THE MEANING OF TRUST:
FIDES BETWEEN SELF-INTEREST AND APPETITUS SOCIETATIS

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And I insist upon it, that this pretended Love of our Species, and natural Affection that we are said to have for one another, beyond other Animals, is neither instrumental to the erection of Societies, nor ever trusted in our prudent Commerce with one another, when associated, anymore than if it had no Existence (Bernard Mandeville, Fable of the Bees, Part II, 183).

...ea pietate omnium pectora imbuerat, ut fides ac ius iurandum proximo legum ac poenarum metu civitatem regerent (Livius, Ab urbe condita, I.21).

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years the youthful writings of Hugo Grotius have been receiving more attention than ever before. There is still much to be researched and most texts from these early years of the 17th century have not yet been adequately edited, but major steps have been set to understand the intellectual Werdegang of the author of De iure belli ac pacis. Written in 1625 after the fateful Twelve Years’ Truce (1609–1621), De iure belli ac pacis belongs to the mature writings. Texts written before the Truce—most of these Mss. not published during Grotius’s lifetime—represent the early output: poetry like Adamus exul, politica like Parallelon rerumpublicarum, legal works like De iure praedae commentarius and its offspring Mare liberum, but also many notes and drafts pertaining to his fields of interest.

Peter Haggenmacher was among the first to understand the great importance of these early writings for the later work. In his solid and detailed Grotius et la doctrine de la guerre juste,1 Haggenmacher definitively changed the course of Grotius scholarship by the careful and considered analysis of the fate of scholastic sources through the “Memorandum”

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to the “Treatise”—as Haggenmacher had nicknamed respectively *De iure praedae commentarius* and *De iure belli ac pacis*—in order to present Grotius as the theorist of war and peace that he really was.²

As a student of political thought I carefully studied this analysis of 1983, in order to help me with my project of how at the interface of practical political issues and the theory of just war something like a Grotian system was developing. That is where the *Parallelon rerumpublicarum* of ca. 1600–1602 entered the scene, this self-confident comparison of the Dutch Republic with the ancient Greek and Roman republics. One of the fascinating aspects of this Ms. that was written around 1600, but published only in 1804, is the importance of the concept of ‘fides’. Without any doubt, Grotius preferred the Roman republic over the Athenian, even though in the end both showed one major defect: their perfidy, sacrificing agreements with other nations to interest of State. The Athenian League was notorious for that, just as the later Romans—an early manifestation of the perfidy of the Spanish Habsburgs. This chapter ‘de fide et perfidia’ in the *Parallelon* apparently started a programmatic quest that would continue through *De iure praedae commentarius* and *De iure belli ac pacis*.

In this paper I want to discuss the meaning of trust, in order to shed some light on the way Grotius structures the relationship between individual and community, between citizen and State, and consequently between private and public. For short, what political theorists normally describe as the issue of sociability. I have chosen this theme, as a tribute to Peter Haggenmacher’s important, joyful and enthusing participation in the *De iure praedae* conference I had the good fortune of organizing in June 2005 in Wassenaar, The Netherlands.³

I will proceed in the following way. First I rehearse the modern debate on trust in political theory, also in order to distinguish and contrast the Grotian and Hobbesian approaches to sociability. Then I will start to trace the Grotian concept of trust as part of his theory of sociability. Standardly the latter is identified by the *appetitus societatis* of the Prolegomena of *De iure belli ac pacis*, to which the term oikeiosis was connected in the second edition (1632). But for whom the early writings are important such a limitation cannot work. Together with Peter Haggenmacher we

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