The Limitations of Family Tradition and the Barrier between Public and Private

Karoline von Hessen-Darmstadt's "Schreib=Calender" between Almanac and Diary

HELGA MEISE

Egodocuments written in Europe in the late Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period are marked by diversity, not by uniformity. This is noticeable in various aspects, for instance in the medium in which the autobiographical text was written, the type of text to which it belongs, and the data they contained. It is also true of the motives for writing or the intentions of publication, the audience to whom the text was addressed, or the functions it was to fulfil in its public or private contexts. When we survey the sources, there is nonetheless one striking point: the fact that one medium seemed to be of special importance for the writing about oneself. That was the contemporary almanac.

The almanac was one of the most common books of the time, after the Bible and the catechism. In the Early Modern Period this was apparently the case all over the Continent. The almanac, usually a small book in quarto or octavo, contained two parts either separately or together. The first part was the calendar as such. It presented the months of the current year in chronological order, listing day by day holy feasts and working days. Special sections indicated the remembrance days of the saints, the position of the planets and their significance for blood-letting. The second part, the so-called "Prognosticon astrologicon" or "Practica", furnished further information about the year, the forecast, predictions about eclipses, war and peace, the harvest and advice concerning human health. Furthermore, the almanacs provided blank spaces in different sizes. In the first part, the calendar, these spaces made it possible to use the book not only for the printed information, but to write down notes on one's own behalf. As a matter of fact, nearly all the almanacs shown or mentioned in old and recent studies contain entries by those who owned or used them for their intended purpose.² Thus, the combination of printed text and blank space was the distinguishing mark of the Early Modern almanac. These two features explain its enormous success with contemporaries. For meeting both requirements, reading and writing, the medium was one of the most important books of the day.

Tracing back the history of the medium in German speaking countries from its invention as a "Jahreskalender in Buchform" in the mid-16th century,3 we find a

most revealing example in the tradition of almanac-keeping founded by the family of the Landgrafen [counts] von Hessen-Darmstadt. Not only does it show the importance of the practice, but also admirably displays the functions of the medium in the Early Modern period. Moreover, it provides further information about the sources, first about the contemporary ways of arranging autobiographical notes in printed texts, second, about the specific relations between public and private which are to be observed. The fact that the Darmstadt sources have survived in such wealth indicates the growing significance of almanac-keeping in this princely family from the 16th century on. The earliest almanacs are those kept by Philipp Landgraf von Hessen (1504-1567) during his imprisonment from 1547 to 1552.4 Two generations later, almanac-keeping was common practice in the family of the Landgraf von Hessen-Darmstadt, established after the death of Philipp von Hessen by his youngest son Georg I (1547-1596). Highly esteemed by almost every member of the family during two generations, almanac-keeping became a tradition which has been running through to the 20th century, and which the dynasty, at least in the Early Modern Period, took up as its special characteristic. For this period alone, 177 almanacs have been preserved. Kept by thirteen members of the family, six women and seven men, they cover two centuries, starting in 1624 and ending in 1790 with the death of Landgraf Ludwig IX (1719-1790), the last sovereign of the Landgrafschaft under the Old Regime.⁵ The almanacs were purchased from booksellers, most of them with "blanks": they "alternated a page of the month's printed data with a facing page open for inscription (though often calibrated to the datelines opposite ...)".6

As time went by, the number of almanacs kept in the family of Hessen-Darmstadt grew continuously. Moreover, with each generation the volume of writing increased. Over time, the individual profiles of the writers themselves became more distinct, the entries changed from "itemising" to "narrating". Irrespective of the nature of the entries, or of the length of the hand-written texts, all the almanackeepers were satisfied with the medium as a matrix for their writing. They respected the space offered by the almanacs, apparently not looking for a possibility of rendering in print what they had written down in already printed text.

Furthermore, the Darmstadt tradition reveals its dependence on very specific relations between public and private. All the almanacs went into the archives of the Landgrafschaft [county]. The archives were the place where all documents concerning the rulers' rights and prerogatives were kept safe, in case anyone would contest them.⁸ The almanacs of the members of the dynasty were regarded as part of the estate of the deceased writer, their deposition in the archives was taken for granted. Once they were in the archives, the written notes might be read by anybody with authorised access – each consultation of the deposited data was subject to regulations set up in detail by the sovereigns throughout the period, and known not only to the members of the dynasty, but also to any other person who had access to the archives.⁹ Thus, not only the writing or reading of the notes, but also

their public or private use was determined by the dynasty and its authority beforehand. Every writer knew that the almanacs would be conserved in the archives after their death, in a public place, as it were, and as a public paper documenting the life of a member of the dynasty as a public person. This knowledge affected the writing of every statement from the very first note. What is private to our understanding, the authentic feelings, hopes and wishes of the writer himself, might occur in the notes, but its private status could not be guaranteed, since everything could easily be traced by numerous individuals belonging to the dynasty or to the court administration. Therefore, a barrier was apparently erected between public and private; publication of the written texts seemed to be out of the question from the very beginning of almanac-keeping in the Darmstadt dynasty.

Nevertheless, the almanacs of Karoline von Hessen-Darmstadt (1721-1774) merit special attention, precisely because they seem to call into question the barrier between public and private. The Fürstin left at least eleven almanacs, but a closer look seems to reveal that she was on rather bad terms with the practice. Karoline kept different groups of entries carefully separated, and reserved special copies for special statements. At the same time, she experimented with other forms of autobiographical writing, diaries and letters, essays and testamentary provisions. My article deals with the functions and meanings of the almanacs for the Fürstin and for the courtly society in the late 18th century. It is my thesis that for Karoline the family tradition has to be seen as a chain: the Landgräfin maintained the tradition, but finally could not manage the contradiction between the courtly claim to representation and the individual claim to self-reflection, the awareness of her own feelings, hopes and wishes. The same contradiction ultimately prevented the Fürstin from making the definite break with the almanac as a medium for her autobiographical writing, or even from starting on an autobiography as such. As is clearly discernible from the texts as well as from their context, Karoline tried to meet the demands of self-reflection in the almanac by transforming it into a diary. However, she deemed only her role as a politician, as a potent Fürstin working for the preservation of her dynasty and the promotion of its representation, worthy of handing down, not the personal side of herself, her private thoughts and feelings. Thus we see the conflict between two different Selves, a powerful Self capable of attaining its claims, and a weak one uncertain of being able to overcome the difficulties involved in trying to reach personal aims. The conflict was not resolved, but produced experiments with different forms of autobiographical writing. To demonstrate this, my article is a reading of the Landgräfin's almanacs in comparison with the family tradition, and outlines the alteration to be noticed in her almanac-keeping. First, I shall take up the series of almanacs the Landgräfin kept from 1762 to 1772, and then I will discuss the second almanac Karoline used in 1772, in addition to her usual one. Finally, the difference between the almanacs will be discussed by looking at the relationship between the written statements, and the private and public uses made of them.

KAROLINE VON HESSEN-DARMSTADT AND HER ALMANACS 1762-1772: THE ALMANAC AS AN ACCOUNT-BOOK

Karoline von Hessen-Darmstadt, born in 1721 as Pfalzgräfin of Zweibrücken-Birkenfeld, was married in 1741 to Ludwig Landgraf von Hessen-Darmstadt (1719-1790), heir to the throne of Hessen-Darmstadt, and by then regent of Hanau-Lichtenberg. 10 First, the couple lived in Pirmasens, but from 1745 on, after great differences,11 the Fürstin established a court of her own in Buchsweiler while her husband remained in Pirmasens. She accompanied him when Ludwig served with the Prussian army in Prenzlau/Brandenburg from 1750-1757, but on returning, the couple continued to live at their separate courts. In 1767, Karoline decided to move permanently to Darmstadt, the residential town of the Landgrafschaft, with the intention of representing the future sovereign there. She established herself with their children, five daughters and three sons, in the Darmstadt castle, which was mostly uninhabited, because Ludwig VIII (1691-1768), her father-in-law and ruling prince, preferred the surrounding hunting castles while her husband's younger brother, Georg Wilhelm (1722-1782), led a courtly life in a town palace. Ludwig himself stayed on in Pirmasens, and he preferred this even after he took over the reign, on the death of Ludwig VIII in 1768. 12

Karoline von Hessen-Darmstadt left at least eleven almanacs of the same series. Its title says:

Neuer Schreib=Calender, Auf das Jahr Jesu Christi [...]. Den Cantzleyen, Gelehrten, Schreibern, Kauf= und Handels=Leuten, Zum Nutzlichen Gebrauch, mit sonderm Fleiß Auf den Meridianum zu Straßburg gestellt. Straßburg, gedrukt und verlegt durch Franciscus Christmann, Der Königlichen Intendantz Buchdrucker wohnhaft in der Judengaß. 13

All almanacs were printed in Strasbourg, their format was octavo with one blank page for each week. Written in Karoline's own hand, they cover the years 1762 to 1772, thus forming a series of ten volumes. There are no clues as to the reasons why they started and ended when they did.

The almanacs of the Fürstin are not only different from those of her husband's, but from those of her predecessors as well. One difference is immediately striking: Karoline was the first member of the dynasty who wrote in French; all the other almanac-keepers, her husband as well as her predecessors, wrote in German. Furthermore, her almanacs differed from the Darmstadt tradition in size and volume. By choosing the small format, and by writing not in the blanks but in the rubrics of the printed page, Karoline returned to the type of almanac which was used by only a few family members in the early 17th century. Moreover, Karoline's entries are incomplete and in contrast to those of the other writers did not grow with time. This is especially noteworthy when compared to the notes of her husband. Ludwig IX kept his almanacs meticulously from 1738 to 1790. With the passing years, he tended to write more and in bigger books, assigning the writing more and more to his

Low is jumin-sy

To grand oly beija Voir au fond une estade

you regretantori to trone de laten

gui verous des primissane de la attent

par les tans que de l'alien acrient that

au los tangs bacha pare che que acrient that

au los tangs bacha pare che que acrient that

a factiff

a fullan afis in von trona, um pipe

la frantiff

a fullan afis in von trona, um pipe

la frantiff

a fullan afis in von trona, um pipe

la frantiff

a fullan afis place a Groch, les un lune en

bes du terre la printe forca: et le l'a shatest non

in peu plus tras office à vote de la shatest non

in peu plus tras office à vote de la shatest non

in peu plus tras office de la shatest non

les sans l'alcorar freste de Mo: les logales

les ans l'alcorar freste de Mo: les logales

les de Dalas deput la ga au januar de cheval

l'ali, T. Rome 364

First page of the diary of Karoline von Hessen-Darmstadt written in 1754, during the carnival. (Hessisches Staatsarchiv Darmstadt D 4 nr. 555/1).

secretaries. His last almanac from 1790 filled three volumes in folio format.

Looking at the ten almanacs Karoline kept continuously from 1762 to 1772, one notices their distinguishing feature. There is only one type of entry: expenses. Figures appear again and again, though not systematically, but as they occurred. Mostly, they concerned expenses for alms, accessories and servants' wages. For instance, on May 15th 1762 it says: "pauvres. 5. perdu piquet"; in January 1765: "Commissions faits à Paris"; on March 5th, April 17th, and May 5th of the same year: "jeux ... habits ... almanach ... papier"; on April 19th 1772: "transport 18, au brodeur 22", four days later: "porteur 2x 3,9". There are expenses for other occasions, too, but only a few. As the entries show, Karoline was the only one in the family of the Landgraf to reduce the almanac to one form of use only: to accounting, to the management of her own budget. This reduction seems even more important in view of the fact that there were only three kinds of expenses, alms, accessories and servants' wages.

Comparing Karoline's almanacs to the overall tradition in the Darmstadt dynasty leads to the impression that she actually turned away from almanac-keeping. She used the almanac for one purpose only, reducing the functions it had fulfilled in the past. Her predecessors had used the medium to record their lives in growing detail. The entries had become a nearly complete record of individual life. From one generation to the next, they became more detailed. Gradually, the almanac recorded the everyday life at court, from meals to religious service, from participation at celebrations and ceremonials to births and journeys, including the establishment of dental care, the furnishing of the living rooms and the fate of courtiers. Reflections on the Self became more and more important. As time went by, the writers tended to reflect in more detail on themselves, for instance on melancholy, desires and feelings of love. Since lavish forms of representation started to be criticised and abolished at the court of Darmstadt at about the same time, the almanac had become a still more indispensable medium to demonstrate one's princely identity – to oneself. As the example of Ludwig IX shows, the almanac took on this function in an increasing degree, which makes Karoline's refusal to use this medium even more marked. This refusal is borne out, for example, by the fact that her already limited almanac-keeping seemed to stop in 1772, just before the important event of the following year, her long prepared journey to Russia. In 1773, Karoline finally started on the journey accompanied by her daughters Wilhelmine, called Mimi (1755-1776), Amalie (1754-1832) and Luise (1757-1828). Her object was to introduce them to the Empress Catherine II, née Herzogin von Anhalt-Zerbst (1729-1796), who was looking for a spouse for her son and heir to the throne of Russia, Czarevitch Paul of Russia (1754-1801).14 In consideration of this important aim, it is astonishing that Karoline apparently did not make use of an almanac which would have been helpful, if not as a travel journal, then at least as an account-book, especially as the journey had been almost prevented by financial difficulties.

In view of the reduction of entries on the one hand and the reluctance to keep up

Karoline von Hessen-Darmstadt by Johann Ludwig Strecker (1721-1799). (Schlossmuseum Darmstadt).



the almanac on the other it is perplexing that Karoline stuck to almanac-keeping for as long as ten years. Obviously, the point was to keep up the tradition rather than to break with it. Two of the aspects mentioned above support this. Like all the other members of the family of the Landgraf, Karoline kept her almanacs herself, in her own hand, and like everyone else, she carefully prepared for their safekeeping. All her almanacs were newly bound; the colour and format of the covers were perfectly matched. Thus, they fit the tradition that had been founded and established in the dynasty of Hessen-Darmstadt long before.

KAROLINE'S SECOND ALMANAC FOR THE YEAR 1772: THE ALMANAC AS A DIARY

As the series 1762-1772 testifies, Karoline maintained the Darmstadt tradition of almanac-keeping, but she experimented with other forms of autobiographical writing even earlier. In 1754, she first tried her hand at a diary. The immediate cause was the carnival at the court of Prussia where Karoline and her husband had been invited. Karoline described four days of the carnival, concentrating on the

evenings which she covered in great detail and obviously admired and enjoyed hugely. We do not know of any further notes on her stay in Prussia, which lasted for seven years. It is therefore very interesting that as late as 1772 similar notes began to appear again. Today, the records are preserved in two copies by unknown hands. Both suggest that the Landgräfin wrote into an almanac once more. According to the bound copy saying: "Schreib=Calender auf das Schaltjahr 1772 pp. Straßburg, Franz Levrault. In blaugrüner Pergamentdecke. Bezeichnung mit Blei im Deckel von alter Hand.", It looks as if Karoline used an almanac of the same series as usual. Apparently, the Landgräfin reckoned with the possibility that one almanac would not be sufficient for 1772. She started a second one for the same year, but as the differences show, this one does not fit into the series of the ten others.

Indeed, when one compares the two almanacs for 1772, the differences are striking. One almanac contains the same type of notes as the preceding ones. Sums of money occur again, and expenses are fixed as before. Once again, the almanac served as an account-book. In contrast to this, the other almanac does not pay attention to sums but "itemises" events, in Sherman's terminology. Moreover, there are day-by-day entries which document the year 1772 entirely, in distinction to the account-book which has large gaps. The entries in the second almanac are in French, too, but they were written in prose and differ in length and in style. Mostly, they are "itemised" but Karoline tried to represent the events in a sophisticated way, too, to "narrate" them. This is indicated by the frequent use of the subjunctive, and by the detailed descriptions of some events, by several hints on preferred occupations, and on disturbing feelings and fears which seem to cross the barrier between public and private. Obviously, the almanacs for 1772 served different purposes. The first was reserved for accounting, the second for every other event worth noting. The reasons for which Karoline took two copies and differentiated between them are not known. It is impossible to determine whether, and to what extent the Landgräfin's proceedings depended on the given space of the almanac or on the content of the entries. Probably, the Landgräfin's decision was influenced by literature, but there is no proof of this, nor of the fact that she wrote for special readers.

Nevertheless, a reading of the entries in the additional almanac gives rise to some interesting observations. A few entries refer to the first almanac. For example, on April 19th it says: "Je prend possession de mes cabinets, mon boudoir est tell que j'ai voulu l'avoir", and on the 23rd: "j'arrange mes nouvelles chambres". Both notes correspond to the account-book saying: "transport 18" respectively "porteur 2x 3,9". A third correspondence is notable. The entry "aux paysan qui m'ont mené au Melipocus 5 R", 19 noted in the account-book could be related to the large report on the walk in the second almanac where it says: "trainée par des chevaux de paysan j'ai employé …". These entries could be regarded as "counternotations".

But the connections between the almanacs are very scarcely as clear as these. It is

obvious that the statements which appear only in the second almanac constitute a narrative of their own. Irrespective of their style, whether they are "itemising" or "narrating" the events of the current year, the entries give a glimpse not only into the life of the Landgräfin but also into her private thoughts and fears. The entries do not complete the account-book but exceed it, thus transforming the second almanac into a diary which shapes the personal side of the writer, her moods and occupations. As was usual in almanac-keeping not only of the Darmstadt dynasty, the Landgräfin repeatedly noted the same topics. Karoline recorded her prayers at the beginning and end of the year. Prayers were also mentioned before important events, for instance the pregnancy of Karoline (1746-1821), her eldest daughter, married to Landgraf Friedrich V von Hessen-Homburg (1748-1820),²⁰ or the imminent departure of her eldest son Ludwig (1753-1839), heir to the throne of Hessen-Darmstadt.²¹ Everyday life was noted, but also special events. Entries on meals and walks were repeated throughout the year, as were visits to her husband in Pirmasens or visits of her mother, Caroline von Pfalz-Zweibrücken-Birkenfeld (1704-1774), either to Buchsweiler or to Darmstadt. The Landgräfin noted daily the state of the weather, which determined whether she could go out or not. She wrote about heart and breathing troubles from which she had been suffering for some time. She reported her visit to the physician Samuel-Auguste Tissot (1728-1797) in Mainz for a cure in that year. The overview shows that Karoline's entries transform the second almanac into a diary.²² Here, she recorded exactly those events that also appeared in the almanacs of the members of the Darmstadt dynasty in the centuries before. The spectrum of topics touched by her predecessors ranged from journeys to health problems, from hunting to child birth, from festivities to everyday life. One other observation must be made. Karoline's entries do not prove the great influence on the rule of Ludwig IX she is supposed to have had. True, there are entries on politics, or references to members of the council. Friedrich Karl von Moser (1723-1798), the chief administrator of the state, who was called to Darmstadt on April 11th 1772 and whom she is said to have invited,²³ was mentioned quite often, for instance:

[July] 13th The Landgraf disappointed me today having not quite understood the relation of Moser I represented it respectfully but fruitlessly, I therefore didn't say any more and interrupted the discourse as he started to talk about the topic I become sad, triste, supper ...;

[July] 30th Cappes arrives en courier to announce me that the Landgraf would sign, we went, Karoline [the eldest daughter, H.M.] and I to have dinner at Bickenbach. Moser whom I had forced to go there came also.²⁴

None of this proves a political determination with regard to Moser. Instead, it shows clearly her will to bring about the "Russian Marriage"²⁵ which was a highly political endeavour and which Ludwig IX left entirely to his wife.

After having married Karoline, her eldest daughter, to the Landgraf von Hessen-Homburg in 1768, and her second daughter Friederike (1751-1805) to Friedrich Wilhelm von Preußen (1744-1797), the heir to the Prussian throne, in 1769, the

Russian marriage was the most ambitious part of the Darmstadt marriage politics. The objective was to marry one of the daughters to the Czarevitch of Russia, heir to the throne. A Russian marriage would be one of the most brilliant marriages a Landgräfin von Hessen-Darmstadt could make. It would promise not only a great future for the bride, but also affirm the place of the Darmstadt dynasty among the European courts. Moreover, it would prove that the Landgräfin herself was capable of successful and ambitious marriage politics. In 1772, the Russian marriage took up more and more of her attention. She managed to engage Friedrich II of Prussia as a mediator, and got Ludwig IX to sign an agreement permitting his daughter's conversion to the orthodox religion. This all-important project is omnipresent in Karoline's diary. It overshadows all other events she noted. The Russian marriage was mentioned in the prayer noted at the beginning of the year before any dated entry:

One more year has passed without any unfortunate event for my family; how will this year end? Will I be alive, here or beyond? May God protect those whom I love and may he keep my eldest son safe from seduction. I'm not thinking of women, but of cheats and flatterers. I shall only be comforted if he is away; I wish that one project succeeds, but I desire it perhaps too strongly. Luck is no longer made for me.²⁶

In the following months, hopes and fears became predominant:

[August] 9th ... a letter from Berlin mentions the illness of the Empress, even dying – after a year full of hopes of grandeur I'm once more reduced to nothing. That's the way things are going in the world, I'm going to become a philosopher, dinner in the garden. ...

[September] 21st ... everybody is talking of a conclusion of peace between Russia and Turkey, I would be delighted for mankind, because, after all, I believe that the special interest that I have in this conclusion is receding. It is a beautiful dream ending with the awakening.²⁷

The excitement of waiting for the Empress's decision to receive her and her daughters in St. Petersburg continued to increase. At the same time, nobody knew if Ludwig IX on his part would agree to a marriage which involved a religious conversion of his daughter. The tension came to a head when finally success seemed secure:

[November] 19th ... I can't stand it any more;

[November] 20th ... This world is forgetting me;

[November] 21st ... This evening I'll know if or if not. I'm arming myself with philosophy to bear a negative answer, the clock rings 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, no letter, so everything is said and after 16 months of uncertainty and kept in suspense disappointed of all my hopes;

[November] 22nd ... Yesterday, I went to sleep as usual, my sleep is keeping me going, but as I woke up at half past five, my first thought was that of the end of my beautiful dream, I took Marc Aurel and read chapter 22 to get armed by the arms of philosophy: at 8 in the

morning, Riedesel came with a letter, I recognized the hand of the Empress ... then a second letter which deprived me definitively of all my hopes for a fortunate ending of the luck so much desired.²⁸

Unexpectedly, at the end of the year, a literally radiant future dawned. Karoline noted:

[December] 31st ... very cold as the days before, I slept extraordinarily well, a further year passed, I'm alive, in spite of all my illnesses ... I'm looking forward to the marriage of one of my daughters to the Czarevitch; God showed me many graces this year, I feel that, prostrated, I offer him all my actions of graces, should I be alive next year?²⁹

Her dream had come true. After having been presented to Catherine II on the journey to St. Petersburg in 1773, Wilhelmine of Hessen-Darmstadt was chosen by the Empress. She converted to the orthodox faith and changed her name into Nathalie. She married the Czarevitch in October 1773, only to die three years later on her first confinement.

The Landgräfin's entries concerning the Russian marriage bring up more or less explicitly another theme directly linked to it, her reputation as a member of a ruling dynasty. The problem whether her prestige was respected or not bothered Karoline again and again. Some entries refer to this matter in describing ceremonies of court life. There is, for example, the awakening and the meal worth noting after having established herself in the Darmstadt castle, by moving into an apartment set up for her:

[April] 27th I slept for the first time in my bedroom newly fit up, my daughters assist to my getting up, and this morning, all the ladies of the castle, even my mother, came to see me in my beautiful apartment, I had had supper there for my sons and Zillenhardt assisted, too.³⁰

The morning arrangement apparently imitated the French ceremony of the "lever" of the King. Well-known from Versailles, where the ceremony was taken as the centre of the royal power,³¹ the Fürstin obviously liked the attendance of family and court, her "lever" in their presence. The ceremony was experienced as pleasurable, the Fürstin enjoyed it, as well as the supper in the evening. Both, the ceremonies and the room where they took place, served to demonstrate her prestige. They confirmed her courtly position: the Landgräfin as the focus of the Darmstadt court. This is also proved by the fact that the Darmstadt castle finally had been rebuilt, at least partly. After Karoline's arrival in Darmstadt and the death of the old Landgraf, a great effort had been needed to prepare the castle for the stay of the successor and his family. Karoline tried to complete the extension of the castle, which had been neglected since 1715 when a fire had ruined nearly the whole building. The "lever" she recorded in 1772 celebrated the completion of the refurbishment, the success of her effort: Her "lever" took place in a new apartment, added to an older part of the castle. At the same time, the apartment was her own. Furnished after her needs and taste, it corresponded to her expectations.³² The records on both equipment and arrangement document the prestige of the Landgräfin. The notes were

part of the representation of that prestige, but also demonstrated it to the writer herself – in writing or even afterwards, in reading the entries once more. But hitherto, there is no evidence that the Landgräfin herself or other members of the family or the courtly society actually read the entries.

It is interesting, however, that the theme of the Landgräfin's prestige was regularly brought up by her, often intermingled with other matters. One entry demonstrates for instance how representation was turning into self-reflection. It says:

[July] 23rd I left at 7 in the morning and from Bickenbach near 9 pulled by horses of a farmer whom I hired one hour and a quarter to climb the hill of the Melibocus, Riedesel and Cappes followed on horse back. Never in my life had I discovered at the same time such a big valley and such a beautiful landscape. The Rhine seemed close, Worms so near to distinguish tours and some houses. Manheim, Mayence, Oppenheim, Lorsch, all pretty close – all that could be seen cultivated either in lawns or in bushes; I contemplated that beautiful landscape more than an hour and I took also almost one hour to get down from the mountain by foot. I suffered from the heat, arrived at Bickenbach, we had dinner shortly afterwards, I came back here near 6, concert in the woods and supper in the garden then promenade at the place.³³

At first glance, the entry on the walk on the hill near Darmstadt reinforced her prestige. The Landgräfin was not moving alone. She "hired" transportation and was accompanied by Riedesel and Cappes, both councillors at the Darmstadt court who were on horseback and followed behind. Representation was required not only in the courtly realm, but also outside, in public. On closer inspection, the entry mentions occupations which distracted from representation. The walk seems to be related in detail, also in order to note a certain impression, a certain feeling. What is to be seen in climbing the Melibocus is getting more and more important. Step by step, the walk turns into a contemplation. What was seen, thought or felt in "more than an hour" was yet not named or described. Nonetheless, the pleasure the Landgräfin derived from "contemplating" the "cultivated landscape" is to be read between the lines. What counted was not the demonstration of her prestige, but the opportunity for contemplation and perceptions of things and views. The walk was arranged as an occasion for experiencing this. Contemplation revealed itself as a search for the sensation of beauty.

Other feelings and discourses of the time fit this experience, too. Analogous to the description of the walk and its implicit pleasures, Karoline wrote: "Le 2 [Aout] beau tems et chaud, j'allois à 5 1/2 dans mon hermitage pour lire et donner du pain à mes daims,".³⁴ The reading was arranged in the same way as the walk had been. It took place in intentional solitude, the "hermitage", a separate part of the castle's park, exclusively for her use.³⁵ It is a well-documented fact that reading was one of the most important occupations of the Landgräfin.³⁶ Karoline's library was extensive. Her reading matter included the works of Descartes, Locke and Wolf as well as those of Voltaire, Diderot and Rousseau. She was perfectly acquainted with "forbid-

den literature". Her library contained contemporary French, English and German literature, as well as works on natural sciences and statistics. She corresponded with the Baron Friedrich Melchior Grimm (1723-1807), who announced and delivered what was new in Paris. The Landgräfin joined the Enlightenment not only by her reading matter, but by her preference of reading as such. Reading was one of the contemporary passions, shared first of all by women of the nobility as well as those of the middle classes. Besides, the Landgräfin shared the other passion of her contemporaries: letter writing.³⁸ But again, reading or writing were not reported in detail in her diary. The practices were rarely mentioned, authors or addressees scarcely named. Karoline did not mention the Darmstädter "Empfindsamen" either, the famous circle that gathered around Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) and Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749-1832) in Darmstadt. Her supposed influence which earned her the title of "große Landgräfin" which Goethe bestowed on her in Dichtung und Wahrheit, 40 remains vague, although the circle reached the height of its fame in this year. Only once, Karoline seems to refer to it: "23.[4.1772] ... Mme de la Roche de Coblentze vint hier et aujourd'hui avec sa fille, la mère m'a captivé".41 Sophie de la Roche (1730-1807) did not belong to the "Darmstädter Empfindsamen", but her bestseller: Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim, published in 1771/72, could be linked with the movement. The work was not included in the Landgräfin's library. 42 As these entries show, Karoline was engaged in the discourses of the time, but did not go into her engagement thoroughly. That representation and self-reflections are both experiences the Landgräfin had is only to be read between the lines. But nevertheless, they reflect upon the personal side of the writer, her predilections and feelings, private matters.

Moreover, many passages of the diary gave a more detailed account on her Self. It is true, none of these went much beyond an attempt, but they were far more frequent than in all the other Darmstadt almanacs of the Early Modern period. Beside the entries which report the occupation with the Self by contemplating beauty, by reading and writing, there are also statements like these:

- [January] 6th very cold, Riedesel appeared, Louis had dinner at his uncle's I went there for supper then the young people danced I went there at 6, there was music, play from 7 to 8, supper from 8 to $9^{1}/_{2}$, dance from 10 to $2^{1}/_{4}$ in the morning, the young people danced like mad my mother didn't go, she suffered from a headache; ...
- [August] 4th [at Pirmasens, H.M.] passing rain, at the drill [of Ludwig's army] from 9 to 11½ we had coffee in the alley, I left my nice room to sleep upstairs par decorum. The Landgraf promised me to renounce the suppers à table he shall be less disturbed⁴³

The Landgräfin noted the effects courtly activities had on her mood: The dancing young people were judged to be "lost", the assistance at the drill of her husband's army or the sharing of his bedroom "par decorum" were perceived as constraint. When waiting for a decision concerning the Russian marriage, Karoline mentioned twice what she expected from philosophy: "I'm arming myself with philosophy to

bear a negative answer ... I took Marc Aurel and read chapter 22 to be armed with the arms of philosophy" (November 21st/22nd). Worries about the position of the dynasty in the courtly society alternated with reflections on the Self: The entries leave no doubt of their interrelation. The worry about the prestige is as omnipresent as the Russian marriage. The fear of "myself reduced to nothing" (August 9th) was pronounced expressively even earlier. It is matched by Karoline's eulogy on the Landgräfin Marie von Hessen-Kassel (1723-1772):

[January] 16th ... she was a respectable lady because of her merits; at least, she left educated and established children, what one could not say about me if I'm going to die in the next months.⁴⁴

Not being able to leave "educated and established children" herself meant to be reduced to "nothing". The fear seemed even greater in respect of the genealogy: Landgräfin Marie was born as the daughter of King George II of England (1683-1760). Experiencing all these thoughts, hopes and fears concerning her own prestige and her own position in the courtly society, there was apparently only one person to take refuge to:

[May] 5th The absence of my mother hurts me. Dealing with her contributes to my luck. There's not even one point where we have separate opinions. If my project fails I'm going to comfort myself with my mother's doubts.⁴⁵

Summing up the entries in the diary, one has to note that the Landgräfin repeatedly returned to two themes. On the one hand, to representation that affirmed her prestige, either at the court or in the public realm, on the other to perceptions on other sides of this Self, ranging from hopes and fears connected with the "Russian marriage" to personal preferences in everyday life, reading and writing, the search for contemplation and beauty and the participation in discourses on philosophy. The obligation, but also the capacity to keep up the prestige became visible as well in the uncertainty engendered by the fear of failing to meet these demands. Karoline's marriage politics aimed at the "grandeur" (August 9th) of her house and therefore of herself. The entry on the deceased Landgräfin of Hessen-Kassel is not only a eulogy, but reflects Karoline's own claims to herself. Her marriage politics went in the same direction as her husband's politics, for Ludwig IX intended to renew the "grandeur" of the dynasty of Hessen-Darmstadt, too. But while he did not write about his worries regarding this "grandeur" in his almanacs, Karoline returned to it again and again, on different levels. Her entries prove again and again that the Russian marriage was directly connected with her own person. Its success influenced the writer profoundly, it was becoming the touchstone of her identity. Thus, the second almanac goes far beyond the accounting or balancing of expenses and costs. While its counterpart, the account-book for 1772, was part of the series and continued the family tradition, the second almanac, turned into a diary, dealt mainly with her own Self. This broke the barrier between public and private

which had been respected in the Darmstadt tradition of almanac-keeping up to now: Karoline's diary outlined at least two different Selves, which could hardly be reconciled. On the one side a Self that affirmed a way of life befitting her rank, on the other a Self experiencing itself as powerless and full of doubts; her problem was exactly the prestige the other Self boasts of.

The reasons why the Fürstin did not go further in her exploration of autobiographic writings remain unknown, at least as long as there is no other authentic evidence to be interpreted. No other almanacs have been preserved. Karoline's use of other forms of autobiographical writing, diaries and letters, essays and testamentary provisions, did apparently not push her to start an autobiography as such. On the contrary. As shown by her will the Landgräfin apparently did not even want her "papers" to be preserved. Confirming once more her role as a Fürstin whose marriage politics aimed at the "grandeur" of her dynasty and the promotion of its representation, the Landgräfin declared in her testament that after the revision of "my papers", "all letters" should be burnt except those of the "Roi de Prusse, de l'impératrice de Russie, du grand Duc et de ma fille Nathalie". 46 Karoline did not even mention her almanacs, as if convinced that their deposit in the archives of the Landgrafschaft would only document her role as a potent Fürstin, not her doubts, fears and worries. The Landgräfin envisaged the public use of her official series, but underestimated the impact of her second copy of 1772. But in keeping it, Karoline herself marked the barrier between public and private. What she hinted at, the many other sides of her Self, reveal a reflected fragmentation of this Self in which we are interested and which we have learnt to describe as private.⁴⁷

NOTES

- See Jeroen Salman: *Een handdruk van de tijd. De almananak en het dagelijks leven in de Nederlanden 1500-1700* (Zwolle, 1997); Bernhard Capp: *Astrology and the Popular Press. English Almanacs, 1500-1800* (London/Boston, 1979); Lodovica Braida: "Les almanachs italiens. Evolution et stéréotypes d'un genre (XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles)". In: Roger Chartier/Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink: *Colportage et lecture populaire. Imprimés de large circulation en Europe XVIe-XIXe Siècles* (Paris: 1996) 183-209; Alfred Messerli: "Propaganda und Ideologie der Schriftlichkeit in deutschschweizer Volkskalendern", id., 209-239; Klaus Matthäus: "Zur Geschichte des Nürnberger Kalenderwesens. Die Entwicklung der in Nürnberg gedruckten Kalender in Buchform." In: *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens* 9 (1969), 965-1396.
- See Salman, *Handdruk*, 25, 42, 44; Stuart Sherman. *Telling Time*. *Clocks, Diaries and English Diurnal Form* 1660-1785 (Chicago and London, 1996) 56f. Jill Bepler/Thomas Bürger. "Katalog zur Kabinettausstellung in der Herzog August Bibliothek." In: *Simpliciana XVI* (1996), 211-253.
- 3 Matthäus, Geschichte, 982ff.
- 4 "Hessen und Thüringen. Von den Anfängen bis zur Reformation. Eine Ausstellung des Landes Hessen." (Marburg, 1992), 326.
- For the entire tradition see my "Das archivierte Ich. Schreibkalender und höfische Repräsentation in Hessen-Darmstadt 1624-1790" (Darmstadt: Hessische Historische Kommission 2001).
- 6 Sherman, Telling time, 57.
- Sherman, *Telling time*, 57: "The scheme did not leave much room for narrative expatiation, and inscribers generally chose in any case to itemize memorable but disparate events rather than to perform each day as prose."
- See Axel Behne. "Archivierung von Schriftgut." In: Schrift und Schriftlichkeit. Writing and Its use. Ein interdisziplinäres Handbuch. Ed. by Hartmut Günther/Otto Ludwig. 2 vols. (Berlin, 1996) 1, 146-158.
- See Heinz Duchhardt (ed.). Politische Testamente und andere Quellen zum Fürstenethos der Frühen Neuzeit (Darmstadt, 1987) (= Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte der Neuzeit, 18), 42, 75.

- See Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie (1882), S. 410-415; Neue Deutsche Biographie 11 (1977), S. 283; Jürgen Rainer Wolf: "Femina sexu ingenio vir". Die "große Landgräfin" Henriette Karoline von Hessen-Darmstadt und ihr Kreis im Bild der Geschichtsschreibung. In: Christof Dipper (ed..), Hessen in der Geschichte. Festschrift für Eckhart G. Franz zum 65. Geburtstag (Darmstadt, 1996) (= Arbeiten der Hessischen Historischen Kommission, N. F., 11), 130-145.
- See Hermann Bräuning-Oktavio, "Der Katalog der Bibliothek des Landgrafen Ludwig IX. von Hessen-Darmstadt (1790)." In: *Börsenblatt für den Deutschen Buchhandel. Frankfurter Ausgabe.* 93 (1970), 2565-2615, 2567-73.
- Jürgen Rainer Wolf, "Zwei Jahrhunderte Krieg und Frieden." In: Friedrich Battenberg/ Jürgen Rainer Wolf/ Eckhart G. Franz/Fritz Deppert, *Darmstadts Geschichte. Fürstenresidenz und Bürgerstadt im Wandel der Jahrhunderte* (Darmstadt, 1984), 129-289, 260ff.
- Hessisches Staatsarchiv Darmstadt (StAD) D 4 Nr. 558/1 u. 2: 1762-63, 1765-72. The almanac of 1764 is missing. Whether there were more almanacs or not remains an open question.
- See John T. Alexander. "The Courts of the Russian Empresses in the Eighteenth Century." In: *The Court Historian* 4, 2 (1999), 161-167.
- 15 StAD D 4 Nr. 555/1.
- StAD D 4 Nr. 557/11. The title in the "Findbuch" is that of an archivist. It says: "Auszüge aus ihren Tagebüchern, 2 Abschriften". The copies are complete, but not the same. One is bound by a string, the other one contains 27 double pages in the format 27x21,5 cm. It has margins that mostly contain explanations of names mentioned in the text. I have used only the first copy. Both copies were made in the beginning of the 20th century, according to information given by Dr. Jürgen Rainer Wolf. The handwriting could not be identified; the originals are lost.
- 17 Ibid.
- "April 19[1772] I take possession of my cabinets, my boudoir is as I wanted it to be"; "April 23 [1772] I'm arranging my apartment."
- 19 23.7.1772. "to the farmer who led me up on the Melipocus 5 R."
- 20 16.3.; 26.5.; 16.10.1772.
- 21 17.3.1772.
- Ralph Rainer Wuthenow. *Europäische Tagebücher. Eigenart. Formen. Entwicklung* (Darmstadt, 1990) 1: "Was ein Tagebuch ist, meint jeder sofort zu wissen: eine Folge von Notizen, in regelmäßigen oder auch unregelmäßigen Abständen geführt, nicht selten sogar wirklich von Tag zu Tag und in einer von der Eigenart des Schreibenden geprägten Reflexion auf äußere, politische wie persönliche, private, gar intime Begbenheiten und auf Erfahrungen, Gesehenes wie Gehörtes, Träume, Erwägungen, Stimmungen, auch auf Gelesenes bezogen."
- Wolf, *Jahrhunderte*, 271; see also Jürgen Rainer Wolf: "Zum zweihundertsten Todestag Landgraf Ludwigs IX. von Hessen-Darmstadt." In: "Gedenkreden zum 200. Todestag Landgraf Ludwig IX" (Historischer Verein Pirmasens 1991) 7-18, 16.
- "Le 13.[7.1772] Le Landgrave m'a desesperé aujourd'hui ayant mal compris la relation de Moser j'ai represanté respectueusement, mais sans fruit, je n'ai donc plus dis le mot et rompes le discours quand il recommencoit à parler sur cette matière je reviens triste, abattue, souper ...";
 - "Le 30.[7.1772] Cappes arrive en courier pour m'annoncer que le Landgrave signoit, nous allames Caroline et moi diner à Bickenbach. Moser que j'avois forcé d'y aller vint aussi."
- 25 See Bräuning-Oktavio, Katalog, 2577.
- "Encore une année de révolue et sans evenemens malheureux pour ma famille, quelle sera la fin de celle ci, ou existeray-je, sera-ce icy, sera-ce bien Loin, ou sera-ce dans la tombe, tout ce qui mon Dieu voudra, qu'il me conserve les objets qui me sont chèrs, et qu'il preserve mon fils ainné de la seduction, il n'est point question de femmes mais des fourbes et des flatteurs, je ne serai à mon aise que lorsque je le scaurai reparti d'icy; je souhaite qu'un projet reussisse, mais je le desire peut etre trop pour en esperer du succés. Le bonheur n'est point fait pour moi."
- "Le 9.[8.1772] au petit parc de 8 à 9 puis à l'eglise, Boden à une lettre du 2 de Berlin qui lui dit L'Imper.[atrice] de R.[ussie] en danger de vie et que l'on craignoit une revolution; après avoir été bercée pendant une année d'esperances chimeriques de grandeur, me voici reduite à rien, c'est ainsi que va le monde, je m'en vais redevenir philosophe, souper au jardin. ..."; "Le 21.[9.1772] Le Landgrave a fait hier un effort, il a resté levé 6 heures, il reprend une direction de prosperité, je compte sortir, voici 4 jours que je n'ai mis les pieds hors de la maison. on dit la paix faite entre les Russes et le Turcs, j'en suis bien aise pour l'humanité car d'ailleurs je crois que l'interèt particulier que j'aurai y prendre n'existe plus, c'est un beau Reve que a fini par le reveil."
- "Le 19.[11.1772] ... je n'en peu plus"; "Le 20.[11.1772] ... Ce monde la me quitte"; "Le 21.[11.1772] ... ce soir je saurai oui où non je m'arme de philosophie pour soutenir la négative, il sonne 7,8,9,10 et 11 heures, point de lettres, ainsi tout est dit et je me vois après 16 mois d'incertitude et ballotée entre le ziste et le

zeste dechüe de toutes mes espérances"; "Le 22.[11.1772] ... je me suis endormie hier comme toujours, mon someil est inexpugnable c'est là ce qui me soutient, mais en m'éveillant à 5 1/2 ma première idée a été la fin de mon joli rêve. j'ai pris Marc Antonin j'en ai lu le 22eme chapitre pour m'armer de courage de philosophie, à 8 heures du matin Riedesel est entré avec une lettre, je reconus la main d'A. je l'ouvris il ne me dit rien cependant c'étoit n'avoir pas perdu tout espoir. Riedesel avait eu la colique toute la nuit, sa phisionomie n'est plus aussi s'embrunit il vint à 5 du soir avec une seconde lettre qui nullement me fait esperer la Réussite de l'affaire Dieu veuille qu'elle tourne au bonheur de ce qui m'est cher."

- "Le 31.[12.1772] froid come ces jours ci, je dors à merveille, encore une année de finie, j'existe malgré mes maux qui augmente en langueur et en quantité, mais ils ont diminué, quand à la force, ma mere est en santé, mon frere de meme, mes filles mariées sont heureuses, mon fils ainé paroit changé en bien, mes filles, surtout les deux ainées à la maison, ne m'ont pas donné de chagrin, mon fils cadets n'ont pas changé en mal, Fritz est malade, mais je peux esperer sa guerison, ma soeur vit, mes amis sont les mèmes pour moi, j'ai la perspective de voir l'une de mes filles mariées en Russie au Grand Duc; Dieu m'a fait bien des graces cette année, je le sens, prosternée je Lui en offre mes actions de grace, vivrai-je dans une année icy?" The question mark is part of the text.
- "27.[4.1772] J'ai couché pour la première fois dans ma chambre de lit nouvellement faite, mes filles assisterent à me coucher, et ce matin toutes les Dames du chateau meme ma mère vinrent me voir dans mes jolies chambres, j'y ai donné à dejeuner mes fils et Zillenhardt en ont aussi ete."
- For a description of the "lever" and its functions for the French court at Versailles see Norbert Elias, *Die höfische Gesellschaft. Untersuchungen zur Soziologie des Köngitums und der höfischen Aristokratie. Mit einer Einleitung: Soziologie und Geschichtswissenschaft* (Frankfurt am Main 1983) Chapter V: Etikette und Zeremoniell, 124ff. See also Jeroen Duindam, *Myths of power: Norbert Elias and the Early Modern Court* (Amsterdam, 1995).
- See Jürgen Rainer Wolf. "Je voudrais trouver un petit trésor … ". Planungen zum Ausbau des Darmstädter Neuschlosses nach dem Regierungsantritt Landgraf Ludwigs IX. In: *Archiv für Hessische Geschichte* NF 40 (1982), 313-319, 314.
- "Le 23 [7.1772] je partis à 7 du matin et de Bickenbach vers 9 trainée par des chevaux de paysan j'ai employé 1 1/4 d'heure pour monter au somet du Melipocus, Riedesel et Cappes suiviront à cheval. De ma vie je n'ai découvert à la fois uns plus grande etendue et un plus beau pays. Le Rhin paraissoit tout près, Worms à distinguer les tours et plusieurs maisons, Manheim, Mayence, Openheim, Lorsch tout près tout ce que l'on voit cultivé ou en prairies et des bouquets de bois; j'ai contemplé ce beau pays plus d'une heure et j'ai employé aussi environ une pour descendre la montagne à pied, je mourrais de chaud, arrivée à Bickenbach on dina preu après, je revins icy vers 6, concert au petit bois et souper au jardin puis promenade sur la place."
- "[August] 2nd nice weather and hot, I went at 5 1/2 in my Hermitage to read and give bread to my deers,". See Hermann Bräuning-Oktavio. "Die Bibliothek der großen Landgräfin Caroline von Hessen." In: *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens* 6 (1966), 681-875.
- See Hermann Bräuning-Oktavio. "Die Bibliothek der großen Landgräfin Caroline von Hessen." In: *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens* 6 (1966), 681-875, 710-729.
- 36 See Bräuning-Oktavio, *Bibliothek*.
- Hermann Bräuning-Oktavio. "Verbotene Literatur in der Bibliothek der großen Landgräfin." In: *Hessis-ches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte* 10 (1966), 147-164. Bräuning-Oktavio is referring to the works of Voltaire, Helvetius, Holbach, Diderot and others.
- 38 See Ph. F. A. Walther. *Briefwechsel der "Grossen Landgräfin" Caroline von Hessen. Dreissig Jahre eines fürstlichen Frauenlebens* (Wien 1877) I. 4f: "She had the habit of writing letters every day after lunch for a couple of hours and couldn't decide to give up this habit inspite of the warnings of her doctors."
- 39 See Gerhard Sauder. "Der empfindsame Kreis in Darmstadt." In. *Darmstadt in der Zeit des Barock und Rokoko. Ausstellung des Magistrates der Stadt Darmstadt Mathildenhöhe* 6.9.-9.11.1980. Katalog: Gesamt-redaktion Eva Huber. 2 Vols. (Darmstadt, 1980) I, 167-176.
- Johann Wolfgang v. Goethe. *Aus meinem Leben. Dichtung und Wahrheit.* In: Johann Wolfgang v. Goethe. *Werke.* 14 Bde. (= Hamburger Ausgabe) (München, 1981ff) (Hamburg, 1948ff), Bd. 9, 1982 (Hamburg, 1955), 517.
- "23.[4.1772] ... Madame de la Roche de Coblentze came yesterday and today with her daugther, the mother er impressed me".
- 42 See Bräuning-Oktavio, Bibliothek.
- "Le 6[1.1772] très froid, Riedesel reparoit, Louis dine chez son oncle j'y vais souper puis la jeunesse dansera J' suis allée à 6 heures il yavait musique, jeu de 7 à 8, souper de 8 à 9½, bal de 10 à 2¼ du matin La jeunesse a dansée comme des perdues ma mère n'y vint pas, elle avoit des maux de tète"; "Le 4.[8.1772, Pirmasens] pluye passagère, à l'exercise de 9 à 11½ nous primes du caffé dans l'allée, j'ai quitté ma jolie chambre pour coucher la haut par Decorum. Le Landgrave m'a promis de renoncer aux soupers à table il en sera biens moins gené ... ".

- "Le 16.[1.1772] ... c'etoit une femme respectable par son mérite; du moins a-t-elle laissé ses enfans formés et etablis, il n'en sera pas de meme de moi si je dois mourir dans les premières années."
- "Le 7.[5.1772] L'absence de ma mère me peine extraordinairement. Son commerce fait tout mon bonheur, il n'y a qu'un seul point ou nous différons d'opinions. Si l'affaire manque je me consolerai parce que ma mère en redoute la reussite."
- StAD D 4 Nr. 557/6: "Toutes les lettres que n'auront point de raport aux affaires seront brulées hors celles du Roi de Prusse, de l'impératrice de Russie, du grand Duc et de ma fille Nathalie que seront mises separement dans du pacquets, cachetés avec mon cachet et remis aux archives."
- I would like to thank Irmgard Hölscher and Cornelia Niekus Moore for the discussions we had.