The

Hungarian Historical Review

New Series of Acta Historica Academiæ Scientiarum Hungaricæ

Diversity

VOLUME 13 NUMBER 2

2024

Institute of History,
Research Centre for the Humanities,
Hungarian Research Network

The Hungarian Historical Review
New Series of Acta Historica
Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae

Volume 13 No. 2 2024

Meaning of Diversity in the Middle Ages

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Special Editors of the Thematic Issue

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Hungarian Historical Review 13, no. 2 (2024): 153–171

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On January 20, 1438, a memorial service for Sigismund of Luxembourg was held in the cathedral of Ragusa (now Dubrovnik). Sigismund, who had been king and emperor of many realms, had died a few weeks earlier, and in many regions of Europe, he was commemorated with church services, the ringing of bells, and solemn speeches.[1] Ragusa was no exception: here, in front of an exclusive audience, the Italian scholar Philip Diversi († 1452) spoke in memory of the deceased.[2] Philip first referred to his unworthiness and then outlined Sigismund's connection to Ragusa before moving on to the emperor's greatest achievement: Sigismund's commitment to unity in the Church, evident in his efforts against the Ottomans and Hussites. Whole countries, including "Italy, Germany, Spain, Gaul, England, all the transalpine regions, all peoples and nations" even the very "earth and all the seas [...], the rivers, mountains, valleys, and finally all elements"[3] had born witness to Sigismund's achievements. The

* We would like to thank our anonymous reviewers for their remarks, which helped clarify our argumentation.

1 Jörg, "Trauerfeierlichkeiten Kaiser Sigismund." On rituals in Ragusa, cf. Janeković Römer, "Public rituals," 7–43.

2 On Philip Diversi and his speeches, see the studies by Janeković Römer, "The orations of Philip Diversi," 43–79; Janeković Römer, "Newly Discovered Autograph," 67–117; Janeković Römer, "Laudes civitatum," 275–89.

3 Janeković Römer, "Oratio in funere Sigismundi imperatoris," 52–83, here 59–60: *Attestatur demum Italia, Germania, Hispania, Galia, Anglia, omnes provintię transalpinae, omnes regiones, omnes gentes ac nationes. Testantur terrę et omnia maria, testantur flumina, montes, valles, et omnia denique elementa longos crebros continuos ipsius comeatus, incredibiles labores, maxima capitis pericula rectissima consilia, singularissimos modos, divinam solicitudinem, prudentiam apertam, et admirabilem industriam quae tam solicite, constanter, intimide, sapienter, diligenter, clare, benignissime et astute egit, exercuit, passus est, subiit, adhibuit* […]. *in opus adduxit atque demonstravit cum ea loca, illas oras, remotissimas regiones, et ipsum universum orbem, reges, duces, principes et populos christicolas preter sui regalem dignitatem discurreret et*

 DOI 10.38145/2024.2.153

emperor had traveled to all "places, coasts, the most remote regions and the whole world, as well as to kings, leaders, princes, and Christian peoples"[4] with tireless commitment and prudence. If this picture of imperial omnipresence did not convince the members of Philip's audience, they should compare their own deeds with those of Sigismund. They would then clearly see that their achievements hardly bore any comparison with his, "neither with regard to the variety of regions, nor the effort to travel all over the world, nor the speed of their execution, the dexterity of warfare, the number or size of battles, or the conclusion of peace and alliances."[5] Thus all the peoples of all the many languages of Europe should commemorate the great emperor's passing.

Similarly, almost four years earlier, Isidore of Kiev († 1462) had commented on Sigismund's praiseworthy character and accomplishments. Isidore had traveled to the Council of Basel as a delegate of the Byzantine Emperor John VIII Palaiologos to negotiate the union of the Latin and Greek churches.[6] En route, he stopped at the Imperial Diet in Ulm, where he held a panegyric speech and managed to persuade Sigismund of the importance of future cooperation. Isidore also praised Sigismund's commitment to the unity of Christendom throughout Europe (only logical in view of his efforts to bring about Church union). Sigismund, Isidore insisted, was well equipped to do this. He was, after all, fluent in Latin, German, Hungarian, Czech, and Italian.[7] In addition, Isidore claimed, Sigismund had shown a sense of justice and foresight. He had stayed awake "through whole nights in concern for the state [... and had taken care] with foresight of peoples, cities and people, and everything that concerned them!"

circuiret et conveniret unde summo christianorum consensu, eius sanctissimis exortationibus initum convocatum, congregatum atque confectum est, illud splendidissimum, sanctissimum divinissimumque Constantiense concilium in quo cum bona fere infinita acta fuerint unum maximum totius christianitatis saluberimum culmen completum extitit.

4 Janeković Römer, "Oratio in funere Sigismundi imperatoris," 52–83, here 60: *In opus adduxit atque demonstravit cum ea loca, illas oras, remotissimas regiones, et ipsum universum orbem, reges, duces, principes et populos christicolas preter sui regalem dignitatem discurreret et circuiret et conveniret unde summo christianorum consensu, eius sanctissimis exortationibus initum convocatum, congregatum atque confectum est, illud splendidissimum, sanctissimum divinissimumque Constantiense concilium in quo cum bona fere infinita acta fuerint unum maximum totius christianitatis saluberimum culmen completum extitit.*

5 Janeković Römer, "Oratio in funere Sigismundi imperatoris," 52–83, here 62: *Si enim ante oculos ponere libuerit omnes a nostris imperatoribus omnes ab ex terris gentibus potentissimisque populis omnes a regibus clarissimis res tractatas voluerimusque cum suis comparare palam videbimus nec diversitate regionum nec orbis circuiendi solicitudine nec perficiendi celeritate nec bellorum studio nec preliorum numero aut magnitudine nec pacis aut concordiarum confectione posse conferri.*

6 On the political and religious context, see Kolditz, *Johannes VIII.*

7 Schlotheuber, "Bedeutung von Sprachen Luxemburgerherrscher"; Deutschländer, "Höfische Erziehung und dynastisches Denken."

Isidore also noted that if the emperor's presence was necessary somewhere, "then [he did] not allow [himself] any rest, without thinking even in the least about postponement or rest for the body. As if on wings, [he seemed] to fly here and [was] always on the move [...]."[8] Isidore expressed his astonishment at the emperor's devotion and accomplishments with an exclamation rich with pathos: "Who has as much power and rulership and who commands as many vast peoples [...] as you, Your Majesty?"[9]

Ruling Diverse Realms and Territories: The Case of Sigismund of Luxembourg

Sigismund of Luxembourg (1368–1437) not only ruled over an impressive array of territories but also reigned for a long period of time. From the perspective of diversity, Sigismund of Luxembourg's reign represents a fortunate but also challenging case study. Fortunate because immensely rich and varied sources have survived from Sigismund's long reign in Hungary, the Holy Roman Empire, and Bohemia. These sources provide detailed insights into the significance and roles of categories of difference, social affiliations, group identities, and negotiation processes. The two examples introduced above only give a small glimpse of these kinds of bonds and processes. Challenging, however, because Sigismund was confronted with very different cultural and political conditions in each of his kingdoms. The reality of a personal union across several kingdoms therefore consisted less of a centrally organized power structure and more of different spheres of influence with their own structures and methods of exerting influence. The rule of Sigismund as a cosmopolitan figure who governed vast territories led to a multiplication and differentiation of monarchical centers.[10] Resilient alliances, effective communicative strategies, and a considerable degree

8 Hunger and Wurm, "Isidoros von Kiev," with the critical edition of the speech at 154–63 and a German translation at 164–73. We refer to the last part of passage no. 6, in the German translation p. 170: "ganze Nächte in Sorge um den Staat [… und kümmerst] Dich vorausschauend um Völker, Städte und Menschen und alles, was diese betrifft […]! Wenn aber irgendwo Deine persönliche Anwesenheit nötig ist, dann gönnst Du Dir keine Ruhe, ohne auch nur im mindesten an Aufschub oder Erholung für den Körper zu denken. Wie auf Schwingen scheinst Du bald hierhin, bald dorthin zu fliegen [und] bist immer in Bewegung […]."

9 Hunger and Wurm, "Isidoros von Kiev" (as note 8), 171: "Wer hat schon so viel Macht und Herrschergewalt und wer gebietet über so viele riesige Völker […] wie Du, Majestät?"

10 We refrain from providing a comprehensive description of the current state of research and merely refer to a few particularly influential studies: Hruza and Kaar, *Kaiser Sigismund*; Takács, *Sigismundus Rex et Imperator*; Pauly and Reinert, *Sigismundus von Luxemburg*; Hoensch, *Kaiser Sigismund.*

of everyday political pragmatism were constitutive for the period of Sigismund's rule. Depending on the situation and the local balance of power, Sigismund, his allies, and his opponents alike had to renegotiate or reconfirm interests, power relations, and coalitions in different regions, depending on the temporal, spatial, and social contexts.

The territories ruled by Sigismund and the neighboring regions significantly influenced by him served as the framework and the focal points of case studies for the international and interdisciplinary conference "DIVERSITAS (Sigis)MUNDI – Politische, soziale, religiöse und kulturelle Vielfalt in der Zeit Sigismunds von Luxemburg (1368–1437)" [DIVERSITAS (Sigis-)MUNDI. Political, social, religious, and cultural diversity in the time of Sigismund of Luxembourg (1368–1437)], which took place in Munich in February 2023.[11] The conference aimed to reveal dynamics, conflicts, regional peculiarities, and the significance of various affiliations in the time of Sigismund of Luxembourg by focusing on a range of case studies. In addition to questions of political history, issues involving social and economic history, migration history, gender history, religious history, object and art history, personal history, and spatial history were considered. Presentations and joint debates were dedicated to the question of how religious, cultural, and linguistic diversity influenced local practices of rule and governance. Furthermore, we considered the extent to which categories of difference (such as religion, social status, gender, and ethnicity) established politically relevant group constellations. We also discussed whether specific practices and semantics were developed to cope with diversity. Finally, we considered the ways in which the various categories of difference overlapped or reinforced one another.

In order to provide a forum for discussion of these questions, the conference focused on the period of Sigismund of Luxembourg (1368–1437). But more importantly, it considered the meanings and applicability of diversity as an analytical term for Medieval Studies. The conference panels were structured around four fields: political, social, religious, and cultural diversity. These fields enabled the participants to focus on a variety of types of diversity, e.g. religious practices, concepts of the unity both of the Church and of empires. Other issues were discussed, including multilingualism, the roles of learned men and women, multiple cities, and propaganda and conflicts.

11 For a conference report and summary, see Willert, "Tagungsbericht."

This special issue of the *Hungarian Historical Review* presents selected case studies from the 2023 conference. Instead of providing a summary of the papers or retracing the four conference sessions, our introduction focuses on the various possible meanings of the term diversity, methodological approaches to the study of diversity, and the relevance or applicability of these approaches to the field of Medieval Studies.[12] We discuss ways in which we can study political, social, religious, and cultural differences in the Middle Ages through the prism of diversity and the terminological and methodological challenges this presents.

Modern and Historic Meanings of "Diversity": Approaching a Challenging Term and Its Usages in Medieval Studies

The term diversity can be understood in a variety of ways, as current debates concerning social/gender/class equality and sociological discussions about social orders aptly demonstrate.[13] In historical research, however, there seems to be no fixed definition. For this reason, the conference concept used a broad understanding of this term, defining diversity simply as any potential system of differentiation.[14] Some conference papers noted that diversity is not merely an analytical term, as one does indeed find the Latin term *diversitas* in numerous medieval sources.[15] However, more than once it became clear that this term does not translate to a modern concept of diversity, especially not to diversity as "celebration of difference."[16] This first impression, if perhaps vague, is confirmed by the definition of *diversitas* provided by the Oxford Latin Dictionary:

> dīuersitās, -ātis *f.*
> 1. A state of being apart, separateness, distance.
> 2. The condition or fact of being different, diversity, difference; difference of method.
> 3a. Difference of opinion, disagreement (between).
> 3b. a contradictory state, inconsistency.[17]

12 Our text merges the introduction to the conference (J. Burkhardt) and the summary (P. Schweitzer-Martin).

13 For an introduction to various methodological approaches, see Vertovec, *Routledge International Handbook*; Krell, *Diversity Studies*.

14 On difference as an analytical category, see Ruby, "Security makes a difference"; Hirschauer, "Un/Doing Differences."

15 See, for example, the quotation from Philip Diversi's speech in note 5 above.

16 Berend, "Medieval diversity."

17 Glare, *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, 617.

These observations lead us to two questions. First, is it misleading to use the term diversity in studies on the Middle Ages despite the fact that it may well have meant something else in the sources? Second, is diversity a useful neutral and methodologically convincing term?[18] Numerous papers of this special issue highlight that the term could have an ambiguous or even negative nuance in the Middle Ages.[19] Does that mean we should draw distinctions between positive and negative connotations of diversity in historical research?

To provide some idea of how these two questions can be handled, we should first discuss conceptual and terminological aspects regarding diversity. Today, the concept of diversity is of growing importance and finds itself at the center of political and social debates (e.g. political/religious/social/ethnic/gender diversity, diversity management in work environment, biodiversity, etc.).[20] For the most part, the term is used to refer to issues of race, class, and gender, but it is not limited to these aspects.[21] The Merriam-Webster Dictionary provides recent examples on the web for each dictionary entry.[22] These examples suggest that American newspapers and magazines tend to use the term diversity together with the word inclusion, so the term indeed leans towards aspects of race, class, and gender.[23]

This certainly is not the way Sigismund of Luxembourg or his contemporaries (the case study for this special issue) would have understood diversity. However, recent trends and debates have clearly reflected on academic research and on study programs taught at history departments and other university institutes.[24]

18 Klymenko, "Religious Diversity"; Müller, "Alterity and Self-Understanding"; Reinle, "Diversity and Divergence".

19 E.g. Schneidmüller, "Unitas and Diversitas".

20 Gaupp, "Epistemologies of Diversity"; Vertovec, *Superdiversity*, 125–39; Mounk, *The Great Experiment*.

21 Brauner, "Recht und Diversität," 9–84, especially 9–16.

22 "In an era where there is so much focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion, Chybowski felt that bringing Chong to UConn would provide invaluable input, with his life's work focused on exploring and dismantling history, geography, race, and culture." Melanie Savage, *Hartford Courant*, February 2, 2023. "Rihanna has also made philanthropy part of her mission by championing diversity and inclusion through all of her brands and pledging $15 million towards climate justice through her Clara Lionel Foundation." Cameron Jenkins, *Good Housekeeping*, February 2, 2023. "The Black History Month promotion comes as part of AMC's work with groups like their in-house African American Experience Council, which is working to promote diversity and inclusion within AMC's ranks and offerings." Tim Chan, *Rolling Stone*, January 30, 2023. Merriam-Webster, "Diversity." February 2, 2023.

23 And as the example of Rihanna, a popular artist, shows, diversity can involve huge amounts of money. Taylor, "Fenty Beauty's Diversity-based Business Model."

24 Various German universities offer special programs on "Diversity studies" (apart from regular MA/BA study programs). See, for example, the initiatives in Bamberg (https://www.uni-bamberg.de/diversity/

In January 2023, for example, the History Department at the University of Münster advertised a permanent position (open to historians of all historical periods) as lecturer with a focus on diversity.[25] They were seeking someone who could teach "in the field of 'diversity' (including culture, religion, ideology, ethnic or social origin, gender, age, disability)," understood as "a social phenomenon as well as a key concept and field of research in historical studies."[26] According to this text, the department's concept of diversity is quite broad. Compared to the focus fields of our conference, it additionally comprises ideology, ethnic origin, gender, age, and disability.[27] Overall, this advertisement testifies to a growing academic interest in this field, independent of specific periods, as much as it shows how extensive and vague the very concept of diversity is.

Drawing on this example, we pondered the extent to which the term is relevant (or increasingly relevant) to the field of Medieval Studies in particular. Without claiming completeness, we tried to establish a first impression based on findings generated by searches in the bibliographical databases RI-Opac (Regesta Imperii-Opac) and IMB (International Medieval Bibliography). According to our statistical analysis, the term diversity (or "Diversität" in German) has only come into use for publications by medievalists since the late 1990s. If one counts all entries using the term "Diversität" or "diversity" in the title of a book or article without, however, counting titles that were indexed with the term diversity, the number of results is limited: about 90 in the IMB and about 30 in the RI-Opac. Compared to many other key words of medieval studies, these are fairly low numbers. As is so often the case, there are various explanations. Mostly, this topic has a lot to do with labels. There has been considerable research and scholarship on social and religious difference in the Middle Ages, but often this scholarship is part of studies focused mostly on other topics and therefore does not show in

diversity-in-lehre-und-studium/diversity-themen-in-der-lehre/), Munich (https://www.lmu.de/de/die-lmu/-arbeiten-an-der-lmu/zusaetzliche-angebote/diversity/index.html), Bonn (https://www.gleichstellung.uni-bonn.de/de/universitaetskultur/gender-diversityvorlesungsverzeichnis) or Heidelberg (https://www.uni-heidelberg.de/diversity/genderlehre.html).

25 Universität Münster, *Lehrkraft für besondere Aufgaben*, January 18, 2023.

26 "Lehrtätigkeit im Bereich Diversität (u.a. Kultur, Religion, Weltanschauung, ethnische oder soziale Herkunft, Geschlecht, Alter, Behinderung) als gesellschaftliches Phänomen sowie als geschichtswissenschaftliches Schlüsselkonzept und Forschungsfeld." Quote from the advertisement as in note 25.

27 Some of these aspects are also touched upon by the papers in this special issue. Gender, age, and disability are not at the core of the case studies, but they are discussed to a certain degree. But these aspects certainly have been studied and are studied for the Middle Ages. See, for example Neumann, *Old Age before Modernity*; McDonagh et al., *Intellectual Disability*; McNabb, *Medieval Disability Sourcebook*; Nolte et al., *Dis/ability history der Vormoderne*.

the databases if one considers only the titles of publications. Examples include studies focused on the crusaders or on pluri-religious cultural contact zones.[28]

What, however, do authors mean when they use the label diversity for their publications? Diversity is often used as a synonym for "variety" or "plurality," and vice versa.[29] These terms are not quite the same in English and German, but they have clear overlaps. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary describes diversity as "the condition of having or being composed of differing elements (especially the inclusion of people of different races, cultures, etc. in a group or organization)."[30] Plurality is defined as "a) the state of being plural, b) the state of being numerous, c) a large number or quantity,"[31] while variety is "the quality or state of having different forms or types."[32] While we cannot discuss the manifold studies on plurality in the Middle Ages here,[33] we would like to suggest the use of diversity as an analytical tool for Medieval Studies. This is not a political agenda that seeks to highlight or promote diversity in history. Rather, compared to terms such as plurality and variety, diversity as a concept seems to offer the clearest focus on individuals and groups, and this makes it an attractive concept for the study of social groups and their structures and forms of identity.

Diversity as an Analytical Tool for Medieval Studies? Conceptual and Terminological Suggestions

Accordingly, the levels of meaning and areas of application of this term vary considerably. Diversity is often used to describe very different areas, ideas, and social practices. Cultural scientist Margit E. Kaufmann even characterizes diversity as a "tense dispositive of the Zeitgeist."[34] According to Kaufmann, the widespread use of the term diversity can be understood as a reaction to tensions within Western societies. Cultural anthropologist Steven Vertovec even states that our time is not necessarily "characterized by a higher degree of social

28 See, for example: Echevarría et al., *Religious Plurality*; Baumann et al., *Religion – Migration – Integration*.

29 On this methodological problem, see Strack and Knödler, "Einleitung," 8–16 and (for a diachrone perspective) Wiese, "Religiöse Positionierung."

30 Merriam-Webster, "Diversity."

31 Merriam-Webster, "Plurality."

32 Merriam-Webster, "Variety."

33 See, for example, Ehrich and Oberste, *Pluralität – Konkurrenz – Konflikt,* and Borgolte, "Mittelalterwissenschaft."

34 Kaufmann, "Mind the Gaps."

difference than earlier times, but […] discourses about diversity are ubiquitous in the contemporary era."[35]

From a historical perspective, on the other hand, Thomas Bauer, professor of Islamic and Arabic Studies, recently noted a significant loss of diversity and ambiguity in modern times under the catchphrase of the "disambiguation of the world" ("Vereindeutigung der Welt"). Bauer suspects that this development is a trait of modernity, which is characterized by a trend toward the annihilation of diversity and the rejection of ambiguity. In contrast, Bauer attests to the exemplary character (from the perspective of diversity) of pre-modern societies, because they were "tolerant of ambiguity" ("ambiguitätstolerant") and thus well versed in modes of dealing with social, cultural, and religious differences. In contrast to countries in Africa, the Near East, or Asia, which he contends offer examples of "real multiculturalism" ("wirkliche Multikulturalität"), Bauer considers pre-modern Europe monocultural due to the homogenizing effect of Christianity: "In the pre-modern era, no continent was as religiously and culturally uniform as Europe."[36]

A medieval monarch like Sigismund of Luxembourg or his contemporary observers like Philip Diversi and Isidore of Kiev would probably have been surprised by this assessment. After all, Sigismund ruled and influenced large parts of Europe. Sigismund was always confronted with diverse day-to-day political disputes, different groups, differing concepts of belonging, and a differentiation of participatory structures, whether these differences were consequences of the "Great Western Schism," the war against the Hussites, debates concerning the power of disposition in his kingdoms, efforts to unify Christendom, or defense measures against the Ottomans.

But do we need the concept of diversity for research on Sigismund and his time? Does the study of historical constellations through the prism of diversity really yield new or different findings? Or is diversity just a buzzword synonymous with variety, plurality, or multiculturalism? And does the term, which is used today primarily in reference to race, class, and gender, possibly direct our gaze away from forms of alterity in medieval societies? The aim of this special issue is not to impose modern notions of diversity on medieval societies. Nevertheless,

35 "Wir leben im Zeitalter der Diversität. Das heißt nicht unbedingt, dass die Gegenwart durch ein höheres Maß an sozialen Unterschieden gekennzeichnet ist als frühere Zeiten, sondern dass Diskurse über Diversität in der heutigen Zeit allgegenwärtig sind." Vertovec, *Diversität*, 21. See also Vertovec, *Superdiversity*.
36 "In der Vormoderne war kein Kontinent religiös und auch kulturell so einheitlich wie Europa." Bauer, *Die Vereindeutigung der Welt*, 10.

it seems that a term that is primarily used with political and social connotations and implications has great potential for academic discussions, less as an empirical than as an analytical category.

At the heart of diversity lie "different conceptions of social difference." It is thus a relational concept which highlights differences in terms of social categories and can be applied to relational structures within a social space. Consequently, as Steven Vertovec suggests, an important basic assumption is "the recognition of social difference,"[37] regardless of which aspects are brought into focus. This is also where Moritz Florin, Victoria Gutsche, and Natalie Krentz started in 2018 when they made the first systematic attempt to make diversity applicable to historical case studies. They understand diversity as a "system of differentiations"[38] that could be pronounced and asserted differently depending on historical constellations. First, a broad reservoir of categories of difference is to be assumed (e.g. religion, language, gender, social position, etc.), which can become visible and effective in different ways. Then, we must ask for forms of dealing with these social differences. In addition to the marking of otherness, the resulting options for perception and action are crucial. These include both observable positioning by means of clothing, symbolic external presentation, and use of language or religious practice and discursive positioning within a social hierarchy.[39]

Depending on the context, differentiated categories can lead to social inequalities, disparate distribution of resources, and different opportunities for participation. They can but do not necessarily have to contribute to the consolidation of social hierarchies. At the same time, the categories that are used to define and legitimize differences are variable in terms of their content or use, and thus the practices and semantics of differentiation are similarly variable. Categories of difference can be used to legitimize or negate claims to resources or to create new normative orders.[40]

Diversity as a historical category of analysis thus does not serve as a means of tracing static forms of inclusion or exclusion.[41] Rather, according to our hypothesis, it can further more nuanced contextualization of political, social,

37 "Verschiedene Vorstellungen von sozialer Differenz" and "die Anerkennung sozialer Differenz": Vertovec, *Diversität*, quotes 21 and 23.

38 "System von Differenzierungen": Florin et al., *Diversity – Gender –Intersektionalität*, 9.

39 See also Hirschauer, "Telling People Apart."

40 Burkhardt, "Frictions and Fictions."

41 There are various profound studies on mechanisms of inclusion/exclusion in the Middle Ages. We refer only to some works, without any claim of exhaustiveness: Goetz and Wood, *Otherness*; Folin

cultural, and religious differences and hierarchies historically in their relevance to processes of social negotiation and also reveal semantic or narrative changes in the ways in which these differences were reified, challenged, or exploited.[42] Whether "plurality" ("Vielfalt") is an adequate synonym for diversity or whether, as in recent migration research, terms such as "multiplicity" ("Vielheit")[43] or alternatives are more appropriate remains a matter for discussion.

The papers in this special issue consider which sources reveal information about social differences and hierarchies. They thereby show that a variety of sources and phenomena can provide knowledge about forms of social differentiation. One can easily state that it is possible to study diversity in the Middle Ages and that this study of diversity is fruitful. However, not everything we can study has to be studied or has the same importance. Without any doubt, the concept of diversity offers new perspectives on social groups and phenomena that have not been given the attention they deserve. At the same time, we need to discuss whether and how the modern concept of diversity is applicable to the Middle Ages. The easy answer would be yes, it is applicable, but we have to be cautious and precise. It is important to understand the study of diversity not solely as analysis of markers of difference, such as race, class, and gender, but also as the study of concepts, definitions, and uses of variety, understanding contemporary assessments of such variety and its social functions and contexts.

Baring this in mind and based on the papers of the conference and the articles in this special issue, we would like to highlight four aspects that struck us as good reference points to show why it is important to focus on diversity as a concept. First, when applying the concept of diversity, many case studies also found notions of unity and uniformity. These concepts are certainly essential to any understanding of groups and societies, and thus they are of great importance to the field of medieval studies. In some cases, unity and uniformity seem to be opposed to social differentiations. In other cases, these differentiations can be part of unity. Thus, as an analytical tool, diversity can further a more nuanced understanding of how various forms of unity were understood and how they functioned.[44]

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and Musarra, *Cultures and Practices*; Tolan, *Expulsion and Diaspora*; Eisenbeiß and Saurma-Jeltsch, *Images of Otherness*; Reichlin, "Ästhetik der Inklusion"; Borgolte and Dücker et al., *Integration und Desintegration*.

42 Louthan et al., *Diversity and Dissent*.

43 Terkessidis, "Komplexität und Vielheit."

44 See, for example, Murray, "From Jerusalem to Mexico", and Sère, *L'invention de l'Église*.

Second, differences and hierarchies typically can be found in processes of inclusion and exclusion used by self-fashioning social groups. This becomes visible in the cases of numerous religious groups and subgroups but also in uses of language (understood broadly also as discursive styles), forms of symbolic expression, and communication strategies.[45] At the same time, the papers discuss how social groups were imagined, for instance in the case of individual cities, knights, the nobility, and possibly even heretics.[46] If we analyze these constellations through the prism of diversity (within a realm or outside it), we can arrive at a richer grasp of how these groups were constructed and how they functioned.[47]

Third, we can ask whether positive and negative conceptions of diversity can be handled analytically the same way. Negative and positive connotations of diversity certainly are closely linked to processes of inclusion and exclusion and can even be used as tools in these processes. As a term, diversity has a number of meanings, ranging from separateness and the condition of being different to a difference of opinion. And scenarios of diversity are conceived in multiple ways. If possible, in our analysis we should make clear how diversity was assessed at the time in its specific context to preclude misconceptions by modern readers.[48]

And last, what role do differences and imaginations play in learning and imitating in art and scholarship, in connecting people, and in establishing opportunities for cultural exchange? Contact zones (understood both spatially and socially) seem to be especially fruitful for these questions.[49] These contact zones can include regions such as the Adriatic or the Mediterranean,[50] assemblies such as councils or parliaments,[51] and cities and even courts.[52] We can study both the intellectual works and artifacts produced in these milieus and contact zones and we can focus on individual people and their motives and interests.

45 On new forms of communication and publishing in the Late Middle Ages, see Schweitzer-Martin, *Kooperation und Innovation*; Brockstieger and Schweitzer-Martin, *Between Manuscript and Print*.

46 Pleszczyński et al., *Imagined communities*; Stouraitis, *War and Collective Identities*; Hovden et al., *Meanings of Community*.

47 Burkhardt, "Argumentative Uses"; see Hübner, "Impossible Propaganda" and Adde, "League of Lords."

48 On the question of medieval "alterity," see Jaspert, "The Mediterranean Other"; Srodecki, "Antemurale-based Frontier Identities," and the discussions in Braun, *Wie anders war das Mittelalter*.

49 See, for example, Mersch and Ritzerfeld, *Lateinisch-griechisch-arabische Begegnungen*.

50 Jaspert and Kodlitz, *Entre mers – Outre-mer;* Jaspert, "Iberian Frontiers Revisited"; Ehrich and Oberste, *Städtische Räume*.

51 Burkhardt, "Assemblies Holy Roman Empire."

52 See, for example, Opacic, *Prague and Bohemia*; Schlotheuber and Seibert, *Böhmen und das Deutsche Reich*.

These four spotlights highlight only some aspects and debates of this special issue. In many cases, the focus on diversity puts social groups, social practices, social discourses, and forms of identity building or interactions with these forms of identity into focus. This seems to be a promising way of broadening our perspective on the period of Sigismund of Luxembourg beyond the emperor and the nobility surrounding him. Analyzing modes of differentiation in the Middle Ages thus means applying the analytical category of diversity, which furthers a more nuanced understanding of social groups, their practices, and how they interacted with and conceived of one another.

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Hungarian Historical Review 13, no. 2 (2024): 172–194

Unitas and *Diversitas:* Sigismund's Empire as a Model of Late Medieval Rulership

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This article analyzes the emperorship of Sigismund (1368–1437) as a particular configuration of rule in the fifteenth century. Research on the medieval Holy Roman Empire in the Latin West has traditionally focused on the great emperors from the ninth century to the thirteenth. In contrast, imperial coronations and imperial rule in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries have received much less attention. The article first presents the structural features of the Holy Roman Empire and then focuses on the significant changes to this structure in the late Middle Ages. Discontinuities made imperial rule the exception rather than the rule. Long intervals between imperial coronations always required reinventions of traditions, which led to situational negotiations among popes, authorized cardinals, and emperors. In 1433, Sigismund was the first emperor since 1220 to receive his coronation from the pope himself in Rome. The article makes it clear that Sigismund was a master in the creation of new rituals and symbols. During his reign, the imagery of the empire expanded significantly. Alongside unity *(unitas)* came diversity *(diversitas)*. The article shows how differently the imperial coronation of 1433 was perceived and narrated by contemporaries in Italy and Germany.

Keywords: Holy Roman Empire, emperorship in the late Middle Ages, coronation, Emperor Sigismund, Roman popes, perceptions of power

Through his imperial coronation on May 31, 1433, Sigismund (1410–1437) aligned himself with the long-established traditions of papal elevation ceremonies in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.[1] In the Middle Ages, the concept of Latin emperorship elevated kingship to a heightened status and gave it a unique and universal dignity. This was deeply rooted in salvation history, yet it did not necessarily translate to a practical increase in power. This article outlines the overarching framework encompassing the images, assertions, and actualities of emperorship in the late Middle Ages.[2] It then delves into Sigismund's emperorship, exploring four lines of inquiry: (1) the novel notions of parallels between Roman emperorship and kingship in the context of Sigismund's dual kingship in 1410–11; (2) the reasons

1 Hoensch, *Sigismund*; Pauly, *Sigismund*; Schlotheuber, "Sigismund."

2 Scales, *Shaping*; Jones et al., "World of Empires"; Schneidmüller, "Kaiser sein."

DOI 10.38145/2024.2.172

behind the absence of Sigismund's imperial coronation during the Council of Constance despite his role as a patron of the Holy Roman Church; (3) the question as to whether the Roman king truly needed a ceremonial elevation to emperor in Rome; and (4) the motivations behind the late achievement of Sigismund's imperial coronation. Was it merely a matter of preference or was it a belated pursuit of a missed opportunity?

The essay begins with an introduction of depictions of an emperor, laying the groundwork for a comprehensive analysis of sources that have been acknowledged but not yet systematically contextualized. Sigismund emerges as a ruler around whom there was a rich array of imagery and who was skilled in grand presentations and a creator of rituals and symbols of authority. The work on monuments of German kings and emperors by Schramm and Fillitz fail to capture this abundance.[3] Only the exhibitions in 2006 in Budapest and Luxembourg made an earnest attempt to amass these images.[4] Claudia Märtl has recently highlighted the disparity in research attention to emperorship between the early and high Middle Ages compared to the fifteenth century, which has led to an uneven focus on written and visual sources.[5]

Proceeding with a focus on Emperor Sigismund, the essay first offers three illustrative examples. Firstly, "the man with the fur cap," a parchment on wood housed in the Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna, garners attention for its quality and uniqueness. Its creation is dated to around 1420 or 1436–37.[6] Multiple representations of Sigismund wearing a fur cap suggest its significance to the king and emperor. The depiction reveals a diadem atop the fur cap and the opulence of his robe.

Secondly, the image of Sigismund's Roman imperial coronation by Pope Eugene IV (1431–1447) in 1433 endures visually. Bronze reliefs by Filarete, commissioned by Eugene between 1433 and 1445, adorn the central portal of the new St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. These reliefs portray significant scenes, including Sigismund's coronation and his journey with the pope to the Ponte Sant'Angelo. The images symbolize the submission of the Christian emperor to the authority of the pope.[7]

3 Schramm and Fillitz, *Denkmale*, 75–77.

4 Takács, *Sigismundus*, 122–67. Cf. Kéry, *Sigismund.*

5 Märtl, "Kaisertum und Italien," 328–35.

6 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sigismund,_Holy_Roman_Emperor#/media/File:Pisanello_024b.jpg. Accessed March 17, 2024. Cf. Takács, *Sigismundus*, 153–54.

7 https://www.wga.hu/html_m/f/filarete/stpete7.html. Accessed March 17, 2024. Cf. Takács, *Sigismundus*, 460–61.

A third image is sketched in the words of the Mainz merchant Eberhard Windeck. He wrote his "Book of Emperor Sigismund" soon after Sigismund's death. It has survived in several text manuscripts and in two illuminated manuscripts. Windeck tells a scandalous story denouncing the negligent treatment of the Germans at the Roman Curia. It is said that Sigismund's imperial crown was placed crookedly on his head during the coronation: "So the emperor knelt before the pope. Then the pope lifted his right foot and placed the crown straight on the emperor's head, as is right and customary." In his narrative of the presentation of the sword, Windeck amplified the scandal of the "foot-crowning." Allegedly, during the reading of the Gospels, the pope gave the emperor the bare sword "with the top to his hand. The emperor's marshal reversed it and placed it correctly in the emperor's hand. And then the emperor finished singing the gospel."[8] The narrative presentation of this double affront was intended to scandalize and provoke German sentiment against the Curia. This tale, while probably not historically accurate, provides insight into the contemporary perspective on imperial coronations.

These images present emperorship characterized by humility and humiliation. Eberhard Windeck's chronicle defines Sigismund as the "Light of the World," emphasizing his role as both Roman king and emperor.[9] In his account of the emperor's death, Sigismund's flair for drama in his presentation of himself is evident, as he dons ecclesiastical vestments and the imperial crown before passing. Windeck describes Sigismund's desire for his corpse to put on display for days to show that the ruler of the world had died.[10]

The juxtaposition of the titles "Light of the world" and "Lord of the world" raises questions about the essence of emperorship in the fifteenth century. This assertion of universal primacy contrasts with the submissiveness Sigismund displayed before the pope. These observations prompt an exploration of the evolving nature of late medieval emperorship in Latin Christianity, leading back to a deeper examination of Sigismund's role as emperor.

8 Windeck, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, 343–44. Cf. Bojcov, "Kaiser"; Schneider, *Windeck*.

9 *Römscher kunig und keiser,* [von] *dem man sprach lux mundi, das ist ein liecht der werlt*. Windeck, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, 1–2.

10 *Also saß er uf eim stuole und verschiet. also soltu nü merken, waz er in befalch, e er starp: wanne er sturbe, so solt man in ston lossen zwen oder drige tage, daz alle menglichen sehen sollten, das aller der welt herre dot und gestorben were.* Windeck, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, 447.

Emperorship as a Figure of Order

Emperorship represented an elevated form of kingship, but what contributed to this elevation? Who played a role in shaping it? Who embraced it? It is worth examining the foundational principles of emperorship within the Holy Roman Empire.[11] Below, I present nine key aspects in a simplified breakdown.[12]

(1) Emperorship drew its inspiration from ancient models of order. It embodied both a sense of exceptional universality and the ability to accept external rulers, without making this apparent contradiction a central challenge. The concept of earthly superiority was developed to boost the legitimacy and authority of the emperor, although this concept did not necessarily extend beyond the empire's borders. A strict hierarchical structure was not theoretically established. The distinction between higher-level emperorship and subordinate kingship was context-dependent and pragmatic. An early medieval doctrinal text offered the following formulation: "King is he who rules over one people or more. Emperor is he who rules over the whole world or takes precedence in it."[13] While some sources did describe emperorship as dominion over the entire world, these memorable phrases did not align with the reality of diverse rule on earth. Despite being perceived as universal during the Latin Middle Ages, emperorship functioned within the plurality of monarchies.

(2) The restoration of the Roman Empire in the West by Charlemagne in 800 endowed the notion of emperorship of the Latin Middle Ages with a new dimension. After initial experimentation with rituals in the early nineth century, emperorship formed a liturgical partnership with the papacy as the second universal authority that claimed unique dominion on Earth. The "ordines" of crowning and anointing in St. Peter's Basilica integrated the spiritual agency of the popes and the religious devotion of the emperors. The historical primacy of the Roman Empire, established in ancient times, shifted to emphasize collective responsibility for Latin Christianity. This conferred a sacred grandeur and distinct Christian charisma on the emperorship, rooted in its foundation at the tomb of Peter, prince of the apostles. This evolved into the idea that Augustus' empire preceded the Christian church and laid the groundwork for the Savior's birth. However, imbuing secular rule with spiritual significance led to functional

11 Sulovsky, "Concept"; Sulovsky, *Making*.

12 For the following paragraphs cf. Schneidmüller, *Kaiser des Mittelalters*, 10–15; Schneidmüller, "Kaiser, Kaisertum."

13 *Super totum mundum aut qui precellit in eo*. Beyerle, "Schulheft," 7.

dependencies and personal considerations, preventing a comprehensive political embodiment of imperial dignity throughout the Middle Ages. This complexity should not be seen as a missed opportunity of the imperial state or as capitulation to papal precedence, as once argued by German scholarship. On a pragmatic level, the Frankish and later East Frankish kings' patronage of the Holy Roman Church offered a significant opportunity for participation in the imperial traditions of the ancient Mediterranean world.

(3) The unity of the Mediterranean region as a whole was disrupted in the seventh century. First, the Arab expansion and the formation of the Muslim empire fractured this unity. Subsequently, in the eighth century, the Franks gained political ascendancy in the West. This prompted the Roman papacy to shift its allegiance from Constantinople to rulers in Gaul and Italy, resulting in the coexistence of two Roman and Christian empires. Thus, the once unified ancient world empire gave way to three separate empires. From Charlemagne's re-establishment of the western *imperium Romanum* in 800 until the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453, Christendom navigated the presence or contestation of two Christian emperors. During Sigismund's reign, genuine attempts were made to reconcile Eastern and Western Christianities, yet the competition between Christian and Muslim universal claims persisted beyond the Middle Ages. Between 800 and the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806, the emperorship of Frankish, East Frankish, and German kings played a significant role in shaping the history of Latin Europe. Additionally, variations of imperial concepts emerged at times in regions such as the British Isles, Iberian Peninsula, and France.

(4) The notion of the shared responsibilities of emperors and popes encountered challenges during the Investiture Controversy, during which the popes asserted their authority more forcefully than the emperors. This period marked the onset of conflicts over primacy and the nature of their mutual relationship. These disputes often revolved around ritual actions during personal encounters, with both pope and emperor demanding obedience from each other.

(5) Around the year 1200, Pope Innocent III (1198–1216) heightened the papal claim to examine the eligibility and qualification of the future Roman kings. This pretense was grounded in the earlier papal transfers of the emperorship from the Greeks to the Franks and then to the Germans *(translatio imperii)*. According to Innocent III, this historical transfer granted the popes authority over the empire's destiny from its inception. Since only the Roman king would later be crowned as the Roman emperor by the pope, it was deemed essential for

the pope to assess the king's suitability at the time of election. While the Roman kings never fully acknowledged this approbation claim, they had to contend with it consistently. In 1338, the prince electors in the "Rhenser Weistum" and Emperor Louis IV (1314–1347) in the "Licet iuris" imperial law codified their interpretations of the election of kings and emperorship. According to this perspective, a person elected by a majority of electors would automatically become a Roman king without requiring papal approval. Going one step further, Emperor Louis IV even linked the Roman emperorship directly to the electors' election. This pragmatic understanding, which dispensed with the papal coronation, gained acceptance in the sixteenth century. Until that point, a few more emperors negotiated situational compromises during their coronations. Charles IV, Sigismund, and Frederick III each made adjustments during their respective coronations to accommodate the shifting dynamics of their time.

(6) The most significant impact of emperorship on Latin Europe emerged indirectly. The very notion of universality and supremacy fostered a heightened sense of dignity and independence among neighboring realms. In personal encounters, the primacy of the empire was acknowledged only as a matter of ceremony, if at all. Within their own domains, rulers like the French king perceived no higher authority than themselves. This perspective was shared by Roman popes, as well as legal scholars in Italy and France. This political parity between emperor and king laid the groundwork for the principles of state sovereignty that took shape in the sixteenth century, influencing the global political landscape of the time. Consequently, the diverse characteristics of different realms took precedence over the concept of imperial unity.[14]

(7) A chronological overview reveals a lack of consistent theoretical continuity in the concepts of empire and imperial ideals during the Latin Middle Ages. Despite established "ordines" for imperial coronations, the institution of emperorship required reinvention and redefinition with each succession. The temporal disparity between kings' elections north of the Alps and their subsequent papal coronations in Rome hindered any continuous imperial narrative. Between 800, the year of Charlemagne's coronation, and 1519, when Maximilian I passed away, 30 emperors ruled in Latin Christianity. For 413 of these 720 years, a Roman emperor ruled. After Otto the Great revived the Roman emperorship in 962 and linked it to the East Frankish or German kingship, his eight successors held the title of emperor in continuity until 1137. In contrast, from 1138 to 1519, most

14 Schneidmüller, "Imperium."

Roman kings did not proceed to the Roman imperial coronation. Within the 300 late medieval years spanning Frederick II's imperial coronation in 1220 to Maximilian I's death in 1519, periods of active emperorship were exceptions rather than the norm. Between Frederick II's coronation in 1220 and the subsequent coronation in Rome in 1312 of Henry VII, 92 years passed without an imperial coronation. Henry VII's elevation marked the next imperial coronation, achieved without the participation of the reigning pope based in Avignon at the time. Authorized cardinals conducted the coronation of two Luxembourg dynasty rulers, Henry VII in 1312 and Charles IV in 1355. The coronation of Louis IV from the Wittelsbach dynasty in 1328 was carried out by opposing bishops or an antipope. This increasing temporal and personal detachment led to a divergence between the election of the Roman king and the emperorship in the fourteenth century. Sigismund, in 1433, became the first emperor since Frederick II in 1220 to receive his imperial crown from a legitimate pope, a span of 213 years. This period encompassed 55 years since the passing of Sigismund's father, Charles IV, in 1378. Thus, the concept of imperial continuity or living memory is not applicable. After Sigismund, Frederick III from the Habsburg dynasty was the final emperor to be crowned at the Roman apostle's tomb in 1452. Subsequent rulers often retained the title "Elected Roman Emperor" without undergoing a papal coronation. Only one more instance of the liturgical collaboration between pope and emperor occurred for Charles V in Bologna in 1530. The three-century span from 1220 to 1519 underscores that a reigning emperor was the exception rather than the rule. While the royal throne in the Roman-German Empire was rarely vacant, and sometimes multiple contenders vied for the crown, there were 118 years of emperorship contrasted with 181 years without an emperor. The lengthy reigns of Frederick II (30 years) and Frederick III (41 years) accounted for 71 of those 118 years. The remaining four emperors – Henry VII, Louis IV, Charles IV, and Sigismund – reigned for periods ranging from one to 23 years.

(8) While contemporary encomiums praised the emperor as "Lord of the World," rulers themselves were cautious when making assertions about their global primacy or dominion over the entire world. The chancellery and court focused primarily on the emperor's protective role over the Holy Roman Church and Christianity. Few exceptions saw imperial claims encroach upon neighboring kingdoms. Notably, in 1240, Emperor Frederick II and the pope engaged in heightened disputes that briefly rose to the level of claims to imperial supremacy. Even then, the Hohenstaufen chancellery made clear distinctions between

recipients within the Holy Roman Empire and other kings. A circular letter sent in 1240 to King Henry III of England requested solidarity, while a similar version for the Archbishop of Trier invoked the Germanic peoples' defense of the empire and world dominion.[15] This was a critical moment of imperial superiority propaganda. However, instances of such explicit claims diminished in the subsequent years. During Henry VII's reign, particularly on the day of his imperial coronation in 1312, he disseminated circular letters throughout the Latin Christian world, conveying his vision of a universal monarchy on Earth.[16] This rhetoric surprised both his contemporaries and later historians, with its emphasis on his unique authority. Malte Heidemann's analysis of these texts and their reception demonstrated how exceptional these expectations of universal subjugation under his rule were. The reactions to this rhetoric were equally telling: the French king impetuously defended the independence of France, while the king of Naples vehemently rejected any notion of *imperium* or *unitas*.[17] It is significant that Henry VII's grandson Charles IV and his great-grandson Sigismund chose to distance themselves from their ancestor's claim to world dominion. In his election proclamations in 1433, Sigismund expressed joy at being raised to the rank of emperor of the Romans, without delving into sweeping claims.

(9) While the emperors themselves exercised restraint in their assertions, fifteenth-century scholars exhibited a greater degree of ambition. They articulated imperial hopes and claims, deriving these visions from the continuation of the *imperium Romanum* and its role in Christian salvation history. Soon after Sigismund's passing, the "Reformation of Emperor Sigismund" emerged as a manifesto for empire reform. In this document, Sigismund only serves as a precursor to the prophesied future peace emperor, *Friderich von Lantnewen*. This imagined emperor would usher in an era of peace and rule as a priest-king in the tradition of the Old Testament figure Melchizedek, thereby fulfilling God's order on Earth. This harmonization of divine and worldly realms would be symbolized by the eagle on a golden background, representing the empire and God.[18] Nine years after Sigismund's death, Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini wrote a letter to King Frederick III (1440–1493) exploring the origins and authority of the *imperium Romanum*. This letter positioned the empire as a divine creation, with the author dissociating it from any dualism with the papacy. Aeneas Silvius then emphasized

15 Weiland, *Monumenta*, 312.

16 Schwalm, *Monumenta,* 801–7.

17 Heidemann, *Heinrich VII.*

18 Koller, *Reformation*, 332–42.

the empire's specific political mission for the present and future. The core ideas of this letter revolved around the necessity of monarchy to curb individual excesses and ensure peace. This political unity could only be realized under a unique ruler, appointed by God, who could bring about universal peace *(pax universalis)*.[19] The *imperium Romanum*, from this perspective, was God's creation, initially ruled by kings or magistrates and later by an emperor. The empire's legitimacy stemmed from both the power of nature and the recognition of Jesus Christ, born during the reign of Emperor Augustus. Christ's acknowledgment of the *imperium* solidified its status as a temporal power, coexisting alongside the papacy as two distinct powers. This notion surfaced in humanist discussions about Sigismund's coronation as well. Some even suggested that the existence of the *imperium Romanum* would prevent the advent of the Antichrist. The Roman people, as the originators of the empire and world monarchy *(monarchia orbis)*, proclaimed Charlemagne as Patricius and later as Augustus. This lineage extended to the Teutons and culminated in Frederick III. To King Frederick III, Aeneas proclaimed the highest earthly authority, emphasizing his role as the guardian of secular concern.[20] Aeneas's words, while suggestive and subject to qualification, highlighted the evolving perceptions of imperialism in the mid-fifteenth century.

Profiles of Sigismund's Empire

For an extended period, Sigismund's tenure as emperor remained a lesser explored topic among medievalists. This could be attributed to waning interest in late medieval emperorship compared to earlier periods, coupled with Sigismund's relatively belated ascendancy to imperial status, which lasted only four years. During his lengthy term as Roman king from 1410–11 to 1433, an imperial coronation could have followed the Council of Constance's conclusion in 1417–18. Such an event was indeed on the horizon and had been contemplated by the court. However, Sigismund's engagement with the ill-fated Council of Basel and the ultimate failure of the conciliar approach cast a shadow over the emperorship of the last of the Luxembourger emperors.

Hönsch's comprehensive biography adeptly amalgamated the components of imperial action. However, the focus here is more pointedly directed towards

19 Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, *De ortu*, 58–59. English translation: Izbicki and Nederman, *Three Tracts*, 95–112.

20 Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, *De ortu*, 60–69.

the councils and imperial reform.[21] Regarding Sigismund's imperial coronation, Hermann Herre's compilation found in the volume of the Reichstag records[22] held sway for an extended period. Nonetheless, the attempt to reconstruct the reality of the day of Pentecost 1433, as undertaken there, was hampered by the favored analysis of the late medieval coronation ordo. We do not know for certain whether this text was indeed utilized for the imperial coronation. The epistolary and historiographical sources do not confirm this with any conclusiveness.

Only recently have the Italian campaign and imperial coronation of Sigismund garnered the requisite scrutiny in in-depth examinations by Péter Kovács[23] and Veronika Proske.[24] Kovács and Proske dispel the notion of a seemingly unequivocal reality of the event through successful individual analyses of the numerous and highly diverse written, visual, and musical sources. These documents unveil a vibrant panorama or a polyphonic symphony, thus providing a varied foundation for an understanding of the events of 1431 to 1433. In contrast, Duncan Hardy's essay on Sigismund's emperorship is notably concise.[25]

In six points, I explore the theme of "emperorship as a figure of order" for Sigismund. In doing so, I must extend my temporal scope beyond the recently extensively researched final six years of Sigismund's life.

(1) Responsibility and Imperial Kingship: In the 1390s, as king of Hungary, Sigismund called upon the Christian community to organize defenses against the Ottomans. The Hungarian army, however, joined by crusaders mainly from Burgundy, suffered a crushing defeat at Nicopolis in 1396. Sigismund narrowly escaped capture. He upheld his commitment to the crusade until the end of his life. Even in his last year, while fatally ill, he supposedly expressed his intention not to pass away before embarking on a crusade to the Holy Land.[26] Following his election and subsequent establishment as Roman king in 1410–1411, Sigismund renewed his dedication to Latin Christianity. Despite limited means, he engaged with personal charisma in preparing for the Council of Constance. Martin Kintzinger and other researchers have meticulously studied Sigismund's extensive travels in Western Europe, as well as his active involvement in the Council.[27] Until 1414, Sigismund effectively pursued the Roman king's responsibility to

21 Hoensch, *Sigismund*, 371–99.

22 Herre, *Reichstagsakten*, 701–848.

23 Kovács, "Coronation"; Kovács, *König Sigismund.*

24 Proske, *Romzug*; Proske, *"Pro duobus."*

25 Hardy, "Emperorship."

26 Beckmann, *Reichstagsakten*, 259–64, cit. 263.

27 Kintzinger, *Westbindungen.*

reform the Holy Roman Church. He consistently motivated monarchs, nobles, and clergy from different regions of Latin Christianity to participate in the Council. Rarely in the late Middle Ages was the will of a Roman king asserted so forcefully beyond his imperial borders. Sigismund subsequently augmented his Hungarian kingship with the Roman kingship and later the Roman emperorship. This dominion over multiple realms established a composite and even imperial kingship. The official title emphasized the superior authority of the Roman king and emperor preceding the Hungarian royal title, symbolizing kingship over various realms. His documents' *intitulationes*, following the dignity of Roman king or emperor (Latin with plural genitive: *rex / imperator Romanorum*), presented his kingship over Hungary, Dalmatia, and Croatia, followed by "etc." (in the singular genitive for the names of countries). After Sigismund had attained the Bohemian kingship, the chancery appended the kingship of Bohemia following Hungary and preceding Dalmatia and Croatia. Sigismund's second significant Hungarian seal specified the scope of his kingship as Hungary, Dalmatia, Croatia, Bosnia with Herzegovina (Latin: *Rama*), Serbia, Galicia, Volhynia (Latin: *Lodomeria*), Cumania, and Bulgaria.[28]

(2) Familial Bonds: Sigismund's ascent to the Hungarian throne and his entry into the politics of the Holy Roman Empire were initially shaped by family negotiations and considerations concerning his elder half-brother Wenceslas and his nephews Jobst and Prokop. Wenceslas, as the heir to Emperor Charles IV's throne, had assumed kingship over both the Holy Roman Empire and Bohemia. Even after having been deposed as Roman king by the prince electors in 1400, he continued to assert his claim to the Roman kingship. From Sigismund's election as Roman king in 1410 until Wenceslas' death in 1419, this resulted in an unprecedented and delicate duality. Sigismund demonstrated a flexible disposition, adhering to or diverging from binding agreements depending on circumstances. Early agreements between Wenceslas and Sigismund, opposing King Ruprecht, attest to this. In 1402, as king of Hungary and Vicar General of the Roman Empire, Sigismund informed Giangaleazzo Visconti of the settlement among the four Luxembourg princes and the impending campaign in Italy, wherein Wenceslas would participate as *rex Romanorum*.[29] The division of the Roman emperorship and Roman kingship was repeatedly contemplated within the Luxembourg family. Initially, in 1410, between Wenceslas and Jobst,[30]

28 Kondor, "Two Crowns."

29 Weizsäcker, *Reichstagsakten*, 190–92.

30 Leuschner, "Wahlpolitik," 552; Hoensch, *Sigismund*, 152.

and subsequently in 1411, between Wenceslas and Sigismund. While distinctions between father and son existed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (such as between Emperor Frederick II and King Henry (VII) and between Emperor Charles IV and King Wenceslas), the functional partition among brothers was novel. The plan was for Wenceslas to retain the Roman imperial dignity, the imperial regalia, and his kingship over Bohemia. Sigismund upheld his promise not to seek the imperial crown during Wenceslas' lifetime.[31] Noteworthy was the agreed separation of the Roman emperorship and Roman kingship. This evolution would have rendered the imperial dignity a mere ornamental distinction for a Bohemian king, lacking imperial agency within the empire and Christianity.

(3) *Defensor et protector*: Sigismund asserted this agency as Roman king. Throughout the preparations for and course of the Council of Constance, he functioned as protector and defender of the Church, as well as of the Council itself. During the Council's rituals, the Roman king presented himself adorned in imperial regalia *(in habitu imperiali)* and seated prominently at the southern crossing pillar of Constance's cathedral. In terms of rank, Sigismund held a position above the nations, though he was de facto limited to the German nation. For the council, he adopted a distinctive visual depiction, wherein a prince aims the tip of a bare sword at the king's head or crown. Werner Paravicini referred to this depiction, observed during the royal Christmas service or princely enfeoffments, as the "Constance gesture."[32] Sigismund embraced a ritual that had been pioneered by his father Charles IV. During the Christmas service, the ruler read the Gospel of Luke's account of Jesus' birth with an unsheathed sword, akin to Augustus, whose decree marked the inception of Christian salvation history.[33] Sigismund's dramatic entrance at the beginning of the Council of Constance was of such significance that he endured considerable hardships during the hastened procession to Constance, and he instructed Pope John (XXIII), present at the event, to await his arrival. Achim Thomas Hack characterized the grand entrance before the Council in the following words: "At the seventh reading during Matins and the first Mass, Sigismund, donning the liturgical attire of a deacon and accompanied by candle bearers, ascended the cathedral pulpit and, with his sword unsheathed, recited the Gospel *Exiit edictum*

31 *Nach dem keiserriche und siner wirdikeite nicht stehen noch werben noch uns der annemen oder underwinden.* Kerler, *Reichstagsakten*, 102–6.

32 Paravicini, "Schwert," 279–304.

33 Heimpel, "Weihnachtsdienst auf den Konzilien," 388–411; Heimpel, "Königlicher Weihnachtsdienst," 131–206.

a Caesare Augusto."[34] Thus, Roman royalty laid the groundwork for the Council to reunify Latin Christianity. While the council did not address all the formidable challenges, the election of Martin V (1417–1431) in 1417 marked the end of the papal schism and a return to the papal office's singular authority. It is perplexing that Martin's return to Rome in 1420 did not lead to Sigismund's elevation as Roman emperor after Sigismund's endorsement by the new pope. While the chancellery was already planning to give the emperor a novel emblematic, the opportunity was ripe after Wenceslas' demise in 1419.

(4) Ritual Dynamics: The previously mentioned "Constance gesture" exemplifies Sigismund's mastery of ritual. His flair for attire and ceremony is evident in various contexts. Yet, Sigismund also fostered the creation of new symbols and signs for the imperial imagery.[35] In 1415, he commissioned a mural fresco in Frankfurt, the place of the royal elections, to depict the new quaternion system.[36] Post the emperor, empire, and prince electors, this fresco integrated dukes, margraves, landgraves, burgraves, counts, nobles, knights, towns, villages, and peasants as representatives of the empire in groups of four. While the rationale behind selecting and combining these 40 members remains enigmatic, this societal hierarchy illustrates a noteworthy innovation. It intertwined the responsibilities of the king and elector, as formulated in the Golden Bull of 1356, with the medieval community of princes, forming an elite action group of the empire. Numerous depictions since the fifteenth century underscore the integrative power of this model, linking its constituents to the emperor and empire's distinctive position within salvation history. Sigismund's influence extended beyond the structure of quaternions. The double-headed eagle with a halo, symbolizing emperorship, also traces back to him. Its significance is evident from an entry in the "Hauskanzleiregistraturbuch." In November 5, 1417, six days prior to Martin V's papal election, the protonotary Johannes Kirchen ordered two imperial majesty seals *(sigilla imperialis majestatis)* from a goldsmith, specifying the double-headed eagle as the seal's image.[37] In Sigismund's imperial seal since 1433, the intricate idea of the double-headed eagle is codified into an enduring iconographic order. On the obverse, Sigismund presents himself

34 Hack, *Empfangszeremoniell*, 567.

35 Kintzinger, "Zeichen," 365–69; Scales, "Illuminated Reich," 73–92.

36 Schubert, "Quaternionen," 1–63; Hoffmann, *Darstellungen*, 53–58.

37 Altmann, *Regesta Imperii*, no. 2662a; Sickel, "Geschichte," 14. Archival Manuscript: Vienna, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, RK Reichsregister F Hauskanzleiregistraturbuch Kaiser Sigismunds, 1417-1418, fol. 72r. Accessed March 17, 2024: https://www.archivinformationssystem.at/bild.aspx?VEID=4089040&DEID=10&SQNZNR=151.

with five coats of arms: the haloed double-headed eagle representing the Holy Roman Empire and the coats of arms of Luxembourg, Bohemia, Hungary, and Upper Hungary (patriarchal cross). The reverse bears only the haloed double eagle, accompanied by a programmatic inscription referencing the eagle of the prophet Ezekiel, symbolizing the sanctity of the *imperium Romanum* and the interweaving of the spiritual and temporal realms. The inscription reads "The eagle of Ezekiel has been sent to the bride from heaven. Higher than the eagle flies no seer and no prophet." *(Aquila Ezechielis sponse missa est de celis. Volat ipsa sine meta, quo nec vates nec propheta evolabit alcius).*[38] Bettina Pferschy-Maleczek delves into the mystical and allegorical dimensions of this symbolism in an extensive article. Based on the vision of Ezekiel (Ezek 1:4–28), the eagle signifies both the fourth gospel and the fourth and final world empire, the *imperium Romanum*.[39]

(5) Union of the two greatest lights: Using these words, the papal secretary Cencio Rustici extolled the liturgical harmony between the pope and the emperor in his celebratory oration during Sigismund's coronation as emperor. As was customary for this genre, the accolades for the new Rome and for Pope Eugene IV as a "celestial man and earthly deity" *(celestis homo et terrenus deus)* resonated with grandeur.[40] With great ceremony, Sigismund, 65 years of age at the time, made his entry into Rome on Ascension Day in 1433 and encountered the pope there. A few days later, the imperial coronation took place in St. Peter's Basilica during Pentecost. The recent works by Kovács and Proske provide detailed accounts from eyewitnesses and distant chroniclers, offering insights into an imperial coronation that shared essential elements with the models of the fourteenth century. Noteworthy is the repeated mention by Gimignano Inghirami, dean of the Sacra Rota and a man who was deeply involved in the ceremony, of the new emperor's struggle with gout. Due to this ailment, Sigismund needed assistance and was provided a small seat near the altar.[41] Why did Sigismund, a Luxembourger, subject himself to over two years of challenging and at times degrading travel through Italy? A little more than a decade earlier, after the successful conclusion of the Council of Constance, he could have celebrated his journey to the Roman tomb of the Apostles as the successful protector of the new elected pope. The motivation to travel to Rome was evidently driven by the changes in the papal office in 1431 and the threat to the established principle of

38 Allgeier, "Adler-Siegel." 37; Bleisteiner, "Doppeladler," 4–52.

39 Pferschy-Maleczek, "Nimbus," 448–50.

40 Cencio Rustici, "Oratio," 157–58. Cf. Proske, *Romzug*, 192–93.

41 Guasti, "Ricordanze," 46–47.

recurring councils of the Roman Church, as outlined in the Constance Council decree "Frequens." The rejection of the Council of Basel by Pope Eugene IV and the Council Fathers' plans to depose him led Sigismund to resume his diplomatic endeavors from before the Council of Constance. His aim was now to secure the imperial crown, which would grant him greater influence over the council proceedings. The well-documented negotiation process sheds light on the extensive efforts Sigismund undertook to maintain his authority over the church and council. The initial period from the start of the Italian campaign on April 1, 1431 to the acquisition of the Iron Crown in Milan on November 25, 1431 was relatively brief. In contrast, the time leading up to the Roman imperial coronation dragged on tediously. The succinct account by the Liège chronicler Cornelius Menghers of Zantfliet, who described Sigismund's move to Rome to obtain the third crown as the holder of already two crowns, presents the extended duration as part of the lawful progression from Italian king to Roman emperor.[42] However, the reality was far more demanding. In the end, the mutual benefits for the emperor and the pope prevailed, as Eugene IV's rule remained tenuous. By accepting Eugene as the person to crown him, Sigismund reinforced Eugene's authority. Thus, Sigismund's entry into Rome and the imperial coronation were staged as a continuous display of harmonious agreement. In an encomium of Sigismund, possibly delivered at the Council of Basel, a Bolognese orator recalled the closeness between the pope and emperor, characterized by kisses, tears of joy, and overwhelming ardor. The bond was so strong that onlookers perceived their distinct bodies as a singular entity, "marvelous in our eyes."[43] The musical composition "Supremum est mortalibus bonum," a motet by Guillaume Dufay, a member of the papal chapel, praised the pope and king as peacemakers and celebrated the long-awaited peace as the ultimate good for humanity and a divine gift.[44] However, amidst the abundant praise, it is important not to overlook the fact that Italian humanists also subjected Emperor Sigismund to ridicule. A mere four days after the imperial coronation, Poggio Bracciolini wrote a letter to Niccolò Niccoli in which he gave an eyewitness account of Sigismund's time in Rome. The letter compared the medieval imperial coronation tradition, stemming from Charlemagne,

42 Zantfliet, "Chronicon," 433.

43 Edited by Proske, *Romzug*, 184.

44 Text, accessed March 17, 2024: https://www.diamm.ac.uk/documents/174/08_Du_Fay_Supremum_est_mortalibus_bonum.pdf. Music, accessed March 17, 2024: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4x85jsfbiVQ.

to the Roman empire of antiquity. Poggio's disdain was directed at the term "king of the Romans," which the present emperors adopted even before their consecration and coronation. He perceived this term as perverse and believed it originated from barbarians unfamiliar with ancient history and the power of words. In this manner, Poggio derogated Emperor Sigismund as an uninformed individual. This remark from the scholar dismissed the four-century-long self-assuredness of Roman royalty as a privileged monarchy within Latin Christianity. The glory of Roman antiquity now became the benchmark for a late medieval period that highly valued the legitimizing "power of words" *(vis verborum)*.[45]

(6) Recollected emotions: Prior to his coronation, Sigismund had been accepted into the community of the canons at St. Peter's in the church of Santa Maria in Turri. Following the imperial coronation, on the Tiber bridge, he elevated numerous followers to knighthood in the traditional manner. A letter documents as many as 180 honors.[46] After the knighting at the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, this elevation during the imperial coronation held the highest distinction for a Christian knight. This triumph might still have been rooted in the belief articulated by Emperor Frederick Barbarossa in 1155 that he possessed the right to rule over Italy and be crowned emperor as a conqueror. Notably, no German princes or Hungarian magnates were present at Sigismund's imperial coronation. Consequently, numerous knightly and patrician attendants carried their knightly pride back to the land north of the Alps, enhancing the memory of the 1433 imperial coronation. This was accompanied by numerous imperial confirmations of privileges, noble grants, coat of arms enhancements, favors, and legitimizations of illegitimate birth.[47] The news of the imperial coronation prompted celebrations in German cities, with bells ringing, bonfires blazing, and grand processions taking place in imperial cities.[48] The response in Nuremberg is meticulously documented, where accounts detailed the costs and benefits of the imperial coronation for the city. A decade earlier, Sigismund had entrusted the imperial regalia to Nuremberg's Holy Spirit Hospital in perpetuity. They arrived in 1424. The Nuremberg City Council sent a legation to Rome for the imperial coronation, led by Erhard Haller and city clerk Ulrich Truchsess. The city's records chronicled expenses of 2296 ¼ florins and 8 pounds of Nuremberg

45 *Existimo autem hoc a barbaris derivasse, qui priscas historias ignorarunt, neque verborum vim tenuerunt*. Poggio Bracciolini, *Lettere*, 122–24, cit. 124.

46 Herre, *Reichstagsakten*, 844.

47 Kovács, "Coronation," 126–34.

48 Herre, *Reichstagsakten*, 844.

Heller for the legation's 14-week absence.[49] In return, the envoys secured 23 imperial privileges, including nine with a Golden Bull. One of these documents confirmed the perpetual residence of the imperial regalia in Nuremberg. This golden-bull document from the new emperor upheld the king's privilege from 1423, which had previously only been confirmed with a wax seal. In total, the imperial city of Nuremberg held 27 rulers' charters with golden bulls issued between 1313 and 1717. Remarkably, a third of these charters dated back to the day of Sigismund's coronation as emperor alone.[50] The expenses associated with issuing eight golden bulls and 14 charters under majesty's seal on coronation day were meticulously recorded: 600 ducats for the imperial chancery, 200 ducats for the gold used in the bulls, 40 ducats for the goldsmith, and 50 ducats in gratuities for the chancery clerks.[51] With this extraordinary abundance of costly gold bulls, Nuremberg compensated for not having received the renowned "Golden Bull" of Emperor Charles IV and the Electors in the fourteenth century. Of the seven originals of this pivotal document, six were reaffirmed at the time with the imperial gold bull, while only Nuremberg relied on the more affordable wax seal version. Five members of the Nuremberg delegation, identified by name, were among the newly knighted individuals in 1433. Ulrich Truchsess and Erhard and Paul Haller, were granted an imperial confirmation and augmentation of their coat of arms.[52] The benefits of Sigismund's reign for Nuremberg were commemorated in the renowned artworks by Albrecht Dürer in the early sixteenth century, dedicated to the shrines of relics kept in the city. Alongside the portrait of Charlemagne, credited as the originator of the regalia, stood Sigismund, to whom Nuremberg owed the preservation of these cherished artifacts.[53] Nonetheless, the jubilation over the imperial triumph in Germany was coupled with a disconcerting sentiment that the Curia had treated the emperor with disrespect. Eberhard Windeck presented a thought-provoking anecdote that likely was not considered in the historical reconstruction of the events within the Roman St. Peter's church. Windeck's intention was to evoke emotions through his narrative. Allegedly, the cardinal designated for the coronation had questioned the emperor in advance about his legitimacy of birth and piety.

49 *Die Chroniken*, 451–52.

50 *Nürnberg – Kaiser und Reich*, 26; *Norenberc*, 62–63, 66–67.

51 *Die Chroniken*, 451–52.

52 Kovács, "Coronation," 130–32; Altmann, *Regesta Imperii*, no. 9459–9461. Cf. *Die Chroniken*, 304, 387.

53 Accessed March 17, 2024: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sigismund,_Holy_Roman_Emperor#/media/File:Albrecht_D%C3%BCrer_082.jpg.

Sigismund affirmed his legitimacy but then added that the cardinal himself was neither pious nor fit for coronation due to his alleged act of mutilating a woman's breasts. According to this story, the cardinal in charge then carelessly placed the crown on the emperor's head during the coronation, causing it to tilt to the right side. In response, as mentioned earlier, the pope straightened the crown with his right foot, adhering to custom.[54] This tale of the papal foot-adjustment roused sentiments in Germany. The story contrasted moral righteousness and concern for Christianity with the perceived moral decay within the Curia and the popes' perceived arrogance. This account, passed down even during the Reformation, fueled the grievances *(gravamina)* of the German nation during the late Middle Ages. Consequently, the image emerged of the virtuous emperor humiliated by a cunning pope.

Conclusion

In her analysis of Sigismund's political system, Sabine Wefers evaluates the role of the emperorship as follows: While the emperorship was undoubtedly a form of "elevated kingship," its practical function was essentially equivalent to regular kingship.[55] This assessment seems accurate, but it underestimates the legitimizing significance of imperial dignity for the emperors of the late Middle Ages. Hence, the approach taken in this article diverges from examining the utilitarian aspect of the emperorship and instead proceeds from the perspective of the emperorship as a splendid symbol of order. Consequently, alongside modes of action, there arises a focus on interpretations, perceptions, rituals, and their impacts. In terms of functionality, the limitations of imperial authority were repeatedly demonstrated during the later Middle Ages. Nonetheless, no other monarch would have undertaken Sigismund's ambitious efforts to organize Latin Christianity and enable the Council of Constance. The institution of emperorship provided a framework for a vision of unity even amid enduring diversity.

In this paper, I have outlined three conceptions of emperorship, delineated nine characteristics typical of emperors, and presented six distinct profiles of Emperor Sigismund. A key argument of this article centered on the fluidity in the conception and structure of empire in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

54 Windeck, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, 343–44.

55 Wefers, *System*, 213.

This openness was largely attributed to the frequent interruptions in the reigns of emperors. Only the Roman kingship succeeded in establishing lasting continuity. A detailed comparison of the reigns of Roman kings and emperors reveals that imperial rule between 1250 and 1519 was more of an exception than the norm. Consequently, each late medieval imperial coronation should be seen in its exclusivity rather than as a recurring pattern. This perspective lends significance to Sigismund's delayed decision to seek coronation as emperor from the pope, underscoring his understanding and vision of himself as the defender of the Roman Church as well as the protector of the Council. Thus, Sigismund's stance is revealed within a comprehensive framework of emperorship, allocating roles to the participants in the reenactment of crowning and sacring as established rituals. Nevertheless, the significant interruptions in late medieval imperial coronations led many of Sigismund's contemporaries to perceive and portray imperial authority in varying ways.[56]

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56 This paper was initially presented in German. I improved the English translation by making use of the "rephrase" feature on chat.openai.com.

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Hungarian Historical Review 13, no. 2 (2024): 195–212

Alterity and Self-Understanding: Inclusion and Exclusion Strategies of Southern German Estates in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries

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This article analyses diversification strategies in the politics of Sigismund I as king and emperor. Three examples (Swabia, Bavaria, and Tyrol) show different aspects of this diversity. In Swabia, Sigismund attempted to mediate alliances between the knightly societies and the city federations in order to create a counterweight to the imperial princes. In Bavaria, he privileged the knighthood and thus created a dynamic that led to the formation of the land estates with their own identity. Sigismund also supported rebellious nobles in Tyrol against their prince. All interventions can be better contextualised against the backdrop of his imperial policy. At first glance, he was not successful anywhere, but the imperial privileges he granted had an impact on the conflicts between the knighthood/nobility and princes in the fifteenth century and thus diversified late medieval constitutional practice.

Keywords: nobility, empire, constitution, knighthood, Swabia, Bavaria, Tyrol, estates

When King Sigismund was in Nuremberg in September 1422, he had difficult months behind him which had born witness to his coronation as king of Bohemia, victories and defeats against the Hussites, and a hasty flight. Furthermore, he was not in Nuremberg entirely voluntarily, for after he himself had let an invitation to a possible court day in Regensburg lapse, the electors had summoned him to appear in Nuremberg on July 15, 1422.[1] Historian Sabine Wefers speaks of the self-organisation of the empire.[2] Sigismund arrived on July 26 and tried to make the day called by the electors his own after all.[3]

On September 13, 1422, the Sunday before the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, he allowed the knighthood in the empire (it remains unclear whether at this point he was only addressing the estate of imperial knights, which was

1 RTA 8, 111. Many of the following source quotations are taken from the edition of the Reichstagakten (RTA), to this: Wolgast, "Deutsche Reichstagsakten." On court days, imperial days, diets, and their distinction, see Hardy, "'Tage'," and Annas, *Hoftag – Gemeiner Tag – Reichstag*.

2 "Selbstorganisation des Reichs." Wefers, *Das politische System*, 93.

3 An overview is provided by Wefers, *Das politische System*, 81–110.

 DOI 10.38145/2024.2.195

also not yet clearly definable) to unite for the protection of their rights and to admit imperial cities to their union. In the corresponding charter, at least one of which is preserved in the original in Munich, the king emphasises his concern for safeguarding the rights of the knighthood of his realm.[4] His aim was for the nobility to be happy and blessed.[5] Sigismund had to intervene, as he had heard that the knighthood in Germany was suffering much coercion and that many of its rights were being challenged.[6] This is followed in the corresponding charter by the cities, to which he grants the full right to join the associations of the nobility.[7] For himself and all his successors, Sigismund confirmed the right of association for the knighthood and cities in his realm.

The charter from September 13, 1422 has so far received attention as King Sigmund's "privilege," especially in research on the Swabian nobility. Hermann Mau even regarded it as the "Magna Carta der deutschen Reichsritterschaft."[8] The aim of this royal privileging of Sigismund was, in my view, to diversify the political constellations of actors in the Holy Roman Empire so that Sigismund himself would be able to intervene as the ordering head of this empire and thus to create counterweights to the Electoral College. Sigismund's approach can be seen as innovative against the backdrop of his father's legislation (the Golden Bull) and the denigration by towns and princes of previous associations of lesser nobles as "evil societies" (*böse Gesellschaften*, e.g. in the early 1380s).

If we understand diversity as a system of differentiations[9] that could be developed and asserted in different ways depending on historical constellations, this can be seen as Sigismund's attempt to create diversity in order to secure and expand his rule. In the following, I will examine how realistic this attempt proved. I draw on three concrete examples: the Swabian noble alliances, the estates of the Duchy of Bavaria, and rebellious nobles in the County of Tyrol. I conclude with an admittedly incomplete attempt to assess the exemplary results to Sigismund's

4 Sigismund expresses his concern, "damit der adl bestet ist, also versorgt werde das er bestee und nicht zerrutte noch zerstort oder also gedrungen sey an seinen rechten." Sigmund – RI XI, 1 no. 5246.

5 Sigismund continues: "bey unsern zeiten an seinem wesen gelücklich und seliglich beleibe." Sigmund – RI XI,1 no. 5246.

6 Sigismund describes the situation of the knighthood: "wann wir wol vernomen haben, das die ritterschaft in teutschen land viel zwang leidet und vast gedrungen wirdet an iren rechten von etlichen." Sigmund – RI XI,1 no. 5246.

7 Sigismund addresses the cities: "Darumb mit wolbedachten muet, guetn rate und rechter wissen geben wir volle macht und gewalt, und das sy auch unsere und des reichs stete in densel-ben punt wol nehmen mögen, die sich zu in wolten verpinden." Sigmund – RI XI,1 no. 5246.

8 Mau, *Rittergesellschaften*, 59.

9 "System von Differenzierungen." Florian et al., "Diversity," 11.

imperial policy and his understanding of rule. A quick glance at the secondary literature suffices to show that the relationship between King and Emperor Sigismund to the non-princely nobles has hardly been studied. Historians have tended focus on his relations with the princes of the Holy Roman Empire and the political actors who enjoyed "imperial immediacy" *(reichsunmittelbar)*.[10] From a broader perspective, the preliminary findings of this paper can further a more nuanced understanding of the associative political culture of the late medieval empire, as recently emphasised by Duncan Hardy, for example:[11] "The Empire therefore consisted of a shifting kaleidoscope of intertwined jurisdictions and networks."[12] The functioning of these networks within the empire in its parallel and mutually overlapping constitutional structures and constellations, especially below the level of the imperial princes, has not yet been sufficiently studied.[13] In this article, I attempt to do this from the perspective of diversity.

The Swabian Noble Alliances

On April 25, 1413, the regional Swabian knightly confederations under the banner of St. George concluded the Bund der Gemeinen Gesellschaft, the so-called Jörgenbund.[14] A few days later, 19 imperial cities entered a union among themselves with a protective relationship with Count Palatine Ludwig and Count Eberhard of Württemberg.[15] More than a year later, at Christmas 1414, Sigismund came to the empire as the elected Roman king. At this time, he could only rely on the support of the electors to a limited extent. Accordingly, Sigismund quickly sought to harness the political potential of the lower nobility and the cities. He built on the origins of the Society of St. George's Shield in the suppression of the Appenzell rural communes and the League above the Lake

10 Wefers, *Das politische System*, and Wefers, *Primat der Außenpolitik*, with her strong focus on foreign policy, almost does not address the political issues below the imperial level, which paints Sigismund's picture too strongly in one direction.

11 Hardy, *Associative Political Culture*, passim.

12 Hardy, "The Emperorship of Sigismund," 293. Other works dealing with Sigismund's ruling practices include *Sigismund von Luxemburg*, edited by Macek et al., *Kaiser Sigismund*, edited by Hruza and Kaar, and Whelan, "Dances, dragons and a pagan queen."

13 While the question of an imperial constitution *(Reichsverfassung)* has been raised again and again, its connection with the constitutional structures of the territories is not clear. Still central to this discussion is Moraw, *Von offener Verfassung zu gestalteter Verdichtung*, passim.

14 Mau, *Rittergesellschaften*, 12–35. Cfr. to the internal constitution of society Obenaus, *Recht und Verfassung der Gesellschaften mit dem St. Jörgenschild.*

15 Cfr. Florian, *Graf Eberhard der Milde*, 77–92, especially 81.

in 1407–1408, which surely played a major role in making the Society and other associations of lesser nobles potential partners of kings and emperors.[16] At the Diet of Constance in February 1415, Sigismund reminded the city delegates of the great city alliances of the fourteenth century, and he explained to them that the princes were increasing their rights at the expense of the empire, while the empire only had the cities to support it. However, his attempts at motivation were unsuccessful. The cities refused to accept the royal alliance policy proposed.[17]

All the more surprising is the reason Sigismund gives in his Nuremberg charter of September 13, 1422 for not only allowing an alliance between the nobility and the cities but even having called for it. In the charter, he states that all the cities represented in Nuremberg had a great desire to achieve unity and friendship among themselves.[18] He, the king, could therefore only welcome the fact that the cities stuck together when the princes joined forces.[19] However, it is doubtful whether Sigismund acted as reactively as scholars have often believed him to have done. Rather, the charter should be understood merely as a rhetorical attempt to realise a project that had been running since 1414 at the latest, albeit unsuccessfully in this case as well.

This corresponds to an assumption expressed by Heinz Angermeier that it was not the intention of the imperial cities to engage in a new imperial policy. Rather, it was the king who based on his Hungarian experiences, believed that he could also only develop a monarchical policy in Germany with the help of the cities.[20] After Sigismund's initial conflicts with the Hungarian estates, he was able to come to terms with them in the following years. The model for his attempts to establish city alliances in the empire was certainly the great city privileges of the Hungarian diet of 1405. He probably assumed that this would also enable him to govern successfully in the empire.

16 The origins are reconstructed by Carl, "Vom Appenzellerkrieg zum Schwäbischen Bund."

17 Mau, *Rittergesellschaften*, 51.

18 Sigismund emphasises with regard to the cities: "daz alle die stette die nun zu ziten allhie zu Nurenberg sint eine große begirde hant daz die stette eine einunge und eine frúntschaft mit enander hettent." RTA 8, 127, 136, line 11f. See also Hoensch, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 263 with reference to the Reichstagsakten.

19 Sigismund continues with regard to the princes and cities: "sich die stette zusammen hieltent, wen die fursten eines werent." RTA 8, 131, 142, line 33f.

20 "Nicht die Intentionen der Reichsstädte waren mithin auf ein neues reichspolitisches Engagement ausgerichtet, vielmehr war es der König, der aus seinen ungarischen Erfahrungen heraus glaubte, auch in Deutschland eine monarchische Politik nur mit Hilfe der Städte entfalten zu können." Angermeier, *Königtum*, 53.

This attempt to encourage and favour alliances of the lower nobility, the knighthood, and the cities was supplemented by a clear policy of prohibition, which can be seen as two sides of the same coin. For example, Sigismund forbade the Elector of Mainz and the Rhenish imperial cities of Mainz, Worms, and Speyer to form alliances, with a clear justification addressed to the Elector of Mainz: Since Emperor Charles IV had forbidden such association, he too, Sigismund, thought it was forbidden. He therefore did not want the Elector to approach the aforementioned cities. Instead, he should show consideration for the king and the Empire. In this case, Sigismund clearly argued with the prohibition of alliances formulated in the Golden Bull,[21] which the king knew how to interpret differently for himself than for the imperial princes: an alliance could only be established with the knowledge and will of the imperial power. Sigismund wanted to secure a monopoly on it, so to speak.[22] Mark Whelan has identified several factors of the communication between the Princely Abbey of Ellwangen and Sigismund's court which can probably be cited as an additional difficulty in achieving this goal: "the obstacles associated with traversing the vast Luxembourg realms and the costs involved in treating with an often distant sovereign."[23] As Whelan points out, this did not mean that these problems diminished Sigismund's "significance to contemporaries,"[24] but they perhaps did make some of his policies more difficult to implement in practice.

Nevertheless, some of the electors also tried to apply Sigismund's strategy and organise alliances under their leadership. However, the cities and the St. Jörgen Society refused such electoral association plans at the end of 1427. In May of the following year, the electors again tried to establish such an alliance under their aegis, but we know of no reaction to their efforts.[25]

At the Diet of Pressburg in 1429, Sigismund himself again called on the cities and knights in the Roman-German Empire to form an alliance, but again

21 The Golden Bull is published: *Die Goldene Bulle Kaiser Karls IV. vom Jahre 1356*, edited by Wolfgang, MGH Leges 8 (Weimar: Böhlau, 1972), 11. According to Capitulum XV *De conspiratoribus* of the Golden Bull (p. 70f.), which was similarly contained in Friedrich Barbarossa's Roncal Peace of 1158, connections between lords and cities were forbidden. Sigismund thus certainly contributed in the long term to a weakening of the normative dimension of the Golden Bull on this point.

22 Angermeier, *Reichsreform*, 360, sees this as the transition from a policy of association to a policy of alliances.

23 Whelan, "Dealing," 342. Also Whelan, "Taxes, Wagenburgs and a Nightingale," with a focus on the Hussite Wars.

24 Whelan, "Dealing," 342.

25 Cfr. Angermeier, *Reichsreform*, 350–60.

without any discernible result.[26] Here too, the situation in Swabia nevertheless served as a model illustrating the merits of his argumentation. He sent the knight Konrad von Flörsheim to the knighthood in the Gau and Westerreich, west of the Vogesen, who was to call on them to unite in the name of the king. They need only examine and recognize the benefits such an association, which Sigismund had helped them to achieve, had brought to the Knighthood of Jörgenschild.[27] Hermann Mau saw this as Sigismund's ultimately failed attempt to create a "new basis of power"[28] for himself and the empire.

So what remains of the intended diversification? Probably more than contemporaries were aware of. In his work on the Schwäbische Bund, the Swabian Confederation, Horst Carl describes the period under Sigismund as an important phase in the cooperative socialisation of the nobility in the German southwest.[29] However, the privilege of 1422 by no means belongs only to the prehistory of the Swabian imperial knighthood, because the hypothesis that Sigismund only addressed knights and towns that were impartial to the empire is not persuasive, as the following example clearly illustrates.[30]

The Land Estates in the Duchy of Bavaria

The Bavarian estates *(Landstände* or *Landschaft)* existed in 1422 in the four partial duchies that had been created in the late fourteenth century after the death of Emperor Ludwig IV under his sons and grandsons.[31] There they formed their own political entities without giving up the idea of an existing Duchy of Bavaria.[32] Whether they were the addressees of Sigismund's Nuremberg charter is difficult to say, but probably not. Nevertheless, the Bavarian estates took this royal charter very much for granted and included it as the thirtieth letter of freedom in their collection of rights and privileges created in 1508.[33]

It was obviously easy for them to integrate this royal document into their perception of themselves and their status, because this right of the nobility and

26 Cf. Mau, *Rittergesellschaften*, 82.

27 Cf. Mau, *Rittergesellschaften*, 58f.

28 "Neue Machtgrundlage." Mau, *Rittergesellschaften*, 36.

29 Phase of "genossenschaftlichen Vergesellschaftung des Adels." Horst, *Schwäbischer Bund*, 100.

30 Mau, *Rittergesellschaften*, 49, Anm. 148.

31 Holzapfl, "Bayerische Teilungen."

32 Lanzinner, "Landstände."

33 The Letters of Freedom have been published, but only in an older edition. I am preparing a modern historical-critical edition: Lerchenfeld and Rockinger, *Die altbaierischen landständischen Freibriefe,* here no. 30, 74f.

the knighthood to unite with the towns had long been a reality in the Duchy of Bavaria. The institutionalised inclusion mechanisms, which we know as the right of the nobility to unite, were at the same time countered, however, by equally (and I would say causally) necessary exclusion mechanisms, which first and foremost slowly contoured the group that wanted and was supposed to unite. These exclusion mechanisms were also strongly developed in the Duchy of Bavaria at the beginning of the fifteenth century.[34]

The treatment of guests *(Gäste)*, i.e. of foreigners, or non-Bavarians in this specific case, was regularly a topic of discussion, as was their role in the ducal administration, the council bodies, and the affiliation with the *Landschaft*.

The three Bavarian dukes Stefan, Friedrich, and Johann had to make several concessions to the nobility at a Diet in Munich in 1392: For themselves and their descendants, they promised not to issue any charter to guests, i.e. foreigners, which could call into question the rights of the "land und leut,"[35] a term that the estates liked to use, in Bavaria. If they did, these documents would be pronounced invalid. Likewise, the dukes vowed for both Upper and Lower Bavaria that they would not take guests into consideration when appointing councilors *(Räte)*, guardians *(Pfleger)*, and other court offices, and that they would not appoint anyone who did not come from Bavaria, i.e. that they would only take Bavarian compatriots into their service.[36] As a reaction to this, on the same day the "graven, freien, dinstleut, ritter und knecht, stet und mergkt gemaingklich wie die genant sein die zu den landen obern und nidern Bairn gehörent,"[37] so counts and nobility, towns and markets in Upper and Lower Bavaria declared

34 There are as yet no monographs on the Bavarian estates in the Middle Ages. First overviews can be found in Carsten, *Princes and Parliaments*, 348–57; Lieberich, *Landherren und Landleute*; and Volkert, "Entstehung der Landstände in Bayern."

35 Lerchenfeld and Rockinger, *Die altbaierischen landständischen Freibriefe*, no. 13, 30–33, 31.

36 "Auch ist ze wissen, das wir und unser erben und nachkomen kainen gast noch yeman anders kainerlay brief umb pfantung und angriff unserer egenanten land und leut nit geben söllen, als sy des von unsern vordern und von uns auch brief habent. Teten wir es daruber, oder ob wir vor sölich brief icht gegeben hieten, die söllen unsern egenanten landen und leuten unschedlich sein. Und wie sy sich sölicher angriff und pfantung werent, daran thunt sy nicht wider uns noch unser erben in kain weiss." Lerchenfeld and Rockinger, *Die altbaierischen landständischen Freibriefe,* no. 13, 30–33, 31f. The charter continues: "Auch bekennen wir, das wir unsern landen und leuten zu obern und zu nidern Bairn die genad getan haben, das wir und unser erben nu fürbas zu unsern räten, pflegern und allen andern ambten wie die genant sind in denselben landen kainen gast nicht nehmen noch setzen söllen, der zu unsern landen obern und nidern Bairn nicht gehöret." Lerchenfeld and Rockinger, *Die altbaierischen landständischen Freibriefe*, no. 13, 30–33, 32.

37 Lerchenfeld and Rockinger, *Die altbaierischen landständischen Freibriefe*, no. 13, 30–33, 33.

that they wanted to unite, also to resist, but in a way that the dukes should always remain with the rule in Bavaria, for the unity of the country, one could well say.

The two charters of the Tuesday before St. Catherine's Day 1392, one issued and sealed by the princes *(Landesfürsten)* and one issued and sealed by the estates, reflect the reciprocal relationship. The assurance of exclusivity necessarily went hand in hand with the right to exclusivity for a privileged group. The following year, Duke Johann and Duke Ernst of Bavaria-Munich promised at a diet in Munich that they would only staff their council as well as their castles and fortresses with locals.[38] This exclusion was also linked to inclusion, for in the same charter, the two dukes granted the counts, knights and nobles, the towns and markets, or in other words, the "land und leute" of their partial duchy, the right to assemble at any time as soon as necessary.[39] On the eve of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary in 1396, the dukes Stefan and Johann confirmed in Munich that they would only fill their council positions and all offices with persons who had been born in Bavaria or who were residents there, i.e. who had landed property and thus belong to the "land."[40]

At this point, one could mention numerous other letters of alliances, privileges, and their confirmations which were written with particular frequency around 1400. They all move within the range of exclusivity and inclusivity that has been described, and it is only by thinking about them together that we can understand the diversity of political actors and structures. If we think further about Patrick Lantschner's observation for the late Middle Ages that "the logic of conflict is the logic of political order itself,"[41] the dynamic between inclusion and exclusion can also be interpreted not only as a conflict between prince and

38 "Wir sullen auch ainen rat alzeit setzen und nehmen nach rate ritter und knecht und unser stet, und sullen auch all unser vesten, schloss und pfleg besetzen mit landherren und landleutn die zu dem land obern und nidern Bairn gehoren und die darin gesessen sind." Lerchenfeld and Rockinger, *Die altbaierischen landständischen Freibriefe*, no. 16, 36–38, 37.

39 "Es mögen auch unser vorgenent graven und freien, dinstleut, ritter und knecht, stet und mergkt, land und leut wol tag suechen und zu ainander komen her gen Münichen oder anderswo, als oft in das not beschicht, und zue in aus dem land pitten wen sy verstent der darzue nutz und guet sey, und da mit ainander reden der herschaft des landes und ir notturft." Lerchenfeld and Rockinger, *Die altbaierischen landständischen Freibriefe*, no. 16, 36–38, 37.

40 "Wir söllen und wöllen auch fürbas kainen unsern rat, noch kain unser gericht, pfleg noch ambt besetzen noch entpfelhen mit kainem gast, dann alain mit leuten die zu den landen Bairn gehörent und darinne gesessen sind." Lerchenfeld and Rockinger, *Die altbaierischen landständischen Freibriefe*, no. 20, p. 43–47, 46.

41 Lantschner, *The Logic of Political Conflict*, 207.

estates, but as a principle of political order, as Christina Lutter also points out for Vienna.[42]

The question of exclusivity is by no means confined to Bavaria, especially on Sigismund's side, but is also encountered in the monarch's immediate environment. The question of the national composition of his council became particularly intense after the death of his chancellor Georg von Passau in early August 1423. The number of Hungarian magnates, for example, in the witness lists and the strong participation of Italian scholars of jurisprudence were repeatedly criticised in the empire, but so was the prominent role of some members of the Swabian noble alliances in Sigismund's close environment.[43]

In addition, Sigismund's efforts concerning the "Landfrieden," which Heinz Angermeier has clearly elaborated,[44] are also reflected in a charter of the Bavarian Landschaft. According to a charter from a diet in Augsburg on the Monday after Palm Sunday 1429, one of the reasons for the association of the estates was that Sigismund had seen the unchristian work and the many sufferings that war and conflict had brought both for the rich and for the poor.[45] The estates of the Duchy of Bavaria also included this charter, which originated in a different context, in their collections, rights, and privileges and thus also used it in later centuries to legitimise their claims to imperial authority.[46] In 1434, the Bavarian knighthood had all its rights, freedoms, and privileges explicitly confirmed by Emperor Sigismund. The document was later included in the collection as the thirty-sixth letter.[47] Under threat of a fine of 100 gold marks for violation of the chartered rights, Sigismund placed the knighthood under special imperial protection. This possibility of sanctions was also explicitly directed against the princes of the empire, i.e. also (although not mentioned by name) against the Bavarian dukes, and it sanctions harmonised well with Sigismund's strategy of forming alliances at the level of the regional nobility, as shown by the example of Swabia. Thus in Bavaria and throughout the empire, sensitivity concerning the exclusivity of one's own rights and privileges seems to have been part of the actors' mindset and certainly played a central role in the question of diversity in the constitutional structure of the late medieval empire. The aforementioned

42 Lutter, "Konflikt und Allianz."

43 For example RI XI,1 5598; RI XI,1 5991, 5894, 5804.

44 Angermaier, *Königtum und Landfriede*, and Hardy, "Between Regional Alliances and Imperial Assemblies."

45 Lerchenfeld and Rockinger, *Die altbaierischen Freibriefe*, no. 35, p. 83–86.

46 Ibid., no. 30, p. 74f.

47 Ibid., no. 36, p. 96–98.

imperial privileges for the Bavarian knighthood also contributed significantly to the formation of the estates, which were later able to invoke precisely these documents – a dynamic that has never been studied before.

Older traditions involving these kinds of demands for exclusivity can be found here. If we look at Tyrol, for example, Margrave Ludwig had also stipulated in the so-called "Großer Freiheitsbrief" (Great Charter of Freedom) of January 28, 1342, which his father, Emperor Ludwig IV, had confirmed, that no important position in Tyrol would be filled by a foreigner.[48] This observation leads to the third example.

The Nobility of the County of Tyrol

In the county of Tyrol, Sigismund's strategy of diversifying political actors fell on ground that was every bit as fertile as in Bavaria, since there is also evidence of a long tradition of corporative political participation in Tyrol. Sigismund wanted to take advantage of this to weaken the Habsburgs, who ruled Tyrol at the time.[49]

During his reign, the feud between Duke Ernst and Duke Friedrich in Tyrol ended (specifically, in 1417). After that, the struggle for territorial power, which the noble families of Rottenburg, Wolkenstein, Spaur, and Starkenberg in particular wanted to dispute with the ruler, continued for almost a decade. For this period, Werner Köfler assumes that the influence of the nobility in Tyrol reached a highpoint.[50] The Tyrolean Landschaft repeatedly acted as a mediating authority. In 1420, Friedrich IV, who wanted and needed to expand his position of power, demanded that the richest nobles of Tyrol return the pledged offices and courts of the prince, though he did offer as a sum in return. However, the nobles refused to return them and sought help not only from other nobles in Tyrol but directly from King Sigismund. There they quickly found support.

As late as December 18, 1422, Sigismund from Pressburg encouraged the support of Ulrich von Starkenberg and Oswald von Wolkenstein. The brothers Michael and Lienhart von Wolkenstein were to support them against Duke Friedrich of Tyrol, who was attacking them. On December 29, Sigismund

48 Hölzl, "Freiheitsbriefe," 7 (A).

49 Cfr. for the following elaborations especially Köfler, *Land, Landschaft, Landtag*, passim; Jäger, *Geschichte der landständischen Verfassung Tirols*, vol. 2, 307–87; and Fahlenbock, "Durch uns und unnser Landtschaften gemacht."

50 "Höhepunkt politischer Einflußnahme." Köfler, *Land, Landschaft, Landtag*, 58.

ordered Duke Friedrich to cease his hostilities against "his servant" Wilhelm von Starkenberg and his brother Ulrich. They would not violate Tyrolean land law, and thus Friedrich had no right to take action against them. If Friedrich, called the duke "with the empty purse,"[51] wanted to assert his claims, he should do so before the king or before Dukes Ernst and Albrecht of Austria. Sigismund thus intervened relatively quickly in the Tyrolean disputes by strengthening the opposition among the nobles.

At a meeting in Merano at Pentecost 1423, Duke Friedrich confirmed the rights and freedoms of the assembled estates in order to quickly achieve an association of the country against the opposition of the nobility. With Sigismund's support, however, the latter wanted to prevent such an agreement at all costs. When the king was in Altsohl (today Zvolen, Slovakia) in July, he once again increased his support for the rebelling nobles. Since Friedrich IV had not fulfilled his obligations to him as king and to the entire Roman-German Empire, in July 16, he was deprived of all fiefs in the county of Tyrol, the land on the Adige and in the Inn valley, as well as other courts. Sigismund announced his intention to return them to the empire and to grant the County of Tyrol to the brothers Ulrich and Wilhelm von Starkenberg as a fief for their loyal service. At the same time, at the request of the two brothers, Sigismund confirmed the rights and privileges of the estates on the Adige and in the Inn valley. Here we encounter a phenomenon that can be observed regularly throughout the fifteenth century: emperors and kings used their power to grant privileges to provincial estates to strengthen them against sovereigns. This constituted a diversification of the constitutional structure of the Roman-German Empire. On the following day, July 17, Sigismund ordered the Imperial Marshal Haupt von Pappenheim to lead the imperial panoply against Duke Friedrich, the disturber of the peace. Sigismund also called on the nobility of neighboring Tyrol, namely Counts Hans von Lupfen and Friedrich von Toggenburg, to take up arms against the disobedient Friedrich and to support Ulrich and Wilhelm von Starkenberg and to march into the Inn and Etsch valleys. One day later, on July 18, 1423, the Tyrolean nobility (we can see how well coordinated the king and the nobility were at this point) formed an alliance on behalf of the entire Tyrolean countryside to protect its freedoms and rights vis-à-vis the prince. At this moment, Sigismund seemed to have been successful with his strategy of playing the Tyrolean nobility

51 "Herzog Friedrich Friedrich mit der leeren Tasche"; Fahlenbock, "Durch uns und unnser Landtschaften gemacht," 70.

off against the disagreeable prince. Friedrich, however, remained unimpressed with the day convened for August 5. In the forefront, he had so-called cedulas ("Zedeln") sent to the courts of the country, which Friedrich thus gave more political significance than before, informing them about grievances in the country that needed to be remedied and the evil activities of the rebellious nobility. The "Zedeln" also contained the explicit prohibition against entering into any alliance without the consent of the prince, and they were thus clearly directed against alliances of the nobility, such as the alliance that King Sigismund had deliberately permitted in Nuremberg the previous year.[52]

Friedrich's only problem was that hardly any nobles appeared in Brixen on August 5. The few who were present therefore asked for the date to be postponed, and a committee was formed to solve the problem later. The rebellious nobles, however, did not succeed in getting the estates on their side. On the next day, probably a committee meeting, on November 18, 1423, the bishop of Brixen and representatives of the estates appeared alongside the ruler and some of his councillors, who distanced themselves from the alliance that had been formed by the nobles. Finally, the council condemned the alliance of the nobility as an affliction of Tyrol.

Over the course of the year, Duke Friedrich succeeded in settling with a large part of the Tyrolean nobility, which is why de facto the alliance only lasted a few weeks. The sources, however, are silent about King Sigismund, who had wanted to intervene in the conflict a few months earlier. Friedrich's fight against the Starkenbergs, who were particularly supported by Sigismund, continued. On May 10, 1424, a meeting in Innsbruck decided to send a delegation of representatives of the land estates to Greifenstein, the main castle of the Starkenbergs. This delegation failed, however, whereupon the Landschaft agreed to support the ruler by force of arms. Friedrich had thus decided the conflict de facto in his favour.

This enabled him to consolidate his rule, not quickly, but steadily, against the few remaining opposition families. In 1426, the Landschaft successfully mediated between him and the Spaur. Wilhelm von Starkenberg gave up the fight against the duke in November of the same year. Only Oswald von Wolkenstein[53] remained, whom we know well from other contexts around Sigismund. Isolated as the last resister from the noble group, he wrote his depressed song

52 Cfr. Köfler, *Land, Landschaft, Landtag*, 251–53.

53 See Schwob, *Oswald von Wolkenstein*.

"Durch Barbarei, Arabia" in the winter of 1426–1427, which ended with the following words: "Mein freund, die hassen mich überain / an schuld, des müss ich greisen. / das klag ich aller werlt gemain, / den frummen und den weisen, / darzü vil hohen fürsten rain, / die sich ir er land preisen, / das si mich armen Wolckenstein / die wolf nicht lan erzaisen, / gar verwaisen."[54] In 1427, he was summoned to the Diet in Bolzano, secretly left the country, was captured and brought to Innsbruck. Already on December 15, 1424, more than two years earlier, King Sigismund had promised him that he would comply with his request and intercede with Duke Friedrich IV on the rebel's behalf. Here too, Sigismund did little apart from make announcements from afar. Nevertheless, Oswald von Wolkenstein was admitted to the Order of the Drake *(Drachenorden)* by Sigismund at the Diet of Nuremberg in 1431, which presumably gave him a belated sense of satisfaction.

Thus, in Tyrol, Sigismund made significant attempts in the initial conflict to oust the unpopular Habsburgs by diversifying the power structures within the county. The fact that all the relevant charters were issued far from Tyrol, not even in southern Germany, points to another problem. Sigismund seems to have had neither time nor energy to enforce his attempts. In the end, he failed in Tyrol in his fight against the establishment of a strong principality in the south of the empire. But here too, over the long term, an enduring image emerged of Sigismund as a leader who could dynamize the people emerged.

An Attempt at Synthesis

Now it is worth taking a final look at Sigismund's attempts to diversify the political landscape of the Holy Roman Empire in his favour. Although the knighthoods of Swabia, Franconia, and Bavaria had formed a defensive alliance against the Hussites in Ellingen on July 10, 1430, this alliance expired again after three years on St. George's Day 1433. After Sigismund's return from the imperial coronation in Rome at the end of 1433, further efforts of his failed at the imperial diets in Basel and Ulm in 1434 and at the imperial diet in Regensburg. In March of the same year, the negotiations between the St. Jörgenschild Society and the Swabian League of Towns failed in Kirchheim unter Teck.[55] In mid-October 1434,

54 On this poem by Oswald von Wolkenstein Moser, see "Durch Barbarei, Arabia."

55 See Tumbült, "Schwäbische Einigungsbestrebungen unter König Sigmund."

Sigismund left the Empire for good, and with his departure, the negotiations on the Swabian association were broken off and never resumed.

But why did Sigismund's sometimes very ambitious efforts fail at first sight?

Perhaps it can be said quite simply at first: Sigismund's efforts towards diversification failed because of the diversity of the actors and the unwillingness of the cities to cooperate with the nobility and the knighthood, as a Nördlingen city scribe reported from Kirchheim in 1434: "aber es wart keine ainung troffen, quia displicuit civitatibus, et semper, in quantum licite potuerunt, quesiverunt vias exeundi."[56] The efforts to achieve peace *(Landfrieden)* at the end of the fourteenth century had already failed due to the differing interests of the cities and knights.[57] Sigismund's renewed attempts were equally unsuccessful.

Thinking further about an idea of Heinz Angermeier's concerning the land peace order *(Landfriedensordnung)*: Sigismund, with his numerous territories outside the empire, tended to be less affected by his own policy of diversification within the empire. He never had a direct view of his efforts to further associations and alliances and quickly lost sight of them.

The system of diversification can also be seen in Sigismund's role as King of Bohemia. In the fight against the Hussites, he generously endowed the "Catholic" cities with privileges, as Alexandra Kaar has shown, but he repeatedly fell short of his promises to them as well.[58] Ultimately, the mutual securing of advantages functioned there in a way that did not work in such a direct manner vis-à-vis imperial cities, especially in the German southwest. The goal of creating "a world of personal relationship framed and maintained by symbolic communication and conventional and negotiatory institutions and associations"[59] ultimately failed.

The royal charters were gratefully received in the regions of the empire in which a certain level of political participation had already been established, but without always having the effect intended by Sigismund. The question of failure thus ultimately remains one of perspectivation. If we look at the long-term consequences of the policy of diversification, it will certainly not be easy to reconstruct concrete causal chains. Even his greatest critics will not

56 RTA 11–13, no. 117.

57 Cf. e.g. Zielke-Dünnebeil, "Die Löwen-Gesellschaft," 60–62.

58 See Kaar, *Die stadt*. On the broader context of Sigismund's trade prohibitions against the Hussites, see Kaar, "Wirtschaft, Krieg und Seelenheil."

59 Hardy, "The Emperorship Sigismund of Luxemburg," 314. Angermeier, *Königtum und Landfriede*, 345, refers to it as a "System sich ergänzender und gegenseitig helfender Einungen im Reich."

be able to deny that Sigismund's attempts, which were considered a failure by his contemporaries, certainly had a dynamizing effect on the establishment of the estates in the territories of the empire and that he thereby enabled more differentiated actor structures to emerge in the constitutional structure of the empire.

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Hungarian Historical Review 13, no. 2 (2024): 213–234

The League of Lords between Feudalism and the Modern State: Diversity of State Models, Political Agency, and Opposition in Late Medieval Bohemia (1394–1405)*

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Traditionally, the League of the Lords *(Panska jednota)* is perceived as having been in opposition to the development of the modern state and as an embodiment of feudalism, which stood in stark opposition to rational modernization. In this paper, in line with the anarchist anthropology of David Graeber and James C. Scott, I would like to show that the nobles were not necessarily conservatives hostile to modernity but rather were political actors who were aware of their choices and who rejected changes not out of a mechanical conservatism but out of a motivated hostility to the modern state. Without losing sight of the pragmatic character of political events and alliances, I am therefore interested in this opposition group and, in particular, in the ways in which it justified its positions and sought to depict itself. Through an analysis of concrete events that occurred in Bohemia, this paper aims to challenge the linear doctrine on the development of the modern state as an unquestioned evolutionary development and thus reassess the possibility of (real) opposition and alternatives to the dominant model.

Keywords: state, revolt, league, Bohemia, agency

Traditionally, revolts in the Middle Ages are perceived as having been in opposition to the development of the modern state and are seen as moments in which the feudal mentality rose up against processes of modernization.[1] This assessment is also applied to noble and patrician revolts. These revolts are considered comparatively fleeting events fueled by lingering elements of an already outdated worldview and are generally criticized for not having had clear political aims and for having served only the interests of those who instigated

* With this contribution, I present one of my new research topics. This work therefore consists more of hypotheses and avenues for reflection than of tangible findings.

1 Traditionally, revolts were considered a deviation from normal politics, an anomaly, and a set of acts aimed against the state and the growth of royal government, Mollat and Wolf, *Popular Revolutions*, 283.

 DOI 10.38145/2024.2.213

them without considering or embracing any ambition to change the system.[2] Or rather, the fact that the leaders of these revolts did not seek to overthrow the monarchy and establish another political regime is taken as clear proof that their acts had no political significance. I would object to this assessment first merely by sharing the observation that the politicians of today are rarely tempted to introduce new social models and are often just as driven by personal motivations as medieval nobles and patricians allegedly were, but this does not prevent us from considering them as serious political players. In this paper, I would like to move away from these kinds of value judgments and propose a reinterpretation of medieval revolts by exploring the campaign of the Bohemian League of Lords against their king, Wenceslas IV (r. 1378–1419).

To briefly summarize the events, Wenceslas IV had been crowned at the initiative of his father Charles IV in 1363, when he was only two years old. He became full king upon his father's death in 1378. This means that Charles had feared that the succession would be contested. Problems arose quite quickly during Wenceslas' reign. There were continuous conflicts among members of the Luxembourg family (which explains the precaution taken by Charles in 1363). Jobst of Moravia (r. 1375–1411) and Sigismund of Hungary (from 1387) could not bear to submit to the authority of their close relative,[3] and the high nobility complained of having been bypassed by the lower nobility, which enjoyed the favor of the court. When the always ambitious Jobst attacked his brother Prokop, with whom he cogoverned Moravia, Wenceslas had not deigned to intervene, perhaps preferring to see his relatives disunited, as Jiří Spěváček has suggested.[4] In addition, Wenceslas was criticized in the Empire, and he was on bad terms with the bishop of Prague, Jan of Jenštejn. In December 1393, the king was even poisoned, maybe by Sigismund, Jobst, and Rupert III of the Palatinate.[5]

It is in this context of the troubles and isolation of the king that the League of Lords was formed in May 1394, which led to the first imprisonment of Wenceslas in May–August 1394.[6] As Wenceslas continued to fail to respect his promises, he was imprisoned a second time by his brother Sigismund, who

2 This corresponds more generally to Charles Tilly's model, according to which premodern movements were less complex and mature than their modern counterparts. Tilly, *Coercion*; Tilly, "How Protest."

3 Wenceslas was Sigismund's brother and Jobst's cousin.

4 Spěváček, *Václav*, 229.

5 Ibid., 229–30.

6 Ibid., 231–37.

took him to Vienna, in 1402–1403.[7] After the king's release, an agreement was reached between him and the nobles in 1405 that put an end to the league, even though the lords had not managed to achieve all their objectives. As a result of this imprisonment, members of the high nobility were entrusted by the king with the supervision of the observance of law in the regions, and they were able to impose their choices for appointments to royal offices. However, the composition of the council remained the prerogative of the king.[8]

The idea is commonly accepted that the league belonged to the past, while the king's government was a step in the direction of the development of the modern state (for instance, the use of competent servants from lower social backgrounds, beyond the figure of the favorite). In this paper, I would like to consider the two models as two competing worldviews. In line with "anarchist anthropology," I intend to show that the lords of the league were political actors who were aware of their choices and who rejected some practices not out of reflex conservatism but out of a motivated hostility to the king's conception of the state. "Anarchist anthropology" is a means of understanding and offering a critical reading of social processes in the world and history based on the choice of objects and an analysis of domination processes, including their adoption or deconstruction. From a retrospective and teleological perspective, "anarchist anthropology" attempts to deconstruct the great narratives of human history, and particularly the earliest chapters of this history (the emergence of the state, domination, coercion), to point towards our unconscious and ideological preconceptions as modern. It was developed in the 1970s, when Pierre Clastres brought to light the existence of a non-coercive power in so-called primitive societies, inviting anthropologists to abandon their prejudices and ethnocentrism.[9] More recently, James C. Scott has challenged the idea that the state was the natural consequence of the appearance of agriculture and the adoption of more sedentary lifestyles. Indeed, Scott has highlighted resistance to the development and imposition of the state.[10] Some medievalists have taken an interest in this development and the tools it provides better to define certain

7 Ibid., 338–52; Bobková and Bartlová, *Velké dějiny*, vol. 4b, 340–62. For more details, see Hlaváček, "Haft"; Hlaváček, "König Wenzel (IV.)"; and more recently, see: Schmidt, "Druhé zajetí"; Oertel, "Vorgeschichte."

8 Spěváček, *Václav*, 358–59; Bobková and Bartlová, *Velké dějiny*, vol. 4b, 384–87; Čornej, *Velké dějiny*, vol. 5, 73–79.

9 Clastres, S*ociété*.

10 Scott, *Grain*.

phenomena of modernity that have their roots in the Middle Ages and differ in their medieval phase from what they would later become.[11]

Without losing sight of the pragmatic character of political events and alliances, I am therefore interested (I) in this opposition group and, in particular, in the ways in which it justified its positions and sought to depict itself. I (II) situate it in a tradition of revolts and claims and in a strong ideology developed by the nobility in Bohemia and (III) underline the strategy of the league. My intention is to call attention to a diversity of state models in the Middle Ages and thus go against an essentially canonical interpretation, which had embraced a linear model according to which the modern state (inevitably and evolutionarily) overcame the medieval state.

The League of Lords

At the end of the fourteenth century, the League of Lords emerged as an oppositional group of noblemen dissatisfied with the rule of King Wenceslas. The movement was characterized by a strong group identity. To formalize their action and their mission statement, they published a letter on May 5, 1394:

> In Prague, May 5, 1394. We Jošt, Margrave and Lord of Moravia, Henry of Rožmberk and Lord of Krumlov, Henry the Elder of Hradec, Břenek of Skála, Bergow of Bílina, Berka of Hohenstein in Saxony, Wilém of Landštejn, Jan Michalec of Michalovice, Boreš the Younger of Bečov and Rýzmberk, Boček of Kunštátu, otherwise known as Poděbrad, the lords of Bohemia, all confess by this letter, unanimously and manifestly, that we have entered into such a covenant and such a promise between ourselves, and that we all have entered into and are entering into such a covenant, and that we promise to hold one another faithfully without guile under our good faith and honor: that we all will and ought to be in unity, and to seek the good of the land, and to bring forth and do the truth in the land, and so to stand together always, that we may lead all the good of the land before us, faithfully helping one another without guile, according to all our faith and according to our honor, each of us and all of us together, with all the power that we each have without guile. And whosoever any of us or any of ours by any act whatsoever shall by any means press him out of the course of the land, or out of the finding of the manor, he is one

11 Forrest, "Medieval History."

> of us and we promise faithfully to help and to stand by him, that it may not be done to him, but that it may be done to every man.[12]

This letter begins with the names of the founding members of the League followed by the "lords of Bohemia," the few nobles mentioned claiming to embody the interests of the whole group and even of the whole country (the word "land" / *zemský* – *země* appears four times in this short excerpt), although they of course spoke only for themselves. This claim to represent all is a typical illustration of *repraesentatio identatis* (representation-identity), which postulates that the part that represents is totally identical to the whole represented (pars pro toto) and which was formalized during the great councils of the fifteenth century (although this does not rule out its earlier existence).[13] Considerable emphasis is put on consensus: "we all acknowledge by this letter, unanimously and manifestly." This is typical of the medieval nobility: against the power of one monarch, the lords emphasized their communal organization as more valuable because it was more just.[14] The action was intended to be in the name of all the Czech lords (the adjective "all" appears seven times), and the vocabulary insists on a promise, communal action, and mutual support within the group. This is called *jednota*, union, or the *pásnká jednota* in Czech, and it is usually translated as "league of lords" by scholars.

The lords' action was given legitimacy by their association as a community and the contention that this community was acting for the common good. This conviction was embedded in the philosophy of Aristotle, who postulated that "any community was made for some good."[15] The "community" was eternal

12 "V Praze, 5 mág 1394: My Jošt markrabě a pán Moravský, Jindřich z Rožmberka a pán na Krumlově, Jindřich starší z Hradce, Břeněk z Skály, Bergow z Bíliny, Berka z Hohenštejna v Sasku, Wilém z Landštejna, Jan Michalec z Michalovic, Boreš mladší z Bečova a Rýzmberka, Boček z Kunštátu jinak řečený z Poděbrad, páni čeští, všichni jednostejně a zjevně listem tímto vyznáváme, že jsme v takú mezi sebú úmluvu a v taký slib my všichni svrchupsaní vstúpili a vstupujem, a to sobě věrně beze lsti pod věrú naší dobrú a pode cti držeti slibujeme: tak jménem, že chceme a máme všichni my v jednotu býti, a zemském dobrého hledati, a pravdu v zemi ploditi a činiti, a tak vždy po tej spolu státi, abychom před se všechno zemské dobré snažně vedli, věrně beze lsti sobě pomáhajíce, podle vší své víry a podlé své cti, každý z nás i všichni spolu, svú vši moci beze lstí, co jí každý míti možem. A koho by kolivěk z nás nebo koho z naších kterýmkolivěk činem kdo kdy kterak tisknúti chtěl mimo zemský běh nebo mimo nález panský, toho tomu máme a slibujeme věrně pomáháti a po něm silně státi, aby se vždy jemu toho nedálo, než aby se každému právě stalo." Spěváček, *Václav*, 232, transcription of: *Archiv Český*, vol. 1, 52–53; *Codex diplomaticus Moraviae*, vol. 12, 184–85, no. 189.

13 On the concept of representation in the Middle Ages, see Zimmermann, *Begriff*, 233–35; Hofmann, *Repräsentation*, 214–19.

14 Adde, "Communauté."

15 Sère, "Aristote."

through the perpetual succession of its members *(communitas non moritur)*, and thus it embodied stability. In the hierarchy of medieval values, the collegial structure of the community provided a permanent consensus, very much in contrast with a mortal individual, who was inconstant in action and motivated by his own interests.

The regular emphasis on concepts of "community" and "assistance" overshadows the fact that the nobility was actually disunited. First, not all of them had joined the league. The loyalists included Prokop of Moravia and Jan Zhořelecký, the cousin and the brother of the king, respectively. On June 7, Jan Zhořelecký published a manifesto to fight the League. He gathered an army of the king's loyalists and marched on Prague. The troops secretly took the king away from Prague. After a short stay at the Rosenberg castles of Příběnice, Český Krumlov and Vítkův Kámen, Wenceslas was interned at the Wildberg Castle of Stahremberk in Upper Austria. Jan Zhořelecký eventually obtained his release (August 1, 1394) in return for promises of impunity and certain concessions.[16] Secondly, tensions also existed within the league.[17]

In the letter written by the League, the king was not explicitly addressed, even though the letter implicitly claimed to correct his errors. The Lords indicated that they wanted to protect "the good of the realm" and "increase the amount of truth" in the country, thus implying that "the good" and "the truth" were not respected anymore. The medieval king was bound to the political society under his rule. From the twelfth century on, the Paulinian (and theocratic) concept of power, which had dominated society until then, was replaced by a contractual one, which recognized political society as a partner of the ruler, who could not be the owner of all the property of his subjects anymore.[18] With the transformations of the modalities of domination which had led to the increase of central power and, simultaneously, to the increased need for the ruler to be able to count on intermediaries (the nobility, the cities), the idea of representativeness, of adequacy between the policy of the sovereign and the expectations of the community of the land, the *communitas regni* (*zemská obec* or community of the land in Czech), had emerged distinctly in the collective imagination.[19] Many sources and testimonies clearly show that the capacity to

16 Spěváček, *Václav*, 235–40; Bobková and Bartlová, *Velké dějiny*, vol. 4b, 346. See the text of Jan's manifesto in *Codex diplomaticus Moraviae*, vol. 12, 194–95, no. 202.

17 Novotný, "Ráj," 223–24.

18 Coleman, "Individual," 2; Szűcs, "Historical Regions," 149.

19 Barthélemy, *Communitas*.

embody the interests of all and to respond as adequately as possible to them had become essential in power struggles, struggles that increasingly involved all subjects, whose appreciation was increasingly decisive because of the generalization of a contractual conception and practice of power.[20] In Bohemia, the lords of the League claimed to be the only ones able to ensure the common good.

Appealing to this notion of the common good, the Czech lords attacked Wenceslas for his alleged failures. Their criticism aimed at the king's purported neglect of political affairs and permanent recourse to members of lower nobility to govern with him. We find here again the *topos* of the bad adviser, a classic figure in medieval political thought.[21] The common good was therefore respected only when the king ruled in concert with the lords, i.e. the high nobility, and took care of the country's affairs, both being linked: when the king collaborated with the lords, he was taking care of the country.

In *Nová rada* (New Council), Smil Flaška of Pardubice clearly formulated these claims. Smil's views capture the perceptions of the frustrated nobility. He had joined the Union in 1395. He was the nephew of Ernest of Pardubice (1344–1364), archbishop of Prague and close advisor to King Charles IV (1346–1378). Another of his uncles, Bohuš of Pardubice, also belonged to King Charles' entourage. Together with his father William, who had become the sole heir to (and administrator of) the family's possessions after the death of his brothers (Ernest, Bohuš, and Smil the Elder), our Smil (the Younger) personally experienced the king's arbitrariness. On the death of Smil the Elder, the king had unjustifiably exercised the right of escheat and had seized the town of Pardubice from his family. Smil and his father had embarked on a legal battle (1384–1385) which had ended in defeat. In 1390, when they had appealed, the royal court *(zemský soud)* had rendered its verdict in favor of the king.[22]

In *Nová rada*, which became a major text in Czech literature, the new, inexperienced king summons the animals to give him advice "for the country's order and peace" (line 50).[23] 44 animals give their advice. There are 54 in all, if we add those who are mentioned but do not speak. The lion is thus a good

20 Watts, *Making*; Blockmans et al., *Interactions*; Schneidmüller, "Herrschaft"; Genet, *Consensus*; Damen, Haemers, and Man, *Representation*.

21 Rosenthal, "The King"; Nederman, "No Bad Kings."

22 Bobková and Bartlová, *Velké dějiny*, vol. 4b, 348–52.

23 I refer here to the verses as presented in the edition mentioned in the bibliography, Smil Flaška z Pardubic, *Nová rada*.

king, respectful of his collaborators and concerned with their advice for the common good. The calls to sleep soundly (made by the bear, 588), to eat and drink beyond measure (made by the bear, 587, the wolf, 702, 707, and the goose, 992), to follow one's desires (made by the fox, 1398–1401), or to isolate oneself and shirk responsibility (made by the cockerel, 1330–1332) correspond to the vices attributed to Wenceslas IV, who did not hesitate to isolate himself in his residences in Křivoklát or Kunratice, in the middle of the forest, to escape the tumult and his responsibilities and to indulge in hunting.[24] Along with the wolf, who is already looking forward to the feasts he will be able to have in exchange for services rendered to the king (730, 738–740), and the fox, who hopes to manipulate the king by flattering him (1382–1387), they all embody bad advisors of low social backgrounds, with whom Wenceslas allegedly had surrounded himself.

The leopard explicitly advises the king not to take commoners (488) but only "noble men" into his council, which should be small (491). He also enjoins him to respect the order and precedence of everyone (508) and not to neglect the prelates (510). The lesser nobility and merchants are openly scorned by the crane for their greed and their craving for social ascendancy via the purchase of offices (crane 645–675), a remark that directly echoes the criticisms of the League of Lords but is also a leitmotif of nobiliary literature.

In Smil's text, the bad influence of these advisors is canceled out by the good advice given by the other animals and especially by the final prayer of the swan. Written by one of the members of the league, *Nová rada* delivered a powerful message in these troubled times. From its foundation, the League had a strong identity, inscribed in a century of vernacular literature, which founded Czech noble ideology.[25]

The Czech Nobility, a Tradition of Revolts and Claims and a Strong Ideology

Although they did not formulate any clear program in writing, the lords' revolt and their demands were part of a long tradition. Written around 1310, the *Chronicle of the so-called Dalimil* represented the first formulation of the political

24 While it was a source of social prestige everywhere in the rest of Europe, hunting was perceived negatively in medieval Czech chronicles and the medieval Czech political sphere in general. When practiced by the king, it signified his disinterest in the affairs of the country and the lords who were supposed to govern with him. On this traditional image in the Czech lands, see Adde, *Bon chasseur*.

25 Adde, "Idéologie."

program of the lords in the context of succession crises after the extinction of the Přemyslid dynasty in 1306. Such a crisis was an opportunity to reconfigure the political order. Dalimil (the alleged author, though it is worth noting that the chronicle contains information from other chronicles written in Latin) took advantage of the threat of the Habsburgs to point out the danger represented by all Germans, even those of Bohemia, and thus to cast suspicion on the burghers of the country who were mostly German. At the same time, he showed that a good king was a king who worked with the lords, calling on the latter to fulfill their mission, i.e. to watch over the king and intervene if he were to prove too abusive. Dalimil condemns dissent motivated by personal aspirations.[26] Nevertheless, there are cases when revolt becomes necessary. Three great revolts (1247–1249, 1276–1277, and 1288–1290) were considered justified: the nobles opposed the pro-German policy of the kings Wenceslas I (1205–1253), Přemysl Ottokar II (1253–1278), and Wenceslas II (1278–1305) and their resulting exclusion from political affairs.[27] Dalimil presents these revolts as having been a necessity for the common good.

Dalimil goes so far as to wish for a new type of political system in which the king would be elected by the community of the land, i.e. the lords, in accordance with the principle of representation-identity mentioned above, according to which the part that represents is absolutely identical to the whole represented. He claims to be concerned about the risks involved in the link between power and the person of the king in the context following the murder of King Wenceslas III, and he insists that the king is stronger if elected.[28] In reality, if the king were to be elected, the nobility would be stronger as the main agent in the decision making process. Only through powerful noblemen could the state (and the ruler) enjoy greater stability. We have here an illustration of the theory of the king's two bodies. The political (or mystical) body is embodied by the community of the

26 Adde, *Chronique*.

27 On these revolts, see Adde, "Fragility."

28 "When the succession to the throne is natural, / if you kill the duke, his mother is not able to provide a new one. / But when the duke is chosen by election, / his death causes little damage. / Some people request the duke's death, / especially those who have some hope for themselves. / Let them know that when the duke was elected, / it is not possible to not get rid of him" [Kteréž kniežě po přirození vschodí, / když jeho zabijí, mátě jeho druhé neurodí. / Ale kteréž kniežě volenie rodí, / toho kniežěcie smrt nemnoho škodí / Neb někteří jich smrti žádají / ti najviece, již k témuž čáku jmají. / Vězte, když volením knězem kde móže býti, / toho kniežěte nikte nemóž zbaviti]. *Staročeská Kronika*, vol. 2, 150–52 (chap. 65, v. 31–38).

kingdom, itself represented by the nobility, and is able by its nature to overcome all the misfortunes (disease, aging, unexpected death) which can befall the king.[29]

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the nobility had developed a strong political self-awareness thanks to texts presenting its views and claims and the repeated crises, which allowed its members to become active again regularly and thus consolidate and even expend their achievements. The first such crisis occurred just after the death of Přemysl Ottokar II (1278). His young son Wenceslas II was kidnaped by his regent, Otto of Brandebourg. During the king's absence (1279–1283), the nobility ruled the country, convening the kingdom's first general diet in 1281.[30]

The second crisis started after the death of Wenceslas III, which led to the extinction of the Přemyslid dynasty. Following the short reign of Rudolf of Habsburg on the Czech throne (1306–1307), the new king, Henry of Carinthia, failed to win unanimous support in the kingdom. The abbots and lords of Bohemia began to negotiate with their suzerain and the new king of the Romans, Henry of Luxembourg (1308–1313). Henry's son Jean de Luxembourg became king (1310–1346). The newly elected King of Bohemia had to accept many demands from the nobility in the form of the *Inaugural Diplomas*. According to some stipulations, he could name only Czechs to principal offices and as members of his council. He also had to seek authorization from the lords to levy taxes.[31] The Czech nobility managed to use the weakness of the king, a young foreigner, to impose itself as the embodiment of the nation and thus as the king's indispensable partner.[32]

A new conflict between the lords and King John of Luxembourg which occurred in 1315–1318 confirmed the lords' achievements of 1310. In 1313, the death of Henry of Luxembourg meant for John the loss of the support of his father and the title of imperial vicar, which had given him the right to have

29 Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*.

30 On these events, see Jan, *Václav II*, 47–48. See also the report of the diet, RBM, vol. 2, no. 1238, 535–36.

31 According to the Inaugural Diplomas, the king had: 1. to name only "regnicoles" to the great royal offices and in his council; 2. to seek authorization from the barons to levy taxes except to finance royal marriages and coronations; 3. to respect the right of the nobility not to participate in the personal wars of the king; 4. to accept the reform of the right of escheat: to ensure that the domains no longer fall into the domain of the king when there is no male heir, all descendants both masculine and feminine up to the fourth degree are allowed to inherit. *Codex Juris Bohemici*, 19–22, no. 11.

32 See Chaloupecký, "Diplomy"; Bobková and Bartlová, *Velké dějiny*, vol. 4b, 26–31; Bobková, *Jan*, 75–80; Jan, "Nástin," 257. On the power-sharing situation between the nobility and the king, see Adde, "Représentation."

foreign advisors as an imperial vicar. The attacks of the Hungarian magnate Máté (III) Csák († 1321) and the lasting instability it created in Moravia further complicated the situation. The king needed the support of the Czech lords, whose military aid in the Moravian crisis came with the condition that the king would dismiss his foreign advisors and officers. In October 1315, Henry of Lipá, leader of this tumultuous nobility, was arrested under the pressure of the queen and accused of having plotted with John's adversary Frederick of Habsburg. At the same time, John had to leave Bohemia to support Louis of Bavaria and to settle the equally complex situation in Luxembourg. The Czech lords intended to exploit the lack of a central authority. Henry of Lipá was released in April 1316 thanks to the pressure of his ever-growing camp. Ostracized, Queen Elizabeth had appealed to foreign mercenaries to assist her in her task, which further increased her political isolation. John came back to Bohemia in November 1317. At the same time, Henry of Lipá formed an official alliance with Frederick of Habsburg (December 27, 1317), which was joined by a great part of the nobility. Faced with this ever-stronger opposition, John called on Louis of Bavaria for help. Louis arrived at Cheb (Eger) on March 20, 1318. John wanted to organize a military expedition with the emperor against the treacherous barons, but the other players wanted to avoid such a risky conflict. The consequence was the signing of the *Domažlice agreements* on April 24, 1318. John had to confirm the commitments of the *Inaugural diplomas*.[33]

The nobility had also taken a stand against Charles IV and his project of bringing the nobility into line with the *Maiestas carolina*, a legal code written in 1350–1351 the aim of which was to increase royal power. Included among its provisions were sections granting the right to judge criminal cases solely to the king and other rights giving the king greater control over functionaries to increase royal revenues. In 1355, the nobility finally rejected the code at the General Diet. Rather than let the matter come to an open conflict with the nobility, Charles preferred in the end to abandon the whole project.[34]

By the end of the fourteenth century, the nobles had merged their stances during these episodes into a coherent synthesis, combining the political vision of the aforementioned *Chronicle of the so-called Dalimil* and a developed legal literature. The *Romžberk Book (Kniha Romžberská)*[35] was a handbook intended for the noble land court or "šlechtický zemský soud." It dates from the first half

33 Bobková and Bartlová, *Velké dějiny*, vol. 4b, 49–58; Bobková, *Jan*, 99–121.

34 *Maiestas*: Kejř, "Die sogenannte Maiestas"; Nodl, "Maiestas"; Spěváček, "Řešení."

35 Fiedlerová, "K otázce."

of the fourteenth century, but additions were regularly made to it during the fourteenth century, depending on the needs of the nobility. It is the oldest legal book written in Czech. The book systematically codifies the common law and includes contemporary regulations. It contains not only legal provisions, but also advice on how to use them in practice. The book was the initiated by Petr I of Rožmberk, "nejvyšší zemský sudí," i.e. the High Court Judge of the Kingdom of Bohemia. Through his position and high office, Petr embodied the ideal of the great lord who worked with the king and was aware of and attached to the privileges of the nobility.[36] He belonged to an important noble family and had married one of the daughters of the aforementioned Henry of Lipá.

Another particularity of the nobiliary culture at the time of the League was, paradoxically, its appropriation and assimilation of Charles IV's legacy, despite its opposition to the *Maiestas Carolina* four decades earlier. In the time of John on Luxembourg (1310–1346), the nobility had similarly presented itself as the guarantor of the Přemyslid legacy against the so-called "foreign king." This was despite its enduring conflict with the Přemyslid kings during the thirteenth century.[37] Once dead and extinguished, the king and the dynasty no longer represented any threat. The dead king and the dynasty served as symbols of the state under the rule of a failed sovereign, as John of Luxembourg and Wenceslas IV were in the eyes of the Czech nobility. They also allowed the nobility to affirm itself as the defender of this state or statehood which was not attached to the ruling king but to a tradition, and thus depersonalized. An idealized vision of Charles IV was soon used to criticize Wenceslas IV, who was presented as his antithesis.[38] The shadow of Charles IV is easily identifiable, for instance in the manuscripts possessed by the Romžberk family, a powerful family which had taken part in all campaigns and plots against the Bohemian kings from the thirteenth century to the time of the League.[39] Of the 23 manuscripts of the *Maiestas Carolina* (twelve by Charles and eleven by his brother John-Henry, then heir to the Bohemian throne), two (one of each) were kept in the Romžberk Archives in Český Krumlov, while the others were kept in the Royal Archives.[40]

36 Lavička and Šimúnek, *Páni z Rožmberka*. This family was also strongly involved in the League of Zelená Hora (1465–1471) created againt George of Poděbrady. On the League of Zelená Hora, see Šandera, "The League."

37 Přemysl Ottokar's defeat against Rodolphe of Habsburg in 1278 was caused by the noblemen who had joined the king of the Romans. Žemlička, *Přemysl Otakar*, 443–76; Vaníček, *Velké dejiny*, vol. 3, 190–96.

38 Hübner, "Herrscher."

39 Henry of Rožmberk is mentioned in the manifesto of the League. Cf. above.

40 Hergemöller, "Einleitung," XI.

Only the Romžberk family possessed this text, testifying to their power and their interest in it. The manuscript ÖNB, cod. 619 [1396], held at the Austrian National Library and containing the *Vita Caroli IV* (Charles IV's autobiography) and the *Ordo ad coronandum Regem Boemorum* (Coronation Order of the Bohemian kings, written by Charles IV), was also in possession of the Romžberk family before it became part of the collection of the Austrian National Library.[41] The destiny of Ondřej of Dubá (circa 1320–1412/1413) is another example of this new interweaving of Charles' legacy and the nobiliary ideology, emerging at the turn of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Ondřej belonged to the high nobility of Bohemia (lords of Dubá, Benešovici). He joined the League after briefly supporting Wenceslas. In 1394–1395 and again in 1402, however, he wrote a legal book, *Zemské právo*, which quoted extensively from the *Maiestas carolina*.[42] A convolute reconstituted by Naďa Štachová offers an illustrative example of this new and surprising synergy. This convolute contained three medieval manuscripts, Cerr. A, Cerr. B, and Cerr. C, named after the collector, Cerroni. This enormous set included both Dalimil's nobiliary chronicle and the chronicle of Pulkava of Radenín, written for Charles IV, as well as Ondřej of Dubá's legal book and the Book of Rožmberk.[43] Despite his desire to bring the nobility into line, King Charles managed to symbolize the unity between the nobility and the state as St. Wenceslas had done for the nobility of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. This does not mean that the nobility did not change over time (quite the contrary). But the group had succeeded in establishing a process of resistance to the ruler by systematically presenting itself as the protector of the common good and accumulating and synthesizing in its favor voices from many different horizons.

The Strategy of the League, Agency, and the Meaning of Revolt

The main grievance of the lords was the hegemony enjoyed at the court by the king's favorites of low social background, to the detriment of the high nobility, especially the high positions occupied by Zikmund Huler, a burgher from the town of Prague, Jira of Roztoky, and Jan Čůcha of Zásada, both members of the low nobility.

41 ÖNB, cod. 619, inscription written inside the cover of the Ms.

42 Spěváček, *Václav*, 495.

43 Štahová, "Cerroniho sborník."

However, as shown by Robert Novotný, Wenceslas' court was, on the contrary, marked by an overrepresentation of the high nobility in comparison with his contemporaries, such Rupert of the Palatinate, Ludwig III of the Palatinate, or the Dukes of Bavaria,[44] and also in comparison with his predecessor Charles IV, as shown by Peter Moraw.[45] If we look at the list of the *podkomoří* (chamberlains) of Bohemia, the most important office of the kingdom, we can observe that the change had started already under Charles IV, the last member of the high nobility occupying this prestigious office having been Henry of Lipá under John of Luxembourg.

Robert Novotný found 160 speakers and advisors at Wenceslas' Court. He could not identify the social origins of seven of them. 46 belonged to the clergy. 108 were lay people. Among the latter, seven were of burgher origin, 32 belonged to the lower nobility, and 61 belonged to the higher nobility.[46] It was thus precisely when they were most favored and when they actually dominated Wenceslas' court that the lords decided to rebel. Robert Novotný considered this a paradox which could only be explained by tensions and divisions within the nobility and competition among the main families of the kingdom, based on long-standing power-kinship ties, though he does not explain which ones were at play.[47]

If the lords were dominant in state structures, why were they complaining? This is a judgment that has traditionally been made about revolts. The actions of the nobles appear so unsuited to the context. But it would be a mistake to look for coherence in reactions, especially in the political sphere. It is a bias of the historian to expect more coherence from individuals of past societies than from his contemporaries. We are not surprised by the incoherence of the politicians of our time, and we should accept that people capable of similar incoherence in the Middle Ages. Moreover, it is a misconception to link revolts to injustice, oppression, or misery. If injustice and oppression were present in the discourse of medieval rebels, they were not necessarily realities. As Ernest Mandel has shown in his work on May 1968 and the contradictions of neo-capitalism, an economic boom and access to a more comfortable standard of living generated new needs, and this in turn allowed for a more accurate grasp of the existing inequalities, which increased resentment and frustration until these sentiments

44 Novotný, "Ráj," 225; Moraw, "Beamtentum," 87–109.

45 Moraw, "Räte," 287–88.

46 Novotný, "Ráj," 224.

47 Ibid., 223.

ultimately tore apart the social frameworks.[48] Similarly, it was precisely the domination of the state apparatus by the Czech high nobility that allowed the lords to revolt at the end of the fourteenth century. The lords were not driven by injustice and demands made by the king. Rather, they merely intended to take advantage of the strong position they enjoyed, while gaining even more power and profiting of the weakness of Wenceslas' rule in Bohemia and in the empire.

Studies of medieval revolt have almost invariably organized themselves around the concept of the state as the arena within which the revolts take place and take on meaning. Whether from a top-down perspective. as in the case of the histories written in the nineteenth century, or from a bottom-up Marxist perspective, as in many of the twentieth-century narratives, revolt is seen as an anomaly and a reaction against either arbitrariness or state excess. More recently, historians have increasingly shown that the "rise of the state" was a dialogic process in which the governed had considerable agency, often clamoring for more government rather than less.[49] We have to interpret the acts of the lords from this perspective: the members of the League were protagonists in the political sphere with their own views, their own forms of agency, and their own expectations.

The League of Bohemian lords was neither the result of a moment of panic among desperate members of an old, frail nobility (as the traditional secondary literature has tended to claim)[50] nor a disorderly and thoughtless attempt to preserve the feudal system or to satisfy the interests of the nobility (as the more recent literature has suggested). The creation of the League and the various steps it took were part of a political undertaken aimed at increasing the power of one clan over another in much the same way as the political parties of today clamor and scheme for power. No one would qualify the behavior of today's political parties as immature or inconsistent, and we should be similarly cautious about applying these kinds of terms to political protagonists of the past. The Czech lords were merely playing the political game of their time.

48 Mandel, *Commune.*

49 Firnhaber-Baker, and Schoenars, "Introduction."

50 This is actually the narrative of the high nobility and the Church.

Conclusion

Modern historiography has been dominated by the Weberian concept of the state's "monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force in the enforcement of its order."[51] Violence exerted by "non-state" or "non-royal" actors is then logically considered inherently a disorderly usurpation of governmental prerogatives, which is also in line with the view expressed by the central authority. However, the state in the late Middle Ages was much more polycentric, multi-layered, and diffuse than modern governments.[52] For this reason, some historians, such as John Watts, are hesitant to speak of a state and prefer to use the word "polity."[53] Even if the debate is open-ended,[54] I still prefer to speak of a state insofar as medieval sources attest the existence of a central and sovereign authority that had developed during the Middle Ages, with its own bureaucracy and specific regalian rights.[55] The action of the League should be situated in this multi-layered and fluid architecture.

To consider the members of the League real political protagonists is also to distance oneself from the traditional, teleological, and ideological narrative on the history of the state, as described by Ian Forrest:

> Generally, state growth is treated as a "good" (without justification) because in most liberal historiography and social science writing modern states are considered as good, and all that stands in the way of this growth is discredited. We see this in the language used to describe change in the history of state power: the verbs "to grow" and "to decline" set the pattern of positive/negative binaries, while abstract nouns such as "consolidation" and "fragmentation," and adjectives like "strong" and "weak" add to the normative discourse in which political history is habitually written.[56]

As a group that destabilized the king's authority, the League was necessarily seen as an immature and thoughtless enterprise driven by the interests of a disunited nobility.

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51 Weber, *Economy*, 54.

52 Forrest, "Medieval History."

53 Watts, *Making*. See also Dunbabin, "Government"; Moraw, "Herrschaft"; Schubert, "Landesherrschaft."

54 On this debate, see Davies, "State"; Reynolds, "There Were States."

55 Genet, *Genèse*.

56 Forrest, "Medieval History"; Bourdieu, "King."

In reality, the League offered an alternative view on the state through a political culture synthetizing the traditional nobiliary expectations as presented in the *Chronicle of the so-called Dalimil*, Smil Flaška's *New Council*, and the legal literature with Charles IV's legacy. By using the same infrastructure and the same ideology as the ruler and the state apparatus, the League contributed to develop and consolidate the state and statehood. Generally, protest does not reflect unease with the growing reach of government, but dissatisfaction with its limitations.

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Hungarian Historical Review 13, no. 2 (2024): 235–260

"The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly" – The Impossible Term "Propaganda" and Its Popular and Anti-Royal Uses in Luxembourg Bohemia (ca. 1390–1421)*

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The article follows two paths. First, it deals with the genealogy of the concept of propaganda and the ambiguities and vagaries of the term associated with it. On the one hand, this concept is decisively shaped by modern prerequisites. On the other hand, it has characteristics that make it a timeless element of political communication. Because of the strong influence of modern phenomena on what we have come to understand as propaganda, the application of this term to premodern examples works only if the communicative context is emphasized, including the historical and social background, the strategies of the propagandist, the propagandist's sense of the most effective means of swaying a certain target public, etc. Second, the focus is on parallel manifestations of propaganda in Bohemian society in the decades before the Hussite Wars (1390–1420). One can identify two of the functions of the propaganda of the time: it was used to deepen and spread the Hussite reformist thinking among the general population and to subject the respective Luxembourg kings, Wenceslas IV and Sigismund of Luxembourg, to harsh criticism. There were few points of contact between the two forms of propaganda used to further these two goals, since they addressed different social groups, but their effectiveness clearly demonstrates how far-reaching the impact of political propaganda could be in the fifteenth century.

Keywords: medieval propaganda, pre-Hussite Bohemia, Luxembourg dynasty, Wenceslas IV, Sigismund of Luxembourg

Good terms are all alike. Every bad term is bad in its own way. The latter applies in particular to the term propaganda when applied to pre-modern phenomena. The term has been subjected to particular scrutiny in the German secondary literature, mainly because of its ideological framing in the Nazi-era. One could raise

* This study was supported by grant no. 19-28415X "From Performativity to Institutionalization: Handling Conflict in the Late Middle Ages (Strategies, Agents, Communication)" from the Czech Science Foundation (GA ČR). It relies on the Czech Medieval Sources online database provided by the LINDAT/CLARIAH-CZ research infrastructure (https://lindat.cz) supported by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Czech Republic (project no. LM2018101).

 DOI 10.38145/2024.2.235

many objections to its use. First, the term itself only emerged in the seventeenth century and therefore cannot be applied to communication strategies used in the Middle Ages. Moreover, it only began to acquire the meanings and connotations it has today in the nineteenth century, because it was only in this period that it became the powerful instrument of political influence used by actors in the public sphere to form parties.[1] Furthermore, its definitions were modelled on modern ideas of the public and the media. Some voices have suggested that, given the comparative dearth of sources from pre-modern centuries and the very different nature of the public sphere and the political languages of the times, we can refer to the communication and persuasion strategies that were in use as propaganda-like at most. Most phenomena of political communication between rulers and the ruled could be explained using the methods introduced by Hagen Keller and Gerd Althoff in the 1980s[2] for the study of symbolic communication and ritual. Their theses concerning the political culture of the Middle Ages, which primarily relied on visual and oral forms of communication as source material, are based on examples from the early and high Middle Ages. Here, the main medium was not writing but sophisticated sign systems and symbolically charged acts, including gestures and rituals. All rulers, i.e. kings, emperors, and also the pope, relied in their communication on this spectrum of non-verbal instruments of power. After all, the symbols comprising these semiotic systems were universally recognized political instruments that could be used to express both consent and dissent.

For football enthusiast Gerd Althoff, medieval rule had a lot in common with a game governed by fixed rules that were binding for both parties.[3] They included publicly celebrated rituals of rule, such as petitions or acts of submission, but also controlled expressions of emotion, i.e. the notorious tears of the king, which he could allegedly shed at will.[4] The main argument is compelling: in a time without universally binding international law or corresponding procedures, compliance with these rules served to secure an urgently needed peace. At the same time, these diplomatic habits appear as a hermetic discourse used among powerful elites that could hardly be accurately characterized as propaganda in the modern

1 Schieder and Dipper, "Propaganda."

2 Among the many publications in which this approach has been used, the following provide the most up-to-date overviews: Althoff, *Inszenierte Herrschaft;* Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale;* Keller, "The Privilege," 75–108; Keller, "Gruppenbildungen," 19–32; Keller, "Mündlichkeit – Schriftlichkeit," 277–86.

3 On this concept, see Althoff, *Spielregeln*; Althoff, "Demonstration," 229–57.

4 Among the critics of the concept, sometimes polemical: Dinzelsbacher, *Warum weint der König*. More general: Buc, "The monster," 441–52; Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual.*

sense. Seen from the early and high medieval playing field, this may be true. But this idea of political balance is also one that largely excludes any interaction with external disruptive elements, or to stick with the football metaphor, a swearing coach on the sidelines or the effects of a pyrotechnical rumble in the stands.

The wider variety of sources from the Late Middle Ages, however, confronts us with political facts that can only be explained as the effects of propaganda in the modern sense of the word. One might think, for instance, of the significant number of negative legends that tarnish the historiographic image of kings and queens. Often, these legends turn out to be byproducts of intra-dynastic squabbles. One could mention the hapless Edward II, the deposed count of Tyrol, John Henry of Luxembourg, or the French queen Isabella of Bavaria, who became the target of England's enemies during the Hundred Years' War.[5]

Much as we collide here with the methodological limits of research on rituals, we must also confront the modern scholarship on models of communication. This scholarship tends almost completely to ignore the pre-modern era and focus instead on the most formative examples of what we have come to understand as propaganda, preferably the mass propaganda created by Josef Goebbels.[6] No wonder. As an object of study, as an example of communicative strategies used to galvanize the masses, this propaganda has much more to offer. First and foremost, it made use of dynamically deployable mass media that was available across all social classes, as well as scientifically measurable interactions between political elites and the citizenry. The study of medieval propaganda offers none of these certainties. First of all, there are no models for this period, in which there were no modern structures of mass communication and the approach to the "public sphere" was completely different. Despite this, the popularity of the term propaganda in medieval studies is unbroken, even if researchers often forget to tell their readers what they mean by it, perhaps in the shy hope that their readership intuitively knows. But there is also an understandable unease associated with the term today, which is why the question of its applicability to pre-modern times is often limited to the search for comparable parameters based on ways in which it has appeared in modern times. This is only partially

5 On Edward II: *Valente, "The deposition," 852–81;* Given-Wilson, *Edward II;* on Queen Isabeau of Baviere, Adams, *The Life and Afterlife;* Clin, *Isabeau de Bavière; On Margarethe Maultasch and the Transition of Tirol from the Luxembourg Dynasty to Habsburg:* Cainelli, "Die Ehetraktate," 235–48; Haidacher and Mersiowsky, *650 Jahre Tirol mit Österreich.*

6 On the omnipresence of Goebbels' propaganda apparatus, Kater, "Inside the Nazis"; Hachmeister and Kloft, *Goebbels-Experiment;* Sösemann. *Goebbels-Propaganda*, 52–76; Schieder and Dipper, "Propaganda," 108–12.

effective, since the manifestations of propaganda, which is a highly amorphous communication phenomenon, often make little sense outside of a specific sociocultural context. But then again, there is something chameleonic about propaganda, such as its timeless characteristics.

Given the ambiguities of the term when applied to different eras, it is necessary to approach its potential usefulness, in medieval studies, from more than one direction. First, we must consider the genealogy of the concept, which calls attention to this versatility. We must then examine forms and uses of propaganda in pre-Hussite Bohemia which show both characteristics: the universal elements of propaganda on the one hand and, on the other, the features of this propaganda (which often addressed several diverse target audiences at the same time) that were specific to Bohemia in the years between 1400 and 1421. In this wide array of propaganda manifestations, the anti-royal examples used against the Luxembourg kings Wenceslas IV and Sigismund of Hungary were only a small side effect of the many crises of the period, which according to modern communication models favored the emergence of propaganda. These crises included the Great Schism, the development of a Czech-centered, spiritual-national reform movement, a royal reign made fragile by power issues and intra-dynastic strife, and the beginning of the confessional Hussite Wars. In the course of these often overlapping conflicts, several defamatory writings were composed which left significant traces in the later historiographical portrayals of Wenceslas and Sigismund.[7] However, chronicles are not at the center of the study, as they represent a category of propaganda that has already been filtered.[8] The focus is more on contemporary sources, such as treatises and manifestos, which even at the time were considered documents which would only be relevant for a comparatively short time. These documents are familiar to the scholarly community, but they have not yet been examined side by side or as a corpus.

Term and Concept

Propaganda, like any communication phenomenon, defies precise definition. It is rather a spectrum of fleeting uses of language and other communication tools the influence of which can be perceived in many different ways. The verb

7 Cf. Hruza, "Audite coeli!" 129–52; Roschek, "König Wenzel IV.," 207–30; Čornej, "Dvojí tvář," 67–115.

8 Studt, "Geplante Öffentlichkeiten," 203–36.

propagare, on which the term is based, comes from early modern biology, where it was used as a synonym for "to expand." "to graft," but also "to reproduce."[9] In the early seventeenth century, when it first appeared, it referred primarily to spiritual growth. In these early days, propaganda was both a missionary instrument and an institution of the Catholic Church.[10] The *Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*, founded for this purpose in 1622, was a subsidiary authority of the Counter Reformation papacy with a permanent office in Rome. Pope Gregory XV had provided it with the necessary bull, and the intention was to provide support for the mission in China and thus help Catholicism play an increasingly global role.[11]

However, it seems that this modest office, the history of which has still not been given a thorough discussion in the secondary literature, also served other purposes. Around a century later, it was described in Zedler's Universal Lexicon as a "contact point for new Christians visiting Rome for the first time." It was meant not only as a point of reference for new bishops from distant colonies who came to visit the Roman shrines for the first time.[12] It also addressed Catholic dignitaries who had been driven out of their dioceses by the Protestants. From the outset, the seat of the *Propaganda Fide* provided not only a place of refuge but also a forum for ideological edification, especially as the house had an printing press of its own which could produce and distribute any number of breviaries and missals.[13]

The French revolutionaries appropriated this idea of an ideological center when they transferred the concept of propaganda from the spiritual to the political sphere at the end of the eighteenth century. They saw themselves as missionaries *(missionaires)* and apostles *(apôtres)* of a global doctrine, the new democratic credo. In 1791, Camile Desmoulins, the French revolutionary and

9 Schieder and Dipper, "Propaganda," 69.

10 The term "propaganda" became the *terminus technicus* for all Christian missionary institutions of every denomination; Schieder and Dipper, "Propaganda," 69.

11 Propaganda is not mentioned in the founding bull (June 22, 1622). However, an excerpt from the founding day reports that the pope had entrusted 13 cardinals with the *negotium propagationis fidei*; Schieder and Dipper, "Propaganda," 69.

12 Zedler, *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon*, vol. 6, 973–74; Art. Congregatio de Propaganda Fide: *Zu Fortpflanzung des Catholischen Glaubens errichtet, und versammelt sich wöchentlich einmahl in Gegenwart des Papstes in einem besondern Palast, der der von gedachtem Gregorio vor dieses Congregation aufgeführet werden, und in welchen diejenigen Personen, so nach Anehmung der Catholischen Religion nach Rom kämen die Heiligthümer zu besuchen, ingleichen vertriebene Bischöffe, und andere Geistliche aufgenomnnen, und verpfleget werden.*

13 Zedler, *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon*, vol. 6, 974. *Es ist auch eine Druckerey daselbst beffindlich, in welcher Breviaria, Missalia et co. gedruckt und von der aus an die Oerter wo es nöthig ist, hingesendet werden.*

cofounder of the Jacobin Club in Paris, equated the task of the Jacobins with that of Catholic *Propaganda Fide*. Like the *Propaganda Fide*, the "propaganda clubs" of the revolutionaries should also further the spread of democratic teachings throughout Europe.[14] These clubs did not exist for long, but it was precisely during the Restoration period that they also promoted the emergence of a conspiracy narrative spread by the advocates of corporatist society. According to this narrative, a secret organized revolutionary network operating out of Paris was responsible for the July Revolution of 1830.[15]

The idea that propaganda helped give every political movement a specific center and form a steady political following only began to be voiced after 1848, when the conservative parties of Europe began to understand the potentials of this tool. At that time, the methods of political propaganda included verbal persuasion but also persuasion by deed, as carried out with bayonets by the Anarchists. The German social democrats and communists distanced themselves from this practice and redefined the term *agitation*, which was based on arguments.[16]

The concept of propaganda received another layer of meaning around 1900, when the fields of sociology and later psychology turned their attention to its effects, making use of methods from emerging disciplines, such as communication sciences, public relations, and propaganda research.[17] This was the birth of American PR and the propaganda concepts of Edgar Bernays who basically invented the profession of propagandist. He understood propaganda as a positive instrument that could be used to promote democracy and the common good, for example in the public health campaigns at the end of World War I, which helped motivate the American (rural) population to be vaccinated against typhoid and typhus.[18]

With his comparatively positive assessment of the uses of propaganda, Bernays was unquestionably in the minority, however. In 1922, Walter Lippmann, who studied the formation of public opinion, pointed at the much more probable

14 The French revolutionaries sought "de propager la vraie liberté." Schieder and Dipper, "Propaganda," 77–79.

15 While the clubs were still demonstrably active in the 1790s, there are no indications in the sources that they were active during the Restoration period. However, there is solid evidence that the institution of Parisian propaganda survived and played an active role in the 1830s. Schieder and Dipper, "Propaganda," 81.

16 Schieder and Dipper, "Propaganda," 94–99.

17 Around 1900, the idea arose that commercial, religious, and political propaganda were basically the same advertising tool, as they all served to persuade a target group, Schieder and Dipper, "Propaganda," 101.

18 Bernays, "Manipulating Public Opinion," 958–71.

dangers of manipulation through the mass media.[19] The experiences of the Nazi era again shifted research on propaganda in the direction of its psychological effects. For Jacques Ellul, the main aim of modern propaganda was to evoke feelings. Its main goal was no longer to change the ways in which people think, but to get them to act in the way the propagandist intended.[20]

But what has changed since 1962, when Ellul formulated his findings? I could share a relevant personal experience. In the autumn semester of 2023, I offered the topic of "Propaganda in the Middle Ages" as an exercise both at the University of Vienna and my home university in Brno in the Czech Republic. I was interested in whether the experiences with propaganda in the Cold War had had an impact on the prevailing perceptions of propaganda among students. They were familiar with propaganda mainly from their parents' experiences. Since propaganda had a much more positive connotation in the countries of Central Europe than in the West, I hoped to find at least some differences.[21] The result was sobering. Instead of historical insights, the students offered me rather gloomy pictures of the present. They perceived propaganda as pure evil, i.e. as a highly ambivalent if not openly dangerous instrument of political manipulation, very much in the spirit of Walter Lippmann. Its main power lay, according to them, in total information control, which is why they associated propaganda with illiberal regimes, extremist political parties, and messianic individuals, all of whom (according to the students) were trying to impose their ideas on a wider public. In doing so, they would rely on strategies ranging from the simplification to the distortion and even the invention of information, or what has now become infamous as alternative facts.[22] The same accounts for constructed images of imaginary enemies, the exploitation of stereotypes, and the use of vulgar language, to name just the most important responses. Neither was there any trace of a positive perception or a historical grasp of the history of propaganda.

19 Lippmann, *Public Opinion*.

20 Ellul, *Propagandes*.

21 Hruza has already pointed out that the term underwent a positive revaluation in the communist countries of Central Europe after World War II, while in the West it was replaced by alternative terms (public relations, marketing methods) due to its strong associations with the Third Reich. Hruza, "Propaganda," 13.

22 The term "fake news" in particular, which was first coined as a means of suggesting that the mainstream sources of news were biased and unreliable and now is often understood more broadly to refer simply to forms of disinformation, propaganda, and hoaxes, is currently put to such a shifting array of uses that it is difficult to predict the latest developments. Cf. Wardle, "Fake news. It's complicated"; Cooke, *Fake news*; Hendricks and Vestergaard, *Postfaktisch*.

It was quite clear that it would be next to impossible to apply these understandings of propaganda to pre-modern phenomena. Today, as empirical experience has confirmed, the concept is highly emotionalized, and understandings of propaganda tend to center around its impacts, which can only rarely be demonstrated in the case of medieval examples. To make the term usable again, it was necessary to get back to the complex web of relations between the propagandist and his target group, i.e. to emphasize the process famously summarized in 1948 by Harold D. Laswell, whose famous model of communication is based on the following question: "Who says what, in which channel, to whom, and with what effect?"[23] It was therefore important to comprehend the multiple levels of interaction between the propagandist and the target group as a playful relationship that finds expression through the chosen channels of information. And one must not forget the craftsmanship of the propagandist. He must know the tastes of his public, prepare the information in a credible way, and choose the channels so as to ensure that his target accepts the information conveyed, whether it is true or not.[24] In addition to choosing the right tools and channels, he must also be clear about the most promising strategies in the respective context.[25] Furthermore, as Umberto Eco has pointed out, most information is ambiguous and can therefore be interpreted in various ways. Effective propaganda therefore requires not only control of the channels but also manipulation of the information content so that the target group gets only the message intended by the propagandist.[26]

As rhetoric became an increasingly important instrument with which to shape political opinion, a broad spectrum of strategies and motifs was developed the effective use of which determined the persuasive quality of the communicative act. Although the effectiveness and availability of some propaganda techniques depend on the specific cultural contexts, we still find similar propaganda techniques in use in almost every period of history. For example, the tactic recognized by Vladimir I. Lenin of simplifying persuasive content or limiting it to a core message that could be understood by as broad a public as possible was

23 Laswell, "The structure," 37.

24 Skill was an aspect to which Josef Goebbels also attached great importance. He saw propaganda as an art form of persuasive communication; cf. Hruza, "Propaganda," 9–10; Doob, "Goebbels' Principles," 419–42.

25 Eco, "Guerilla," 166–77.

26 Ibid., 175.

perfected by Joseph Goebbels, but it had already been put to use in the medieval *ars dictaminis*.[27]

Among these universal truisms of propaganda use is the fact that effective propaganda depends on freely accessible, publicly available information. This information constitutes the foundation of every propaganda invention, since it increases the credibility of the constructed messages. Lies have a special role to play here. According to Goebbels, lies have to be carefully inserted into the propaganda act, as the target audience otherwise may no longer believe the message. However, it has also been true over the ages that the dissemination of persuasive content has been particularly successful when it has been carried out by well-known personalities. Equally efficient and timeless is also the strategy of disseminating persuasive content on many channels simultaneously and, above all, repeating the key messages as often as possible.[28] The latter elements both merit a chapter of their own. Most of the tried and tested strategies are based on familiar (narrative) motifs that change only slightly over time.[29] The communication procedures include the particularly catchy use of oppositions between good and evil and references to the perpetual struggle between the two. Above this conflict lingers a higher power that represents the principle of order and intervenes only to punish or reward. We also encounter the martyr and the principle of self-sacrifice for an idea or community, which is highly topical in the Hussite period. Last but not least, the propagandist may also use humor or parody. The former is known since antiquity as a subversive instrument of the ruled, enabling them to criticize their real or perceived oppressors in public without putting themselves in immediate danger.[30]

27 Schieder and Dipper, "Propaganda," 98–100; Doob, "Goebbels' Principles," 426–28.

28 Propaganda researcher and psychologist Leonard W. Doob was one of the first people to analyze the microfilm versions of Goebbels' diaries in his research on propaganda strategies after World War II. He identified a list of fifteen principles that determine the success of propaganda in a society with modern mass media. Some of these principles are specific to times of war, while others, such as the two characteristics listed, have timeless validity, Doob, "Goebbels' Principles," 423.

29 One of the few historians who has dared look for propaganda structures in the pre-modern era was the British PR specialist and historian Oliver Thompson. His work, published in 1977, contains many terminological inaccuracies, especially for the pre-modern period, but it nevertheless provides a useful overview of recurring narrative motifs used for propagandistic purposes. Thomson, *Mass Persuasion,* 15–23.

30 On the intersection between humor, irony, and political subversion, cf. Schleichert, *Fundamentalisten*; Billig, *Laughter and ridicule;* Eco, *Tra menzogna e ironia;* Morreall, *Laughter and Humor.*

Propaganda against the Luxembourg Kings

The years surrounding the outbreak of the Hussite Revolution have long been known as a period in which propaganda was used in an unprecedented density of transmission across all social classes. Between 1400 and 1420, the leading figures of the Hussite movement in particular succeeded in disseminating the complex content of their theology in a broadly effective, easily understandable way.[31] They utilized all available media and channels and relied in particular on the long-term impact and constant repetition of their messages. Anti-royal propaganda developed against the backdrop of the same crisis-related background. Its propagandists and target audiences belonged to a socially higher and therefore smaller but more educated group. However, they too ultimately used strategies and persuasive instruments that were similar to the tools and techniques used by the Hussites. But what kinds of communication spaces existed in Prague around 1400? The largest of these spaces was tailored to an audience that, according to Thomas Fudge, was illiterate.[32] By this I mean that most city dwellers could read at least reasonably well, which is why the emerging Hussite movement used oral preaching but, above all, combinations of text and image as a means of spreading its ideas. Most common was the convergence of "paint, poetry and pamphlets," often in the form of allegorical images or symbols, to which explanatory or supplementary lines of text were sometimes added and which were carried as a kind of banner in public stagings, such as parodistic processions against ecclesiastical abuses, for example Pope John XXIII's indulgence policy in 1412.[33]

Oral propaganda from the Hussite period consisted mainly of songs and poems, of which the Czech music historian Zdeňek Nejedlý has compiled a significant number from the Hussite period.[34] It would be practically impossible to reconstruct the melodies, but the texts they combine several of the functions mentioned above, with the most important aim being the propagation of the

31 Fudge, *The Magnificent Ride,* 179.

32 Ibid., 180.

33 One of the most notorious satirical processions of 1412 was organized by students and Master Hieronymus of Prague. It was centered around an allegorical chariot decorated with seals in the manner of papal bullae. On it sat a student disguised as a prostitute with bells and jewels on his hands, adorned with imitations of indulgence bullae and offering these bullae to spectators with seductive gestures and flattering words, cf. Šmahel, *Husitská revoluce,* vol. 2, 252–53.

34 The controversial Czech musicologist Zdeňek Nejedlý collected Czech "folk songs" from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century between 1900 and 1913. His *Dějiny husitského zpěvu* (1913) are dedicated to the Hussite period.

movement. Accordingly, the texts reassures all sympathizers and encouraged them to distance themselves from splinter groups and opponents. But they were also intended to motivate members and supporters, including King Wenceslas IV, and sometimes also to persuade them to act in the interests of the movement. At the same time, they used "slander, subversion, and sedition" to belittle their opponents with the entire spectrum of parodistic tricks.[35] Songs and highly mobile groups of singers have always been a tried and tested medium with which to spread specific ideas across social and age boundaries. For the Hussites, they were an excellent form of low–threshold protest in which children could also be involved. The Utraquist priest Jan Čápek, for example, wrote a song for these kinds of groups in 1421, after the surprising victory of the Prague Hussites against Sigismund's crusaders. The aim was to let them proclaim in the streets of Prague that God had personally driven away the thousands of barbarians, Swabians, Saxons of Meissen, and Hungarians who had attacked Bohemia.[36]

This children's song offers an example of one of the forms of propaganda that offers an often unacknowledged advantage to which my students in Brno drew my attention. Songs and slogans are so low-threshold (from the perspective of the complexity of the texts) and positive that reciting, singing, or shouting them can be fun. The children who were taught to love the Soviet Union and despise the West with slogans and songs in school and kindergarten during socialist times did not find these texts offensive either, presumably because the act of reciting or singing them was enjoyable, at least to some degree.[37]

This use of provocative sayings and rhymes was already common in Hussite times. Just like the songs of Soviet times, the songs of the Hussite era could also be memorized by the illiterate. Best known is the phrase "veritas vincit, pravda vítezí," or "the truth prevails," which was incorporated into the

35 Fudge, *The Magnificent Ride,* 188–91.

36 The first verse is the most meaningful in this respect: "Children, let us praise the lord / Honor Him in loud accord! / For He frightened and confounded / Overwhelmed and sternly pounded / All those thousands of Barbarians / Suabians, Misnians, Hungarians / Who have overrun our land." Fudge, *The Crusade*. 81.

37 Little research has been done on the subject of low-threshold propaganda in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. A classic example of this kind of propaganda is the campaign against the "American beetle" (the leptinotarsa decemlineata, or Colorado potato beetle). The regime called on the population to collect these beetles in the 1950s and thus distracted the citizenry from serious domestic political problems. Cf. Formánková, *Kampaň*, 22–38.

official coat of arms of the Czech Republic after 1920 but was initially the battle cry of the socially and linguistically heterogeneous Hussite armies.[38]

If one had to define a place in Prague where the propaganda material of these years reached a density that bears comparison with the ideological and spatial presence of the early modern *Propaganda fidei*, it would be the Bethlehem Chapel in Prague, a propaganda center *avant la lettre*, where the Hussite movement had its spiritual and practical headquarters from 1402 on. The walls of the original chapel were decorated with hymns, defamatory images, and quotations from the works of the leading reformers. There was also an oral element. Jan Hus preached here in Czech at least three times a day between 1402 and 1412, and this gave his words tremendous impact over time.[39]

The situation was different with anti-royal propaganda, for which the Prague public was primarily a sounding board in the years immediately before the Hussite Revolution. Its main media were textual. The surviving pamphlets, tracts, and manifestos directed against Wenceslas IV and his brother Sigismund are exclusively the products of the elites, the clergy, the nobility, their chancellors, and sometimes also university circles.[40] These groups constituted a rather hermetic public sphere, and the general population had little access to their knowledge and intellectual expertise. Anti-royal propaganda was more a political byproduct of the general crisis than a category in its own right. Therefore, its genres are also diverse and range from a sober, legal recording of various gravamina committed by the kings to anonymous Latin lamentations, satirical poems and manifestos often written in several languages.[41] What they have in common is an appealing undertone, which is directed either at the respective king, his supporters, or his opponents, whereby motifs from the criticisms of rulers were used. The arguments touched on two aspects: the morality of the rulers' acts and the legal dimension of these acts. In the course of the fourteenth century, the idea that a tyrant king could be deposed using appropriate legal means became firmly established, such as the idea that depositions were to be implemented by authorized interest groups only.[42] Even if the propaganda

38 Cf. *Kroupa and Veyne, Veritas vincit.*

39 Šmahel, "Reformatio," 264. On the architectural elements of the Bethlehem Chapel in Hus' times, see *Baláček et al., Jan Hus v památkách Prahy.*

40 Cf. Hruza, "Propaganda," 19–21.

41 Cf. Hübner, "Mord und Rufmord," 74–80.

42 The figure of the tyrant, perhaps best exemplified by Emperor Nero, had been a popular motif for bad rule since Suetonius' Imperial Vitae, which was legalized with the Investiture Controversy. Golf, Schanze, and Tebruck, *Tyrannenbilder*; Backhaus. *Tyrann als Topos,* 379–404.

against Wenceslas IV and Sigismund of Luxembourg had different roots and initiators, both were ultimately centered on the highly political question of their suitability as Bohemian or Roman kings.

Why Wenceslas, the eldest son of the extremely successful Emperor Charles IV, was caught in the propagandistic crossfire of his clerical and aristocratic critics is more complex than nineteenth-century historians suggest. Most of these historians considered him simply a bad, lazy, and incompetent king.[43] What is certain is that, in 1378, as the 17-year-old Wenceslas succeeded his great father Charles IV, he had a difficult time from the outset, as he had to deal with problems that were partly due to his position and partly related to the major upheavals of the time.[44] One of these problems was the generational change in the king's crown council, where several politically experienced members from Charles's time were getting old, so the young king lost his immediate protection. Another reason was economic decline, which was reaching Bohemia from the west. This was accompanied by several waves of epidemics, to which Wenceslas's first wife, Joan of Bavaria, fell victim in 1386.

Furthermore, the king's position in the complex structure of Bohemian rule became more vulnerable again, for there were two other powerful stakeholders in the kingdom: the Bohemian barons and the high clergy. Both used the change of rule to force the young king to renegotiate their own rights to rule.[45] The dispute between the five heirs of the House of Luxembourg, i.e. Wenceslas's cousins Margraves Jobst and Prokop of Moravia, and especially Wenceslas's long-term dispute with his younger half-brother Sigismund of Hungary, who plotted with the margraves, also caused upheaval.[46] Wenceslas' Bohemian opponents thus had an opportunity to achieve their goals through pressure from several sides, albeit with changing alliances.

Clouds were also gathering over the empire of which Wenceslas had been head since 1376. Wenceslas had been a thorn in the side of several ecclesiastical electors, in particular the pugnacious Archbishop of Mainz, John II. This was particularly true after his father bought him the Roman crown.[47]

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43 The narrative motif of the "lazy Wenceslas" largely goes back to Piccolomini's *Historia Bohemica* (1458). In the German secondary literature, this image was mainly established by Lindner, *Geschichte,* vol. 1 (1875). The great Bohemian historiographer of the nineteenth century, František Palacký, also preferred to avoid the subject of the elusive king, cf. Činátl, *Dějiny*, 59–66.

44 For a critical look at the political legacy of Charles IV, cf. Rader, *Kaiser Karl der Vierte.*

45 Cf. Klassen, *Nobility;* Šmahel, *Husitská revoluce,* vol. 1, 200–8.

46 Čornej, *Velké dějiny,* vol. 5, 29–32; Čornej, *Dvojí tvář,* 71–80.

47 Sthamer, *Erzbischof Johann II.*

The question of obedience in the Great Schism certainly played a role in this. The young king initially showed open sympathy for his cousin, the French king Charles V, who based his political ambitions on the Avignon papacy. This was a terrifying vision for the Rome-orientated electors, and as far as they were concerned, it had to be avoided at all costs.[48] Ultimately, the European context was far less important for the emergence of the black legend of Wenceslas than the entanglements in Bohemia itself. Although Wenceslas was criticized by many as the exclusive guardian of his father's legacy shortly after the death of Charles IV, the real spark for the construction of his bad reputation was a personal feud between the king and the Archbishop of Prague, John of Jenstein. John had been the king's chancellor in the first years of his reign, but he had left this post as early as 1384 because he had not gotten on with Wenceslas. He too feared Wenceslas' rapprochement with France, but he also took offence at the young king's efforts to break up the church structures that his father Charles had created.[49]

Wenceslas, on the other hand, took offence at John's ascetic orthodoxy and his open sympathy for the opposition League of Bohemian Barons. However, the main point of contention was church policy, namely the right of investiture of the Bohemian kings in the appointment of high church offices, which they had been allowed to exercise since the Přemyslid period in the thirteenth century[50]. This involved rights, but also no small amount of revenue, which Wenceslas wanted for the kingdom from then on. In doing so, he provoked a closing of ranks between the high clergy and the Bohemian barons, as well as other princes, including his brother Sigismund.

The situation came to a head in the spring of 1393, when Wenceslas attempted to make the Benedictine monastery of Kladruby, which had previously belonged to the Prague archbishopric, a bishopric dependent on him personally. With his contacts to the League of Lords, Jenstein succeeded in thwarting the intervention of the royal power with a legal coup d'état. However, Wenceslas then captured Jenzenstein's closest associates, the cathedral deans Nikolaus von Puchnik and Johann von Pomuk, and had them tortured in order to find out more about the bishop's plans and the individuals behind them. Pomuk died in the process.[51]

48 Čornej, *Velké dějiny*, vol. 5, 57–63.

49 Klassen, *Nobility*, 51; Weltsch, *Archbishop John of Jenstein,* 68.

50 Čornej, *Velké dějiny,* vol. 5, 629.

51 Hübner, "Mord und Rufmord," 71.

Politically humiliated, Jenstein fled to Rome and wrote the *Acta in Curia Romana*, a collection of 37 articles of accusation against the king, which he wanted to present to Pope Boniface IX in the hope that the pope would make Wenceslas pay for the death of his court juristatone for the death of his court jurist. The *Acta* were thus a personal reckoning. The text did not initially have a propagandistic purpose. It did not call on anyone apart from the pope to take action, nor was it intended to be read aloud. Initially, it was meant as a legally usable inventory of the long-term disputes with the king, for which the archbishop hoped to be financially compensated. However, the text also contained the first comparison of Wenceslas with Emperor Nero, a central motif of discourse on alleged tyrants which was widely discussed both legally and politically. This comparison was formulated in a way that Boniface, who was in favor of the Luxembourg Dynasty, could accept.[52] In the 27th article, Jenstein, who was not present himself, describes how the king had tortured Pomuk "with his own hand, applying the burning torch to his side and other places" on his body.[53] However, it was not even the legal aspects of the treatise that made Wenceslas seem a tyrant to the public, but its targeted exploitation by the archbishop's sympathizers, the Bohemian barons, and, later, the ecclesiastical electors. Jenstein's treatise reached the League of Lords, which had Wenceslas IV captured in the autumn of 1394.[54] At the same time, the text was sent to his supporters at the Prague bishop's court, who passed the treatise on to the University of Heidelberg and into the hands of the electoral opposition. The gravamina listed in the treatise became the basis for Wenceslas' deposition. The Nero motif appears again in a letter of complaint addressed to the king in 1397.[55] However, the final use of the extract from the *Acta* quoted above was in the sixth article of Wenceslas' deposition decree from 1400, which was the result of a collaborative effort between Heidelberg canonists and lawyers from the Electorate of Cologne's chancellery. It contains the following accusation: "[Wenceslas] murdered, drowned, and burned with torches in a terrible and

52 Weltsch, *Archbishop John of Jenstein,* 68–69.

53 *Ipseque solus manum et ignem ad latera vicarii et officialis et citera loca apposuit.* Jentzenstein, *Acta*, Art. XXVII, 433.

54 Eberhard, "Gewalt gegen den König," 101–5.

55 The League of Lords (1397) wrote a letter of complaint with accusations against Wenceslas in which the Nero motif is further embellished: *Proč Vaše Jasnost učeným pražské koleje studentóm a kněžím Neronovu ukrutostí protivila se, neukazuje jim Vašie Jasnosti lásky, neb některé ste jímali, jiné stínali, jiné topili, jiné hřebelci jako hovada cídili, jiné bili ste kyji, žádné jim jakožto přejasný otec Váš neukazuje pomoci, ale kládami, okovy i všelikými haněními je mnohokrát zhanbovali ste*? In Havránek, *Výbor,* 619.

inhuman way, with his own hand and with many other criminals he had with him, honorable and noble prelates, priests, and clergy and many other worthy men," which is not worthy of a Roman king.[56] The passage also refers to the widespread notoriety of Wenceslas' alleged crimes. This contention was intended to facilitate the legal side of his deposition. At the same time, it underlined the simple fact that the ecclesiastical electors, at least in their territories, worked diligently to slander Wenceslas publicly.[57] The attribution of the term tyrant by the highest ecclesiastical circles remained with Wenceslas until his death in 1419. His opponents used it again when it became clear that the king supported the Hussite movement, which, after the fiery death of Jan Hus, also earned him the reputation of a heretic.[58]

Between Sender and Reciever

While the propaganda against Wenceslas was linked to the overlapping power interests of various secular and clerical groups in Bohemia and later also in the empire, the negative image that emerged of Sigismund was exclusively the result of the tensions between him and the Bohemian Hussites. The most effective instrument used by the Bohemian Hussites was written manifestos, which became their most important medium of information from 1412, when Hus was banned, to the 1460s, when the movement disintegrated.[59] The target audience of these manifestos was the Bohemian supporters of the Hussite cause, but the manifestos were also used to inform potential sympathizers in the surrounding countries, which resulted in the publication and spread of similar materials in several languages.[60] In terms of content, they served both for spiritual edification and internal strengthening of the movement, as well as to provide information about the current political situation, with propagandistic intentions. The steadfastness of the movement and the doctrine of faith were emphasized, but usually the difficult political and military situation of the movement was also brought to the foreground, as were the intentions of the royal opponent and his

56 *Er hait auch, das erschrecklich und unmenschlich ludet, mit sins selsbes hand und auch ubermicz ander uebelteder die er by yme hait erwirdige und bidderbe perlaten pfaffen und geisltliche lude (…) ermordet, derdrenket verbrandt mit fackelen und ys jemerlichen und unmesslichen recht getodet*. In Weizsäcker, *Deutsche Reichstagsakten,* vol. 3, 256.

57 Graus, "Das Scheitern," 20; Hübner, "Mord und Rufmord," 60–61.

58 Čornej, *Velké dějiny,* vol. 5, 177–211.

59 Hruza, "Manifeste," 121–22.

60 Ibid., 132–33.

allies. The propaganda materials also contained requests for advice and help and sometimes also for personal or financial support.[61]

The manifestos of 1420, when the conflict between Sigismund and the Hussites turned into an open war, also document the verbal armament that came with this war. They began with a dilemma, however. Sigismund's call for a crusade, which the papal legate had read aloud in Wrocław on March 17, 1420, presented many Bohemian nobles with an impossible choice. They sympathized with the Hussites, but they also recognized Sigismund's legitimate claim to the Bohemian throne. Sigismund had threatened the Hussite nobility not with conversion but with extermination.[62] The fear of physical destruction, of losing all secularized church property again, and of further radicalization prompted Lord Burggrave Čenek of Wartenberg to convene a meeting of like-minded noblemen at Prague Castle on April 18, at which manifestos were written in German and Czech.[63] For Wartenberg, who was a follower of the king, the threat issued by the king in Wrocław represented a formal legal basis for a justified call to arms. The occasion for the document was serious, but the form of a feudal letter was not chosen. Instead, they chose the more open form of a manifesto. This was intended to provide the addressees with arguments as to why they should not pay homage to the king and instead arm themselves for the fight against Sigismund. In keeping with the occasion, its form was based on a formal charter. It was addressed to the higher nobility and the towns and villages of Bohemia and Moravia. Sigismund was also referred to without irony with the full title of Hungarian and Roman king. This was followed by the justification for the refusal to show homage, which drew on legal elements similar to the legal elements of Wenceslas' decree of Deposition.[64] Here, too, the basis was the right to resist, because the Hussites now understood the Kingdom of Bohemia as an elective kingdom of their estates. In their view, Sigismund was neither elected nor crowned, and he was guilty of numerous offences against the Bohemian Crown and His Majesty,[65] such as the betrayal of Jan Hus with the rejection of

61 This applies to the manifesto of March 19, which was apparently distributed immediately and thus found its way to Nuremberg and Ulm. Hruza, "Manifeste," 136–37.

62 Hruza, "Manifeste," 132.

63 Both manifestos were based on the same text. The most important difference between the versions in various languages was that the Czech version began with the Hussite ideological program, i.e. the four Prague Articles. Hruza, "Manifeste," 133.

64 Cf. Schnith, "Königsabsetzungen," 309–29.

65 This argument is linked to the general humiliation of the "Czech tongue," which is mentioned in the text as frequently as the Bohemian crown, or more precisely, 14 times. Both are a substrate for the principle

chalice communion and the elevation of one of the most prominent enemies of the Hussites, John the Iron, to the Olomouc episcopal throne. Sigismund's attacks on the territorial and political integrity of the kingdom were also clear through the pledging of the Margraviate of Brandenburg and the sale of the Neumark to the Teutonic Order. Here again we encounter aspects of the discourse on tyrants in the accusations brought against Wenceslas, including allegations concerning the execution of Hussite merchants in Wrocław, whose property he had appropriated, and accusations involving his approach to Count Palatine John, Duke of Bavaria, who had transferred Jerome of Prague, Hus' comrade-in-arms, to Constance in 1416. But there is also a direct reference to the Nero motif. In January 1420, Wenceslas allegedly had ordered the German miners in Kuttenberg to throw all the Czechs into the shafts, and some 400 people had perished. This was probably an unverifiable legend circulating among the Hussites.[66] For these reasons, according to these propaganda materials, no one should pay homage to him, because anyone who were to do so would be a traitor to the Kingdom of Bohemia.

Given the fragility of the Hussite alliance at the time, this alliance should be understood more in symbolic political terms. However, this manifesto, whose dissemination can be traced as far as Ulm, was trendsetting in that it provided a structure for the rejection of Sigismund, which then took on a satirical tone.[67]

This was also true of the four Hussite manifestos preserved in the so-called Bautzen Manuscript, which were written between July and August 1420 by an author from the circle of the Hussite chronicler and magister Laurentius of Březová.[68] The circumstances of its creation were favorable to the Hussites cause. Sigismund's crusader army had suffered an unexpected defeat at Vítkov in Prague. He had been defeated by a small contingent led by Jan Žižka on July 14, and his army had been dispersed. Furthermore, he was not able to keep his subsequent coronation at Prague castle a secret. His role as a villain is clear. But in addition to this, the authors experimented with various propagandistic contents and strategies.

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of the national unity of sovereign power and royal territories, exploited by the Hussites for propaganda purposes. Šmahel, "The Idea," 16, 191.

66 On the ten charges against Sigismund in detail, see Hruza, "Manifeste," 143–46.

67 This information was taken from a letter that the council of Nürnberg sent to Ulm, cf. Hruza, "Manifeste," 137.

68 On the context of the manifesto tradition, see Hruza, "Ghostwriter," 415–20.

The first of these manifestos, the so-called *Lament of the Bohemian Crown to God and against the Hungarian King and the Constance Assembly*, also known as *audite coeli* in Latin, has been the subject of extensive research.[69] The main protagonist of this fictional speech is the personification of the Bohemian crown, who addresses the world and God as the allegorical bride of the Bohemian kings and thus the widow of Wenceslas IV. The crown mentions the good old kings of Bohemia up to and including Wenceslas IV, and it contrasts these exemplary rulers with the new bridegroom, Sigismund, who is portrayed here as an ogre and the embodiment of the anti-king, thus rhetorically reversing the ideal of the ruler: instead of protecting his subjects and upholding the traditions of the dynasty, he betrayed Margrave Procopius and, even worse, betrayed his brother Wenceslas. He was also responsible for the deaths of Jan Hus and Jerome of Prague. The enforcement the crusade proclamation in Wroclaw clearly showed that he had betrayed the Kingdom of Bohemia and the crown (the metaphorical speaker), which was and last guardian of Bohemian majesty.[70] Sigismund is viciously attacked in the document, and his honor and social position are ridiculed. The strategy and language used in the document had a high entertainment value and a high recognition effect. This is shown, for instance, by the well-known comparison of Sigismund with the apocalyptic beast. According to the Bohemian Crown, Sigismund was "not human, but the most murderous offspring of a poisonous snake, which not only wants to tear apart his mother's womb at birth, but to destroy her entire body. He is... the terrible dragon that your beloved apostle saw, red, with seven heads, ten horns, and crowned with seven crowns and ten stars."[71] In general, Sigismund was "closer to an animal than to a human being, as he lacks all reason: a deaf viper, a dog, a predatory fox and greedy wolf and as unreasonable as a donkey standing next to a market stall and not understanding the violin playing.[72]" Accordingly, doubts were expressed about his legitimate descent. Charles IV was only presumed to be Sigismund's father. Sigismund was averse to royal grandeur, which is why the Bohemian Crown described him not as a branch but as "a little twig of a noble foreign root, sickly and covered in

69 Cf. Hruza, "Audite coeli!," 129–52.

70 Sigismund is described as a villain allied with the Roman Church who destroys the *bonum commune* of the Bohemian kingdom. Hruza, "Ghostwriter," 420.

71 In Czech: *Tentot´ jest, jakožt' sě jistě domnievam, onen ještěr hrozný, od tvého milého apoštola viděný, červený, sedmihlavý, desieti rohy zrohatilý a sedmi korunami korunovaný, jenž oné dvanádct hvězdami korunované, slavné láká ženy a plod její ušlechtilý, bolestně rizený, pílí obželivými ustý vražedlně sežrati.* The Latin description is significantly shorter. Hruza, "Ghostwriter," 421.

72 Daňhelka, *Husitské skladby. 32.*

dung."[73] In a reversal of the virtues of a ruler, the crown laments that Sigismund would neither protect the weakest of his subjects nor would be interested in preventing injustice: "How many virgins have been defiled (...) How many honorable, undefiled marriage beds have been defiled! (...) How many widowers, widows, how many orphans and how many childless, poor, needy, miserable, and desperate people have been destroyed by his evil hand." The crown itself is also presented as his victim: "with an unprecedented fury, he rages against me, an abandoned widow, but also a mother and benefactress, and he strives to throw the famous majesty of my glory into the abominable dust."[74]

However, *Audite coeli* was addressed not only to an educated audience who wanted to be entertained and thus possibly distracted from the difficult political situation. It was also intended for a wider public, as it was translated into Czech, together with the second satirical manifesto *nuper coram*, or the *Censure of the Bohemian Crown on the Hungarian King Sigismund*, written after Sigismund's unsuccessful coronation.[75] While the Latin manifestos were most likely intended to appeal to educated Hussite sympathizers in Europe, the Czech texts are clearly intended for a domestic, mostly functionally illiterate audience. Accordingly to reding situations, they differ in content, but also in style. In the latter, Sigismund's misdeeds are depicted much more vividly. The text has a strong national undertone, and the language is a little coarser. For example, Sigismund is portrayed in a gender-stereotypical manner as an effeminate warrior who was also responsible for the defeat to the Turks in 1419 because whores had robbed him of his virility. Here, too, he is mocked by the Bohemian crown: "You have become so effeminate through the lust of harlots that you did not dare put on your armor and did not see the enemy armies, but fled in shameful flight."[76] This would have been repeated, the crown alleges, at Vítkov in Prague, where Sigismund's effeminacy meant that he was unable to prevail against a small Hussite contingent, which included women and a girl, despite his military superiority: "But you were startled, perhaps by the frightening sound of a dry

73 To emphasize Sigismund's lack of royal dignity, the crown refers to him not as a branch but as a "little branch" of a noble foreign root. Daňhelka, *Husitské skladby.* 30.

74 Klassen, "Anti-Majesty," 277; Daňhelka, *Husitské skladby,* 24.

75 The main accusation in the case of this manifesto is that Sigismund had not received the crown legitimately and was thus taking the Kingdom of Bohemia by force. Klassen, "Anti-Majesty," 271.

76 Klassen, "Anti-Majesty," 271.

leaf or perhaps by the snap of the flail (the popular Hussite weapon!). You fled shamefully and lost the bravest part of your large entourage."[77]

As a conclusion to this discussion, we observe that a proper research discussion on premodern propaganda does not yet exist. As far as they are comparable, the results do not contradict medieval ritual research, but can be linked to its phenomenology. The results of the study, insofar as they are comparable, do not contradict medieval ritual research, but can be linked to its cognitive categories. The example of the Bohemian kings Wenceslas IV and Sigismund of Luxembourg in particular shows that propaganda in the fifteenth century could not function without a well-established framework of political symbols, rituals, and ideas of order. The king was a public figure who embodied normative notions of majesty. At the same time, he was forced to deal creatively with this network of norms, especially in times of crisis. His subjects or rivals for power by no means interpreted this embodiment of the norm as inviolable. This became particularly clear in the late Middle Ages, when politically and religiously motivated interest groups used every available means of communication to remind the king of the need to comply with these conceptual norms. We have ample evidence from this period in support of the conclusion that propaganda was an integral part of ritual-based communication among monarchs, elites, and wider audiences. However, since the tools through which propaganda could be propagated were accessible to an array of social, linguistic, and religious groups, uses of propaganda had an unpredictable side that even the presidents of today's democracies fear. The many instruments, strategies, and motifs on which propaganda relies can be used at the right time and by capable propagandists to significantly change perceptions, e.g. to polish one's own image, to help convey even a misleading a message convincingly. It may serve as a subversive form of expression for the frustrations of the oppressed, or to herald a toxic reception history that can no longer be shaken off. The strength of the mechanisms of propaganda lies in the ways in which they can be effectively adapted to new circumstances, and this in turn makes it possible to use them to interfere drastically with the normative frameworks of political rituals. The grip that various uses of propaganda had on Bohemian society before and during the Hussite Wars, including wide swathes of the population and representatives of royal power, speaks for itself.

77 "You arranged your army for war and advancing gloriously toward their wooden huts, built with wooden slats meant for sheepfold, and here attacked with bold hand, having a thousand troops for each defender of the hut." cit. after Klassen, "Anti-Majesty," 271.

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Hungarian Historical Review 13, no. 2 (2024): 261–286

Diversity, Differences, and Divergence: Religion as a Criterion of Difference in the Empire in the First Half of the Fifteenth Century

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The article examines the extent to which religious diversity was possible in the Roman-German Empire at the time of Sigismund. With a look back to the fourteenth century, it considers groups and practices that deviated from Church doctrine to varying degrees and in different ways: the Waldensians and the so-called "German Hussites" as heterodox Christian groups, the Jews as representatives of a religion that was tolerated but suspected of blasphemous and criminal practices, and people who used superstitious or even allegedly magical practices. The Heidelberg university professor and inquisitor Johannes of Frankfurt is used as a representative of the official position of the Church, whose positions provide a comparative foil. Although other religious doctrines were theoretically not accepted (with the exception of Judaism), it will be shown that the persecution of dissenters depended on infrastructural conditions. It was also crucial whether the authorities and the population were willing to take note of deviations and classify them as heretical. At times, the specific labels were used in an arbitrary manner. Particularly in the case of superstitious practices, the questions that arose were often addressed through open processes of negotiation.

Keywords: Waldensians, Hussitism, superstition, Jews, John of Frankfurt

Recogitabo omnes annos meos in amaritudine vite mee (Is. 38, 15). With these words of the Jewish king Hezekiah, the Heidelberg professor of divinity John Lagenator from Dieburg, better known as John of Frankfurt (ca. 1380–1440), began (after a dedicatory preface) his "meditatio devota" in 1409. In this devotional text, he reflected on the *miserabilis ingressus*, the *lamentabilis progressus*, and the *dolorosus egressus* of his life.[1] John chose a sentence often quoted in the literature on preaching and confession to reflect on his sinful life in light of the impending judgement but also of his hope in God's grace. I have deliberately placed the "meditatio devota" at the beginning of my remarks, because we usually know

1 Johannes von Frankfurt, "Meditatio devota," 2. Bulst-Thiele, "Johannes," 138 is skeptical about the informative value of this allegedly topical text. I do not share these doubts.

 DOI 10.38145/2024.2.261

John of Frankfurt better in a different role: not as a man aware of his sins and pondering his own need for redemption, but as an inquisitor.[2] The tension between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, between conform piety, in line with the doctrines, and non-conform piety, is thus embodied by one person. This leads us into the center of our topic: Late-medieval religion examined from the point of view of diversity.

General Remarks

The contributors to this volume were asked to focus on diversity as a concept, specifically as a "system of differentiations."[3] Understood in this way, diversity is, according to Florin, Gutsche, and Krentz, "socially and culturally constructed" and thus "subject to historical change."[4] In general, it can be assumed that there is a broad reservoir of possible criteria of difference and that it is subject to historical change which and how much significance is assigned to which criterion.[5] By developing this assumption further, one can ask in general how diversity is dealt with and which particular forms of diversity are accepted in political, religious, and social terms. It can also be assumed that the acceptance of diversity is (partly) negotiated and that diversity can influence political, social, and religious negotiation processes.[6] However, in premodern times, not all participants were able to influence this process to the same extent, and thus it has to be asked whether and to what extent the idea of negotiation works.

When attempting to apply these general considerations to the subject of religion, I started from a premise and two questions.

Religious affiliation in general and the specific dogmatic form of faith in particular were unquestionably criteria of difference at a time when the legal and social status of a person in the area of Latin Christendom depended on his or her affiliation with the Catholic Church. One need merely think of the special legal status of the Jewish population or the categorization of heresy as "crimen laesae maiestatis." These categories of difference were based on normative

2 In 1425, John of Frankfurt was engaged in the trials against the so-called "German Hussites" John Drändorf and his servant Martin Borchard in Heidelberg as well as Peter Turnau in Udenheim. On this and on John's career as inquisitor cf. Heimpel, *Inquisitions-Verfahren*, 149 f.; Bulst-Thiele, "Johannes," 141 f.; Studt, *Papst Martin V.,* 205 f.

3 Florin et al., "Diversity," 9, 11, 26.

4 Ibid., 26.

5 Ibid., 11.

6 Julia Burkhardt, Concept paper for the conference "Diversitas Sigismundi."

ideas; they were therefore not arbitrarily negotiable. The non-negotiability of central religious criteria of difference concerns the core of difference, the essential differentness between the Christian and Jewish religions, but also dogmatic differences, e.g. between Catholics and Waldensians or Hussites, once certain divergent dogmatic statements had been established as the respective propria in a conflictual process. Within Christianity, orthodoxy and heterodoxy are separated by the readiness to recognize the doctrines of the Church and by engaging in or refraining from religious or superstitious practices.

However, it is necessary to ask about the scope for negotiation when dealing with religious difference. Was there any readiness to coexist and live with differentness if the difference was to be maintained? Was it possible to draw the theoretically given boundaries clearly in practice? Was there any willingness to ascribe or not ascribe the attribute of difference or deviation to specific persons? It should also be noted that it was not exclusively the majority that categorized a minority as deviant. In fact, we can also expect that minorities deliberately differentiated themselves from the majority in their internal communication without necessarily staging this differentiation externally. The forementioned three aspects do not affect the criteria of difference per se, but they draw attention to the possibility and the will of the participants to apply them, as well as to the scope for interpretation while applying them.

Negotiation processes also have to be examined from the perspective of the question as to where the fundamental boundaries of what was tolerable at the margins of religious practice were redefined. Here it was necessary to focus on grey zones between religion, superstition, and magic and to inculcate and amplify existing classifications and norms.

In view of space limitations, I cannot consider all possible varieties of religious practices, spiritual forms of expression, and theological controversies in the discussion below. I concentrate more narrowly on questions that had political implications, because the issue of how to deal with diversity and divergence is also connected to governance in the time of king Sigismund. For this reason, I deal with the ways in which the heresies of the Waldensians and the Hussites were dealt with. The treatment of the Jewish minority and the issue of superstition will only be briefly touched upon. My considerations will be limited to the German part of the Empire, not including Hungary or Bohemia. Occasional retrospectives to the fourteenth century will be indispensable for understanding. Conform piety, which, when viewed in terms of private devotion, did not have a direct political impact, will only be touched upon for comparative purposes. Considering the abundance

of possible aspects and wishing not to proceed too cursorily or arbitrarily, I will tie my comments on Catholic positions and practices back to the aforementioned John of Frankfurt. John, a scholastically influenced theologian who also made contributions to the theology of piety with his "meditatio devota," was of course only one voice among many, but his view may be meaningful precisely because of its averageness.

Disguised Differences: The Heterodoxy of the Waldensians

We begin with the diversity constellation that was at times the most inconspicuous, namely the "informal coexistence"[7] between Waldensians and Catholics. It lasted for up to 200 years. Despite sporadic regional persecution, Waldensian communities survived during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and possibly beyond in the German part of the empire,[8] whereas the Waldensians in Bohemia and Moravia were subjected to more consistent persecution.[9] It was not until the persecutions of the 1390s that the German Waldensians were decisively weakened and decimated.[10] Researchers have investigated the reasons behind their ability to survive for such a comparatively long period of time. It was argued, on the one hand, that the Waldensians did not distance themselves from the Church in their way of life. They received the sacraments of the Church, for example. On the other hand, however, they differed from the Catholics because they rejected the doctrine of purgatory, the veneration of saints and relics, pilgrimages, and sacramentals. They refused to take an oath and denied that killing could be justified. Spiritually, they were committed to lay itinerant preachers, who also took confession. Waldensians defined themselves inwardly as the *künden* (those who knew), thus distinguishing themselves from the Catholics as the *frembden*.[11] In the case of Strasbourg, they lived in close

7 Utz Tremp, *Quellen*, 52.

8 Ubl, "Verbrennung" pt. 1, 64–76 on Austria. Cf. also Maleczek, "Ketzerverfolgung," 19–35, who explicitly refers to the persecution of the Waldensians but implicitly reveals the long existence of Waldensianism in Austria. On the decades-long transmission of heterodox religious teachings in some Brandenburg towns and families despite sporadic persecution cf. Kurze, "Märkische Waldenser," 458 f., 465 f., 475, 478 f., 498, 500.

9 Soukup, "Waldenser," 133–46; Ubl, "Verbrennung" pt. 1, 75.

10 Utz Tremp, *Häresie*, 141 f., 275–80, 296–98. On the 1360s as the beginning of the oppression of the Waldensians, see Välimäki, *Heresy*, 31.

11 Kurze, "Märkische Waldenser," 459; Modestin, *Ketzer*, 90, 125–37; Modestin, "Augsburger Waldenserprozess," 45, 63 f.; Utz Tremp, *Häresie*, 137; Soukup, "Waldenser," 146–55 (with the warning to construct a closed system of Waldensian doctrine). On Välimäki's thesis that the Waldensians did not reject

proximity to one another and pursued similar trades.[12] They were endogamous and passed on their faith to their children.[13] Their strivings not to stand out and to network closely with one another were complementary. Above all, the originally distinguishing feature of the Waldensians, the ideal of poverty, had already receded into the background by the thirteenth century, as it had come, in the meantime, to be seen as applying only to the itinerant preachers, and no longer to the simple devouts or those who only sympathized with the Waldensians. This made it possible for the Waldensians to lead a lifestyle that outwardly hardly differed from that of their Catholic neighbors.[14] There is evidence of good integration into the urban society in Strasbourg and in Fribourg in the Üchtland region, where there were Waldensians who were poor and Waldensians who were wealthy and well connected.[15] There were also Waldensian families in rural areas with a long Waldensian tradition, even entire "heretic villages" (namely in the Mark Brandenburg).[16] The readiness of Waldensians to renounce their heresy when they were discovered and thus save their own lives without denouncing others[17] is as striking as the apparently effective disguises used by traveling Waldensian preachers, who pretended to be merchants.[18]

The Waldensians offer an instructive case study for the topic of diversity in many respects. We begin with the question of whether they actually stood out as diverse, and we continue by asking why they were apparently tolerated over long periods of time despite their doctrinal differences with the Catholic Church. We conclude with the question of the logic and dynamics of persecution, including the problem that the status of a heretic had to be ascribed to individuals (or not).

The answers that have been offered to the first question in the secondary literature are controversial. Generally speaking, the Waldensians' readiness to

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Marian devotion as fundamentally as they were accused of doing and that it was primarily an increase in Marian devotion on the Catholic side that led to the accusation of a lack of devotion, see Välimäki, *Heresy,* 218–21.

12 Modestin, *Ketzer*, 93, 110–18.

13 Kurze, "Märkische Waldenser," 475, 478 f.; Modestin, *Ketzer*, 90.

14 Modestin, *Ketzer*, 87; Modestin, "Augsburger Waldenserprozess," 44 f.

15 Modestin, *Ketzer,* 84 f., 93, 96, 108; Modestin, "Strassburger Waldenserprozess," 191–94; Utz Tremp, "Hexerei," 116; Utz Tremp, *Häresie*, 282 on similar results in other regions of the empire.

16 Kurze, "Märkische Waldenser," 475, 479, 498. Cf. Machilek, "Deutsche Hussiten," 267 with a comparable example from Franconia.

17 Kurze, "Märkische Waldenser," 456, 459, 478; on the Straßburger mass abjuration see Modestin, *Ketzer*, 13; Modestin, "Straßburger Waldenserprozesse," 198 f.

18 Utz Tremp, *Quellen*, 53; Modestin, Georg, "Weiträumige Kontakte," 35 f.; Schneider, "Friedrich Reiser," 78, 80 f.

dissimulate, their willingness to feign repentance and the assumption of the authorities that they were not particularly dangerous were and are considered important reasons behind their ability to externally adapt to their environment.[19] Karl Ubl, however, has called into question this thesis concerning the Waldensians' alleged tendency to try to "camouflage" themselves. Ubl notes that their refusal to take oaths was a clear factor which set them apart from those around them, thus suggesting that the Waldensians were visible after all. In his opinion, other reasons played a role in the low level and sporadic occurrence of persecution before the 1390s in the Duchy of Austria. First, the rulers and inquisitors lacked comprehensive information about the Waldensians, in part because there was comparatively little written institutional information about Waldensians who had already been discovered. Second, the inquisitors had been given few means of power by the central authority (with the kingdom of Bohemia as a significant exception). Third, the population had little interest in persecuting the Waldensians. There was also reasonable fear that the Waldensians, if threatened or persecuted, might take revenge on inquisitors, apostates, or collaborators. Therefore, Ubl writes pointedly of "tolerance as a result of ignorance in the centers, pragmatic and enforced tolerance on the ground."[20] Even after the beginning of a campaign of persecution in the first half of the 1390s, the city of Strasbourg was more interested in a clandestine mass abjuration than in public heretic trials so as not to gain a reputation as a heretic stronghold. A negative image like that would have jeopardized the city's honor.[21]

As far as I know, historians have not yet offered a clear explanation as to why the comparatively peaceful coexistence between Waldensians and Catholics came to an end in the 1390s. The apostasy of so-called heresiarchs and the disclosure of the names of sect followers probably only partly explain the wave of persecution launched against the Waldensians.[22] The persecutions in

19 On the opposite contention that medieval theologians could well regard the Waldensians as dangerous opponents of the State and Church, see Utz Tremp, *Häresie*, 306.

20 Ubl, "Verbrennung" pt. 1, 66–68, 72–76 (quotation 76). In the fourteenth century, heresy trials were often still carried out by itinerant inquisitors, who acted partly in agreement with the authorities and partly at their own initiative. A permanent inquisition did not yet exist everywhere. If there was only little institutional memory in the form of a written record about people who had already become conspicuous, heretics could not be consistently convicted and eliminated. Utz Tremp, *Häresie*, 296, 298; Utz Tremp, "Einführung," 14; Modestin, *Ketzer*, 3–10. Nevertheless, there are some references that the inquisitor Peter Zwicker had clues about heretics from documents of the former inquisitor Henry of Olomouc: Välimäki, *Heresy*, 32, 154.

21 Modestin, *Ketzer*, 3, 21; Modestin, "Straßburger Waldenserprozesse," 191, 201.

22 Utz Tremp, *Häresie,* 139, 279. It remains unclear why the heresiarchs renounced their faith. Utz Tremp assumes that it was caused by a "crisis of the Waldensian lay apostolate" leading to a fundamental uncertainty

Sigismund's time, such as the burning of John Grießer in 1411 or the persecution of the Waldensians in Fribourg in 1430, lagged behind the persecutions of the 1390s. While the persecutions in Bern and Fribourg in 1399 were linked by denunciations and the Strasbourg persecution of Waldensians of 1400 was initiated from outside and favored by a phase of good relations between the city council and the bishop, the Fribourg trial of 1430 was fueled by an external factor, namely the fear of the Hussites. Once the trial was set in motion, it could also be instrumentalized to lead neighborhood conflicts.[23] For the witchcraft trials in 1429 and 1437–1442, Georg Modestin and Kathrin Utz Tremp also asserted that Fribourg was pursuing political interests, namely to establish itself as a sovereign in former Tierstein territories.[24] Thus it was not only religious fervor but also political will that led to the persecution of the Waldensians. The desire of the ecclesiastical and especially the secular authorities to maintain sovereignty over the meanings and procedures of the campaign of persecution against the Waldensians is also evident in their increasing interference in the conduct of the trials.

The transition from the persecution of Waldensians to the persecution of witches in the Fribourg region also raises questions concerning the actual meanings of "Waldensianism" as a construct, i.e. as a label used to denote (heretical) difference. As Herbert Grundmann has persuasively shown, inquisitors categorized heterodox statements by labeling them with the names of older sects.[25] For this, in the fourteenth century, people who were probably Waldensians were labeled Luciferians. Similarly, according to Hermann Haupt, Waldensians in Griesbach and Waldkirchen were labeled Wyclifites in 1410.[26] And, of course, it could be useful to label an opponent within the church as Waldensian to bring him under suspicion.[27] At the turn of the fifteenth century, the original Waldensian name

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of the believers as well as the heresiarchs. On this see Modestin, "Augsburger Waldenserprozess," 49 and below.

23 Ubl, "Verbrennung" pt. 1 and 2; Modestin, *Ketzer*, 13–16; Modestin, "Straßburger Waldenserprozess," 194–97, 200 f.; Utz Tremp, *Quellen*; Utz Tremp, "Denunzianten," 8; Utz Tremp, "Predigt," 212–14. See also Välimäki, *Heresy*, 242.

24 Utz-Tremp, "Hexerei," 118 f. with reference to the research of Modestin.

25 Grundmann, "Ketzerverhöre," 522, 557.

26 Kurze, "Märkische Waldenser," 458; Utz Tremp, *Häresie*, 283–97; Haupt, "Husitische Propaganda," 246.

27 Välimäki, *Heresy*, 224 ff., 241, 243.

(*vaudois*[e]) also took on the meaning of sorcerer or witch because of the equation of *vaudois* with heretic per se and the association of heresy with magic.[28]

However, in the local context, the question of who was to be condemned as a Waldensian was also negotiated on a personal level in front of the Inquisition. In individual cases, Waldensians were able to refute the accusation of heresy.[29] The ascriptions made at the time (i.e. the contention that someone was a Waldensian) are not the only uses of the term that may be problematic. As Ubl has shown in the case of John Grießer, there is also an inherent danger in the scholarship of making simplifications and working with classifications that do not stand up to scrutiny. Grießer, who was executed in 1411, was probably not the Hussite he was accused of being. He may have been a Waldensian. But it is also possible that he may simply have been a dissident whose concern was a social one.[30]

What applies to individuals also applies, under different circumstances, to the Waldensian group in the period under investigation. Their contours began to soften. Long-held biblical positions such as the absolute ban on killing and the consistent refusal to take oaths were abandoned. Some Waldensians moved closer to Marian devotion. Heresiarchs turned to the Catholic Church and even became priests. Lay people may also have begun to perceive the lay apostolate as misguided. From the 1390s onwards, the Waldensians were therefore a group that was at least in a crisis-ridden process of transformation, if not in decline.[31] Some Waldensians thus may have been amenable to Hussite ideas, when Peter Payne (around 1418–1432) and Friedrich Reiser (from around 1450) made attempts to persuade Waldensians and Hussites to unite and to remodel Waldensian teachings and structures by adopting Hussite elements.[32]

28 Utz Tremp, *Häresie*, 152 ff., 353, 443–47. On a lost treatise of Denys the Carthusian titled "Contra artes magicas et errores Waldensium," see Välimäki, "Heresy," 147 f.

29 Utz Tremp, "Denunzianten," 22–27.

30 Ubl, "Verbrennung," pt. 1, 79.

31 Utz Tremp, "Multum abhorrerem," 166 f. (citation 166); Modestin, *Ketzer*, 3, 51–53, 120–23, 130, 146; Modestin, "Augsburger Waldenserprozess," 52 f.

32 The nature and extent of the connections between the Waldensians and Hussitism are disputed, cf. Utz Tremp, Häresie, 142 with a summary of the research process. The source situation regarding Friedrich Reiser, an itinerant preacher with Waldensian roots who is said to have endeavored to bring together Waldensians and German Hussites, is extremely problematic, cf. Utz Tremp, "Einführung," 7–12, 21–25; De Lange, "Friedrich Reiser"; Feuchter, "Frauen." On his activities: Haupt, "Husitische Propaganda," 281–285; Utz Tremp, "Einführung," 15–19; zu Payne see Šmahel, "Peter Payne."

Feared Difference: The Heresy of the Putative "German Hussites"

Let us now turn to individuals who were labeled "German Hussites" by scholars. Sometimes they were condemned at their own time after having been accused of spreading certain teachings of Jan Hus, but sometimes they were simply put in this category by historians (for instance in the case of the aforementioned John Grießer, as Ubl has shown). They could simply have been one of the people who, like John Drändorf, had dedicated themselves to the *pura*[.] *pauperta*[s] *Christi*[33] or had explicitly Waldensian roots, like Friedrich Reiser, who was executed in 1458. In both cases, a Waldensian influence was mixed with the adoption of Hussite ideas. However, it was also possible that a wealthy priest who was presumably well connected in the city council's circles, such as the chaplain of the Regensburg council chapel Ulrich Grünsleder, copied Jan Hus' writings and promoted his ideas.[34]

The authorities were highly alert to the emergence of actual or supposed Hussites, as the Hussite movement had taken on violent and revolutionary traits in Bohemia after the execution of Jan Hus in Constance. The Taborite wing of the Hussites in particular (since 1420) took on revolutionary traits, which found expression in instances of verbal and real violence. Fueled by the active advertising that the Hussite side carried out for its positions, the endeavor to combat the Hussite threat externally, i.e. in Bohemia, was accompanied by the fear of a spillover of the Hussite movement into the German lands. To prevent this, the whole population was required to take an anti-Hussite oath.[35] It is difficult to say how much sympathy the Hussites enjoyed in Germany, especially in the cities, and how well sympathizers were informed about the Hussite doctrines in general. Riots such as the one in Heidelberg in 1422, in which the townspeople and the electoral bodyguard alike organized a riot against the members of the university and in which the cry was heard that the attackers would rather kill students and clerics than Hussites,[36] may have been a mixture of a diffuse expression of sympathy and provocation. For Austria, Werner Maleczek has questioned whether the Hussites, who were feared for their campaigns and acts of violence,

33 Heimpel, *Inquisitions-Verfahren*, D 33. From D 14, D 23 and Heimpel 25 we can conclude that Drändorf had private property.

34 Fuchs, "Grünsleder," 228.

35 Fuchs, "Grünsleder," 223. On the so-called "German Hussites" cf. Machilek, Franz, "Deutsche Hussiten."

36 Hawicks, "Heidelberg," 252; Heimpel, *Inquisitions-Verfahren*, 150; Bulst-Thiele, "Johannes," 143.

were able to gain a relevant mass of followers.[37] Christina Traxler notes that the elementary military difficulties faced by the Hussite movement in the early 1420s in Bohemia itself as well as the national and patriotic character of the movement made it unlikely that it would have spread to Austria during its early years. Instead, she assumes that after the condemnation of Wyclif's teachings and the execution of Hus at the Council of Constance, heretical phenomena of any kind came "suddenly under the general suspicion" of being Hussite. For this reason, Traxler also warns against inferring "the existence and the spread of Hussite followers in Austria from anti-Hussite measures."[38] Nevertheless, it cannot be overlooked that the Hussites aggressively tried to defend and spread their positions. Their positions were also adopted or adapted and disseminated by others. The cases of the heretics John Drändorf and Peter Turnau, who were interrogated and condemned with the significant involvement of Heidelberg professors, including John von Frankfurt, offer two examples.[39]

After studying in Prague, Leipzig, Dresden, Zittau, and again in Prague and after being ordained as a priest in Prague in 1417, Drändorf, a nobleman from the Margraviate of Meissen, led his life as a preacher in Prague and Neuhaus. In 1424, he traveled via the Vogtland region to the Upper Rhine valley as far as Basel. He then moved to Brabant and finally to Speyer.[40] There, he was reunited with Peter Turnau, a native of Prussia and a companion from his Zittau and second Prague years, who had only received a lower ordination in Prague and had left the city in 1414 to attend the Council of Constance. After studying law in Bologna and taking a long journey which led him to Crete, Turnau had come by detours to Speyer. When Drändorf arrived, Turnau was in charge of the Speyer cathedral school.[41] In 1424, Drändorf and Turnau traveled to Heilbronn. Turnau intended to apply for a preaching prebend, and Drändorf probably wanted to preach and evangelize. Drändorf's downfall was that he meddled in the dispute between the town of Weinsberg and the lords of Weinsberg. As a result of this dispute, the town found itself in the Ban of the Imperial Würzburg District Court, the Imperial ban and the reinforced outlawry of the empire *(Acht und Aberacht)*, as well as under the ecclesiastical ban.[42] Drändorf took Weinsberg's

37 Maleczek, "Ketzerverfolgung," 33.

38 Traxler, *Firmiter,* 202 f. (203 both quotations).

39 For the basic research: Heimpel, *Inquisitions-Verfahren*; Selge, "Ketzerprozesse."

40 Heimpel, *Inquisitions-Verfahren*, 25–27.

41 Ibid., 30–32.

42 Ibid., 27–30, 32–36, 40, D 135.

excommunication as an opportunity to incite the town to resist the unjust excommunication. He criticized what he found annoying about the church ban: the secular exercise of power by the clergy, which included the use of the ban in secular matters.[43] This grievance was, as Drändorf suggested, made possible by the blind obedience of the laity.[44] After Drändorf was arrested near Heilbronn, he was extradited to Heidelberg because Elector Ludwig III intervened with the Würzburg bishop who held jurisdiction; hence, Drändorf was subjected to a trial there. The Bishop of Worms and three Heidelberg professors, including John of Frankfurt, presided over the trial on the basis of a Würzburg commission.[45]

In the course of the interrogation, Drändorf revealed his convictions one by one. His radical refusal to take an oath before the interrogation was seen as clear proof of his heresy at the outset of the trial. Self-confident, even defiant, he insisted that the copy of the Gospels he was given on which to take the oath was only a human product and that he could lie with or without having taken an oath. Moreover, Drändorf answered questions about his own biography and his actions by criticizing the church. He claimed that only a few clerics wanted to live according to Christ's *regula*, and he insisted that *symonia, avaricia, luxuria, et pompa* prevailed among the clergy.[46] Emperor Constantine was only allowed to give the church *bona temporalia*, but not *dominium*, and the pope should not have accepted the latter. Not every excommunication was unjust because, he added derisively: For clerics who carried weapons and bishops who invaded towns and villages were excommunicated, just as prelates who exercised temporal power were heretics and in a state of damnation.[47] All believers who professed the true faith were the Church, not the church hierarchy. [48] Drändorf also rejected indulgences. The Council of Constance did not stand for the whole Church, a statement that Hermann Heimpel has interpreted to mean that Drändorf did not consider all the articles condemned by Constantiense in fact to be condemned. Drändorf also agreed with the demand for communion *sub utraque*.[49] On other topics, Drändorf mixed statements that were influenced by Waldensian, Wyclifite, or

43 Ibid., 36 f., text no. 1 f. p. 55–64, D 36 f.

44 Cf. ibid., 37, 45, text no. 1, 55–57, text 2 b, 60 f., 63, D 59; p. 70; Selge, "Ketzerprozesse," 192.

45 Heimpel, *Inquisitions-Verfahren,* 29, 41, 146–48.

46 Selge, "Ketzerprozesse," 195; Heimpel, *Inquisitions-Verfahren,* 47, 67, D 1, D 19, D 53. It is worth noting that John of Frankfurt had already expressed criticism of the Church and the clergy, but he had done so at a synod and thus in an internal forum. Bulst-Thiele, "Johannes," 149 f.

47 Heimpel, *Inquisitions-Verfahren,* p. 45 f., D 37, p. 166–168, D 52; also D 69, p. 174, D 71.

48 Ibid., D 68, p. 174.

49 Ibid., D 40 f., D 43, p. 168 f., D 53, p. 171, D 61, p. 172 f., D 78, p. 176, D 100, D 102, D 105f., p. 180 f.

Hussite ideas with Catholic elements, or he distanced himself from the Hussites, for example by rejecting Hussite iconoclasm.[50] All in all, the heretical positions of the three provenances converged in Drändorf's views. During his short trial which lasted only four days, Drändorf was also tortured. In the end, Drändorf, who had occasionally gone on the offensive and repeatedly provoked his judges, was degraded, sentenced to death, and burned.

Unlike Drändorf, who, as Marie-Luise Bulst-Thiele has suggested, may have wanted to die[51], Turnau did not seek martyrdom. Rather, the trained jurisprudent initially defended himself skillfully in Udenheim (a place belonging to the bishopric of Speyer), where Heidelberg professors also took part in the trial. Heimpel credited John of Frankfurt with having effectuated a turnaround in the trial. The inquisitors got hold of Turnau because of the doubts he had expressed about the "ecclesiastical doctrine and practice," such as the relationship between the Bible, the Church fathers, younger church teachers, and ecclesiastical ministry.[52] Turnau, who argued in a strictly Biblicist manner, argued that the church could err. Moreover, he was accused of Utraquism.[53] To summarize, Kurt-Victor Selge describes Turnau as a "consistent dissident," whereas he characterizes Drändorf as an "aggressively subversive missionary."[54]

At this point, it is worth taking one more look at the other side. Hawicks described Drändorf's judge John of Frankfurt as a "vehement opponent of Hussitism,"[55] as he opposed the Hussites in various roles, including as an inquisitor, as a writer, and as a preacher. However, John differed from Drändorf not only in terms of church politics. Both came from different social classes. Drändorf was originally a well-off lower nobleman, while John was mentioned as a *pauper* at the University of Paris in 1396.[56] As John owed his rise to the church and the university, Drändorf's radical "rejection of university degrees"[57] must have been alien to him. Drändorf's apparently ambivalent attitude towards his ordination to the priesthood, which caused the court to doubt his ordained

50 Ibid., 44–47, D 76, p. 176.

51 Bulst-Thiele, "Johannes," 141.

52 Heimpel, *Inquisitions-Verfahren*, 32 f., 47, cf. for instance T 33–40, p. 213, T 55, T 62, T 64, p. 215, T 67, T 93–96, T. 98 p. 224, T 104–106, T 108, T 110, p. 225–227, T 120–125, T. 128, p. 229 f., T. 147, p. 129 after T 161; Selge, "Ketzerprozesse," 198 f. Cf. also Bulst-Thiele, "Johannes," 142.

53 Heimpel, *Inquisitions-Verfahren*, 48; Bulst-Thiele, "Johannes," 142.

54 Selge, "Ketzerprozesse," 197, 198 n. 99.

55 Hawicks, "Heidelberg," 249.

56 Heimpel, *Inquisitions-Verfahren*, 25; Bulst-Thiele, "Johannes," 136.

57 Heimpel, *Inquisitions-Verfahren*, 46, T. 80.

status,[58] also hardly bore any affinities with the high esteem in which John of Frankfurt held the priesthood in his "meditatio."[59] Further comparisons are methodologically problematic, as Drändorf's interrogation protocols and John's "meditatio devota" belong to completely different genres. Nevertheless, with every methodological reservation, it should be noted that Drändorf primarily denounced the sins of others by harshly criticizing the Church, while John reflected on his own sinfulness. John of Frankfurt was therefore not only a church functionary acting in terms of power politics, but also a person whose work as an inquisitor was probably in part tied to a religious doctrine that he had personally espoused. However, Drändorf's concern for the salvation of his soul, which underlay his desire for communion *sub utraque*, also suggests a spiritual dimension. Perhaps Turnau's occasional appeals to his conscience[60] can also be seen as an indication of internalized piety.

More can be learnt from the study of the Hussites and the trial against Drändorf and Turnau on the subject of diversity. The theological premises and ecclesiastical-political conclusions of Hussitism were considered antagonistic to Catholicity and were therefore no longer tolerable as an expression of diversity. This condemnation included people such as Drändorf and Turnau, who had designed their own heterodox faith with various Catholic, Waldensian, Wyclifite, and Hussite elements. Drändorf and Turnau were also tried as individuals, not as members of a community like many Waldensians.

Incidentally, this was also often the case for the German Hussites of the early period, who were frequently, but not always, clerics, with a Prague university background playing a role. There are no clear indications in the sources that distinct Hussite congregations formed at that time. The time was probably still too short for this and the endeavour too dangerous. The only exceptions were Flanders and Hainaut, where, according to Bart Spruyt, an "important, mostly hidden dissenting movement" existed, which apparently also absorbed Hussite elements early on. As early as the late 1410s and until 1430, a number of people there were detained. The fact that several people were arrested and meetings were held suggests that there were group structures.[61] Elsewhere, despite the

58 Ibid., 26, 43, D 7–11, D 44–51, D 90, D 97, D 131, p. 157 f., 169 f., 178–180; Selge, "Ketzerprozesse," 172, 186 on the problem of whether the ordination of Drändorf (probably an ordination without "titulus" and without episcopal "formata") was valid.

59 Johannes von Frankfurt, "Meditatio devota," 8.

60 Heimpel, *Inquisitions-Verfahren*, T 26, T 53, T 102, T 111.

61 Spruyt, "Echo," 286–91 (quotation 286); Haupt, "Husitische Propaganda," 268 f.

idea of Peter Payne to persuade the Waldensians to join the Hussites, there are only sporadic indications in the sources to suggest that they did, at least until the 1440s. Only then did the weakened Waldensian communities appear to have come so close to Hussite ideas that it would be possible to speak of a Hussite-influenced diaspora.[62] In my opinion, widespread hatred of the clergy and general social unrest are not enough to suggest that we can speak of the existence of Hussite religious communities before the 1440s, even if anti-clericalism in particular would have provided a starting point for the infiltration of Hussite ideas. Concerning the so-called Hussites, the sovereigns, municipal authorities, and local church institutions took the initiative to inquire about and try people regarded as suspicious. In general, we recognize an overriding political will to persecute alleged heretics.

The universities were also involved in the persecution of alleged heretics to varying degrees. Individual Heidelberg professors were involved in the fight against Hussitism at an early stage, an activity that was evidently also linked to their activities as electoral councilors. In 1421, John of Frankfurt and Conrad von Soest each wrote an anti-Hussite treatise during a campaign against the Hussites. Job Vener also took up his pen against the Hussites in 1421. Furthermore, there is evidence of a relevant sermon by John of Frankfurt and a speech by Conrad von Soest.[63] A later example of the anti-Hussite commitment by Heidelberg professors is the refutation of a Taborite manifesto in 1430 by Nicolas of Jawor.[64]At the University of Vienna, in contrast, scholars just respond to requests and demands until the end of the 1420s. They did not become involved in the fight against the Hussites at their own initiative.[65]

The negotiation of a tolerated status, coexistence, or even integration were not on the agenda for those labeled Hussites. The religiously motivated political upheavals in the Kingdom of Bohemia had shown clearly what Hussitism was capable of, but other events also revealed the influence and power of Hussite ideas. Drändorf, whose hybrid heresy has been outlined, also regretted in a letter

62 Machilek, "Deutsche Hussiten," 273 speaks of "singular examples" of persons in the urban milieu who sympathized with the Hussites in the 1420s. The execution of six Hussites in Jüterbock (1416 or 1417) also points to a small group (ibid., 274). Machilek mentions evidence of larger groups of German Hussites, which indicate the existence of communities, from the 1440s onwards. From 1458, they were suppressed by Inquisition trials. Ibid., 280 f.

63 Studt, *Martin V.*, 205, 208, 210; Hawicks, "Heidelberg," 251; Johannes von Frankfurt, "Contra Hussitas"; Bulst-Thiele, "Johannes," 40.

64 Petrásek, *Häretiker*.

65 Traxler, *Firmiter*, 176–78.

to the town of Weinsberg that he and other like-minded priests were too weak to oppose *iniquitati malorum clericorum*, *nisi communis populus et loca imperialia suos oculus aperirent*.[66] He thus formulated a barely veiled threat. The opposition between Hussitism and Catholicism was only bridged at a later date and outside the inner empire, with the Basel and Prague Compactata. They were concluded with the participation of the Council of Basel and also under the impact of many military defeats and massive political pressure from Emperor Sigismund. Furthermore, they only applied to the Kingdom of Bohemia. This was the only case in which negotiations were held with heretics.[67] The willingness to accept difference in this case was forced by the circumstances.

Suspected and Persecuted Difference: The Jews

It is worth also taking a brief look at the Jews, a group the diversity of which had been dealt with for centuries. John of Frankfurt still held the classical position towards them, according to which the messiahship of Christ necessarily would be deduced from the Old Testament. He made no reference to the opinion that emerged in the thirteenth century according to which the Talmud, if understood correctly, also contained appropriate passages.[68] John's writing, apparently secondarily called *Malleus Judeorum*, was intended as an explanation of the former position to the theologically interested Elector Palatine Ludwig III. It was not written with any missionary intention.[69] In another sermon, John emphasized that the Jews had forfeited their first calling by God. Nevertheless, the path to salvation was not closed to anyone, because God would work on anyone if he did not close himself off. This remark can be interpreted as an expression of hope of conversion of the Jews.[70] Despite still moderate voices like his, the Jews faced an increasingly repressive atmosphere in the late Middle Ages, as

66 Heimpel, *Inquisitions-Verfahren,* text 2 b p. 63. Bünz, "Drändorf" argues that Drändorf's activities concerning Weinsberg could be regarded as incitement to a riot.

67 Even if Jews could be brought close to heretics since the Talmud had become known, the way in which they were treated cannot be compared with the ways in which heretics were treated. In this respect, Cardinal Cesarini's argument is misguided that the Council of Basel should not be reproached for having invited the Hussites to discuss their doctrine, as discussions of faith with Jews had long been established. Eckert, "Hoch- und Spätmittelalter," 247.

68 Schreckenberg, *Adversus-Judaeos-Texte*, 209, 291 f., 293–96.

69 Johannes von Frankfurt, "Malleus Judeorum"; Bulst-Thiele, "Johannes," 146.

70 Johannes von Frankfurt, "Simile," 31–35; Bulst-Thiele, "Johannes," 156 even suggests, that John did not exclude the hope of salvation regardless of the conversion of the Jews.

they were accused not only of alleged ritual murders and desecration of the Host but also of anti-Christian blasphemies and heresy because their teachings had gone beyond the Old Testament in the Talmud.[71] Anti-Jewish and anti-Hussite sermons were held one after the other in Fribourg.[72] Presumably both activities reinforced each other as a means of characterizing both the Jews and the Hussites as different. As in the fourteenth century, expulsions of Jews also took place in Sigismund's time, partly in territories and partly in towns.[73] Karel Hruza has shown in an exemplary manner that, for fiscal reasons, Sigismund had no interest expelling Jews, but that he was careful to protect his rights and financial interests when he was unable to prevent their expulsion, and that he thereby abandoned them.[74]

Three patterns can by shown in which the criterion of religious difference was instrumentalized in order to justify the expulsion of a group considered to be different but tolerated so far. First, conspiracy theories were hatched concerning the supposed cooperation of internal and external enemies. Secondly, religious pretexts were used to conceil economically and politically motivated Jewish persecution. And third, anti-Jewish stereotypes were reinvigorated in the run-up to Jewish persecution. As an example of the first, a rumor emerged in Vienna in 1419 according to which Jews, Hussites, and Waldensians had allegedly formed a *confederacio* which was allegedly directed against the Christian majority society. The Vienna theological faculty was consulted about this, but it apparently did not consider the topic urgent, as the discussion about it was postponed. Of the three groups mentioned, it was the Jews in particular who were highlighted because of their *multitud*[o], their allegedly *delicata vita*, and their writings (allegedly) containing detestable calumnies and blasphemies (i.e. the Talmud and probably also the "Toldot Jeschu").[75] The danger scenario was exacerbated by the fact that the Jews, who were already branded as heretics, appeared here in association with other heretics. There was nothing to substantiate this conspiracy theory, of course, even if Jews demonstrably sympathized with the Hussites.[76]

Secondly, the reasons for the expulsions of Jews have to be scrutinized. Petr Elbel has found little support in the sources for the seemingly self-evident as-

71 Cf. the research overview in Niesner *"Wer mit juden,"* 59–80, 95–118.

72 Utz Tremp, *Quellen*, 16–22.

73 Hruza, "Kammerknechte," n. 12 p. 77 f., 83–116.

74 Ibid., 109 f., 115 f.

75 Traxler, *Firmiter*, 121–24 (quotations 121).

76 Yuval, Juden, 63–68; Shank, "Unless," 188 f.

sumption that the expulsion of the Jews from Vienna and Austria in 1420–1421 was a consequence of fear of their alleged alliance with other enemies of Catholic Christianity. Rather, the expulsion was motivated by economic reasons. However, an alleged desecration of the Host in Enns served as a pretext.[77] The final expulsion of the Jews from Vienna in 1421 was also accompanied by the fact that Jews who had already been baptized under the pressure of the authorities were forced to listen to conversion sermons held by none other than the Viennese professor Nikolaus von Dinkelsbühl. These sermons differed significantly from those which Heinrich von Langenstein drafted at the end of the fourteenth century to convert Jews through good words, as they lacked any concession to the Jews.[78] However, the sermons fitted into a time in which the Council of Basel in 1434 wanted to impose forced preaching on Jews and inculcated traditional segregation regulations (1434).[79]

Religious pretexts were also used in other places to dislodge Jewish communities. In 2012, Hruza called attention to the political and fiscal motives of the city of Cologne, which wanted to get rid of its Jews in 1423–24, as the respective competences and rights of disposal over the Jews were a constant point of contention with the Archbishop of Cologne.[80] However, when the city justified its actions to the king in 1431, the danger that the Jews were trying to persuade Christians to apostatize was put forward. It was also argued that foreign crusaders (probably in 1421) had attempted to slay the Jews on their way to the Hussite war, which led to concerns that such events could occur again. Further arguments included the Jewish practice of lending at interest, the expulsion of Jews from neighboring territories, the sanctity of the city of Cologne (with its relics of numerous saints and martyrs), and the rumor of well poisoning due to increased mortality rates caused by an epidemic.[81] Nine months after Sigismund's death, in August 1438, the mayor and the town council of Heilbronn justified to the chancellor of king Albert II, Kaspar Schlick, and the Hereditary Marshal of the Empire Haupt II von Pappenheim their decision not to extend the Jews' residency status because they (the mayor and the town council) had been warned by scholars openly in sermons and secretly in the confession of how seriously they acted badly because they permitted Jews to remain in their community and

77 Elbel and Ziegler, "Neubetrachtung"; Elbel, "Im Zeichen," 137–40, 158.

78 Elbel and Ziegler, "Neubetrachtung," 222; Knapp, "Christlich-theologische Auseinandersetzungen," See 272–79, 281 f.; Knapp, "Frieden," 25–30.

79 Schreckenberg, *Adversus-Judaeos-Texte*, 494; Eckert, "Hoch- und Spätmittelalter," 248.

80 Hruza, "Kammerknechte," 85 f.

81 Von den Brincken, "Rechtfertigungsschreiben," 313–319; Hruza, "Kammerknechte," 85 f.

allowed them to practice usury. The scholars also contended that the mayor and the council debased themselves by making this concession.[82] Consequently, this situation had to be rectified.

As a third point, the accusations of ritual murder (a recurring accusation that both fortified and relied on an anti-Jewish stereotype) merits consideration. These accusations were used to justify repressive measures against Jews and to establish a new martyr cult. In the case of Ravensburg, however, King Sigismund tried to prevent the rise of a cult concerning a pupil purportedly murdered ritually in 1429. Sigismund had the church which had been designated as a pilgrimage site razed to the ground, though he was unable to put a complete stop to the pilgrimages.[83] As far as I know, however, this measure taken by Sigismund was exceptional. In complete contrast, the Palatinate Elector Ludwig III, together with the parish priest of Bacharach, Winand von Steeg, ensured the revival of the declining cult of the so-called "Good Werner of Oberwesel," who had allegedly been ritually murdered in the thirteenth century.

Blurred Differences: Piety, Superstition, and Magic

The problem of superstition, on which John of Frankfurt, among others, commented twice (in 1405 and 1425–27),[84] can only be touched upon in this paper. The first text, a "quodlibet" on the question of whether demons could be compelled and controlled through the use of amulets, signs, and words, still predates the period in which the concept of the *vaudois* was amalgamated with that of the sorcerer. However, since the fourteenth century, magic and heresy in general had been brought closer together. Nevertheless, in his "quaestio" of 1405, John argues against conjuring demons without referring to the concept of heresy. Although demons could perform healings, for example, due to their extensive knowledge of the secret powers of nature, it was forbidden and harmful to summon them. Demons, he explained, only pretended to be coerced and compelled by men in order to deceive people. Anyone who invoked them was committing idolatry. In addition to healing magic, John condemned all kinds

82 *Deutsche Reichstagsakten,* vol. 13, no. 239 p. 479.

83 Hruza, "Kammerknechte," 94.

84 Johannes von Frankfurt, "Quaestio"; for the dating of the "quaestio" in 1405 instead of 1406, 1412 or 1426, see Walz, in Johannes von Frankfurt, *Werke,* 227–30. In 1425/26, John wrote again a "disputatio" about this topic. This text was not as pragmatic as the text discussed above. Rather, it was purely academic. The second text has not yet been edited. Cf. Bulst-Thiele, "Johannes," 148 f.

of common divination practices. Still very much in the old church tradition, he rejected the reality of witches flights, the transformation of people into animals through demonic magic, and the visitation of goddesses of destiny at the birth of children. With those and similar superstitions John charged old women in particular. [85]

Furthermore, especially interesting are the passages in which John critizised "wildly" erected little houses or huts in fields or woods, which were visited due to vows because simple-minded people told of fantastic apparitions and alleged that miracles had been performed. Believers would make gifts and votive offerings to these dubious locations, donations that the parish churches then were lacking. Quite obviously, John was opposing unlicensed spontaneous pilgrimages. He imputed them to be short-lived and therefore unsustainable, and he presumed that they were initiated because of avarice anyway. John also recalled the Savior's warning against false prophets, but without mentioning demonic influences. In a very pragmatic way, he also cautioned that such remote places would provide a good opportunity for fornication. Furthermore, the canons forbade the offering of sacrifices in places that had not been consecrated. Like Nicolas of Jawor before him, John also warned against dubious hermits and ignoramuses who, out of shameful greed, offered to foretell the future and bless animals and humans. This too was idolatry, he insisted. Unfortunately, local priests often remained silent out of ignorance when they learned of abuses which John considered to be the remnants of ancient idolatry. John distanced himself from ignorant and brutal exorcists of the devil, who were often personally dubious figures anyway, much as he also rejected the practice of blessings, therefore citing Matthew of Krakow. If blessings were effective, he asked ironically, why would there be no blessing *contra superbiam, luxuriam vel avaritiam* or against robbers and arsonists?[86]

These passages are partly set in a contemporary discursive context to which Nicolas of Jawor, among others, contributed a great deal. When dealing with spontaneous pilgrimages and blessings, they show above all how the boundaries of permissible diversity were discussed.[87] Unfortunately, it is not possible to trace the arguments used by John of Frankfurt in his more theoretical text written

85 On the context cf. Franz, *Nikolaus*, 177–180; Bracha, *Lug*, 60–64, 70, 89, 91, 95 f., 101 f.; Johannes von Frankfurt, "Quaestio," 73–76, 78 f.; Bailey, *Fearful spirits*, 154 f., 160, 165–167, 170 f., 175 f., 193.

86 Johannes von Frankfurt, "Quaestio," 77 f., 80 (Quotation: 80); Franz, *Nikolaus*, 168 f., 193 f.; Bracha, *Lug*, 149 f.; Bulst-Thiele, "Johannes," 148.

87 On the problem of drawing the line between religion and superstition, see Bailey, *Fearful Spirits*, 148–94.

in 1425–25, in which he labeled people who summonsed demons heretics, as the second treatise remains unedited. It is therefore also not possible to decide whether this was an adaptation to the increasingly aggravated discourse or whether the different focus is due to the chosen level of argumentation.

Conclusion

It is worth returning, in conclusion, to our original considerations. Religion was a criterion of difference which in itself hardly left much room for negotiation. The dogmatic dividing lines were drawn by inquisitorial manuals, but they could also be seen, for example, when arguments from the Franciscan poverty controversy were used to refute the Hussites' Four Articles of Prague.[88] The doctrinal discrepancies are therefore evident in theory. This also applies to methodological determinations. John of Frankfurt, for example, accused the Hussites of clinging to the literal sense of the Bible. This methodological error was otherwise attributed to Jews.

In practice, however, the boundaries were more difficult to draw. The difficulty is evident when it came to the categorizations used for heretics, regardless of whether they were individuals or groups, as they often held hybrid positions. "Deviants" did not necessarily adopt all the doctrines and practices of a denomination that was marginalized as heretical, but possibly only some of them. They could take up and merge different ideas and even keep some elements of Catholic doctrines. In addition, whether a distinction was made between Catholics and heretics depended crucially on the willingness to recognize the heresy of the other person. In the decision-making situation, situational or context-dependent and pragmatic logics therefore competed with normative precepts.

Nevertheless, diversity was undesirable when it moved outside the normative boundaries of orthodoxy. Alexander Patschovsky pointed out early on that the heterodox could not be tolerated where there was no pluralism of truth.[89] Tolerance was only possible with the Jews as long as they were understood as "blind" bearers of Christian truth. More recently, Christoph Mandry added that pluralism could only be regarded as a value once religion had become a private

88 Traxler, *Firmiter*, 347, 349.

89 Patschovsky, "Ketzer," 334.

matter and confession was no longer considered constitutive for the cohesion of the political order.[90]

Concerning magic, the period under review was a threshold period. Magic and heresy could be connected from the fourteenth century onwards, but they were not necessarily combined. Furthermore, certain forms of superstition, as well as unlicensed forms of religion, could still be rejected without immediately being branded as magical or heretical.

In the examples outlined above, the approaches used to deal with diversity can hardly be described as "negotiation." Both with the Jews and where pragmatism prevailed over doctrine in dealings with heretics, the power constellations were quite asymmetrical. Only when it came to the Jews and maybe minor forms of superstition was it possible to admit diversity in principle. In the case of heretics, deviance led to the elimination of the deviant as soon as it was addressed. Only in the case of the Bohemian Hussites (not examined here) did the political and military circumstances make it necessary to tolerate religious diversity, and this diversity in turn influenced political negotiation processes. Hence, I suggest we should speak of "handling diversity" when the possibility of tolerating or integrating differentness was given, no matter how asymmetrical the framework conditions may have been. On the other hand, I prefer to describe differences that could lead to the elimination of the other not as diversity, but as divergence.

Religious diversity can be found when the plurality of religious forms of expression is considered, that characterized conform late medieval piety. One can think of the variety of ecclesiastical and sacramental practices in the parishes, the numerous brotherhoods or the foundation system, which were able to combine the striving for *imitatio Christi* and an internalized relationship with God. However, these forms of religiosity were not the subject of my article

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90 Mandry, "Pluralismus," 33.

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Hungarian Historical Review 13, no. 2 (2024): 287–305

Religious Diversity: What or How? Towards a Praxeology of Early Modern Religious Ordering*

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Scholars of the pre-modern history of religion have increasingly sought to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of religious diversity. Building on these advancements, this paper argues that our comprehension of this phenomenon is intricately linked to our presuppositions regarding religious groups and their boundaries. By challenging the conventional notion of groups as closed, authentic, and consistently coherent collectives, it advocates for a praxeological approach. Drawing on sociological theories and microhistorical studies, with a particular focus on early modern sources related to Jewish communities, it proposes a transition from inquiries about "what" the groups are to an examination of "how" they have been constructed in both temporal and spatial dimensions. Thus, by viewing religious groups and their ordering as dynamic and process-related, this approach aims to deepen our understanding of religious diversity in the early modern era as an analytical and empirical category.

Keywords: early modern history, religious diversity, praxeology

As noted by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, any attempt to construct a comprehensive theory of society capable of adequately and empirically capturing its complexity necessitates a departure from several fundamental assumptions. Among these is the prevailing notion that groups and their boundaries are relatively fixed structures which can be viewed as tangible entities with determinable memberships and delineated borders – often at the expense of any understanding of their relational dynamics.[1] It is crucial to acknowledge that Bourdieu articulated these insights decades ago, engaging with the

* The questions and methodological considerations explored in this essay arose over the course of regular discussions on the formation of religious groups within the context of the DFG-research group *Polycentricity and Plurality of Premodern Christianities* in Frankfurt. I am particularly indebted to Birgit Emich and Alexandra Walsham for their invaluable comments on my study in this context, which have greatly enriched the theoretical framework of this study.

1 Bourdieu, *Sozialer Raum und "Klassen,"* 9. The text is an expanded version of a lecture given by Pierre Bourdieu at the opening of the *Suhrkamp Vorlesungen für Sozial- und Geisteswissenschaften* in Frankfurt in February 1984, 9.

 DOI 10.38145/2024.2.287

prevailing intellectual milieu of his era. Specifically, he challenged the simplistic conceptualization of social classes as historically predetermined categories, thus countering the prevalent notion of societal structure as an objective reality. His overarching objective was to transcend this perspective in favor of a theoretically robust framework informed by empirical evidence and capable of adequately addressing the intricate complexity of its subject matter.[2]

If one adopts this objective and attempts to offer an assessment of religious diversity in the early modern period through a historiographic lens, the imperative remains pertinent. It is incumbent on us to scrutinize how our interpretation of religious ordering intersects with our conceptualizations of religious groups and their boundaries. If one embarks on scholarly inquiries into the histories of Jewish, Muslim, Christian, and other faiths, there is an inherent risk of presupposing a predetermined structure to these religious groups and their demarcations. When we posit the existence of these groups as entities, we assume their cohesion as a collective and, moreover, we presuppose the 'authenticity' of their respective religious practices. Heeding Bourdieu's critique of the compartmentalization of societal structures, such as the presumed objectivity of historical classes, we must take an epistemological step back. This entails examining the foundational assumptions inherent in historiography concerning religious groups and exploring analytical frameworks capable of transcending the complexity of these groups (and the processes through which they are posited and thus created in the secondary literature).

It is worth highlighting that over the past few decades, there has been a fruitful dialogue between historiographic and sociological approaches,[3] along with extensive reflections on the complexity of religious organization in the pre-modern era. This paper contributes to a specific development recently articulated by Sita Steckel, who has synthesized past and current debates around an originally sociological concept of societal differentiation, thereby fostering an interdisciplinary perspective particularly applicable to the history of religions in the Middle Ages.[4] The genesis of these discussions lies in historiographical

2 Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Simultaneously, the broader issue at hand was also tackled by Niklas Luhmann. In particular, his insights on the topic can be found in a collection of his essays, which have been translated into English and edited by William Rasch: Luhmann, *Theories of Distinction*.

3 In German-speaking and French-speaking academic circles, the dialogue between sociology and history has a longstanding tradition, particularly since the 1970s. Some notable classic works that exemplify this intersection include Bourdieu and Lutz, "Über die Beziehungen zwischen Geschichte und Soziologie in Frankreich und Deutschland"; Wehler, *Geschichte und Soziologie*.

4 Steckel, *Differenzierung jenseits der Moderne*, 307–51.

reflections on differentiation theory, which, in essence, conceives society as a system consisting of various subsystems, such as politics, religion, medicine, law, and so forth, each driven by its own functional dynamics of communication.[5] Notably, this form of societal complexity was originally construed as an inherently modern phenomenon. Consequently, differentiation theory, understood as a theory which applied specifically to modernization (explicitly constructed in contrast to pre-modern society), served as a catalyst for historical debates.[6] Historians of pre-modern period have consistently argued for an approach that acknowledges the societal and historical complexity of pre-modern times. As Sita Steckel aptly phrases it, there is a call to perceive pre-modern societies "as dynamic entities"[7] and thus necessarily to engage with primary sources in order to capture the nuances of historical dynamics faithfully.

In light of contemporary scholarship on pre-modern religious dynamics and pluralities, the notion that differentiation theory applies exclusively to processes and moments of modernization appears increasingly difficult to substantiate.[8] Instead, current discourse emphasizes methodological endeavors by historians aimed at crafting conceptual frameworks that effectively capture the empirical intricacies of religious organization in pre-modern contexts. Building on this premise, this paper argues that our understanding of religious ordering is intricately tied to our presuppositions concerning religious groups and their boundaries. It therefore adopts an epistemologically reflective approach, seeking to illuminate the historical and societal complexities surrounding religious groups as early modern phenomena. Drawing on sociological theories, microhistorical studies, and early modern sources related to Jewish communities in particular,[9] it proposes a shift from inquiries about the essence of these groups to an examination of *how* these groups have been constructed and how, as constructions, they behaved both temporally and spatially. By conceptualizing religious groups

5 Luhmann, *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft*, 595–865.

6 Oexle, "Luhmanns Mittelalter," 53–65.

7 Steckel, *Differenzierung jenseits der Moderne*, 351.

8 Steckel, "Hypocrites! Critiques of Religious Movements and Criticism of the Church"; Brauner, *Polemical Comparisons*; Weltecke, "Über Religion vor der 'Religion'"; Pietsch and Steckel, *New Religious Movements Before Modernity?;* Jaspert, *Communicating Vessels*.

9 The ideas presented in this essay are informed by reflections derived from my ongoing book project, which examines the significance of religious practices associated with food, eating, and fasting in delineating the boundaries between diverse religious communities circa 1600. This project investigates various religious groups, including Jewish, Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, and Greek-Catholic communities. Selected cases drawn from this research endeavor serve as the bedrock for the theoretical discussions in this essay.

and their organization as dynamic and process-oriented, this approach aims to enrich our understanding of religious diversity and the complexity of the notion of diversity itself as both an analytical and empirical category in the study of the early modern era.

To accomplish this goal, this paper begins with an exploration of the regulatory constructions of religious boundaries (I) followed by an in-depth examination of these boundaries from a bottom-up perspective. This examination considers the intricate interplay among the religious, economic, and medical spheres. Specifically, the paper employs the paradigm of religiously coded food and eating practices (II) as an analytical perspective from which to elucidate these dynamics. Within the chosen praxeological framework, it is imperative to acknowledge that any attempt to draw delineations among the societal spheres of religion, economy, and medicine necessitates recognition of the analytical nature of such categorization. This analytical division is crucial to any conceptual approach to the study of interactions that transcend individual subjectivity and structural objectivity. This allows for an understanding of these interactions as outcomes of both individual choices and structural dispositions.[10] Additionally, it is necessary to perceive these spheres and their logics not as static compartments but as dynamic and contingent phenomena, exerting influence within every unique configuration of interactions.[11] Translated within the context of this paper, praxeology entails the meticulous reconstruction of how religious group formation may be either compromised or strengthened, depending on varying societal contexts and problem references across different fields. This paper seeks to elucidate how these patterns can be extrapolated into broader conceptual frameworks.

Community of Law(s): Plurality and Polyphony of Regulations

Crucial to the construction of religious collectives in Judaism is the foundational concept of a chosen group the members of which adhere to the commandments of their God. A comprehensive collection of laws *(mitzvoth)*, prohibitions, and precepts, derived from the oldest sources, was manifested in writing in antiquity. At least since the destruction of the Temple, Judaism has primarily been a law-based religion: *halakha* has been and remains far more central that any profession

10 Bourdieu, "The Objectivity of the Subjective," 135–42.

11 Bourdieu and Wacquant, "The Logic of Fields," 94–114.

of faith (and here sees the crucial difference in the construction of belonging in Christianity). These norms address a wide range of topics and spheres, extending to the main matters of daily life. Though commonly translated as Jewish Law, *halakha* literally signifies the *way to proceed* or the right way to behave. Synchronized behavior, both in law and in practices, is constitutive for religious boundaries. Another fundamental aspect of group building is individual/personal belonging, which in the case of Judaism is not solely a result of following these norms of law but is primarily attributed to descent from a maternal Jewish line. This form of belonging includes or implies commitment to religious law. These two understandings of belonging (a definition of belonging on the one hand and the obligations of belonging on the other) initially provide a rather clear picture for what is addressed in this paper as a religious group. However, insights from early modern sources prompt further questions.

In one of his writings published in 1593, Reb Chaim[12] lamented the behavior of his Jewish contemporaries: "And the rabbis have warned us not to be like the peoples of the lands, neither in our words nor in our deeds nor in our dress, but this is not heeded now in our sinful state, as many members of our community seem to mingle with them [*goyim*][13] and be like them [*goyim*], and they [members of our community] defile themselves with wine from their [*goyish*] feasts."[14] This passage underlines contemporary violations of religious norms but also speaks to the blurring of boundaries between Jewish and Christian groups. This blurring, crucial to the argument of this paper, occurs through daily practices and interactions.

The entire tradition of rabbinic literature and commentaries, developed over centuries in reaction to the practical need to adapt the (in principle) unchangeable norm of *halakha* to local and regional circumstances,[15] reminds us to approach cases of violation of religious law beyond the sheer concept of deviance. As is asserted in one of the communal records, "[E]very Jew knows the law, and no [special] ordinance is needed."[16]—so confirm one of the communal records. Yet the same record demands daily vigilance and control, prescribing sanctions and

12 Reb Chaim, full name Chaim ben Bezalel (בצלאל בן חיים), born 1520, studied in Lublin by MahaRSCHaL (Salomo Luria). One of his classmates was Moses Isserles. Chaim ben Bezalel is the brother of the famous Judah Loew von Prag (Maharal). He died in 1588, so the book cited was published after his death.

13 *Goyim* = *Non-Jews*, in the context of pre-modern history also translated as *Christians*.

14 Chaim ben Bezal'el, *Sefer ha-Ḥayyim*, fol. 39r.

15 Baumgarten, "Daily Commodities and Religious Identity."

16 Wettstein, *Kadmoniyyot mi-Pinqasa' ot yeshanim le-Qorot Yisra'el be-Polin*, 19. Cited on the basis of the translation by Cygielman, *Jewish Autonomy in Poland and Lithuania*, 93.

penalties for cases of violation.[17] Community members belong to their collective by birth, which requires commitment to Jewish law. This clear demarcation of a group remains intact, as community leaders simultaneously count on the possibility of norm violations and, therefore, refer to and rely on regulations.

In the late sixteenth-century Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth,[18] Jewish communities received permission from the political establishment of the country to arrange a relatively autonomous communal administration, with organs at both the local and the supranational levels.[19] Interestingly, Jewish autonomy was facilitated by the political establishment of the Commonwealth not because it entertained some notion of tolerance or religious diversity but rather due to the need to find a way to collect taxes from the growing Jewish diaspora in the country.[20] Among other provisions, this autonomy included the exclusive prerogative to regulate communal matters related to *halakha*.[21] From the late sixteenth century onwards, communities and their organs produced an enormous amount of minute books *(pinkassim)*[22] addressing different aspects and problems of daily life from the perspective of Jewish law. One crucial part of these regulations concerned religiously coded practices explicitly linked to religious differences, such as dress and attire in this example from 1607: "men and women shall not clothe themselves with the garments and immorality of non-Jews […]; children of Israel are to be distinguished by their clothing."[23] In the context of the religiously coded practices of attire, exceptions were or could be made for travelers (for security reasons) or those close to the political establishment and/or court (as a form of symbolic communication).[24] This practice of making (or not making) exceptions offers an example of how religious

17 Ibid.

18 On the origins of these communities, see Kulik and Kalik, "The Beginnings of Polish Jewry."

19 Heyde, "The Beginnings of Jewish Self-Government in Poland"; Kalik, *Office Holders of the Council of Four Lands*; Kalik, *Scepter of Judah*, 9–21; Kaźmierczyk, *Żydowski samorząd ziemski w Koronie;* Teller, "Laicization of Early Modern Jewish Society"; Schorr, "Organizacja Zydow w Polsce od najdawniejszych czasow az do r," 734–75; Baron, *The Jewish Community*; Goldberg, "The Jewish Sejm"; Ettinger, "The Council of the Four Lands"; Goldberg, *Sejm Czterech Ziem*, 12. Recently: Katz, *The "Shabbes Goy."*

20 Kalik, *Scepter of Judah*.

21 Cygielman, *Jewish Autonomy in Poland and Lithuania*, 13.

22 Teller, *The East European Pinkas Kahal.*

23 Halperin, *Pinqas Wa'ad Arba' Aratsot*, cited on the basis of Bartal, *Pinqas Wa'ad Arba' Aratsot*, 17, no. 50 (1607).'

24 On symbolic communication and the construction of religious identity in the early modern Italian context, see Cassen, *Marking the Jews in Renaissance Italy*.

practices not only co-shape boundaries but also, when deemed reasonable or necessary, temporarily prioritize them.

The changeability and adaptability of norms and therefore of boundaries, depending on contexts of interactions, will be important topics in the discussion below, particularly in the context of religiously coded practices related to food. The phenomenon of Jewish autonomy, in step with the actual practices of a regulatory framework, can be seen as another layer of collective demarcation of the group through adherence to a distinctive concept of law, along with religiously coded and regulated practices and fundamental norms of *halakha*, as mentioned above.

The limitations of this regulatory framework were many. As mentioned earlier, one of them was that regulations could only concern matters related to tradition. Moreover, Jewish authorities could exercise forms of governance over their community members but not over Christians or members of other religious groups.[25] As interactions usually went beyond religiously defined communal spaces, regulatory organs and authorities regularly faced challenges in any attempt or effort to implement their orders broadly.

Furthermore, from the perspective of Jewish law and communal regulations, it is essential to stress the historically and societally given polyphony and disparity of regulations, emanating from different institutions and parties, motivated by diverse considerations, and situated in conditions of particular power relations. Rural and urban areas, for instance, were distinct in this regard. While the status of Jewish leaseholders *(arendarze)* was of importance in the latter,[26] the regulatory constellations in the cities which enjoyed Magdeburg rights in its various forms were particularly significant. Guild and craft unions present another regulatory setting, primarily in context of the economic organization of the groups. Additionally, a special aspect of different urban districts being admitted to different groups merits consideration. Moreover, the status of Jewish communities in different places in the Commonwealth was subject to privileges issued by kings, resulting in different economic or social latitudes for different communities, which sometimes shared the same city, as is the case in L'viv/Lwow/Lemberg,[27] which was home to two Jewish communities, one in the inner parts of the city and one on its periphery. Furthermore, the regulatory attempts by Christian, mainly Catholic institutions and organs towards the

25 Cygielman, *Jewish Autonomy in Poland and Lithuania*, 13.

26 Kalik, "Szlachta Attitudes towards Jewish Arenda in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries."

27 Kapral, "The Jews of Lviv and the City Council in the Early Modern Period", 79–100.

Jewish community also merit consideration.[28] This briefly outlined plurality of regulatory frameworks and their dynamics and interdependencies are certainly topics that warrant further exploration and therefore cannot be exhaustively presented here. Yet it is crucial to keep this complexity in mind, along with the layers of Jewish law-related regulations, as we move towards a bottom-up study of interactions, focusing on one particular example of religiously coded norms and practices concerning food and eating.

The Logic of Fields: Between Religion, Medicine, and Economy

"A cooked root of this plant, called in Polish *kosaciec* [קאזאצעך], in Latin *irys* […], as well as a salve made out of it, with added pork lard, softens gastric ulcers; with rose oil and a little vinegar mixed together, it is good for headaches; if mixed with honey and white hellebore, it removes stains from a face."[29] This recipe for improving health and treating ailments such as ulcers comes from a medical advisory published in Krakow in 1613. The language of the text is Yiddish, a vernacular which allows us to assume that this advisory was intended for daily use by members of the Jewish community. Hence, it is even more striking that this recipe included pork lard, which was prohibited by Jewish law.

Food-related prohibitions and precepts constitute a significant part of *halakha*, dating back to biblical times.[30] Along with other functional aspects, these norms of a different kind have been used to create religious differences, i.e. to draw boundaries between Jewish and non-Jewish groups, not least due to the visibility and observability of practices related to food preparation and consumption.[31] For instance, Leviticus 11: 44–47 includes verses regarding pure and impure (i.e. edible and inedible) animals, linking this differentiation to the fundamental religious distinction between Jewish and non-Jewish groups, exemplified by individuals in 1 Maccabees 1:12– 63 who chose death over consuming pork during the Seleucids persecution.[32] If pork and pork products

28 Kalik, "Patterns of Contacts between the Catholic Church and the Jews in Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the 17–18th Centuries: Jewish Debts."

29 *Sejfer derech ejc ha-chajim*, printed in Yiddish in Krakow 1613, cited on the basis of Geller, *Sejfer derech ejc ha-chajim: Przewodnik po drzewie żywota*, 207–8.

30 For a detailed analysis of food in Judaism, see Diemling, "Food."

31 Weltecke, "Essen und Fasten"; Freidenreich, *Foreigners and their Food*, 44; Teter, "'There Should Be No Love between Us and Them.'"

32 Diemling, "Food," 347.

remained strictly prohibited, how can it be explained that they were mentioned in a book explicitly addressed to a Jewish audience?

An accurate analysis of a specific type of this source sheds light on the entire tradition of translations of medical works from diverse European languages into Yiddish from the sixteenth century to the eighteenth, which was one fascinating phenomenon of early modern knowledge transfer in Europe.[33] *Sejfer derech ejc ha-chajim* presents one such translation of a then widespread type of *regimen sanitatis salernitanum*,[34] which allegedly explains the puzzling reference to pork lard. The recipe could include foodstuffs that were prohibited by *halakha* because it was not derived from a text related to the Jewish tradition in the first place. Nevertheless, the question of retaining the passage in the translation intended for daily use by members of Jewish communities would still require explanation.

However, upon comparing the original version and the Yiddish one, we discover the latter to be an interesting case of symbioses, combining translated passages and passages added later. Remarkably, the cited passage was authored and included by the translator. Therefore, the inclusion in the recipe of an item that was prohibited by religious law still demands some explanation. From the perspective of differentiation theory (as well as field theory), one possible interpretation would be that texts written primarily as medical or health advisories related to a different form of authority than, for instance, those written from an explicitly religious perspective. And again, as mentioned in the introduction, this analytical division does not equate to empirical reality but is to be understood as implicitly incorporated in communicative and interactional structures as an option.

Confirming this perspective, rabbinic literature and commentaries traditionally addressed the issue of recommending a considerable range of items prohibited by religious law but apparently in daily use for medical or other purposes. In several recipes of *Sejfer derech ejc ha-chajim* which included pork lard, prescriptions were linked solely to external bodily parts, and thus the lard was not intended for consumption. It could be used as a salve, for instance, but still was not to be eaten. One such example regards a treatment for chickenpox among children. The recipe recommends combining a drink made from winter cress with a lard salve: "[O]ne must know and keep in mind that if giving bitter things [to drink], one must make a suppository from a stewed honeycomb or

33 Jánošíková and Idelson-Shein, *New Science in Old Yiddish*.

34 Geller, "Yiddish 'Regimen sanitatis Salernitanum'."

to grease the anus with fresh pork lard, so that worms can move faster from bitter to sweet."[35] This differentiation in internal and external use of forbidden items may have something to do with traditional rabbinic adaptations of *halakha* to particular regional or societal circumstances. An impressive number of commentaries and rabbinic texts argue about the use of pork and lard in the context of medical, economic, or social contexts. For example, one early modern commentary[36] notes that the lard of an impure animal is considered unsuitable for sale or purchase by religious law, with certain exceptions. Selling lard intended for consumption is strictly forbidden, but its use for daily purposes (such as lighting a fire) is permissible. Additionally, exceptions may be made in cases of physical suffering: "[T]here is no permit for using lard for lubrication, except in cases of suffering; however, for a healthy person and for pleasure, it is not allowed […]."[37] This reflects a pragmatic approach taken by religious elites. It indicates that the normative perspective of religious law cannot always be directly applied to daily life situations. Instead, it must be adapted and regulated differently according to various societal contexts.

On the one hand, religious boundaries influenced or expressed by norms related to food are established according to religious law. On the other hand, on a practical level (including the level of discourse), attributions, demarcations, and interdependencies of these boundaries could vary based on the logics of the various societal fields. This is illustrated in another passage from *Sejfer derech ejc ha-chajim*, where advice on improving digestion suggests following a practice among non-Jews *(goyim)*, specifically Christians, who during Lent ate nuts after consuming fish to mitigate mucus production.[38] While this practice may be seen as something to emulate, it simultaneously remained a clear marker of religious difference in religious texts. Notably, also figures writing from different Christian perspectives (and in various epochs of the pre-modern era) emphasized the functional distinctiveness of the Jewish feast, set in contrast with the Christian practice of fasting on Saturday. This can be illustrated exemplarily with the words of the influential Jesuit Piotr Skarga (1536-1612): "Why do we fast on Saturday? […] Firstly, in order to turn away from the Jews and reject their Saturday feast,

35 *Sejfer derech ejc ha-chajim*, cited after, Gweller, *Sejfer derech ejc ha-chajim: Przewodnik po drzewie żywota*, 233–37.

36 Ashkenazi, Yoreh *De'ah sign,* 117.3.

37 Ibid.

38 *Sejfer derech ejc ha-chajim*, cited after, Gweller, *Sejfer derech ejc ha-chajim: Przewodnik po drzewie żywota.*

which, like other feasts, was only prescribed until the resurrection of Christ. [And] [b]ecause fasting contradicts the feast."[39]

Daily practices were undoubtedly influenced by religious law and forms of exercising control, yet they were presumably influenced to the same degree by the logics of societal fields. In Jewish moral literature, observations about economic activities in trade, such as the one from the city of Vilnius/Wilno, where the Jewish community would trade with Christians using impure poultry, reveal instances in which community leaders lost control over such situations.[40] There are numerous regulations in the communal minute books regarding this matter in different regions of the Commonwealth. Solomon Kluger sought to arrive at compromises by drawing a distinction between trade in pork, with was forbidden, and trade in pork lard, which according to Kluger was allowed.[41] This separation of meat and lard is striking. It invites us to consider whether lard was one of the very basic products in the region, common in general society, and therefore hard to avoid in daily life. It was used to prepare medications and, as evident from the passage cited above, to make soap and candles, and it was a great preservative for other foods or products. Kluger offered an explanation as to why his use of lard was justifiable: "Because I have complete evidence from one of the proselytes who told me how his father was negotiating the sale of olive oil, and that he himself brought oil from the state of Italy; and he could not transport it so far in barrels of wood without mixing it in lard until it was squeezed and stayed inside without taking out any drop."[42] Boundaries, with could be easily drawn in theological or polemical texts, seem to have been revised in moments of actual interaction.

From the perspective of religious law and its representatives, such as Rabbi and preacher Solomon Kluger (Rabbi Solomon ben Judah Aaron Kluger), the behaviors presented obviously fell in the category of deviant behavior and had to be controlled and punished. Yet from an analytical perspective, these behaviors can be seen as forms of adapting to norms in everyday interactions, which were governed by the logics of the social fields to which these interactions belonged.

39 Piotr Skarga, *O jedności kościoła Bożego pod iednym pasterzem. Y o Greckim od tey iedności odstąpieniu. Z przestrogą y upominanim do narodow Ruskich, przy Grekach stoiących: Rzecz krotka, na trzy części rozdzielona, teras przez k(sięd)za Piotra Skargę, zebrania Pana Iezusowego, wydana. «Prosze, Oycze, aby byli iedno, iako y my iedno iestesmy» (Ioan. 17). W Wilnie, z drukarni iego kxiążęcey miłości pa(na) Mikołaia Chrysztopha Radziwiła, marszałka w(ielkiego) kxię(stwa) Lit(ewskiego) etc.* Roku 1577, 233–34.

40 Ḥokhmat, *Sha'ar Isur VeHiter*, 69.

41 Kluger, *HaElef Lekha Shlomoh*, 189.

42 Isserlis, *ShUT HaRaMa*, 53.

One could simultaneously appear to be a member of the religious community and be included, socially[43] or economically,[44] as a member of general society.

From this perspective of interactions, for instance, entangled labor relations among Jewish and Christian populations represent complexity.[45] Jewish communal minute books shed light on these contexts frequently and regarding different aspects. Jewish households often hired maids who were Christian, which led to regulations concerning the responsibilities and prerogatives of the employers and their employees. A protocol from 1607, for instance, reads, "[Jewish] women are to remain vigilant [יהיו נזהרים, sic!], in preserving and salting the meat themselves […], and by no means [having it be salted] by their non-Jewish maidservants; and they should also be careful when cooking the food, for it happened many times that they [the non-Jewish or Christian maidservants] […] added something forbidden."[46] The household was hardly observable from the outside, so the responsibility to watch over religious others became an issue, alongside the obligation to adhere to the law. Similarly, Jewish slaughterers *(shoḥ aṭ im)* were frequently reminded of the rules of kashrut, and the possible sanctions and penalties for violations were stressed, such as suspension of one's license *(ḥazaka)*.[47] Licenses which permitted someone to engage in Jewish food production and trade, which included the production of butter and cheese and the supply of dried fish (which were popular in this region), were issued and could be suspended by local rabbis. They were thus one common instrument of regulation.

Working relations which brought members of different religious groups together were complex and involved various levels of negation and compromise. As mentioned above, Solomon Kluger complained about trade in non-kosher products in the city of Vilnius/Wilno, pointing out that these forbidden practices had become frequent, especially the consumption of non-kosher products by non-Jewish employees of Jews, even though this was prohibited by religious law.[48] This must have been a major issue, as Polish and Lithuanian *pinkassim* from the sixteenth century onwards are filled with complaints about violations in

43 Kalik, "Fusion versus Alienation"; Teter, "'There Should Be No Love between Us and Them.'"

44 Teller, "Jews in the Polish-Lithuanian Economy"; Heyde, "The Jewish Economic Elite in Red Ruthenia in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries."

45 See: Kalik, "Christian Servants Employed by Jews," 259–70. Kaźmierczyk, "The Problem of Christian Servants," 23–40.

46 Halperin, *Pinqas Wa'ad Arba' Aratsot*. Cited after: Bartal, *Pinqas Wa'ad Arba' Aratsot*, 16, no. 45 (1607).

47 E.g. Michałowska-Mycielska, *Pinkas kahału boćkowskiego* (1714–1817), 12.

48 Ḥokhmat, *Sha'ar Isur VeHiter*, 69.

cases involving food provided for Christian employees. As in the cases involving Jewish households, in this context we are also dealing with complex matters. An example from the Krakow community of 1590 shows clearly that suspicion had fallen on Jewish merchants traveling to the city of Gdansk as oxen drivers and grain transporters of having bought pork for their non-Jewish workers on the road, which constituted a violation of religious law.[49] Much as a clear distinction was drawn between the two communities through the very observable difference between the Jewish feast on the one hand and the practice of fasting on Saturdays among Catholics on the other (as noted by the aforementioned Jesuit Piotr Skarga), the importance of time in the customs though which difference was expressed was also underlined in the context of interreligious labor relations. In the same minute book from Kraków, there are multiple warnings regarding the prohibition of doing agricultural works on a Saturday. Members of the Jewish community were not only prohibited from engaging in this kind of work on Saturdays, they were also prohibited from letting their Christian employees fish[50] or plow or engage in any other activities in the field,[51] under a penalty of a fine of 50 red złoty. The same temporal aspect of religious diversity (religious belonging linked to particular working days and feasts) frequently appears in the context of Jewish tavern keepers, who sometimes unlawfully served guests, primarily Christians, on the Sabbath, thus showing a stronger commitment to profits than to the law. Communal regulations, as we see here, were therefore not based on the law as an abstract norm. Rather, they were systematically driven by very specific situations and interactions.

Furthermore, supranational organs of Jewish autonomy also issued regulations to address violations of dietary laws, emphasizing the importance of maintaining religious boundaries between groups. This indicates that such problems occurred across regions and communities as a whole. A decree issued by the Council of Lithuania in 1628 provides an example. Local religious elites were ordered to warn all members of all communities in all the synagogues not to trade with Christians in non-kosher carcasses and other forbidden foods and also not to buy such items for their non-Jewish employees.[52] Community leaders attempted to prevent and punish violations of these regulations, enforcing the dietary laws in order to maintain religious demarcation between the groups.

49 Statutes legislated by rabbi Meshulam Webush of Kraków in 1590: 922.13 (p. 486).

50 Ibid., 922.10 (p. 486).

51 Ibid., 922.11 (p. 486).

52 Dubnow, *Pinqas ha-Medina o Pinqas Wa'ad ha-Kehillot ha-rashiyyot biMedinat Lita*, 34, no. 138 (1628).

However, religiously regulated practices related to food in particular were not solely about religious constellations. They also intersected with trade and economic interests, social relations, medical and health practices, and so forth. These various spheres of activity can and should be separated, yet on the level of actual interactions, they remained entangled and contingent.

By presuming the stability of early modern religious groups and the singularity of their boundaries, we tend preemptively to attribute authenticity to the very notion of groups as discrete entities, and we therefore are compelled to understand violation of group norms as deviance. Yet, if we shift our perspective from a religious one (which the former one is) to an analytical one, new questions arise. Is it possible that pork was cheaper than other meats, and thus there may have been significant economic incentives to buy non-kosher products for workers? Or perhaps roast pork was simply tastier and more filling? And was pork lard just a great preservative for food and a substance for healing practices? Yet, at this point and from an epistemological perspective, it is less important to find an explanations for these practices or give answers to these questions than it is simply to ask the questions themselves. This would mean not letting a normative, religiously burdened perspective appear in place of an analytical one, which could offer new perspectives on structural contingency and complexity.

Conclusion

Religious groups and their delineations are profoundly influenced by theological and legal frameworks. Despite demonstrating a historical propensity for fluctuation, whether through fragmentation or consolidation, religious collectives endure in the context of this form of ordering as relatively stable structures. Moreover, the formation of these groups is significantly influenced by religious practices and their accompanying regulatory mechanisms, which simultaneously serve to distinguish them externally while fostering internal cohesion. In this context, an interplay among shifts and enduring features is observable across temporal and spatial dimensions. Furthermore, within the realm of societal interactions, an additional framework emerges wherein a complexity of norms, regulations, and practices recurrently find expression in distinct forms. These diverse frameworks contribute to the establishment of religious boundaries, which can vary significantly. Additionally, the pace and frequency with which these boundaries undergo change within each framework may differ markedly.

Praxeology, as advocated for use in this paper, presents a perspective that transcends the simplistic dichotomy between the normative dimensions of theology and law on one hand and practices and interactions on the other. This perspective underscores that the analytical approach to understanding early modern group building should not be constrained by either of these frameworks. Rather, it urges a comprehensive consideration of the inherent complexity within these layers, recognizing their potential polyphony and incongruence in the early stages of assumption building.

These considerations have implications for the framing of religious diversity as both an empirical and analytical category. When beginning from a theological or law-related perspective, one may tend to perceive religious plurality solely as a sum of different groups. While historically valid to some extent, such an approach tends to accentuate only a specific aspect of the broader spectrum of religious ordering. These perspectives often underscore the apparent clarity and stability of religious collectives and their boundaries, notwithstanding their potential for variability. What remains concealed is the ambiguity inherent in what we define as religious groups. This ambiguity extends beyond mere proximity or boundaries of collectives and examines notions of deviance, when religious norms, perceived as definitions or forms of belonging, are individually or collectively transgressed. This paper considers these latter aspects of group formation and their conceptual underpinnings.

Consequently, if we seek to arrive at an understanding of religious diversity as both an empirical and analytical category, we must appreciate the complexity of ordering. Such an understanding must account for the coexistence of static and dynamic collective boundaries, both temporally and spatially, as well as the contingency of their manifestations in various interactional contexts.

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Hungarian Historical Review 13, no. 2 (2024): 306–319

Medieval Diversity: Contexts and Meanings

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In these concluding remarks to the collection of articles, I tease out the meanings of the term "diversity," considering the contexts in which it appeared and how the various meanings it acquired in shifting contexts are meaningful for historical analysis. If one considers the possible connotations of "diversity" when applied to the age of Sigismund, what comes to mind immediately is diversity associated with Sigismund himself. As king of Hungary and Croatia, prince-elector of Brandenburg, king of Bohemia, king of the Romans, and later emperor, he ruled over diverse lands. This was depicted, for example, in the famous posthumous portrait in Nuremberg by Abrecht Dürer with the display of coats of arms.[1] Furthermore, his royal title, in line with those of his predecessors, added a large number of territories, some of which were only part of the realm in wishful thinking: "Sigismund, by the grace of God king of the Romans forever August, and of Hungary, Bohemia, Dalmatia, Croatia, Rama, Serbia, Galicia, Lodomeria, Cumania, and Bulgaria; Margrave of Brandenburg and heir of Luxembourg."[2] Sigismund was reputedly fluent in many languages and at home in different cultures. The Hungarian chronicler Johannes Thuróczy claimed that Sigismund's long beard was a tribute to the Hungarians, whose ancestors allegedly had had long beards.[3] There are also many depictions and portrayals of Sigismund. They served as reminders of his sway in diverse locations through visual means.

Sigismund's political role was similarly diverse. He organized the crusade to Nicopolis, gathering Hungarian, French, Burgundian, German, and Italian troops and thus uniting a very diverse set of armies, only to suffer a major defeat in 1396. Other crusades did not fare much better.[4] While Sigismund was a failure on the battlefield, he is seen as a major innovator in diplomacy who traveled all over Europe and spent substantial amounts of time in various cities, from

1 https://www.albrecht-durer.org/Emperor-Charlemagne-And-Emperor-Sigismund.html.

2 "Sigismundus, Dei gratia Romanorum Rex semper Augustus, ac Hungariae, Bohemiae, Dalmatiae, Croatiae, Ramae, Serviae, Galliciae, Lodomeriae, Cumaniae, Bulgariaeque Rex, Marchio Brandenburgensis, nec non Lucemburgensis haeres." His titles changed over time. This example is from 1425, Fejér, *Codex diplomaticus*, t. X, vol. 6, 695, no. CCCXI.

3 Johannes de Thurocz, *Chronica Hungarorum*, Book 5, Chap. 24.

4 Housley, *The Later Crusades, 1274–1580*, 76–79.

DOI 10.38145/2024.2.306

Paris to Rome and Buda to Perpignan. He tried to mediate between England and France in the Hundred Years' War. He was instrumental in ending the papal schism at the Council of Constance, yet he also failed to protect John Hus at the same council and ignited the Hussite wars.[5]

Contemporary authors were critical of the discrepancy between the king's persuasive speeches and the various promises he made on the one hand and his actual deeds on the other:

> This king was a lord of good words, he could say what everyone wanted to hear; he bade, gave, counselled, and promised much to which he did not hold, and he was not ashamed of this… His words were sweet, lenient, and good, and his works were brief, meager, and small.[6]

Although this is from a hostile source (the *Klingenberger Chronik*, by a partisan of Duke Frederick IV of Austria-Tyrol whom Sigismund placed under imperial ban and dispossessed in 1415), it is not the only such writing by an author who was not impressed by Sigismund's acts compared to his promises. The clash between Sigismund's lofty rhetoric for Christendom and his personal debauchery and the clear mix of opposing personality traits that this implied led one author to make the following claim:

> The contradictory qualities, lofty thinking and frivolous action, religiosity and cynicism, chivalric virtue and breaking his word, spiritual depth and cruelty, piety and lasciviousness merged in him in an almost fantastic way. […] He was a dreamer and a calculator, a knight and a real-politician, uniting the ideas of Alexander the Great novels and Machiavelli.[7]

Portrayals of Sigismund in national historiographies were similarly varied.[8] Traditional evaluations of Sigismund tended to be negative, although for different reasons. In the Hungarian historiography, he was not taken seriously because he came to rule by right of his wife. He was seen as a weak king who had to give in to nobles and was responsible for the failed crusade of Nicopolis. According to a persistent popular legend, however, John Hunyadi, who was venerated as a national hero, was his illegitimate son. This may have been at

5 Fudge, *The Crusade Against Heretics in Bohemia, 1418–1437*.

6 Sargans, *Die Klingenberger Chronik*, 209.

7 Horváth, *Zsigmond király és kora*, 10.

8 For a discussion of the earlier secondary literature, Hoensch, "Az 1945 utáni Zsigmond-kutatás súlypontjai."

least partly based on the well-attested fondness Sigismund had for women. As Oswald von Wolkenstein (1376/7–1445) quipped, "if the Schism had involved women, we would have achieved unity sooner."[9]

From the point of view of many German historians, Sigismund had utopian plans and no real successes, apart from collecting crowns. For Czech historians, he was an enemy of the Hussites, who represented the Czech national cause, and he was responsible for the Hussite wars. An author in 1937 explained the contradictions in Sigismund's personality by the spine-chilling logic of the times as carried in his blood. According to this claim, due to his ancestry, which brought together west and east, Sigismund embodied the collision of "sophisticated Western education and irrepressible Slavic primeval power and wildness."[10]

Eventually, reevaluations of Sigismund began to present him as having done the best under difficult circumstances with very limited resources. He was lauded for a cultural revival in Hungary as well as for the success of a marital alliance as a counterweight to hostile barons. His own bravery as well as his propensity to reward loyal service and find excellent military commanders and advisors were highlighted. His reform projects for Church and Empire were seen positively. Indeed, he was often hailed as a master of performative communication. Thus we can, as is so often the case, reflect on the diversity of historians' points of view and, in particular, on the significant shifts of perception over time.

More recently, it has been suggested that to compensate for the difficulties he faced, despite his financial problems, Sigismund cultivated the ritual, emotional, and material aspects of rulership, such as symbolic displays and splendid clothing.[11] This line of research directed attention towards diversity in the use of spectacle in particular, or in other words, towards how public ceremonies performatively constructed rulership. Sigismund used imperial cities such as Constance for large assemblies, where burghers, merchants, ambassadors, and ecclesiastics would witness such ceremonies. One example is the Congress of Buda in 1412. The meeting's principal aim was to broker a peace deal between Poland and the Teutonic Order. Those present included Sigismund himself, King Władysław II of Poland, and the king of Bosnia. It was attended by people from seventeen different countries, reportedly thirteen dukes, twenty one counts, 1,500

9 "Wer zwaiung an den frowen gelaint,/ wir hetten uns leicht ee ueraint." Klein and Wachinger, *Die Lieder Oswald von Wolkensteins*, 54; "If the disagreement [Schism] had played a role with the ladies, / we would have certainly reached a compromise much earlier." Classen, *The Poems of Oswald von Wolkenstein*, 75.

10 Horváth, *Zsigmond király és kora*, 12.

11 Hardy, "The Emperorship of Sigismund of Luxemburg."

knights, 4,000 servants, one cardinal, one legate, three archbishops, eleven other bishops, 86 players and trumpeters, seventeen messengers, and 40,000 horses.[12] According to Jan Długosz, even the envoys of Zeledin (Jalal al-Din), khan of the Golden Horde, traveled to Buda. The khan was an ally of Władysław II of Poland, and according to the chronicler, Sigismund used the "Tatar" presence "to threaten the Venetians."[13]

Art was a vital tool in the performance of power, but if one considers the art of the period from the perspective of diversity, there are interesting paradoxes. One example is the depiction of the Pope and Emperor Rotulus in Berlin's Staatsbibliothek from 1431, which offers an example of diversity in repetition. The pope and emperor figures are similar, but there are subtle differences in the forms of their crowns and in some details.[14] A reliquary cross from Nagydisznód/ Cisnădie /Heltau, c. 1440, is celebrated in the catalogue of an exhibition on Sigismund for its complexity: "[t]he diversity of precious materials and complex iconography makes this cross one of the most outstanding Central European goldsmith works of the period."[15] While for the modern observer, the reliquary is valuable and alluring because it is made of a variety of precious metals, it reveals a more intriguing diversity. The cross was probably originally made as a reliquary for a Holy Blood relic, as suggested by the use of a ruby for the wound on Christ's side. The cross was tied to the most universal Christian holy figure, yet it was at the same time very local, as it included the patron saints of the parish church, St. Walburga and St. Servatius.

Another example is the so-called Jankovich saddle, a bone saddle from c. 1420–40.[16] This saddle was made with plates of ivory fastened over a wooden frame and hide, with imagery including St. George, a wild man (thought to represent the inner beast), and representations of courtly love with a minstrel. The meaning of the imagery refers to chivalry, protection from enemies, and the defense of Christian borders, and it has links to the Order of the Dragon. At the same time, this type of saddle was likely inspired by saddles that figured in works of literature, since ivory saddles appeared in romance literature from the twelfth century on, referred to by writers such as Chrétien de Troyes and

12 Whelan, "Sigismund of Luxemburg and the Imperial Response to the Ottoman Turkish Threat," 68.

13 Michael, *The Annals of Jan Długosz*, 411.

14 Staatsbibliothek Berlin, Hdschr. 143, https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN747128251&PHYSID=PHYS_0001

15 Takács, *Sigismund of Luxemburg, Art and Culture 1387–1437*, 86.

16 Takács, 356, 4.65, see also 356–364 and Verő, "Megjegyzések a Zsigmond-kori csontnyergekhez."

Chaucer. The fifteenth-century saddle was probably used for ceremonial events, as were the many other such saddles known from the period. Thus a type emerged, making earlier literary representation a reality linked to prestige and a way to differentiate the elites.

Diversity was linked to differentiation in society in other ways as well, notably through the Order ("society") of the Dragon, which was founded in 1408 by Sigismund.[17] While it started out as a monarchical chivalric order of nobles in the entourage of the king, with Sigismund's election as king of the Romans in 1410, it was very quickly transformed into an international order, with membership used as a reward and in diplomacy. There was a fundamental difference embedded in the order itself: only 24 members, barons of the realm, could wear both the dragon and the cross, while members of a second rank were not limited in number, but could only wear the dragon.

The fact of being admitted as a member, especially of the first rank, was an honor, but it also bound the person to Sigismund, as members had to swear loyalty to the king and promise to help him against the "pagans" (meaning the Ottomans). The Order was used by Sigismund to build alliances inside Hungary and to promote relations with the rulers of Serbia, Bosnia, and Wallachia. He also used it in international diplomacy to promote the anti-Ottoman crusade. In 1433, for his imperial coronation, Sigismund convinced Pope Eugene IV to grant the full remission of sins in a crusading indulgence to the members of the Order of the Dragon:

> Item, because, by the power of its statutes and fulfilment of its oath, whoever is touched by the device or the society of the Dragon is obliged personally to set forth against the Turks, schismatics and heretics, and also infidels and to expose his own person and to attend to the extermination and confusion of the same [groups of people], the lord emperor himself therefore supplicates that our lord should mercifully consider conceding in perpetuity that the aforementioned lord emperor and his successors, the kings of Hungary and those of the aforesaid society and also all and everyone of the kingdom of Hungary and those of other foreign nations who personally set out for the defense of the Kingdom of Hungary and in support of the lord emperor and the successors of the kings and of the aforesaid society against those labeled infidels, schismatics, and heretics should have full remission of sins and penalties, in the same way that crusaders

17 Boulton, *The Knights of the Crown*, 349; Takács, *Sigismundus Rex et imperator*, 337–56.

> *(crucesignati)*, confessed and penitent, in the passage for the acquisition of the Holy Land [have]. Permitted for all in the most blessed form.[18]

The Order of the Dragon was thus associated with war against the Ottomans, raising an interesting point about the sign of the dragon itself. The following explanation was given for this choice:

> we and the faithful barons and magnates of our kingdom shall bear and have, and do choose and agree to wear and bear, in the manner of society, the sign or effigy of the Dragon incurved into the form of a circle, its tail winding around its neck, divided through the middle of its back along its length from the top of its head right to the tip of its tail, with blood [forming] a red cross flowing out into the interior of the cleft by a white crack, untouched by blood, just as and in the same way that those who fight under the banner of the glorious martyr St. George are accustomed to bear a red cross on a white field.[19]

The dragon was often used as a sign of evil, and so the defeated dragon was chosen as the sign of the Order: the members promised to crush the ancient enemy under the triumphant cross of Christ. The sign of the dragon itself had diverse meanings, since it usually implied negative connotations (as in depictions of the dragon defeated by St. George), yet at the same time, in its use as the sign of the Order, it allowed members to recognize one another and so became a sign of status and prestige.

Diversity also existed in politics, notably in the many ways of dealing with the Ottoman threat. At the time of Sigismund's accession to the Hungarian throne, various countries between Hungary and the Ottomans were engaged in defensive warfare against the latter. With the collapse of Serbia, the Ottomans became a more direct danger for the kingdom of Hungary. After the failure of the Nicopolis crusade, it was only Ottoman interest in Asia Minor that brought relief. Sigismund therefore employed a variety of means to counter the Ottoman threat. Diplomatic efforts to gain the loyalty of Serbian and Bosnian rulers failed in the end, as the Serbs and Bosnians became tribute-payers of the Ottomans. Sigismund was also interested in finding allies against the Ottomans in Asia. He tried to secure finances and build up defensive systems on the borders. He also ordered nobles to arm peasant archers, and he specified the obligations of the nobility during a general levy to fight.

18 Fraknói, "Genealogiai és heraldikai közlemények a vatikáni levéltárból," 7–8.

19 Boulton, *The Knights of the Crown*, 350.

Sigismund also used courtly ceremony to call attention to the Ottoman threat. He made speeches at balls, promising war against "the Turks."[20] During a visit to Perpignan in 1415 to discuss Church union with the Byzantines, Sigismund was accompanied by a supposedly Ottoman prisoner who had been captured by him in battle. The Buda congress already mentioned was also intended to promote a crusade against the Ottomans, and Sigismund also made use of German to promote crusades. Yet there are accounts of Sigismund getting completely drunk and even being reprimanded by clerics at the Council of Basel for jousting instead of fighting against the infidel.

Sigismund's efforts to raise awareness of the need for a crusade also had some odd consequences. For example, a report to the Teutonic Order warned that Sigismund claimed he intended to set off for the Holy Sepulcher in the company of a pagan princess, but in reality he was perhaps pondering an attack on the Order.[21] So we should also consider the possible difference between the intention of a message and the recipient's interpretation. There is yet another aspect of diversity in Sigismund's relations with the Ottomans: trying to find common ground, for example when Sigismund negotiated with an Ottoman envoy. Western and Ottoman customs diverged, and the envoy behaved according to Ottoman norms. Sigismund, however, tried to honor him through behavior that corresponded to Western ideas. Sigismund sat on a throne surrounded by his court, and the Ottoman envoy knelt three times while approaching him. The king, however, bowed towards him each time and then had a chair set up facing him for the envoy to sit on.[22]

Hungary, one of the realms ruled by Sigismund, is often cited as an example of diversity, with the famous Admonitions attributed to King Stephen I (although written by a cleric) extolling immigrants:

> For as guests arrive from different parts and provinces, so they bring with them different tongues and customs, different examples and weapons, and all this adorns the royal court while deterring foreigners from overweening contempt. For a country of one single language and one set of customs is weak and vulnerable. Therefore, I enjoin on you, my son, to nurture them [newcomers] benevolently and to hold

20 Whelan, "Sigismund of Luxemburg and the Imperial Response to the Ottoman Turkish Threat."

21 Ibid., 70.

22 Altmann, *Eberhart Windeckes Denkwürdigkeiten*, 175.

> them in high esteem so that they should stay with you rather than dwell elsewhere.[23]

There was thus a long tradition of diversity in Hungary. If we compare Sigismund's reign to those of previous rulers, however, in some ways there was in fact less diversity. The earlier populations of Cumans and Muslims had disappeared by then, for example. Yet in other ways, there was more diversity, for instance through links to the Empire, linguistic variety (which included a growing use of the vernacular), and the appearance of new genres.

However, Sigismund was not only associated with diversity. An anonymous treatise in the name of Sigismund, the Reformatio Sigismundi, c. 1439, which was a manifesto for reform (which suggests that it was a vision of Sigismund), called for an end to regional autonomy and disorder and the creation of a centralized government under the Roman emperor.[24] Tendencies towards more uniformity also appeared in the arts. While many artists were invited to Sigismund's court at Buda from other parts of Europe, this was in order to produce what has been called international Gothic, a style that was more uniform across Europe than before and linked to royal courts. It replaced earlier, more isolated and diverse styles.[25] It has also been suggested that the stone funerary monuments of Hungarian aristocrats became increasingly uniform more or less during Sigismund's reign, as a Buda workshop produced and then influenced the manner in which these gravestones were made.[26]

Some trends therefore moved away from diversity towards more centralization and more uniformity. Yet the diversity of the world at the same time came to be the focus of more conscious attention. At the end of the fourteenth century and during the first decades of the fifteenth, Jewish responsa (she'elot u teshuvot) discussed the variations in Hungary and Austria of blowing the shofar and saying various prayers. Sources also indicate a difference of opinion between two rabbis concerning the use of a tablecloth for Passover. The tablecloth had been laid over a sack, and the issue was that yeast may have rubbed off on it.

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23 "Sicut enim ex diversis partibus et provinciis veniunt hospites, ita diversas linguas et consuetudines, diversaque documenta et arma secum ducunt, que omnia regna [variant: regiam] ornant et magnificant aulam et perterritant exterorum arrogantiam. Nam unius lingue uniusque moris regnum inbecille et fragile est. Proptereo iubeo te fili mi, ut bona voluntate illos nutrias, et honeste teneas, ut tecum libentius degant, quam alicubi habitent." Balogh, "Libellus de institutione morum," 625.

24 Koller, *Reformation Kaiser Siegmunds*.

25 Takács, *Sigismund of Luxemburg Art and Culture*, 80.

26 Jékely, "A Zsigmond-kori magyar arisztokrácia művészeti reprezentációja," 306.

According to one view, this meant that the sack merely had to be shaken out, but according to another, it had to be washed before it could be used for Passover.[27]

The much-traveled Oswald von Wolkenstein even celebrated the diversity of the world. Originating from South Tyrol, he served various lords, including Sigismund, in whose service he went on diplomatic missions. He also authored numerous poems. In one, he celebrated the diversity of life itself:

> Now, since all creatures that God has brought forth,
> whether in water, in the air, or on earth
> express their thankfulness to the Lord in His Majesty,
> simply for the grace that He granted them form,
> alas, stupid man, why then is your heart so wild [blind],
> since you well know that God has created you in His image
> and has granted you His grace so generously
> in so much infinite variety?
> He gave you a body and life, soul and reason;
> earth, fire, water and the wonderful air are your servants,
> and so all animals, wild and tame, the smell of fruit in the deep ground
> are at your disposal in wondrous manner.[28]

Oswald was a member of several chivalric orders. He was a Knight of the Holy Sepulcher and a member of the Order of the Elephant, the Order of the Falcon, and the Order of the Dragon.[29] He was proud of his travels to "France, León-Galicia, Aragon, Castile, England, Denmark, Sweden, Bohemia, Hungary, Apulia, Navarra, Cyprus, Sicilia, Portugal, Granada and Egypt," and also to "Morocco, Arabia, from Armenia to Persia, through the Tartar lands to Syria, via Byzantium to Turkey, Georgia … Russia, Prussia, Estonia, Lithuania, Livonia."[30] In one of his poems, he noted, I have dwelled … with Christians, Greek-Orthodox, and heathens.[31] In another, he boasted of his linguistic skills and his gifts as a musician:

> French, Arabic, Catalan, Castilian,
> German, Latin, Slovenian, Italian, Russian and Greek:
> these ten languages I used whenever necessary.
> Moreover, I knew how to play the fiddle, the trumpet, drums, and the flute.[32]

27 Komoróczy and Spitzer, *Héber kútforrások*, 188–91, 195–99, 183–84 respectively.
28 Classen, *The Poems of Oswald von Wolkenstein*, 56.
29 Ibid., 12–13.
30 Ibid., 64, 126.
31 Ibid., 71.
32 Ibid., 71.

He also reflected on the diversity of customs in the lands he visited. He recounted how the queen of Aragon fixed earrings in his ears and in his beard, a custom at the court there, but something which simply provoked laughter at home.[33]

A contemporary travel account by Johann Schiltberger (1380–c. 1440) provides even more detail, as it is a lengthy narrative rather than short poetry. Johann, who was born not far from Munich, wrote, "I left my home near the city of Munich at the time that King Sigismund of Hungary left for the land of the Infidels."[34] Taken prisoner by the Ottomans, he later recorded his experiences, also adding material from hearsay. He paid particular attention to customs that diverged from European ones, be that the local alternation of winter and summer pastures for animals or the growing of pepper in India.[35]

Schiltberger also compared Christian and Muslim customs, highlighting various differences. He compared Muslim ritual ablution to Christian confession, saying that Muslims believe they were pure after washing themselves, just as Christians were purified by confession made with full penitence. He likened Muslim Friday to Christian Sunday as the holy day. He pointed out that Muslims did not bury their dead in or around temples but out in the fields. He also wrote about the kerchiefs worn on the head by men, Christians wearing blue and Jews yellow.[36] He demonstrated that many of these differences in the end signified the same referent: purification, a day set aside for prayer, the distinction between adherents of other faiths. Thus underneath diversity, he found commonalities.

Yet digging even deeper, ultimately a grave difference is manifest in Johann Schiltberger's thinking between what he saw as the true faith and what he categorized as false belief. He recounts a particular legend concerning a sign that would mark a child who would someday bring great grief to the Christian world. According to the legend, a Christian priest in Egypt knew of a prophecy about a child named Mohammed. According to this prophecy, this child would introduce a doctrine against Christianity which would cause much suffering to Christians. He and his successors would acquire great power, which, however, would decrease after one thousand years had passed. There would be a sign which would identify the child: a black cloud which would always hover over him. The priest identified, Mohammed, who traveled with merchants, from this

33 Ibid., 72, also 77–78.

34 Telfer, *The Bondage and Travels of Johann Schiltberger*, 1.

35 Ibid., 14, 61–62.

36 Ibid., 68–69, 74.

sign.[37] As distinguishing signs go, this one stands out: a divinely ordained cloud following one person. Ultimately, Johann claimed that Muslims themselves knew that the Christians would someday regain their lands, and the Muslims would be expelled. The Muslims had only managed to conquer these lands in the first place because Christians had abandoned justice, had been haughty, and had turned away from God.[38]

Faced with so many types of diversity, how are we to make sense of "diversity" itself in the age of Sigismund? The first important point is that some forms of diversity may hide a common purpose or meaning, such as in the case of some religious rites in Christianity and Islam. Yet it is also possible that a single sign comes to acquire a diverse array of meanings, denoting different things depending on the context. This is the case, for example, with beards. Johann Schiltberger stated that Mohammed forbade Muslims from shaving their beards:

> he who would have a face different to that he received from God does it against God's command. They also say that whoever cuts his beard does it from vanity and pride and to please the world and scorns the creation of God; it is particularly the Christians who do this to please their women… for the sake of vanity, they disfigure the image in which God created them.[39]

In this text, beards are signs of adherence to Islam. Yet Sigismund's luxuriant beard was his trademark. It is depicted in multiple portraits, some of them even hidden as representations of Biblical figures, though Sigismund himself saw Muslim Ottomans as the enemy. As mentioned above, supposedly Sigismund's beard was a way of honoring his ties to Hungary.

Another issue concerns how and why diversity emerged. Interconnections through travel, dynastic ties, and the interests of the ruler and the elites often fostered forms of diversity. Yet diversity also manifested in moments of crisis, for instance the multiple interests that pulled in different directions in the empire or during the Schism. Should we use the same label, "diversity," for all these phenomena? Or should we distinguish between occurrences that were given a positive connotation and instances that were given a negative meaning? And how did context determine the real meanings behind forms of diversity? We need to remind ourselves of historical change as well: diversity in Sigismund's age was not the same as it is now. There was no diversity for the sake of inclusion,

37 Ibid., 65–66.

38 Ibid., 77.

39 Ibid., 71–72.

and there was no explicitly tolerant worldview. Quite the contrary, there were strict limits on what was considered acceptable, resulting in discrimination and persecution, for example of people who belonged to other religions or who espoused beliefs categorized as heresy. So we need to be careful, since diversity has taken on very different meanings in our age.

There were powerful limits to any positive assessments of diversity in Sigismund's times. This was due in part to a worldview strongly imbued by Biblical ideas: Oswald von Wolkenstein's poem celebrated life's diversity but saw it all as existing for the sake of Man. The limits of diversity were also due in part to the hold Catholicism had at the time. Even in the age of papal schism, divergence from Catholic tenets was not tolerated, as the Hussite wars demonstrated. We should keep in mind that the Latin word "diversitas" also meant contrariety, contradiction, and disagreement. Diversity was often seen as negative, something to be condemned or even persecuted, whether embodied in prostitutes, Jews, or heretics. At other times, too much diversity caused unease. There are seeming celebrations of diversity, such as the Admonitions attributed to Stephen I, but underneath, we see the pragmatic motives for encouraging settlers. Ultimately, medieval diversity was seen as positive when it was utilitarian: nature served man, knowledge of many languages was a useful tool, and immigrants served the interests of the ruler.

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Hungarian Historical Review 13, no. 2 (2024): 320–322

BOOK REVIEWS

Climate and Society in Europe: The Last Thousand Years. By Christian Pfister and Heinz Wanner. Bern: Haupt, 2021. 400 pp.

For historians interested in the history of climate change, Christian Pfister's name is very well known, and for climatologists, Heinz Wanner is a name that certainly rings a bell. Their joint undertaking to provide a concise overview of climate fluctuations, weather phenomena, and their societal impacts over the course of the last millennium in Europe is certainly a work that deserves attention. Both Pfister and Wanner spent most of their academic careers at the University of Bern in Switzerland, which (not independent of their activities) became one of the most important centers for climate history research worldwide. In the 1980s, Pfister worked out a system (referred to in the book reviewed here as Pfister indices) to interpret and quantify written sources and thus allow historians to enter into discussions in the growing field of paleoclimatology. His method has been widely accepted and used ever since, providing a common framework for historians and paleoclimatologists to study climate fluctuations using different datasets (proxies), including written sources.

In eleven chapters, the book provides a concise and accessible overview of European climate history over the course of the past millennium. It is a most welcome endeavor, as climate history in recent decades tended to use a language that became increasingly alien to many historians and others interested in climate change in human history. This approach is well reflected in Chapter 1 which explains the main concepts of historical climatology and the climate system, acquainting those who do not have any background in climate studies with basic terms, methods, and assumptions. Chapters 2 and 3 offer two case studies which serve different purposes. The first of these two chapters is on Ötzi the Iceman, the Neolithic man who lived in the Alps around 3200 BC and whose body was found naturally mummified at the site of his death in 1991. The research related to Ötzi (summarized in this chapter) offers an opportunity to address the main climatic trends of the Holocene and at the same time to put these processes in the context of the rapid global warming we have seen recently. Chapter 3 explains the complexity of the impacts of the 1815 Tambora eruption and the concept of vulnerability to extremes. While the chapter is an enjoyable read, it does not quite fit in the chapter structure of the book.

Chapter 4 provides a survey of the development of an interest in registering weather phenomena and climate fluctuations by drawing on the writings of ancient and medieval authors. It shows how this interest paved the way for the formation of scientific societies and networks, followed by the birth of scientific meteorology and climatology in the twentieth century. Chapter 5 is dedicated to the issue of how to use sources that have survived. It provides a survey of the main proxies, such as dendroclimatological data, stalagmite records, ice cores, and sediments and then gives a more detailed analysis of the variety of written sources that can be used by climate historians. The authors discuss the potentials and limitations of the different types of sources by providing examples of the ways in which these sources have been used.

Chapter 6 focuses on the main features of the present-day climate of Europe and then looks at the main fluctuations in the climate of the continent over the course of the past millennium as evidenced by sources from the natural sciences and simulations combined with meteorological measurements from the past. It addresses the reconstructions of regional temperature and precipitation patterns to show the main climatic trends of the last millennium, including the Medieval Climatic Anomaly (or the high Medieval Period, as it is referred to in the book) and the Little Ice Age.

Chapters 7 and 8 survey weather events and the main climatic trends by centuries. While the examples on which the two chapters draw are usually illustrative, their geographical coverage is somewhat unbalanced, and the presentation of some of the years is rather schematic. Chapter 9 shifts the perspective from weather events and climate change to their impacts on society. This term (society) is used in a most restrictive sense, as the authors focus almost exclusively on the demographic context of weather events and climate change, pointing to famine and dearth in various historical moments over the course of the past millennium. Other societal impacts, such as epidemics or the persecution of different marginal groups and elements of society, are mentioned only in inserts.

Following up on the data presented in Chapters 7 and 8, Chapter 10 presents seasonal climate fluctuations over the past millennium (the period that is adequately covered by the written sources and, accordingly, the Pfister indices, depending on the season, covers the last 500 to 800 years). From the point of view of readership, it is not evident why these reconstructions rely solely on the written sources and their quantifications when the introductory chapters put considerable emphasis on the variety of sources which offer relevant information concerning fluctuations in climate. The other main question with

the data presented here concerns their territorial validity. Most of the indices relate to Central Europe (although this is not necessarily explained), but the reconstructions presented are not limited to these areas. The final chapter of the book is dedicated to the recent global warming crisis and argues that, much as premodern societies that faced weather extremes and changing climate were vulnerable, considering the unprecedented global transformation of the past six decades, modern societies face similar challenges, despite their efforts to be independent of these phenomena.

The book includes numerous inserts that present case studies and weather-related phenomena summarized in a page or two. These additions are well-chosen and are entertaining, making the book a more enjoyable read. The one written on the Black Death and the climatic, military, and political background of the events involved is presented based on the seminal book by Bruce Campbell (*The Great Transition*, 2016) but omits recent works that highlight the mistakes in Campbell's narrative.

Despite some of the flaws mentioned above, this book, which was written by two of the foremost experts on the subject, offers one of the most accessible overviews of the climate history of Europe over the course of the last millennium. In most parts of the book, they do so in a style that will be readily understood by undergraduate students and the wider public as well. The visual materials (graphs, maps, and illustrations) were carefully chosen, and they make the text easier to comprehend. This will certainly make this volume (which has also been published in German) an important basic handbook for many courses dedicated to environmental and climate history.

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Hungarian Historical Review 13, no. 2 (2024): 323–325

Christians or Jews? Early Transylvanian Sabbatarianism (1580–1621). By Réka Tímea Újlaki-Nagy. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2022. 292 pp.

An intense debate about the nature of God took place in Transylvania during the middle decades of the sixteenth century. Within an emerging Antitrinitarian movement, domestic voices and exiles living in Transylvania advocated a range of positions about how to worship the one true God. One key matter of disagreement concerned the question of whether adoration of Christ was required of the faithful. These debates were conducted in the context of nascent Antitrinitarian communities, most notably in Kolozsvár (today Cluj-Napoca, Romania). The ambition of those involved was not merely to establish an Antitrinitarian church as an institution in Transylvania but to revive Christianity on the basis of accurate Biblical teaching, while some sought to explore how Antitrinitarian Christianity might be reconciled with other monotheistic religions.

Újlaki-Nagy's excellent study focuses on one of the outcomes of these debates in the religious tradition known as Sabbatarianism. Újlaki-Nagy analyses this religious tradition from within and recaptures Sabbatarian beliefs and worship practices. This is no easy task, given the impact of centuries of persecution of Sabbatarians. Expelled from the Unitarian church, Sabbatarians were the targets of state persecution in the 1630s. The Reformed church supported this campaign against Sabbatarians and also sought to take advantage of this opportunity to undermine their rivals in the Unitarian church. Sabbatarian communities endured imprisonment, loss of property, and forced conversion. Reduced to a small remnant in some isolated villages, Sabbatarians were later targeted by the Habsburg authorities in the mid-eighteenth century, with soldiers and monks sent into Sabbatarian villages to force further conversions. A remaining Sabbatarian community survived in the village of Bözödújfalu (today Bezidu Nou, Romania) until the 1860s, when many converted to Judaism in the wake of the emancipation of Jews. In 1944, Sabbatarian-Jews were taken from their homes in Bözödújfalu to the ghetto in Marosvásárhely (today Târgu Mureş, Romania). Some people were released on the grounds that they were not of Jewish descent. This reversal was partly thanks to available scholarship on Sabbatarians which had been completed in the 1880s by the Neolog rabbi of Pest, Sámuel Kohn. Újlaki-Nagy notes that, even while in the Marosvásárhely ghetto, Sabbatarian-Jews were asked by others who were curious about their identity ("Hát maguk zsidók," or "so are you Jewish?") (p.253).

DOI 10.38145/2024.2.323

Újlaki-Nagy's inquiry focuses on the beliefs and religious practices of early Sabbatarian communities. The author begins by establishing the origins of the Sabbatarian movement in the confessional politics of the 1560s and 1570s. Antitrinitarian preachers claimed legal protection under the terms of the 1568 diet decision in favor of ministers who preached the Gospel according to their understanding of it. However, an Antitrinitarian church was not specifically named in Transylvanian laws on religious rights until 1595 (when it was described as "Arian"). A law against doctrinal innovation had been passed in 1571 with the aim of preventing the spread of non-adorantism within the Antitrinitarian community. However, this law failed to prevent ongoing debate about the nature and authority of Christ. Notably, Matthias Vehe-Glirius (educated at Heidelberg) came to teach in Kolozsvár, although he was soon expelled by the council. The leadership of the Antitrinitarian church after Ferenc Dávid's death supported a clear adorantist theology. Sabbatarians and other non-adorantists were able to remain under the umbrella of the Unitarian church until they were formally expelled in 1606. By that time, Sabbatarianism had taken root in communities on the lands of András Eőssi (who was influenced by the ideas of Vehe-Glirius), and Eőssi then transferred his lands and legacy to Simon Péchi in 1598.

Újlaki-Nagy's work is one of reconstruction of this persecuted religious tradition that adopted many Jewish practices. Újlaki-Nagy acknowledges the limits of what can be pieced together about early Transylvanian Sabbatarianism, and the author treads carefully where needed to avoid speculative commentary. The key surviving sources used by Újlaki-Nagy are manuscript collections (largely copies) of songs and prayers. There are three surviving collections of songs written before the 1620s with nine further collections copied after this period. Újlaki-Nagy focuses on about 90 songs from available manuscript sources which were likely written towards the end of the sixteenth century. Clear themes about the religious ideas prevailing within Sabbatarian communities emerge from these songs. Újlaki-Nagy highlights that Sabbatarians were convinced of the inspired and perfect character of the Old Testament. Moses was the ultimate figure of authority, and other Scriptural writings were seen by Sabbatarians through the lens of Mosaic teaching. The figure of Christ was identified as the expected Messiah, born to human parents and not to be adored in worship. Christ's death was not required for the benefit of the faithful. Sabbatarians viewed obedience to Mosaic law as the pathway to salvation, and they awaited a physical millennial kingdom.

Újlaki-Nagy explores the results of these beliefs in Sabbatarian openness to Jewish ritual practices. The balance of adoption and adaptation of Jewish ritual

amid some retention of Christian ritual goes to the heart of the complex character of early Sabbatarianism. Old Testament feasts inspired the structure and themes of Sabbatarian song collections. Celebrating Jewish feasts was not the result of Sabbatarians wanting to be similar to Jews. As Újlaki-Nagy argues, this was rather an expression of Sabbatarian desire "to be part of the covenant of the law, as they believed this to be the only way to salvation" (p.191). The number of songs written for the Sabbath suggests that was the day when meetings and services were held. Manuscript collections include songs to be sung to celebrate the new moon. There were songs for Passover which spoke to the hope of an anticipated messianic kingdom and songs of forgiveness and repentance to be sung on the Day of Atonement. These surviving songs offer evidence about Sabbatarian purity laws concerning the consumption of meat, the importance of fasting, and ritual bathing for women. Újlaki-Nagy emphasizes the importance of worship practices and ritual in sustaining Sabbatarian identity. The author concludes that "we find a rather strong rejection of the Christian ritual heritage on the one hand and an occasionally clumsy but nonetheless intense openness towards Jewish traditions" (p.236).

Early Sabbatarians did not conceive of themselves as "Judaizers," a term used as a slur by their opponents. Sabbatarians looked to Jews as having knowledge of God that was essential for understanding the Scriptures. The failure of Jews to recognize Jesus as the Messiah was viewed by Sabbatarians as an error. However, Sabbatarians viewed Trinitarian Christians as having sinned by embracing idolatry. This Trinitarian mistake had contributed to the failure of Jews to recognize Jesus as Messiah. As they became part of the camp of Israel, Sabbatarians could contribute to overcoming this Jewish misunderstanding about Jesus as Messiah in advance of an expected messianic kingdom. Újlaki-Nagy's clear analysis of complex sources draws out the context in which Sabbatarian ideas developed as well as the internal dynamics of this religious tradition in Transylvania. In the 1980s, the Ceauşescu regime decided to build a reservoir, and this led to the deliberate flooding of Bözödújfalu (a decision no doubt influenced by anti-Hungarian sentiment). The impact was that the last redoubt of Sabbatarianism was eradicated from the Transylvanian landscape. Újlaki-Nagy's work has done great service in recovering and exploring the ideas and religious practices once followed in this lost Sabbatarian village.

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Párhuzamok és kapcsolódási pontok a spanyol és a magyar politikai emigráció történetében 1849–1873 [Parallels and connections in the histories of Spanish and Hungarian political emigration 1849–1873]. By Viktória Semsey. Budapest: Line Design, 2023. 194 pp.

The monograph *Parallels and Connections in the Histories of Spanish and Hungarian Political Emigration, 1849–1873* examines the history of ideas and politics in the two countries through the relations between their political refugees. The present book builds on decades of research. It reveals which Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, and Hungarian politicians came into contact with one another during their emigration from 1849 to 1873 and which political writings, parliamentary speeches, and articles bear witness to their direct and indirect interactions. Although the title of the work focuses mainly on the Spanish and Hungarian aspects, Semsey could have used the adjective "Portuguese" as well, since there are more than one hundred references to Portuguese-Hungarian and Portuguese-Spanish connections in the text. Indeed, this omission seems even more unfortunate when we see that the idea of an Iberian Union linking Spain and Portugal is a subject that does not allow Portugal to be ignored. On this basis, the book under discussion here is more than the title suggests, and may well be of interest to Spanish and Hungarian scholars, but it may well also constitute a significant contribution to the larger international scholarship.

The monograph is divided chronologically into six chapters and thematically into twelve subchapters. In the first thematic chapter, the author briefly reviews the history of nineteenth-century Spain and Spanish political emigration and compares it with Hungarian historical events. In the case of both countries, political, social, and economic issues arising from civic transformations ultimately led to ideological struggles and, for many people, flight from the country. Hungary's approach to the issue of national independence, however, was markedly different. The Spanish political émigré communities were formed over the course of a longer process, as a result of several changes of power, and its members therefore played a greater role in Spanish politics. In contrast, the Hungarian political émigré community came about as the result of a single historical event, the 1848–49 War of Independence, and this community thus came to play a visible role only after 1849.

The second chapter focuses on the revolutionary events of 1848–1849 and their impact. Semsey first examines the prevailing perceptions of the Hungarian War of Independence among Spanish progressives and conservatives and

 DOI 10.38145/2024.2.326

then turns to the idea of the Iberian Union. She reviews the political period of General Ramón María Narváez (1799–1868) and compares Hungarian and Spanish liberties. She points out that, although there were no major armed clashes in Spain and Portugal during the European revolutionary wave of 1848, the politicians and public writers of the period were nonetheless influenced by these events and reacted to them.

In the next subchapter, Semsey draws a parallel between Spanish and Hungarian ideas of federalism. On the Iberian Peninsula, the idea of a federation emerged as one of the possible political solutions to the national aspirations that were gaining strength and the social and political problems that were becoming increasingly pressing in the mid-nineteenth century. Its proponents hoped that the unification of Spain and Portugal would lead to economic prosperity and allow Spain to reclaim its status as a great power. These concepts were also shared by politicians in the Spanish and Portuguese émigré community, who were present in Paris and London in large numbers between 1848 and 1853, precisely when the Hungarian émigré community in these two major political centers suddenly became a significant presence. The idea of a federation of states also gained currency among the Hungarian emigrants. The so-called Danube Confederation plan would have united people living on the territory of the historic Kingdom of Hungary according to federalist principles, thus (in theory) remedying national differences and socio-economic problems.

The second chronological chapter examines the years 1851–1854, but the period is not entirely consistent here, as the first subchapter focuses on 1851 and the second on 1851–1853. In 1851, Lajos Kossuth, the leader of the Hungarian War of Independence and of the Hungarian political émigré community, made a brief and forced stopover in Lisbon during his sea voyage from the Ottoman Empire to the United Kingdom (Lajos Kossuth's trip to Lisbon was earlier examined by István Rákóczi). In the Portuguese capital, Kossuth met and had conversations with well-known politicians. He was even given an invitation by the mayor of the city, on which sensational reports appeared in the Portuguese press.

In the next chapter, Semsey discusses Spanish-Hungarian (and Italian) relations in London between 1851 and 1853. The Italian politician and revolutionary Giuseppe Mazzini (1805–1872), who was already in contact with the Spanish and Portuguese Iberians before the 1848 revolutions, is mentioned at the beginning of the chapter. According to Semsey, Mazzini and the European Central Democratic Committee were a common point of contact and mediation among members of the Hungarian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian émigré

communities. She suggests that Kossuth and José María Orense (1803–1880) and Fernando Garrido (1821-1883) met in London at this time.

In the third chronological chapter of the book, Semsey traces the characteristics of the Iberian plans for the confederation in the 1850s and the political changes that took place during this period. In this section, she pays particular attention to Sinibaldo de Mas y Sanz's (1809–1868) *La Iberia* (1853) and the Hungarian press's interpretation of the events of the Spanish Revolution of 1854.

The fourth chapter of the work tells the story of the Iberian Legion, which was organized to help the struggle for the unity of Italy. The armies, led by Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807–1882), were joined by a group of over one hundred men and organized by Sixto Cámara (1825–1859) and Garrido at the instigation of Mazzini, with funding from Spanish progressives and democrats. The Iberian Legion and the Hungarian Legion in Italy shared the principle of international assistance and solidarity, but their motivations were different. While the Spaniards were motivated by the aforementioned comradeship, the Hungarians were driven by the desire for independence and freedom from Habsburg rule.

The next chapter draws attention to the fact that, in 1862–1871, the idea of the Iberian Confederation remained present in political thought, but in Spanish and international political conspiracies the Italian and German unification efforts and international events came to the fore. While the Spanish and Portuguese parties were preoccupied with the idea of an Iberian Union, the idea of a Danube Confederation was reinforced among members of the Hungarian political émigré community following the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867.

Semsey has devoted a special subchapter to the history of the Spanish Revolution of 1868, which she also examines from the perspective of the Hungarian press. Semsey has also uncovered a closer link between Kossuth and Orense, the founder of the Spanish Democratic Party. Like Kossuth, Orense lived as a politically persecuted exile in various large European cities. The penultimate chapter of this monograph deals with the main parallels and connections between 1867 and 1873.

The concluding chapter summarizes Semsey's various findings. The book also includes a thematic chronology and indexes of personal and place names. The research, based on a comparative methodology, reflects Semsey's extensive use of secondary literature in several languages, archival materials, and press materials. Her narrative contains little-known stories and interesting contributions to the history of Spanish-Hungarian relations. It illustrates but

does not overemphasize the problems and characteristics of Hungarian domestic politics of the time. For the moment, it has only been published in Hungarian, making it difficult for the international academic community to read it, and it would be worthwhile to publish it in English, Spanish, or Portuguese, as this would make it part of the international scholarly discourse.

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Multicultural Cities of the Habsburg Empire 1880–1914. Imagined Communities and Conflictual Encounters. By Catherine Horel. Budapest–Vienna–New York: CEU Press, 2023. 556 pp.

Catherine Horel is unquestionably one of the most outstanding non-Hungarian historians engaged in the study of the history of both Hungary and the entire Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Horel has published extensively in the field, including a monograph on the history of Budapest, a biography of Miklós Horthy, and some further books and studies on various aspects of the history of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. As a scholar who lives and works in Paris, she is a prominent member of the international community of historians, and she holds important institutional positions, among others in the Comité International des Sciences Historiques and several other professional bodies.

Catherine Horel's recent book is a unique product of history writing in our time. The program of transnational history writing, which seeks to transcend both the intellectual and the topical frameworks of the national paradigm, is now on the agenda. Still, relatively few positive examples may be mentioned for it. In addition, even the precise notion of a transnational historical paradigm is somewhat obscure, not to mention suitable methodologies.

Concerning the empires of the modern era (first and foremost the Habsburg Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy), one finds only a few comparative or transnational history narratives. This is regrettable, since these kinds of investigations would lessen the effects of the national and sometimes even the nationalist approaches to the study of the history of what was a substantially multinational, multicultural modern state and society. One explanation for the rarity of these kinds of studies is perhaps the challenges historians face as scholars who are accustomed to conceptualizations of their topical field within the frameworks of national historiographies. These conceptualizations have tended to predominate even when the national past in question constitutes an integral part of a once imperial state construction. Thus, anyone trying to embark from a transnational historical perspective in discussing the past of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy must make a concerted effort to avoid any commitment to a national and especially a nationalist historical viewpoint. Catherine Horel offers a good example of this kind of scholarship, as she manages to remain untouched by this epistemological bias.

The theme of the book is the town or the city. The precise way Horel approaches it may be labeled as transurban study, a strikingly new genre of

 DOI 10.38145/2024.2.330

sorts in the field of urban history. This kind of study is not wholly unknown in the scholarly discourse, although these studies almost exclusively address the histories of the metropolises of the northern hemisphere. Small and middle-sized towns have been largely neglected by historians until recently. As far as the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy is concerned, only a few Austrian historians have devoted some attention to the problem in this way by adopting a comparative perspective (Wolfgang Maderthaner, Hannes Stekl, and Hans Heiss, for instance). These narratives, however, have focused especially or exclusively on the cultural settings and everyday life of these localities. At the same time, they have also been limited mostly to urban history in Cisleithania and have largely ignored urban history in Transleithania.

Catherine Horel's book is a pioneering work from at least three perspectives. First, she discusses the urban past of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy within a highly extensive comparative framework and with great attention to detail. She does this in part by choosing a somewhat shorter time period for her study (three and a half decades around the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries). This enables her to carry out a spatially extensive inquiry by focusing on many minute details of urban development on an empirical level. Her narrative resembles a microhistory narrative within a comparative framework. No similar undertaking has been accomplished in the field of urban history until recently, as the urban biography has been the dominant genre, an approach from which the town and the city are seen as entirely isolated spatial and social entities. Thus, urban historians rarely tend to place the town and the city in a comparative perspective with the explicit aim of seeking and finding more general patterns and explanations for the many particular developments going on within a single urban realm. Horel, however, breaks with this practice.

Secondly, historians who adopt a comparative perspective are usually content to rely entirely on secondary sources. This is in part a consequence of their inability to work in a multitude of relevant languages, which stands in fundamental contrast with the multicultural (multilingual) historical settings which are the subjects of study. Historians engaged in comparative research thus tend to use narratives available in one or a few world languages (English, German, or French), thereby failing to take into account the original narratives of national historiographies. Horel is an exception to this rule, as she reads and perhaps speaks almost every language used within the borders of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Indeed, her knowledge of this diverse array of languages may well make her unique in her field. The fact that she can draw on the relevant

primary sources and the historical narratives presented in the various national languages unquestionably adds to the merits of her narrative.

With regards to the main findings of the monograph, Horel initially clarifies that the midsize cities under discussion had multiethnic populations, meaning that several languages were in use. Thus, these cities offer a representative sample of the multicultural empire alongside the metropolises (Vienna and Budapest in particular). It might be worth mentioning a remark made by Stanislaus Joyce, James Joyce's brother, who referred to Trieste, where his great novelist brother lived for several years at the beginning of the twentieth century, as a "multiethnic salad."

Catherine Horel clearly strove to choose "typical" urban settlements for her inquiry, i.e., cities in which the striking structural diversity had actually existed, going even beyond the numerous native languages that were in everyday use. In other words, she chose urban communities that were as heterogeneous from the perspective of religious confessions as the empire itself. Accordingly, she decided to compare the following midsize cities with one another: Arad, Brünn (today Brno, Czech Republic), Czernowitz (today Chernivitsi, Ukraine), Fiume (today Rijeka, Croatia), Lemberg (today Lviv, Ukraine), Nagyvárad (today Oradea, Romania), Pozsony (today Bratislava, Slovakia), Sarajevo, Szabadka (today Subotica, Serbia), Temesvár (today Timişoara, Romania), Trieste, and Zagreb. These once Austrian-Hungarian cities are now found in seven different countries.

The main social and cultural characteristic of the midsize cities under discussion was that in spite of their diverse ethnic and national compositions, a single particular component of the local population was usually able to exercise decisive cultural and political authority. The possible variations in the ways in which power was exercised and contested, however, were wide. Sometimes, two ethnic communities could exercise authority on a more or less equal basis, for instance in Brno, where both the Moravian and the German populations wielded power. Most of the towns under discussion, however, followed a different pattern.

The main issue addressed in the book is how the existence of more than one ethnic group, living in the cities side by side, could shape and even determine urban life, both alongside and independently of class stratification. Or to put the question more precisely: in what forms and to what extent could these local societies actually integrate their inhabitants? With the aim of answering this question, Horel offers a detailed empirical examination of the problem of local school politics, autonomous confessional life, the intricate networks of civil

organizations (the associations), the many attempts to create and maintain an autonomous cultural infrastructure accessible to each of the ethnic communities separately, the many continuous efforts to control the urban public domain, political fights as indications of the actual multiethnic distribution of the population, and strivings to kindle a local sense of city patriotism and a local identity. As this list makes clear, Horel takes many issues into account to test the validity of her thesis statement, namely that despite all the centrifugal forces which heavily divided the urban populations everywhere in the monarchy at the time, the so called centripetal forces were also at work. These forces contributed to the integration (to some degree) of the diverse population into a local urban society that was unified at least on some level.

Horel ultimately concludes that, the diversity of these urban societies notwithstanding, mutual understanding and cooperation were still effective forces that historians cannot afford to ignore. The success of these forces, however, depended on the regional and local contexts, which differed significantly, especially in the Cisleithanian and Transleithanian contexts. As far as the former is concerned, the prevalence of a single colonization power (the German-speaking communities) proved not to be dominant in shaping or defining everyday life. Accordingly, beside the mass mobilization for a particular national project, other than the German one could also gain ground in these settings, mainly at the turn of the century. This factor created favorable positions for several non-German-speaking local forces in the local social and political hierarchy. Trieste offers a good example of this, as it was a flourishing city in which the Italian presence had the most influence, or one could mention Lemberg, where the Polish-speaking community prevailed, or Czernowitz, where Romanians and Ukrainians competed for control, or Sarajevo, where the Muslim and the Serbo-Croatian components of the town played key roles in managing the town life.

In Hungary, however, the officially forced national homogenisation policy did not leave any room for anything other than Hungarian (or Magyar) dominance over the other ethnic and linguistic groups, even in urban localities, where the ethnic Magyars actually represented only a minority (for instance in Pozsony and Temesvár). The deep difference between the two halves of the Monarchy in that regard go back to the special characteristics of the Hungarian national concept, the model for which was the French type nationalist conceptualization. This differed from the so-called *Volksstam* ("people's tribe") concept, which prevailed in the Cisleithanian part of the Monarchy. The latter provided some

real possibilities for the decentralization of local power and the representation of non-German national interests.

It would be a simplification, however, to explain these variations exclusively as consequences of the distinctively specific patterns which prevailed in the two halves of the Monarchy. Several local contexts also had an impact both on the intensity of the inherent tensions and the problems created by multilingualism and the multi-confessional makeup of the local population. Even the ways in which the conflicts were solved had some importance. Consequently, there were midsize cities in which the confrontations between or among the various ethnic and nationality components were sharper than the confrontations in other settlements. It is also true that not every ethnic segment was able to represent its own will on a public level with the same force. Jews, who were a presence in all the mid-size cities, were one of the social/ethnic/religious groups that were unable to exercise any serious political influence locally. Antisemitism, furthermore, was present everywhere. This followed in part from the fact that the assimilated Jews were usually thought to be supporters of stronger German influence, especially in the cities, where the rivalry between the non-German and German-speaking populations was acute (like in Brno). The Slovenes also played a similar secondary role behind Italians in Trieste, as did the Ukrainians in Lemberg facing the Polish rule.

The "culture of conflict" and the "conflict of cultures" fueled most of the community tensions in these urban settings. In addition to the role, they always had in setting the tone of the local public life, the integrative forces also fostered the creation of a kind of city identity or local patriotism. This local patriotism was tied to a prevailing sense of imperial loyalty, i.e., Habsburg patriotism. This element, however, was generally absent from the Transleithanian construct of identity. The establishment and maintenance of a national discourse always demanded active agency through rigorous local educational policies, and the ethnically-defined associations and cultural institutions created a physical infrastructure (theaters, museums, etc.). More than any other type of settlement, the city could thus become the place where openly political or easily politicized demands could appear in a visible form and could shape the public life of the citizenry. This explains why a comparative and transurban investigation is indispensable if we seek to arrive at a more nuanced understanding of the mentality of the citizens of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Catherine Horel's amazingly informative and stimulating monograph opens a new chapter in the

urban history writing of Central Europe, as well as in the history of mentalities in this particular macroregion.

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Hungarian Historical Review

Meaning of Diversity in the Middle Ages

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HU ISSN
2063-8647

9 772063 894001 02402