Baal. Rüte had previously attacked such types in "Abgötterei", where he typified them as defenders of the old faith. Thus we

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13

Hans Stricker, Die Selbstdarstellung des Schweizer in Drama des 16. Jahrhunderts (Bern; Verlag Paul Haupt, 1961), 15.

find Zamri overjoyed at the prospects of trouble.

Ich louff darvon/schnel/wie ein hund  
 Mich froeuwt/das ich erlept die stund  
 Darinn man dwaffen bruchen wil  
 Mir ist kein unglück zgross noch zvil  
 Hader und krieg erfroeuwt min hertz  
 Gnad und frid aber bringt mir schmertz (D4b)

Gedeon and his followers, on the other hand, are typified as true christian soldiers, in the army of the Lord. They are ever conscious of their christian responsibilities, both in their behavior amongst themselves as well as with their enemy. An excellent example of this is the prisoner scen. The prisoner asks Assriel for mercy in return for co-operation. Assriel reveals himself in his reply as a true christian soldier.

Bistu ein frommer biderman  
 Und sunst nüt anders boess hast than/  
 Dann nun allein der püt nach giagt  
 So bis manlich und unversagt  
 Dir wirt erzoeugt hie guott kriegsrecht (G6a-b)

What is to be expected of a christian leader is revealed in a monologue by Gedeon, E8b-Flb. Here he assesses his own worthiness for the position. A captain should possess a sound knowledge of the methods of warfare. He must always be an example of bravery, humility, piety and fairness. He should never make important decisions himself, but seek out and listen to the advise of his men. He must also be concerned for the well-being of his men, especially that

there be enough provisions. Thus Assriel's concern is reflective of this responsibility for the well-being of the soldiers.

Es wer zyt man zug ab stat  
 Dann unsers volck nüt zessen hat  
 Wir sind noch nit zwen tag hie gsind  
 Hand ietz schon waeder brot noch win  
 Hungrig und unlydig sind dknecht  
 Der hauptman hat nüt geordnet recht/  
 Soeltent wir lenger blyben hie  
 Wir müstent raten woe und wie  
 Disers volck alls moecht haben spyss (G6a)

The backbone of the Lord's army is the simple farmer, the christian soldier. Gedeon is such a servant of the Lord, chosen by Him and granted victory only by his faith and obedience to God's will. This then is the most important lesson contained in the play, namely, that salvation comes to men only by the grace of God; there is nothing a man can do in his own power to earn it. This is the cornerstone upon which Luther based the reformation, Justification by Faith alone. This is the cornerstone upon which the protestant faith is based. This is Rüte's lesson in the play.

## CHAPTER XI

### CONCLUSION

"Gedeon" is Rüte's third drama. It is also his first completely original work. It reveals the development of Rüte's dramatic ideas in their early stages. A more complete study based on his later works will reveal the extent to which these ideas continued. The author has endeavored in this study to indicate the dramatic ideas in "Gedeon". This drama is written as a two-day performance. It is not, however, one complete play but is, in fact two plays. The second day's performance is not a continuation of the first day's but is an independent play. The first play is a serious religious-didactic work, a Bible lesson. It is, as Rüte states in the prologue, based on the sixth and seventh chapters of the Book of Judges in the Old Testament. This play follows its source very closely. The second play exhibits no such strict adherence to this source. In addition to this, the battle scene with Zebec and Salmana is not, in fact, the battle described in the Bible in which the army was twice divided and then, armed with horns, candles and jugs, led to victory by Gedeon. The battle with Zebec and Salmana is found in chapter eight of the Book of Judges. In the prologue to the first play, Rüte states, that no one

should think the play is based on his imagination, that it is based on the sixth and seventh chapters. This is, as a comparison with the source will reveal, not the case with the second play. The difference between the plays is further indicated by the changed use of the chorus and the stage directions as well as by the task of the heralds in the two. The strict and well defined use of these in the first play contrasts strongly with their use in the second play. Furthermore, the first play is highly structured along the lines of the Terentian drama. It shows an influence of the dramatic ideas of the humanistic drama. The second play is very loosely structured and, on the other hand, reveals the great importance of the popular Swiss theater.

The author of this study constantly was amazed by the statements made by such reputable scholars as Nadler, Creizenach, Ermatinger, Baechtold and others about Rüte's dramatic works. They call the plays handlungsarm and speak of Überflüssigkeit. These scholars would seem to have missed the very purpose of Rüte's dramas. They have judged his plays on the dramatic representation of the story rather than on their purpose. One should consider Rüte a teacher, who used the drama to illustrate his Bible lessons.

He was not a playwright, who wrote for the sake of art. The story as such was only important in so far as it, and the episodes attached to it, served to illustrate the lesson or lessons which Rüte wished to teach in a particular drama. Rüte has been criticized incorrectly on the basis of those forms of the drama which contributed to the evolution of the modern theater. The genre to which most of Rüte's plays belong died out and had little influence on this evolution.

Rüte's relationship with Niklaus Manuel has already been mentioned. This subject should be considered again briefly. Historical evidence indicates the actual staging of only two of Manuel's plays, both in 1523. Manuel's dramatic efforts were limited to four years. On the other hand, at least six of Rüte's plays were performed. Rüte dominated the stage in Bern from 1531 until 1555. Rüte is overshadowed by the great and important contributions made by Manuel in regards to the history of the reformation in Switzerland. In the history of the drama, however, Rüte's position in the Bern of his own time is at least of equal importance, even if his contributions to the drama in retrospect from our modern stage and its historical development may be negligible. Rüte's contribution to the drama



of sixteenth century Switzerland currently is underrated. A reconsideration of his contribution to, and position in, the history of the drama in Switzerland during the era of the reformation is long overdue.

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