Results of the research project 'Political Culture in Central Europe (10th – 20th Century)' led by Jaroslav Pánek and Stanisław Bylina in the Institutes of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic and of the Polish Academy of Sciences

Political Culture in Central Europe

(10th – 20th Century)

Part I

Middle Ages and Early Modern Era

Edited by
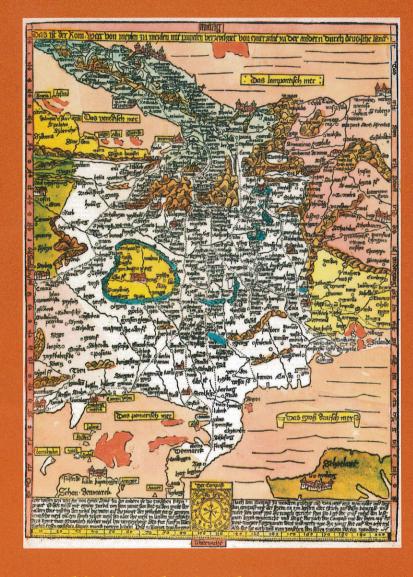Halina Manikowska and Jaroslav Pánek
in cooperation with Martin Holý

Political Culture in Central Europe

I

Political Culture in Central Europe (10th – 20th Century)

I

Contents

II. Early Modern Era

Preface

Political Culture in Central Europe (10th – 20th Century), a two-volume publication that we deliver to all those interested in this subject not only in Central Europe but also in other parts of the world arose as a result of long-standing co-operation of two institutes concerned with historical research the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw and the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic in Prague. As the directors of both these Institutes we asked some of our colleagues specialising in the history of political culture to take part in our common project, and encouraged others to engage in research in this field. It should be added that the above-mentioned issue has long been neglected in the majority of the post-communist countries. We have also invited specialists from Austria, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania and Slovakia who also felt a need to take up research on the political culture of their countries.

In 2004, with the participation of both the Czech and Polish National Committees of Historical Sciences as well as other institutions involved in the project, we organised two preparatory conferences, first in Pardubice, then in Warsaw. On this occasion presented papers were devoted to various aspects of political culture in the Middle Ages and early modern era, as well as, separately, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. All of those that were read there and later submitted to be printed have been included in the first volume (issued in Prague) and the second (issued in Warsaw) of our common, Czech-Polish publication. Their editorial elaboration has been entrusted to our closest collaborators: Magdalena Hułas and Halina Manikowska from Warsaw, as well as Roman Baron (Brno) and Martin Holý (Prague).

We are aware of the fact that research the present state of which is documented in this publication is generally centred round the issue of political culture in individual countries. In some cases, however, it has been possible to present the results of more general, comparative studies,

embracing either the area of several Central-European countries or the wider context of the countries of our Continent. We have no doubt that research into the political culture of Central Europe from the early Middle Ages till the present day will develop. New impulses will be brought to it by the debate at the 20th International Congress of Historical Sciences in Sydney in July 2005, which will feature a Specialised Theme No. 2: *Political Culture in Central Europe in the European and Global Context*. The present collection of works is published precisely on this occasion. We hope it will be a useful point of departure for our debates and the issues presented in it will be later included not only in the European but also world context.

Stanisław Bylina and Jaroslav Pánek

Prague and Warsaw, March 2005

Introduction

Political Culture in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Era (until the End of the 18th Century)

An Introduction

Stanisław Bylina – Jaroslav Pánek

Introduction. The concept of a *political culture*, which is of crucial importance for our deliberations, is very difficult to define, especially with regard to the perspective of history stretching over one thousand years. It also remains an ambiguous concept for shorter periods of history (for example the Middle Ages or the Early Modern Era), and individual researchers define it according to their own needs. Indeed, the huge diversity of views would be evident even if we applied any of its definitions, be it from American or European sociology, political sciences or historiography. Nevertheless, it is necessary to provide at least as general a context for our topic as possible.

Studies collated in this collection discuss the following issues and standpoints of individuals and groups exercising power or participating in government, politics and public life, alongside related activities – starting with the immediate circle of rulers, groups of magnates, 'political nations', representative institutions and organs up to modern political elites and the whole social strata and classes. One of the main contentious issues is the political awareness of these groups and its articulation. We will discuss the models of political views and their reception; the awareness of legal and ethical rules in both domestic and foreign policies and their implementation. Our issues are complicated by the question of the compatibility of particular interests and motives superior to them and the public good of wider regional communities or nations. Political culture was naturally reflected in various concepts, rituals, rites, signs and symbols.

We will investigate the aforementioned phenomena in relation to the space which is referred to in historiography as *Central Europe*, but more often also as *East Central Europe*. If we applied the latter term, we would have to stipulate that our deliberations primarily involved the heart of this region, composed of three states which had established themselves as monarchies during the 10th to 12th centuries: Bohemia, Poland and Hungary. However, we will simultaneously take into account their wider neighbourhood, especially the Austrian and German Lands and possibly also the Balkans. For the benefit of historians who do not deal with the region of Central Europe, we might, at least, add the following: the territory of present-day independent Slovakia was included within the Hungarian state for the majority of the second millenium A.D. (until 1918) and thereafter formed part of Czechoslovakia (1918-39, 1945-92); Silesia also changed its national affiliation (after its early connection with Poland, it belonged to the Bohemian Kingdom between 14th–18th centuries, then to Prussia and Germany, after the Second World War it again reverted to Poland); a special place was occupied by the Old Prussian-coastal provinces on the Baltic sea where the Teutonic Knights established their state in the Middle Ages. The concept of East Central Europe could also be interpreted on the basis of the lengthy, more or less close, union between the Polish Kingdom and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The German Lands have their obvious place in the history of this region, in the narrower sense of the word especially those states lying to the east of the Elbe River; in the wider sense large German states which stretched much further east in the past are involved. In addition, the German question has always represented an important comparative basis for European history, in our case also as being one of the sources for the reception of a political culture.

The history of our part of the European continent and various aspects of its culture have been researched by many historians. Here, we have to mention the names of four historians from three countries who have innovatively enlightened the historical foundations of its unity, each in his own time: František Dvorník, Oskar Halecki, Jenő Szücs and Jerzy Kłoczowski.

Nowadays, political culture and its shortcomings, as well as its historical roots, belong among often discussed themes – albeit superficially in most cases – in those European countries which got rid of their totalitarian regimes

only towards the end of the 1980s and then they started to compare their standard of life with West European states. At first sight it was evident that some Western states had been able to progress under more or less democratic conditions for long decades or even centuries. This comparison became highly topical with the accession of the eight countries, situated from the Baltic to the Adriatic Sea, to the European Union in May 2004.

At that time, another conspicuous disproportion, which encroaches closely on our scientific discipline, manifested itself, namely its unequal status in European historiography. The attempt to outline a unified history of the European continent unveiled the distinction between two groups of states whose history is known in the world or comprehended in diametrically opposed ways. Only a few countries have always dominated the interpretation of the European past and have played power politics or have had an exceptional cultural role, whereas others – especially 'young democracies' – have only rarely been mentioned or have been neglected completely. Nearly every primary school pupil knows at least something about the former, the latter remain vague or completely concealed from even the majority of well-educated people abroad. When attempts are made to construct a common European history the former are automatically understood as its axes, whereas even prominent experts are not usually able – but for some honourable exceptions – to discuss the latter.

For this reason Polish and Czech historians, with assistance from their colleagues in Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia and also in Germany and Austria, have chosen the theme of the political culture in these neglected countries of Central Europe. This provides an opportunity to introduce these Central European issues into a European and global context. First of all, it was necessary to formulate some fundamental questions and summarise the knowledge of the political culture in individual countries. After all, the very topic of the political culture was constantly suppressed or marginalised under Communism – except for Poland. Another aim of the editors of this publication was to compare the political culture in a whole group of Central European countries and to outline general features (including the reception of initiatives from Western and Southern Europe), as well as specific features of the political culture in this macroregion.

As the theme of the political culture from the 10th to the 20th century remains rather unevenly researched, the Czech and the Polish National Committees of Historians have held two preparatory conferences, jointly with the central historical institutes of the Academies of Sciences in Prague and Warsaw. The first of them took place in the Renaissance Castle of Pardubice in June 2004 and focused upon the developments in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Era (until the end of the 18th century). The second was devoted to the political culture of the 19th and 20th centuries and took place in a magnificently restored palace in the middle of the Old Town of Warsaw, which was totally destroyed by Nazi armies in 1944 during their suppression of the Warsaw Uprising. Thus, the venues of both preparatory conferences underlined two fundamentally different environments in which the political life of the past took place and two significantly different positions of the political culture. On the one side the aristocratic environment of the East Bohemian chateau represented a rich synthesis of the ideas and symbols of the Renaissance Italy and Central Europe; on the other the environment of one of the most badly destroyed cities of the world reflected the military barbarism of the 20th century, but also the liberation struggle against genocidal oppression and thereafter the efforts to restore this historical metropolis as an expression of a material contact with the past.

The results of both preparatory conferences have been collected in a two volume publication called *Political Culture in Central Europe (10th – 20th century)*, which will be made available to the participants of the 20th International Congress of Historical Sciences, Sydney, Australia (July 2005). It also comprises the majority of papers for Congress Special Theme No. 2. For this reason it is necessary to sum up the contents and theses of individual presentations in this comprehensive text. They can also be incorporated within a more complex study on the issue of political culture in Central Europe from the Middle Ages until the present time.

The Middle Ages, no matter how distant from the present, established the foundations for the relatively unified development of the countries of Central Europe, or more precisely East Central Europe and its political culture. The late onset of Christianisation in the countries of a 'younger Europe' meant that they found themselves at the periphery of civilisation, which was rather embedded in some countries, but Western influences in other countries helped to overcome this situation more rapidly. However, Christianity already manifested itself prominently in the arena of political culture in the earliest period of the reign of three local dynasties: the Przemyslids in Bohemia, the Piasts in Poland, and Árpáds in Hungary. For example, research has shown the rapid and deep Christianisation at the ruling court of Gniezno, based on the active reception of the model of a Christian ruler. The conduct of Prince Mieszko I, who entrusted his state to papal protection, was very eloquent testimony of the unconventional approach to this issue. The legislature adopted by the early rulers of the three dynasties reflected the need to realise the policy of Christianisation, anchored in the Western models, yet it did not lack in original solutions.

As the ruling Princes came to be vested with a royal title, the religious concept of government changed. The Princes from the Przemyslid dynasty ruled their state as successors of St. Wenceslas, the patron of the dynasty and later the patron of Bohemia as a whole. When Przemysl Ottokar II accepted the Bohemian royal crown towards the end of the 12th century, he became – similar to other kings – the representative and curate of Christ himself. The prestige of the ruling dynasties and their countries was strengthened by the cults of local holy rulers: several canonisations increased the significance of the Hungarian Árpáds; the Cult of St. Wenceslas became embedded in Bohemia and an extensively elaborated state ideology was based upon it. Contrary to that the Piast dynasty had not succeeded in this aspect, and they could not make up for it through the Cult of the Bishop-Martyrs, either. The religious content penetrated the ceremonies and rituals present in the political culture of the Early and High Middle Ages. The categories of Christian ethics were thus introduced to life and dominated the relationship between the rulers and their subjects. Christianised rituals, which became tools of the political game, a means of solving conflicts and achieving aspirations, created a different vision of politics, as opposed to the reality full of violence, betrayals and broken oaths.

In the late Middle Ages the *sacrum* of political culture found its expression in many other manifestations of the same culture, albeit it also acquired new tools of a secular nature. The monarchical rituals, the most important of which were the coronation rites, maintained their religious

significance. The oath still continued to be the ideological basis of political and social system.

The spread of Hussitism in Bohemia undermined the traditional structures of power, around which a political culture formed. In addition, the entire world of values recognised in communal life changed. The primacy of religious elements in the ideas and practice of communal life was particularly evident in the revolutionary phase of the Hussite movement (c. 1420). Religious terminology and symbolism, in which the Chalice as an expression of the Eucharist dominated, was commonly known and understood, and thus occupied a leading role in the different forms of agitation (for example in Hussite manifestoes). Messianism, identifying the Bohemian supporters of a radical reform of Christianity with God's chosen people, dominated and provided reasons for political activities and ideas. Contrary to that, the fear of Hussitism and its influence gave rise to anti-heresy ideology in the neighbouring Catholic countries. It was the very manifestation of this ideology which penetrated the political culture. Especially in its relations to the papacy Poland naturally formed an image of itself as a country neigbouring heretics and schismatics who threatened the faith (i.e. the followers of the Orthodox Church).

The irreplaceable role in the formation of a political culture in individual countries was played by *rulers* themselves, although this role differed significantly depending on the personal characteristics of the Princes and Kings, their ambitions, political aims, but also on their abilities, and internal and external conditions. The *royal courts* and their secular and ecclesiastical personnel were of huge significance. The definition of a 'political nation' developed over the course of centuries. In early medieval Bohemia persons close to the ruling Prince and entrusted by him to exercise official or other duties, 'the family of St. Wenceslas', were predetermined to participate in government. In addition to them the owners of castles and landed property co-formed the political elite during the High Middle Ages. In all the countries of this region – except for Hussite Bohemia – powerful secular and ecclesiastical personalities continued to be a constant feature in the reception of cultural models and in the formation of a political culture.

During the late Middle Ages the role of *the nobility* en masse increased in public life. This was particularly true of Poland where the nobility viewed

state affairs through the prism of either the close experience or direct personal participation. However, some of the noblemen simultaneously managed to broaden their outlook, which they put to a good use in significant political disputes (especially in the dispute between Poland and the Teutonic Knights). The Polish nobility also had at its disposal a simplified knowledge from the region of legal-political theories. Using the medieval 'right to resist' (*ius resistendi*), it justified the establishment of confederations, expressing resistance against unpopular acts by the rulers. Similar standpoints were not unfamiliar also to the Hungarian or Bohemian nobility. In disputes with their rulers, the nobility, if it bided its time, acquired Estate privileges. Representatives of the Polish *Church* joined forces with magnates and the nobility in state affairs, despite leading continuing disputes in the matters of law and property. This shows a marked difference to Bohemia under the Luxembourg dynasty (1310-1437), when the representatives of the high clergy expressed particular political standpoints.

Polish *towns* (and Hungarian ones to a greater degree) participated in decision-making on public matters, including those which only affected their own burghers, to a small extent. The situation was different in Bohemia, Silesia and Prussia (Prussia partly belonged to the Teutonic state). Here, the town elites played a significant role in the formation of strong Land identities. The political awareness of burghers in these greatly urbanised countries was not confined to politics within the towns but it also involved a wider region and the entire state itself. The political potential of the burgher community and its political awareness came to the fore especially during times of social tension, storms and upheavals, which were frequent at the beginning of the 15th century. These conflicts were a sort of school for political thought and activity, searching for suitable legal arguments and the formation of political concepts.

The 12th and 13th centuries introduced the process of *institutionalisation* of a political culture. More or less stable states created stable tools for the exercise of power, restraining a ruler's wilfulness. The institutional structure was based on *monarchia* or *majestas* as the embodiment of the central executive power and *communitas* as an expression of the representative power. This dual relationship made it possible to resolve conflicts by negotiation. Colloquia, courts and diets, which gradually emerged, provided

scope for temporal elites to create and progressively stabilise the law, as well as being a practical school of political culture. In the 14th and 15th centuries political life expanded further, as advisory, delegatory and representatives bodies were established. These institutions of the power elite were to represent the common interests of the state. Taking the example of the Polish Kingdom we can mention the special role of the Royal Council, a group of persons linked to the ruler, yet simultaneously exposed to the pressure on behalf of the magnates. In all the Central European states, the Royal Chancery, a forum of well-educated people, acquainted with traditions and the law, was an institution crucial for the reception and the further spread of European political customs, the models of conduct and diplomatic methods.

In Prussia and Silesia, but also in Bohemia, municipal councils played an important political role. They acted as holders of power, responsible for the common good (*bonum commune*) in relation to the burgher community; simultaneously they defended its interests, sometimes even confrontationally, against the central government of the Land.

Christianisation of formerly pagan countries was one of the *tools* of spreading a Christian political culture. It was naturally used towards the end of the Middle Ages when the Grand Duke of Lithuania and his state accepted baptism. Afterwards, religious rituals helped to resolve conflicts by mediation. The Central European rulers used German models of mediation. Concrete rituals were disappearing and changing their content, yet their common role as the manifestations of political activity continued. The enthronement rituals, described in *Ordines Coronandi* stood at the uppermost levels of a political culture. Modern research unveils a rich complex of ideological elements in them, some of them very archaic, indeed.

Participating in a political culture called for certain knowledge and skills. Here, it primarily involved the ability to deploy a whole arsenal of concepts necessary for participating in public service and the conduct of diplomatic relations. Dealing with historical arguments and their introduction to political discourse was of considerable significance. Another efficient tool of a political culture was the suitable application of references to traditions, to the secular law and Canon law and a knowledge of diplomatic customs. Pressure corporations established their customs, arriving at their *modus deliberandi* at aristocratic conventions, Land diets and regional congresses

(Polish *sejmiki*). Although these forms of the political culture partially developed in the Bohemian and Hungarian states, they reached their zenith in the so-called aristocratic democracy in Poland. The effectiveness and intensity of political agitation came to the fore in conflicts. One good example from the 15th century is the activity of influential Catholic preachers in the West Bohemian town of Pilsen during its struggle with the Hussites, or in Silesian Wrocław during the town's conflict with the Bohemian King George of Podiebrad.

The decisive factor in the formation of political culture in the three Christianised states during the 10th and 11th centuries was the quality of the foreign *clergy*, arriving from the West. For example, the monks who settled in Poland were St. Romuald's pupils and belonged to the spiritual elite of Europe. The rapid and creative reception of Western models also involved the ideology of royal power. The first representatives of three dynasties, the Przemyslids, the Piasts and Árpáds, managed to secure notable places for themeselves within Christian Europe. The relations with the *Reich* played an important role, although they fluctuated in terms of quality, as they were crucial for the cross-fertilisation of the political culture in younger Central European states. Other European ruling courts were also important in this matter.

The political culture in the broadest sense of the word, which respected international limitations, was the destiny of the political and intellectual elites in individual countries. In the late Middle Ages the accession of foreign dynasties to the thrones of these three Central European states (Luxembourgs in Bohemia, Anjou in Hungary, and Jagiello in Poland) strengthened the international dimension of this culture. This fact brought Central European countries closer to Western Europe, including its Romance region.

The conflict between Poland and the Teutonic Knights led the Polish intellectual centres (the Royal Chancery and Cracow University) to theoretical reflections on the law, politics and political ethics. The issue of just wars and methods of Christianisation became particularly acute. It also entered the international forum. Contrary to that, Hussitism in Bohemia, which attempted to introduce a reform programme with universal impact, led to the political isolation of the country. Yet, the representatives of the Hussite elites (not

merely the Utraquist but also the Taborite), represented a political culture, the level of which guaranteed them successes also at the Council of Basle.

The masses of the nobility – if we take Poland as an example – participated in public life, especially at a local level and very often understood it through the prism of their particular interests. However, they were simultaneously able to accept the principle of co-existence within the framework of the Polish-Lithuanian state, which joined two political nations with different institutions, different traditions and partially with different confessions. Similar to that the ruling classes in the countries of the Bohemian Crown and in Hungary had to cope with a new situation towards the end of the Middle Ages. Preconditions had arisen for co-existence in a confessionary pluralistic society, which created the seeds for different approaches to the political culture by the different factions of the power elites living on the same territory.

The Estate and religious *diversification* of the political culture in these states and countries of the Central European region was symptomatic for the late Middle Ages and the **Early Modern Era,** primarily the 15th and the 16th centuries. Everywhere, the finishing touches were added to the structure of the political system based on the dual division of power between the monarch and the Estates. The elements of vertical and horizontal communication blended there and the competitive and complementary powers and the feelings of responsibility ensued from them. The Lands of the Bohemian Crown stood out as a characteristic example because the horizontally conceived Estates' conceptions stood against the vertical conception of the state's cohesion. In addition, the former were gradated by the level of legal thought bound to the state (the Crown, or possibly a group of confederate countries), to the individual country as a legally emancipated whole or to a smaller region or even a dominion ruled by a single magnate. The specific variants of political culture, with particular regard to the relationship between the ruler and the state (the formulation of individual and collective loyalty), the role of the written and common law in the life of society, as well as various manifestations of emotions and trends to reflect political relations theoretically, developed on these levels.

The culmination of this inconsistent development was the Bohemian Confederation of 1619. This constitutional charter and a state entity based on

it succeeded in integrating the disparate interests of the Estates within the concept of a federation ('confederation') of Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia and Lusatia on the Land and Crown levels. This federation, which was to be governed by the Protestant Estates, aimed to present an alternative to the Habsburg Monarchy to other Central European countries, also. The concept of a Central European federation corresponded to the transformed conduct of the power elites in religious and primarily inter-ethnic relations (the language symbolism, among other features, was to show that the long-term tensions between Czechs and Germans were a thing of the past). Whereas tendencies to develop the equal constituents of the political culture in the Bohemian Lands were gradually eliminated by the harsh centralisation policies of the Habsburgs and by their victory over the Bohemian rebels in 1620, in Hungary and especially in Poland, the multi-layered political culture of the elites (of the ruling court, the aristocracy, the lower nobility, and possibly that of the politically active clergy) survived until the 18th century.

The Early Modern society in all the Central European countries was significantly influenced by the confessionary division (obviously the concept of a *Konfessionalisierung*, expanded over the German territorial states, cannot be applied to Bohemia, Poland and Hungary without reservations). Religion still provided the secular authorities with the legitimacy they needed, although this proclaimed religiosity concealed an evident state interest (*raison d'état*) throughout the Early Modern Era and especially during the 18th century. The interconnection of religion and politics was a factor which significantly impacted upon the symbolism of power, as well as its wider communication options. Historiography became another factor, and it both reflected and created a political culture. When moulding past events, historiography (in its humanistic, Baroque and Enlightenment forms), created ideal types and the normative form of a political culture even for its day. Despite being excluded from a decision-making in the political arena, this 'service' activity of the burgher class did help to create the ideological atmosphere of the time, and manifested itself prominently in the work of universities. This is evident for example in an analysis of theses defended at Prague University towards the end of the 16th century and in the early 17th century. They embraced a comprehensive repertoire of the fundamental ideas of European thinking of the period preceding the Thirty Years' War.

The economic pressure of the Early Modern Age monarchy upon the modification of a political culture also impacted upon the conflict between the dynastic and Estate conceptions of the state. The first Habsburgs, who ruled over their Central European monarchy, primarily strove to apply this instrument. Using the means of a unified currency, they (starting with Ferdinand I) attempted not merely to control the use of precious metals as a fundamental instrument of exchange operations but also to establish a new state and dynastic symbolism within the thinking and internal communication of Estates society.

The highest manifestation of the political culture was the concept of *libertas*, embodied in the notion of a corporate liberty (Estates) and a confessionary (religious) one. In this, the time shift from the West to the East is evident – the concept of *libertas* first manifested itself in the Bohemian Lands, then in Hungary and Poland, where it reached its zenith and was anchored in the law. The Polish nobility expressed its advanced concept of liberty and responsibility primarily through power-sharing and participation in defence and the financing of the state, its ethos, as well as its expansionary ambitions. Contrary to that, the concept of the Estate and religious freedoms in Bohemia and Hungary met with systematic counter-measures by the Habsburg rulers. They gradually came to be manifested in the contrasting formulation of alternative models of a political culture, expressed in the ethos of the service and respect for the hierarchical links to the royal court.

In the 17th century and in the first half of the 18th century, the administrative instruments at the disposal of the ruler and the Estates gradually merged in the Bohemian and Austrian Lands. The role of the Estates and the Land Diet as a central instrument of the Estates continued in the legislature, administration and the judiciary, yet the monitoring role of the royal court simultaneously increased. Thus, a homogenous culture appeared in the Bohemian-Austrian region, which made possible the implementation of unification changes in the co-state under the reign of Maria Theresa.

A strong emphasis on liberty as the central plank of a political culture manifested itself most prominently in Poland, which had created a unique political order. Its nobility viewed the Polish nation as free contrary to other 'non-free' nations (Poles considered Czechs to be a non-free nation,

especially after the defeat of the first anti-Habsburg Revolt in 1547; similarly, for Hungarians Czechs also became the symbol of subjugation after the defeat of their Revolt in 1620). This was a breeding ground for a sense of superiority and a certain 'nationalisation' of liberty. This was the basis for the growth of not merely a specific collective empathy by Poles (the Polish nobility) and an awareness of their national identity, but also of strong emotional feelings and propaganda. The intellectual fruit of deliberations on Polish liberty was a unique political literature which lacked a fully-fledged counterpart in either the Bohemian or Hungarian environments in the 16th and 17th centuries.

The situation in Hungary was exceptionally complex because this territory found itself in the 16th and 17th centuries on the boundary of two world empires – the Habsburg and the Ottoman. Both empires were not only at war permanently but they also represented different types of political culture, one based on Catholic centralism and the other on Islamic universalism. However, this situation simultaneously made it possible for the Hungarian Estates to resist centralisation trends from Vienna and – compared to the Bohemian and Austrian Lands – to develop a specific political culture of the Hungarian elites more freely. The Catholic Habsburgs did not succeed in suppressing Calvinism, widespread amongst the nobility, and Lutheranism, common in the towns, on the territory of St. Stephen's Crown. In addition, radical reformation movements also asserted themselves in Transylvania. Each of these confessionary political environments possessed its own ideological sources, conceptions and models of conduct, which in their total created the preconditions for an internally diversified political culture (including a specific variant of a political culture in Transylvania in the 16th– 17th centuries).

The conflicting relationship of different concepts of liberty and the conflict itself between those who upheld the opposite notions of liberty and a strong central power resulted in the emergence of *integration* trends in the second half of the 16th century and at the onset of the 17th century. In the geographic and social sense this involved the political subordination of 'peripheral areas' to the unifying 'centre'. The central Estates institutions strove to subordinate peripheral institutions and corporations (in 'secondary', incorporated or weaker components of the state); a strong dynasty –

especially the Habsburgs – attempted to concentrate powers on its own territory and to expand its rule over all the Central European states; the Catholic Church sought to re-unify Central European space (expansionist trends were, however, also present in radical Calvinism and to some extent Lutheranism, too). These trends had a many-faceted impact upon the political culture but were only partly successful in the end (the Bohemian Estates did not achieve full control over other Crown Lands, to the contrary, they emancipated themselves significantly around 1600; the Habsburgs did not enforce their hegemony in Poland and their centralizing policies were only partly successful in Hungary; similarly in Hungary and Silesia the Catholics did not manage to suppress Protestant Churches). This conflict of two political cultures (one based on liberty, the other on authority) led to the collapse of consensual systems at the change of the 16th and 17th centuries. *Jus resistendi* and *bellum justum*, the concepts carried over to the 17th century by new generations, reflected the radicalisation of thought and conduct and they emphasised confrontational trends in the development of a political culture.

The military calamities of the 17th century profoundly transformed the political culture (with regard to property, power and religion). They introduced the use of force and the criminalisation of political activity into the political culture. They affected each of the three Central European states in different ways – Bohemia, to a large degree, assimilated itself to the Viennese centre of power and co-formed the Austrian-Bohemian variant of a hierarchical political culture; the specific development in Hungary resulted in a more moderate form of assimilation, whereas Poland distanced itself from all the other Central European states through its Sarmatian variant of political culture. During the period of *divergence* in the 17th and the first third of the 18th century these three states became so diverse that they entered the following modernised transformations of the political culture with very different prerequisites.

The period of Enlightenment later in the 18th century was affected by the *rationalisation* of the political culture in terms of the new political discourse, which sought to optimise the state with the current political system, now plunged into crisis. The examination of these transformations on the example of the Polish state documents that the political necessity to

guarantee efficient defence against the external threat to the state was primarily involved rather than a response to social pressure clamouring for changes. The remedy of the system was to be based on the *renovation* of efficient forms of governance and a political culture which had proved themselves in the past; the balance between royal power (majestas) and the aristocratic freedoms (libertas) was to be restored. Frictions between the court (absolutist), magnate-based (oligarchic) and aristocratic (republican) approaches to the administration of the state gave rise to a tendency towards a constitutional monarchy. It, in the eyes of the nobility, was to guarantee freedoms for the high-born domestically and at the same time the ability to defend themselves against being annexed by neighbouring states. Obviously, the failure of these attempts led to the dissolution of the Polish state.

Conclusion. In the 18th century the divergent developments of a political culture in Central European countries reached their zenith. Whereas the trends to strengthen the central authority in Poland failed, the top echelons of Bohemian nobility, subordinated in the military conflict with the Habsburgs one-and-a-half centuries earlier, could paradoxically participate in their implementation – obviously within the context of the Habsburg Monarchy. This reality documented rather well that the assimilation of the political culture in Bohemian-Austrian space progressed to wide-ranging identification with the interests of the Viennese Court, while Hungary and especially Poland each maintained their specific political culture. On the one hand it became the starting point of the later struggle for the Austrian-Hungarian settlement, on the other the basis for the strong resistance of the Polish elites to have their Polish state divided up and dominated by neighbouring powers. At the threshold of the 19th century the political culture of the elites in individual countries of Central Europe was manifestly diverse and created different starting points for the emergence of a modern civic society in the Bohemian (Czech) Lands, Hungary and Poland. The preconditions for a more comprehensive understanding of this dissimilarity are traced by studies which are included in the second volume of the present collection *Political Culture in Central Europe*.

Translated by Alena Linhartová

I
Middle Ages

Christianisation of Political Culture in Poland in the 10th and Early 11th Century

Roman Michałowski

The Christianisation of Poland started in 966 when Prince Mieszko I adopted the Christian faith and was baptised. It is not easy to establish the pace at which the new faith spread to the individual social strata or say to what extent the change shaped the religious and moral attitudes of the previously pagan masses. What is certain is that the political thought of the Polish court underwent a quick and profound Christianisation.[1] An event which occurred at the end of Mieszko I's rule (d. 992) showed that this process was already well advanced. I have in mind the *Dagome iudex*, that is, the donation made by the prince for the benefit of St. Peter.[2] What the prince

---

[1] For the Christianisation of Poland and Polish political culture see, above all works by Aleksander Gieysztor, e.g. 'Les paliers de la pénétration du christianisme en Pologne au Xe-XIe siècle', in *Studi in onore di Amintore Fanfani*, 6 vols. (Milan, 1962), i, 329-67; Aleksander Gieysztor, 'Le fonctionnement des institutions ecclésiastiques rurales en Bohême, en Pologne et en Hongrie aux Xe et XIe siècles', in *Cristianizzazione ed organizzazione ecclesiastica delle campagne nell'alto Medioevo* (Settimane di studio del CISAM, xxviii, Spoleto, 1982), 925-54; see also his 'La chrétienté et le pouvoir princier en Europe du Centre-Est des origines jusqu'à la fin du XIIe siècle', in *La cristianità dei secoli XI e XII in Occidente: coscienza e strutture di una società: Atti della ottava Settimana internazionale di studio, Mendola, 30 giugno – 5 luglio 1980* (Miscellanea del Centro di Studi Medioevali, x, Milan, 1983), 125-45. My point of view is presented in Roman Michałowski, 'La christianisation de la Pologne aux Xe-XIIe siècles', in Michel Rouche (ed.), *Clovis: Histoire et mémoire*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1997), ii, *Le baptême de Clovis, son écho à travers l'histoire*, 419-34.

[2] Brygida Kürbis, '*Dagome iudex* – studium krytyczne', in Kazimierz Tymieniecki (ed.), *Początki państwa polskiego; księga tysiąclecia*, 2 vols. (Poznań, 1962), i, 364-424;

offered was the realm of Gniezno which he ruled. It had happened before, though infrequently, that a ruler put himself, or possibly also his subjects, under the protection of the Prince of the Apostles, but nobody had yet offered him a state. It became a widespread practice later on, but the Piast prince was the first to take this step, which meant that he did not follow anybody's example, but rather was motivated by his own convictions.

Let us forget the 100-year long discussion on the ulterior motives of the gift, though these must have also existed, and focus on the fact that the donation had religious consequences and Mieszko must have realised this. From that moment on, he ruled the state on behalf of St. Peter and paid him rent on that account. Consequently, he and his successors had the right to count on St. Peter's help in governing the country. Bruno of Querfurt, writing a generation later, did in fact assert that it was St. Peter who had saved Mieszko's son Bolesław the Brave from Henry II's war expedition.[3]

The situation was therefore as follows: shortly before his death the Polish prince redefined his position as ruler and he did this in Christian categories.

We have more facts at our disposal with regard to the reign of Bolesław the Brave. It is worth recalling Matilda of Swabia's opinion about the deceased Bolesław, which she expressed in her letter to the king's son, Mieszko II. She calls him nothing less than the source and origin of the holy, Catholic and Apostolic faith in the part of the world under his rule. To justify her opinion she pointed out that the Polish ruler used to cross swords with people whom the holy preachers had failed to persuade to improve their ways. This resulted in his bringing the most savage nations to the Lord's table.[4] The

---

Roman Michałowski, *Princeps fundator: Studium z dziejów kultury politycznej w Polsce X-XIII wieku* (Warsaw, 1993), 59-61.

[3] Jadwiga Karwasińska (ed.), *Epistola Brunonis ad Henricum regem* (Monumenta Poloniae Historica [hereafter MPH], series nova, iv, pt. 3, Warsaw, 1973), 103.

[4] Brygida Kürbis et al. (eds.), *Codex Mathildis. Liber officiorum cum foliis dedicationis* (Polska Akademia Umiejętności, Monumenta Sacra Polonorum, i, Cracow, 2000), 139-40.

letter is certainly not free of panegyric exaggeration, but in a way it reflects the real state of affairs.

It is well known that the ecclesiastical province of Poland was established thanks to Bolesław the Brave's endeavours.[5] When he ascended the throne, there was only one bishopric in the Piast state and this lay under the auspices of the Apostolic See. In 1000 Poland had five bishoprics, including one archbishopric. Can there be any doubt about Bolesław' involvement in the evangelisation of pagans? The missionary monastery that he set up in the western regions of his state by agreement with Otto III was to carry on evangelisation in the lands on the Elbe. He entrusted the monastery to St. Romuald's Italian disciples, Benedict and John. What is worth noting is the choice of the missionaries: the two hermits belonged to the spiritual elite of Europe. Though the monks died before they set out on their mission, the monastery continued to exist, but it is not known whether it took up the mission of converting pagans.

An energetic activity was however started by Bruno of Querfurt, a German disciple of St. Romuald and a friend of Otto III. In the years 1004-9, Bruno was busy converting Black Magyars, Pechenegs, Swedes and also Yadzvings. Although the mission to the Yadzvings ended in failure and the missionary himself suffered a martyr's death at their hands, the expeditions to the Pechenegs and Swedes had yielded good results, though temporary, as it turned out. It is well known that Bolesław the Brave helped Bruno in his mission to the Yadzvings and there is every reason to believe that he gave Bruno material and diplomatic assistance when the German missionary tried to convert the Pechenegs and the Swedes.

Bolesław the Brave's activity as a Christian lawmaker leaves us in no doubt about. We have no texts of his decrees at our disposal and are, there-fore, in a less favourable situation than the historians studying the reign of St. Stephen of Hungary, but we know that Bolesław did issue decrees similar to the Hungarian ones, perhaps even in written form. We owe our knowledge of

---

[5] An outline of Bolesław the Brave's reign has been recently written by Jerzy Strzelczyk, *Bolesław Chrobry* (Poznań, 1999).

Bolesław's legislation to Thietmar, who was not stingy with interesting details.[6]

We learn from Thietmar that the monarch was hard on those who committed the sin of adultery or broke their fast. Corporal punishment (corresponding to the character of the offence) was the penalty in both cases; for instance, a man who ate meat during the forbidden time had his teeth knocked out. As we see, Bolesław the Brave followed in the footsteps of great Christian kings who used secular legislation in order to induce their subjects to observe the commandments. The Piast ruler even went a step further: he sharpened one point of the canon law. In the Latin Church there was a ban on eating meat from Ash Wednesday to Easter, but in Bolesław's Poland this period was extended by two weeks, from Septuagesima Sunday. The result was that Bolesław's subjects had to fast nine weeks, not just six and a half as people in other countries did.[7]

At the turn of the eleventh century there was a trend to enforce the norms of canon law in Europe. The process was carried on by small, hardly visible steps. But in the case mentioned above, the sharpening was so radical that it cannot be attributed merely to a general trend. It is an example of the Christian ruler's zeal in fulfilling his duties.

Mieszko I and Bolesław the Brave ruled a country where Christianity was a new religion which was not yet deeply rooted. It was therefore perfectly natural, requiring no special commentary, that they were deeply engaged in building the Church's framework and were interested in their subjects obedience, at least to a minimal extent, the commands of their religion, which was a state religion. A historian might belittle the significance of the anointment of monarch and explain that by submitting to this rite Bolesław the Brave and Mieszko II were not motivated by a desire to secure

---

[6] Robert Holtzmann (ed.), *Thietmari Merseburgensis episcopi Chronicon* (Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum Germanicarum, nova series, ix, Berlin, 1935), VIII, cc. 2-3, 494-96.

[7] Roman Michałowski, 'The Nine-Week Lent in Bolesław the Brave's Poland: a Study of the First Piasts' Religious Policy', *Acta Poloniae Historica*, lxxxix (2004), 5-50.

God's grace but by political reasons, for they hoped that the coronation would move them up in the hierarchy of rulers. Arguments of this kind would turn a historian into a sceptic and make him think that, although Polish rulers learned to observe the norms binding on the monarchs in the Christian world, this was but a veneer of an otherwise pagan culture.

Such an interpretation would be groundless. Let us mention a few facts. The *Dagome iudex* shows that the prince grasped the characteristic way of thinking of Christianity at that time. Donations for the benefit of St. Peter had been well known institution, but it was usually a monastery, and not a state, that was donated. The establishment of ties between a ruler and St. Peter also had precedents, though it had previously been done in a different way, not by a donation. Original though, Mieszko I's action was in keeping with the times. Nor was the prolongation of Lent an extravagance. Proposals for starting Lent on Septuagesima Sunday were put forward in Carolingian and Ottonian times, and the idea began to be put into effect in the second half of the tenth century. No other country went so far as to forbid its population to eat meat in the pre-Lent period, but judicial proceedings and weddings were forbidden during that time.[8] As we see, Bolesław the Brave simply drew the final conclusions from the discussions held in the West. He must have been well informed of what occupied the Church and must have attached great importance to it.

Let us refer again to Matilda of Swabia's above-mentioned letter. She tried to prove that Mieszko II was a genuine king crowned by God himself. This is all the more interesting as Mieszko II's coronation was regarded as a usurpation in Germany. The most important arguments used by Matilda are the services rendered by this king, including his unparalleled activity in founding churches. This is a subtle way of thinking: if Mieszko II had so many monarchical qualities, he must have received divine instruction. And if the heavens themselves had equipped a ruler with statecraft, then this meant that they had predestined him for royalty. It is probable that Matilda's letter echoed the propaganda spread by Polish authorities. But the arguments used in the letter, in particular the importance attached to the foundation of

---

[8] *Ibid.*

churches, had no analogy in the sources of that period, though they were well established in the way of thinking in those days. We are faced with the same phenomenon: the court of Gniezno had familiarised itself with Christian political thought to such an extent that it could use it creatively and with appreciation.[9]

In order to find out what helped Polish rulers to have such deep knowledge of the principles of Christian political culture at the end of the tenth century, it is necessary to bear in mind that the ideology of royal power proclaimed and confessed in the western world was Christian to the core. Not only did it regard Christian principles as the moral prerequisite of all political activity, but it also asserted that in the last instance the ruler was responsible for preaching the Gospel and looking after the worship of God.

Political treatises were unknown in the tenth century. Opinions on the monarch's rights and duties were formulated by means of complex expressions, such as *Christus domini*, and anointed by God. The term not only referred to the fact that the king was anointed during the coronation. It also implied that the monarch was similar to Jesus Christ, God's anointed *par excellence*. And in fact, in its most official statements, the Church called the king a reflection, an impress of Christ (*typus Christi*).[10] This way of thinking had its consequences in practice. Let us recall one example.[11] Otto I was crowned emperor on the day of the Purification of the Virgin Mary (2 February). This is a day of a Christological character. It commemorates the prophetic words of the aged Simeon who, taking the Child in his arms, called it 'a light to lighten the Gentiles' (Luke 2:32*)*. The choice of the day of coronation reflected Otto I's self-consciousness. On becoming emperor, he became similar to the Saviour, the similarity consisting in the tasks facing him. He was destined to follow in the footsteps of God's Son, and convert pagan nations.

The fact that influential circles in Otto I's times, and also later, used such expressions as *typus Christi* or *vicarius Christi* to denote a king testifies to the intensity of the ideology of royal power. The comparison of the ruler to the Saviour, a daring analogy, must have been engendered by an authentic need to understand what the king was and by a profound conviction of the sacredness of the monarch's authority.

Even Mieszko I, *amicus imperatoris,* as Widukind calls him, was familiar with the German world.[12] He was a valuable partner for some circles of the aristocracy, and the imperial court, which never treated the Piast prince superciliously, fully appreciated his significance after the outbreak of the Polabian Slavs' rising in 983. It was then that Germany and Poland established a strategic alliance cemented by the two countries' hostility towards the Lucices. The alliance was at the root of Otto III's close co-operation with Bolesław the Brave, but the co-operation between these two rulers was much wider in scope.

During his visit to Gniezno in 1000,[13] Otto III made Bolesław the Brave brother and co-operator in the Empire (*frater et cooperator imperii*).[14] Medieval Europe did not know such a position. The emperor created it *ad hoc* for the Polish prince, drawing inspiration from St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians (2: 25). In it, the apostle speaks about a certain Epaphroditus, whom he sent to the Philippians and calls him his 'brother and companion in labour' (*fratrem et cooperatorem* [Vulgate]).[15]

---

[9] Roman Michałowski, 'Les fondations ecclésiastiques dans l'idéologie de la première monarchie piastienne', *Acta Poloniae Historica*, lx (1989), 133-57.

[10] The most important literature is cited in Roman Michałowski, 'Otto III w obliczu ideowego wyzwania: monarcha jako wizerunek Chrystusa', in Roman Michałowski et al. (eds.), *Człowiek w społeczeństwie średniowiecznym* (Warsaw, 1997), 57-72.

[11] Ernst-Dieter Hehl, 'Kaisertum, Rom und Papstbezug im Zeitalter Otto I.', in Bernd Schneidmüller and Stefan Weinfurter (eds.), *Ottonische Neuanfänge: Symposion zur Ausstellung 'Otto der Grosse, Magdeburg und Europa'* (Mainz, 2001), 226-8.

[12] The latest monographs: Jerzy Strzelczyk, *Mieszko Pierwszy* (Poznań, 1992); Gerard Labuda, *Mieszko I* (Wrocław, Warsaw and Cracow, 2002).

[13] The literature on the congress is enormous; see, for instance, Jerzy Strzelczyk, *Zjazd Gnieźnieński* (Poznań, 2000).

[14] *Galli Anonymi Chronicae et Gesta ducum sive principum Polonorum*, ed. Kazimierz Maleczyński (MPH, nova series, ii, Cracow, 1952), I, c. 6, 19-20.

[15] Tomasz Jasiński, 'Tytulatura Bolesława Chrobrego na Zjeździe Gnieźnieńskim', in *Memoriae amici et magistri: Studia historyczne poświęcone pamięci prof. Wacława Korty, 1919-1999* (Wrocław, 2001), 23-31.

During his Gniezno pilgrimage, Otto III, like St. Paul before him, titled himself servant of Jesus Christ. This means that he regarded himself as an apostle and recognised Bolesław, as St. Paul had recognised Epaphroditus: his collaborator in evangelisation. The emperor identified himself with religious obligations to an even greater extent than his predecessors and successors. This was the reason for the most unusual expressions in his titles: first, servant of Jesus Christ (*servus Iesu Christi*) and then servant of the apostles (*servus apostolorum*). One can even venture to say that Otto III's political conception, including his idea to renew the Roman Empire, stemmed from his evangelical devotion, to be exact – from his conviction that every aspect of the emperor's political activity should have a religious aim in view.[16]

It was precisely this devotion to God's causes that was the second reason, very important in Otto's opinion, for his co-operation with the Polish prince. This was not only a question of a strategic alliance against the Polabian Slavs. Bolesław the Brave was to carry out missionary work on behalf of the Empire in its north-eastern borderlands. Mieszko I had also moved in the circles of the German power elite whose political activity was based on Christian values, but Bolesław the Brave became even more closely attached to this ideology by being entrusted, on highly honourable conditions, with a clearly religious role.

Let us return to the question of the prolongation of Lent. In all probability the amendment in question was added to the canon law after the Gniezno Congress, that is when the Polish ruler already held the post of the Empire's collaborator. This could not be just a coincidence. Bolesław may

---

[16] I have tried to characterise Otto III's political thought in Roman Michałowski, *Zjazd Gnieźnieński: Religijne przesłanki powstania arcybiskupstwa gnieźnieńskiego* (Wrocław, forthcoming). Of basic importance for this question is still the monograph by Percy Ernest Schramm, *Kaiser, Rom und Renovatio: Studien und Texte zur Geschichte des römischen Erneuerungsgedankens vom Ende des Karolingischen Reiches bis zum Investiturstreit*, 2 vol., (Studien der Bibliothek Warburg, xvii, Leipzig and Berlin, 1929; vol. i has had several later editions); see also Knut Görich, *Otto III. Romanus, Saxonicus et Italicus: Kaiserliche Rompolitik und sächsische Historiographie* (Historische Forschungen, xviii, Sigmaringen, 1993); Gerd Althoff, *Otto III* (Darmstadt, 1996); Jerzy Strzelczyk, *Otton III* (Wrocław, Warsaw and Cracow, 2000).

have been inspired by the intention to show that he was performing the role assigned to him in a praiseworthy way. If the amendment in question was added to canon law during the time of Henry II, which is possible, its aim was polemics. Otto III's successor refused to confirm the position assigned to Bolesław in Gniezno, and this is why Bolesław, by trying ardently to fulfil the religious duties incumbent on a collaborator of the Empire, wanted to prove, to spite the Emperor, that this was what he in fact was.

We have already drawn attention to Bolesław the Brave's zeal in evangelising pagan nations. We know this is what Otto III expected of Poland. It is therefore most likely that in this respect, too, Bolesław was motivated mainly by a determination to fulfil his obligations to the Empire. The Piast ruler did not let himself be dissuaded from this work even when the incumbent German king did not attach special importance to the conversion of pagans.

At the end of his life Bolesław the Brave began again to play the role of the Empire's collaborator, in full agreement with the Emperor. After the peace of Bautzen he availed himself of the help of German troops, attacked Rus' and captured Kiev. From Kiev he sent envoys to the Byzantine emperor, Basil II, threatening to take revenge unless Basil agreed to become his faithful friend. We owe information on this legation to Thietmar. It seems to follow from Thietmar's commentary that Germany was greatly interested in the further development of events.[17] This would mean that the Polish prince's policy had been concerted with Henry II. But in this case the religious objectives of collaboration were not the most important.

It seems that Bolesław's political stance was shaped by two ideas. On the one hand, he felt it was his duty to bring his subjects and the neighbouring pagan peoples to God. In this respect he followed the example of many other Christian rulers. But he was also inspired by another objective: participation in the construction of the Empire. His attachment to this idea survived not only the death of Otto III, but even the disappointments he experienced during the reign of Henry II. When his grandson was born in 1016, he gave him two names: Casimir and Charles. It is beyond doubt that

---

[17] *Thietmari ... Chronicon*, VIII, c. 33, 530-2.

the second name reflected a political programme: Bolesław's grandson was to complete the work of restoring the Roman Empire, a work started by Otto III.[18] It is worth recalling that the Polish royal prince was the grandson of Matilda, sister of the Emperor Otto III and through his grandfather, Erenfried Ezzon, was a descendant of Charlemagne.

The two ideas – leading people to God and participation in the construction of the Empire – were intertwined; for according to the medieval point of view, the Empire signified, first and foremost, service to God. This aspect of the imperial policy was emphasised by Otto III. His model was Charlemagne from whose seal he took the motto RENOVATIO IMPERII ROMANORUM. In Saxony – Otto was a Saxon – Charlemagne was regarded above all as an apostle. As we remember, the two ideas were combined in the dignity which Bolesław the Brave was offered in Gniezno: he was to serve the Empire by supporting it, first and foremost, by apostolic work.

The self-consciousness of the Polish court was perhaps reflected in the *Annales regni Polonorum deperditi*,[19] which have not survived but are easy to reconstruct in a general outline. They contained many entries referring to the history of the Franks (beginning with Charles the Martel) and the history of Germany, laying stress on the construction of the empire, the role of St. Boniface and the archbishopric of Mainz. The choice of information might imply that during the time of Bolesław the Brave the Piasts regarded themselves as followers of the Empire's tradition and of the imperial Christianisation mission.[20]

---

[18] Stanisław Kętrzyński, 'Karol Wielki i Bolesław Chrobry', *Przegląd Historyczny*, xxxvi (1946), 19-25; Herbert Ludat, *An Elbe und Oder um das Jahr 1000: Skizzen zur Politik des Ottonenreiches und der slavischen Mächte in Mitteleuropa* (Cologne and Vienna, 1971), 85-92.

[19] *Repertorium fontium Historiae Medii aevi*, ii (Rome, 1967), 316.

[20] As far as this hypothesis is concerned, let me refer to the latest research on the oldest Polish annals. I have in mind, above all, the studies by Tomasz Jasiński, e.g. 'Początki polskiej annalistyki', in Jerzy Strzelczyk and Józef Dobosz (eds.), *Nihil superfluum esse: Studia z dziejów średniowiecza ofiarowane Profesor Jadwidze Krzyża-niakowej* (Publikacje Instytutu Historii UAM, xxxiii, Poznań, 2000), 129-46; Tomasz Jasiński, 'Rocznik obcy w Roczniku kapituły krakowskiej', in Danuta Zydorek (ed.),

---

The suspicion arises that the idea of continuation may have played a role also in Mieszko I's political thought. Indications to this effect can be found in the *Dagome iudex*. In the times before Mieszko, another great Slav ruler, Sviatopluk of Moravia, placed himself under the protection of St. Peter. He did not donate his state to the Prince of the Apostles, but the reason was probably that Moravia was regarded as St. Peter's property anyway. This would imply that the Polish prince knowingly followed the example set by the founder of the Slav empire. This seems to be confirmed by another fact: Mieszko gave the name of Sviatopluk, an unprecedented name at that time, to one of his sons by his second marriage.[21]

Let us sum up. Our reflections lead us to the conclusion that the quick and undoubtedly rather profound Christianisation of Polish political culture was due, among other things, to the fact that the first Piasts succeeded in finding a place for themselves in Christian Europe. Their military power opened for them the door to the imperial court, where they were welcome guests.

It is worthy of notice that the historian of the first Piast monarchy did not find any sources referring to pre-Christian political ideas. After all, the young Polish state and its ruling house must have been guided by some ideological motives before Mieszko I was baptised, and these motives naturally could not have been Christian. In what has survived of Polish medieval writings, we can, without any difficulty, find legends referring to the rulers; they are based on what may be called an archaic way of thinking. But a historian who examines Poland's political culture at the end of the

---

Scriptura custos memoriae: Prace historyczne (Publikacje Instytutu Historii UAM, xliv, Poznań, 2001), 217-24; see also his 'Zagadnienie autorstwa Rocznika obcego: Przyczy-nek do historiografii niemieckiej X stulecia', *Roczniki Historyczne*, lxviii (2002), 7-25; I have also benefited much from Jarosław Wenta's paper on the beginnings of Polish annals, which he read in Kazimierz on 17 October 2003 at a conference devoted to auxiliary historical sciences; the conference was organised by the Maria Curie Skłodowska University (Lublin).

[21] Dušan Třeštík, 'Von Svatopluk zu Bolesław Chrobry: Die Entstehung Mittel-europas des Tatsächlichen und aus einer Idee', in Przemysław Urbańczyk (ed.), *The Neighbours of Poland in the 10th Century* (Warsaw, 2000), 138.

tenth century encounters certain difficulties when he tries to make use of these legends. They were first recorded by Gallus Anonymus, a chronicler who wrote nearly a hundred years after the death of Bolesław the Brave, in the second decade of the twelfth century. Master Vincent called Kadłubek, author of the largest collection of the legends we are interested in,[22] wrote them down even later, at the turn of the thirteenth century. The researcher is faced with a dilemma. On the one hand, he must realise that by drawing conclusions on the times of the first Piasts from the legends put down by Gallus Anonymus and Kadłubek he runs the risk of being anachronistic, while on the other hand, he will easily notice that some of these legends contain very archaic ideas. The natural presumption is therefore that the ideas in question were alive in Poland before Mieszko I's baptism and must have also been present later, during the first Piast monarchy.

Let us have a look at the legend about Piast and Popiel in the version immortalised by Gallus Anonymus.[23] The argumentation presented by the chronicler leads to the conclusion that the progenitor of the Piast dynasty, Siemowit, was made prince by God himself. We are thus firmly on Christian ground. The dialectic of prize and punishment is also in harmony with Christian teachings: Popiel was dethroned for he had refused to accept the wayfarers at his court, while Siemowit acceded to the throne because his father had welcomed the guests. We must admit, however, that this dialectic would also not be out of place in the notions of Indo-European religions.

Piast, however, is shown as a 'multilayer' figure. Outwardly, he is completely Christianised. The host of this hospitable house is a prince's ploughman; his occupation being mentioned to denote his social status. The

[22] See above all Jacek Banaszkiewicz, *Polskie dzieje bajeczne mistrza Wincentego Kadłubka* (Wrocław, 1998).

[23] *Galli Anonymi Chronicae*, I, cc. 1-3, pp. 9-13. Of fundamental importance among the multilingual books concerning this legend is the study by Jacek Banaszkie-wicz, *Podanie o Piaście i Popielu: Studium porównawcze nad wczesnośredniowiecz-nymi tradycjami dynastycznymi* (Warsaw, 1986). See also Czesław Deptuła, *Galla Anonima mit genezy Polski* (Lublin, 1990, 2nd edn, 2000); this scholar, who has greatly contributed to the development of studies on Gallus' legend, has a different view of many questions.

reader is to understand that the hero was a poor man, of a very modest status. There were two reasons why the chronicler found these traits indispensable: first, they gave the appearance of verisimilitude to the theory that Siemowit's promotion was due to God's power, and secondly, they brought into relief Piast's generosity; though he had next to nothing, there was no trace of stinginess about him. However, one cannot help thinking that the figure of the hero assumed Christian characteristics in the process of the development of the legend. Hundreds of examples come to mind (Slav, e.g. the Czech Premisl, Celtic, German and many other examples) in which the first king or progenitor of a dynasty was God's ploughman or gardener. The aim of these tales was not to qualify these men socially but to show that a hero who was once a farmer will be able to secure food for the community. The name Piast, which probably means 'he who provides food', may be a trace of this older version of the legend.

Chościsko is undoubtedly a relic, a kind of fossil, of an older version of the legend. He does not play any role in Gallus' chronicle. It is only mentioned in the text that this was the name of Piast's father. It must be assumed that this mysterious figure lived a more active life in an older version, for otherwise it would have been senseless to mention him at all. Special attention should however be paid to the name itself. According to Jacek Banaszkiewicz's highly plausible interpretation, it meant a long-haired man. This would indicate that archaic, pre-Christian ideas about kings whose power, as with the Merovingian *reges criniti,* lay in their long, uncut hair, existed in Poland too.[24]

But there are more vestiges of archaic thinking in the Piast legend. The rite of hair-clipping is the crucial moment of the narration. The two strange wayfarers cut Siemowit's hair with due ceremony, which in the future was to pave the way for him to the throne. Hair-cutting signified adoption; the question therefore arises who the guests were in the opinion of the authors of the legend. Without calling them by name, Gallus Anonymus presents them

[24] Jacek Banaszkiewicz, 'O pomysłach etymologiczno-historycznych p. Andrzeja Bańkowskiego, dotyczących imion postaci z podania dynastycznego Piastów', *Onomastica*, xxxvii (1992), 264 ff.

as saintly persons; they had the gift of prophecy and miracles happened
while they were present. But they were not saints in the Christian meaning of
the word; nor is it said in the chronicle that they were angels. In all pro-
bability they were the products of pre-Christian imagination which endowed
them with numinous characteristics, just as it ascribed sacral features to the
act of hair-clipping.[25]

As we see, there is no lack of evidence in Gallus' text that questions
connected with the state and the monarchy were analysed in early Piast
Poland through references to notions and ideas that had nothing to do with
Christianity. This conflicts with the material we have presented above. But
let us repeat: it is unlikely that ideas of this kind were not taken into
consideration at the beginning of Mieszko's reign and that they just melted
away after his baptism. Why did they not leave a trace in the material
accessible to us?

Two replies come to mind. The material we have is fragmentary. We
know very little about the period of the first monarchy and it is pure chance
that the few sources which we have at our disposal show Christian, and not
pre-Christian, elements of ideological reasoning. But another reply is also
possible: the Polish court could have deliberately and persistently cut itself
off from them. Of course these elements did not disappear completely, the
social circles which were not linked to the court did not forget them, and
made use of them in one way or another, so that the memory of some mythical
figure survived, to say nothing of the fact that the old mentality remained
intact among the broad strata of society and it could again and again give
birth to ideas about a long-haired king or a prince who was a divine
ploughman. But the Piast ruler did not want to know anything about this.

---

[25] Roman Michałowski, 'Restauratio Poloniae dans l'idéologie dynastique de
Gallus Anonymus', Acta Poloniae Historica, lii (1985), 5-43, esp. 5-18; let us point out
that in the book mentioned in n. 23, and also in other studies, Czesław Deptuła has
doubts about the pre-Christian origin of various themes in the legend, an opinion with
which I do not agree. See also Paweł Żmudzki, 'Spór o analizę strukturalną podań i mi-
tów dotyczących „Początków" Polski (na marginesie książek Jacka Banaszkiewicza
i Czesława Deptuły)', Przegląd Historyczny, xciii (2002), 451-71.

Could either of these two hypotheses be false? Strictly speaking, pro-
bably not. But the material at our disposal, scant as it is, allows us to form an
opinion on this question.

Let us consider the importance of Dagome iudex for the interpretation
of the ideological principles of a prince's power. Without being quite certain
about it, we can assume it probable that the political thought of that time
made use of the principles which we know from Gallus' legend, even though
the legend did not yet exist. The most important of these principles was that
the monarch was a descendant of a noble forefather endowed with sacral
features, irrespective of how they were defined. Some significance may have
been attributed to the rite of hair-clipping, a rite which transferred the
prince's charisma to his son. In this situation, through inheritance and the
hair-clipping, Mieszko I had a share in the virtue, prowess and luck of
a more or less mythical progenitor of his clan.

After the donation to St. Peter, the value of these elements had to be
relativised. For from that time forward Mieszko was on the throne, not
because he had inherited it from his ancestors, but because he was given it
back by St. Peter (the Dagome iudex act should be interpreted as precaria
oblata). Economic and military success was no longer guaranteed by the
virtues and achievements of his forefathers – the various Piasts, Siemowits
and Lestkos – but by the blessing flowing from heaven, from the Prince of
the Apostles.

The least that can be said is that this relativisation did not inconvenience
Mieszko. He willingly, or perhaps even intentionally, replaced one legitimi-
sation with an other one.

This is how the situation can be presented: The first three Polish
Christian rulers – Mieszko I, Bolesław the Brave and Mieszko II – radically
reformulated the ideological foundations of royal power. They rejected the
tradition that grew out of the remote past and referred to Christian legacy.

However, a question arises: why did pagan legacy make itself felt so
strongly in a later period? a change in the Polish court's policy is a fact that
should be reckoned with. In the 1030s the Piast state collapsed, and the only
surviving male representative of the dynasty, Casimir the Restorer, was exiled.
These events were accompanied by social unrest and the revival of paganism.
A few years later Casimir returned to the country and started the laborious

work of rebuilding the monarchy. It is beyond doubt that the attempts to rebuild its ideological foundations were part of his endeavours. He undoubtedly did his best to gain the confidence of the social elites, and the events of the past years showed him that Christianity had not struck deep roots in Poland. He had therefore to go back to old archaic themes in the hope that they would turn out to be more convincing than references to the God from the Bible. The efforts of Casimir,[26] and perhaps also of his successors, gave rise to the dynastic legend, the later version of which is known from the chronicle of Gallus Anonymus.

Translated by Janina Dorosz

---

[26] It is worth pointing out, that Jacek Banaszkiewicz, 'Tradycje dynastyczno-plemienne Słowiańszczyzny północnej', in Henryk Samsonowicz (ed.), *Ziemie polskie w X wieku i ich znaczenie w kształtowaniu się nowej mapy Europy* (Cracow, 2000), 269, dates – on the basis of other arguments – the birth of this legend at ca. the middle of the 11th century.

Transformation of the Dukedom of 'the Bohemians' into the Kingdom of Bohemia

Josef Žemlička

Between the end of the 10th century and the early 13th century parliamentary gatherings of 'all the Bohemians' (*omnes Bohemi*) took place primarily in Prague, but also in Sadská, Kníň and other places in Bohemia. These were assemblies of the Bohemian political nation, free men ranging from noblemen of the highest rank, men of excellence and court dignitaries to small freeholders, of lowly birth, yet formally free (*rustici, rustici* ducis). These parliamentary gatherings, or diets, were regularly held on St. Vitus's Day (15 June) to whom the Cathedral of Bohemia was dedicated, or on St. Wenceslas' Day (28 September), the patron saint and protector of his 'Bohemians' and the country as such. If the duke wished it, diets could be held at any place and any time, even during military campaigns. Indeed, *'jsa obklopen zbraní a chráněn strážemi'* (surrounded by arms and protected by his guards), the ruler could enforce his will most easily there.[1]

---

[1] *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Bohemorum*, ed. Bertold Bretholz (Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores, Nova series ii, Berlin, 1923 [further Kosmas]), II. 22, 114-15. Most recently Zdeněk Šimeček, 'K charakteristice středověkých kolokvií v Čechách', *Československý časopis historický*, xviii (1970), 593-601; Stanislaw Russocki, *Protoparlamentaryzm Czech do początku XV wieku* (Warszaw, 1973); idem, 'Początki Zgromadzeń Stanowych w Europie Środkowej', *Przegląd Historyczny*, lxvi (1975), 171-88; Josef Žemlička, '„Politický kalendář" přemyslovských Čech', *Český časopis historický*, lxxxix (1991), 31-47; idem, 'Te ducem, te iudicem, te rectorem (Sněmovní shromáždění v časně středověkých Čechách – kontinuita či diskontinuita?)', *Český časopis historický*, xci (1993), 369-84.

Throughout long continuous development the issue of Bohemian parliamentarism merged with the process of the emergence of the Estates. Its origins, even in Bohemian circumstances, go far beyond the 13th century when groups of grandees, in sources referred to as *comites, proceres, primates, seniores, milites, maiores natu* emerged from the shadow of the ruler. These people persistently moved 'around the throne'; they had honours and titles bestowed on them; they held office; they promised loyalty and even betrayed it. In time their ranks stabilized; the beneficiary nobility in its highest echelon became almost hereditary and it identified with 'the Bohemians' (*Bohemi*), with 'the family of St. Wenceslas' (*familia sancti Wenceslai*). Other free 'Bohemians', but of common birth, primarily the ruler's yeomen and categories of people related to them, were ousted from their circle. Collective oaths (*sacramenta*) of the most influential representatives were attached to dynastic or constitutional treaties. The Duke ruled with their support and capitalised on rivalry between court cliques, noble families and extended noble families with skilful manoeuvreing to achieve his aims. The feeling of unity felt by prominent 'Bohemians' from Bohemia and Moravia gradually increased and the prestige of their elites grew. This was especially true between the years 1172 and 1197 when changes on the throne speeded up the political and social emancipation of the nobility. Emperor Friedrich Barbarosa also contributed to this process, because he invited the most influential of them (1173, 1182, 1187) to his court not merely as observers but as direct guarantors of his decisions. Also the Holy Roman King Philip of Swabia, when he was concluding a treaty with the then Duke Przemysl, involved in it 'his Bohemians' (*cum Boemis suis*).[2]

---

[2] The Chronicle of Jarloch, Abbot of the Milevsko Monastery, in *Fontes rerum Bohemicarum*, ii, ed. Josef Emler (Prague, 1874) (further as Jarloch), 465, 480-1, 516. In more detail Wolfgang H. Fritze, 'Corona regni Bohemiae. Die Entstehung des böhmischen Königtums im 12. Jahrhundert im Widerspiel von Kaiser, Fürst und Adel', in Wolfgang H. Fritze, *Frühzeit zwischen Ostsee und Donau. Ausgewählte Beiträge zum geschichtlichen Werden im östlichen Mitteleuropa vom 6. bis zum 13. Jahrhundert*, ed. Ludolf Kuchenbuch und Winfried Schich (Berlin, 1982), 209-96; Josef Žemlička, '„Omnes Bohemi": Od svatováclavské čeledi ke středověké šlechtě', *Mediaevalia Historica Bohemica*, iii (1993), 111-33.

This process could not be stopped, not even by such a strong Duke as Przemysl Otakar I (1197-1230), annointed as King in 1198. Through his skilful policy of rewarding loyal supporters, yet not persecuting his predecessors' adherents, he harmonized his interests with prestigious and influential families. Although the numbers of *milites, proceres, nobiles* could be estimated in hundreds, the main role in state administration and politics as such was occupied by 'land barons' (*barones terre*) who relied on the support and background of their old families, relatives and clients. The representatives of the Ronovecs, the Hrabišics, the Vítkovecs, the Markvartics; the heads of the Sternbergs, the Pernsteins and the Kunštats were amongst the bearers of high office. Simultaneously they acquired large estates. Generally, this represented a stable, but not hermetically sealed, core of about 25 noble families. Other *nobiles* and *milites* formed a community, which varied widely as to their 'nobility' and wealth, and those ranked the lowest were merging with the remains of 'free' yeomen.[3]

Przemysl was the last of the Bohemian rulers who governed land in the old manner. He ruled more from his saddle than his palace chambers. Surrounded by a retinue of his confidants and dignitaries, he dutifully travelled throughout Bohemia and Moravia until his old age. Simultaneously he judged, punished, elevated, rewarded and hunted; he participated in the consecration of churches and various festivities. The centre of government power was where the king resided. Thus, he had both good awareness of the state and the requirements of his Land and kept 'his Bohemians' on tenterhooks.[4]

However, this was a key period of the process in which a mixture of noblemen, dignitaries, warriors and landowners united into a class welded together by their common interests. Already in December 1203 Pope

---

[3] Estimated at 20-25 such families by Rostislav Nový, 'K počátkům feudální monarchie v Čechách II (K počátkům českého znaku)', *Časopis Národního muzea - Historické muzeum*, cxlvii (1978), 147-72, 169, according to Vratislav Vaníček, *Velké dějiny zemí Koruny české II. 1197-1250* (Prague and Litomyšl, 2000), 225-26, 20-30 families were involved.

[4] On Przemysl's itinerary see Ivan Hlaváček, 'Die Itinerare der böhmischen Herrscher bis zum Jahre 1253 aus verwaltungsgeschichtlicher Sicht', *Folia diplomatica*, i (1971), 120-1.

Innocent III thanked the 'Bohemian governors' (*suppanis Boemie*) in a special letter for receiving his legate Quido and asked them to collaborate 'with their ruler' to advance Otto IV of Brunswick's candidature in the power struggle within the Empire. The nobility's self-confidence was also strengthened by the King's clash with Andrew, the Bishop of Prague (1214-24). *Barones, comites, nobiles* appeared as one party to it. They turned to the Pope and in January 1217 he addressed his reply to the Chamberlain, the Buda Castle Warden, the Field Marshall, the High Steward and 'all governors' (*universis suppanis*). On other occasions Honorius III referred to these people as *magnates*.[5]

A group of magnates also guaranteed the results of discussions held in January 1219 in Kladruby, which aimed at resolving the dispute between the King and the Bishop. Przemysl himself emphasized this fact to the Pope when he pointed out the participation of 'the prominent nobles from our kingdom' (*nobilibus regni nostri maioribus*). Apart from his own seal (*sigillo nostro speciali*), in its corroboration (a part of the document providing information on the manner of verification) the King announced 'a common seal of the Kingdom of Bohemia, namely St. Wenceslas, because our magnates do not use a special seal in common affairs' (*cum sigillo communi regni Boemie, videlicet sancti Wenceztai, quia comites nostri specialibus non utuntur in facto communi sigillis*). The seal itself has not been preserved yet numerous polemics have revolved around its appearance and interpretation. They simultaneously represent discussions about the origins of an aristocratic Land community and the Estates.[6]

Comites, magnates, nobiles, milites from 1219 belonged to the Land elite for many generations. They participated in elections and the enthronement of rulers; they gathered at colloquia, court proceedings and military campaigns. For a long time they did not unite in a collective body. The Przemyslids themselves manoeuvred skilfully against it because the division of 'all Bohemians' into competing cliques and interest groups suited them. Only at a time when

[5] *Codex diplomaticus et epistolaris regni Bohemiae*, ii, ed. Gustav Friedrich (Prague, 1912) (further CDB II), No. 36, 33, No. 136, 125-26, No. 143, 134.

[6] CDB II, No. 172, 160-1.

these grandees and representatives of the old 'beneficiary' system transformed themselves into hereditary land aristocracy, could they unite on the basis of their political interests. The ideology of St. Wenceslas, previously serving the interests of the duke and his dynasty, began to act as a platform for this transformed nobility. The Holy Duke Wenceslas, better known as Good King Wenceslas, became the patron of the 'Land' and its bearers – 'the Bohemians.' This was a development which lasted from the 11th century and did not end in 1306 when the Przemyslids died out. For this reason, also, the *sigillum commune regni* (1219) cannot be an expression of some awareness of their aristocratic status. It is not evidence of an enclosed Land community which as a legal entity together with the ruler could confirm constitutional acts. Since the *sigillum nostrum speciale* can be identified with the face of the third type of Przemysl Otakar I's seal, it follows that the *sigillum commune regni Boemie* has to be once again considered to be the reverse St. Wenceslas side of the same type of Przemyslid's seal. Probably it was to symbolise the permanent authority of Duke Wenceslas over the Land of Bohemia as heralded by preceding and following double-sided seals of dukes and kings until King Przemysl Otakar II abandoned this tradition. However, both sealed texts from 1219 seem to indicate the direction in which the state authority divided here: the King on the one side and 'Land' (*terra*), 'kingdom' (*regnum*) on the opposite side. The aristocratic Land community transformed itself into the bearer of the latter. This process was completed later, as aptly expressed in the verses of the so-called Dalimil's chronicle from the early 14th century.[7]

[7] Cf. Rostislav Nový, 'K počátkům feudální monarchie v Čechách I (Sigillum commune regni)', *Časopis Národního muzea - Historické muzeum*, cxlv (1976), 144-64, which also presents a survey of opinions (F. Palacký, J. Kalousek, V. Novotný, O. Bauer, J. Čarek, V. Hrubý, V. Vašků and others). The existence of a separate seal, representing the 'land' (kingdom) under the reign of Przemysl Otakar I, was also rejected by Russocki, *Protoparlamentaryzm*, 54-6, which places the beginnings of the land estates movement between 1278 and 1415. Conversely, the *sigillum commune regni* is interpreted as a manifestation of the enclosure of the land corporation of the Bohemian nobility by F. Graus, 'Adel, Land und Herrscher in Böhmen vom 10. bis 13. Jahrhundert', *Nachrichten der Giessener Hochschulgesellschaft*, xxxv (1966), 146-7, 150-1. According to Dušan Třeštík, *Kosmova kronika. Studie k počátkům českého dějepisectví a politického myšlení*

Wenceslas I (1230-53) followed in the footsteps of his father. He tried to maintain and strengthen royal power. He did not stand in the way of the property expansion of 'noble' families, for which 'honours' awarded at court and in the provinces cleared the way. Therefore, these families did not refuse to help him in his hour of need. They fought for themselves and the 'liberation' of their estates from the influence of the still active hordes of gentlemen of the chamber, masters of the hunt, burgraves, or in other words court beneficiaries. At the same time these people were no longer 'Bohemians' of the old type. As *barones, comites, nobiles, potentes* they became true occupants and owners of castles, villages, estates or parts thereof. Castle-dominated regions disappeared from an imaginary map of the Bohemian Lands and were replaced by a kaleidoscope of landed estates, and thus the transformation from 'the period of dukedom' into a society of the early Middle Ages reached its climax.[8]

Although 'the common seal of the Kingdom' from 1219 did not herald a corporate aristocratic community, it heralded the emerging dualism of state power. The symbol of St. Wenceslas entered into a relationship with the concepts of 'Land' (*terra*) and 'kingdom' (*regnum*) which were breaking free from the sovereign's dominant influence and the nobility transformed themselves into their bearer. The Lands of Bohemia and Moravia constituted themselves as legal entities, as if imaginarily standing next to 'their own' king.

(Prague, 1968), 207-13, it is not possible to consider the St. Wenceslas seal as an originally independent court seal of the ruler. On the question of the establishment of the Land community most recently Vratislav Vaníček, 'Šlechta a český stát za vlády Přemyslovců (K formování ideologie české šlechty od 11. do počátku 14. století)', *Folia Historica Bohemica*, xii (1988), 65-107; idem, 'Předpoklady a formování šlechtické „obce českého království" (zemské obce)', *Mediaevalia Historica Bohemica*, i (1991), 13-55. Early signs of the collective awareness of the nobility are assumed by Jiří Kejř, 'Počátky a upevnění stavovského zřízení v Čechách', *Právněhistorické studie*, xxxiv, (1997), 63-95. On Dalimil's concept of the Land community see Zdeněk Uhlíř, 'Pojem zemské obce v tzv. kronice Dalimilově jako základní prvek její ideologie', *Folia Historica Bohemica*, ix (1985), 7-32.

[8] Summarily Josef Žemlička, *Počátky Čech královských 1198-1253. Proměna státu a společnosti* (Prague, 2002); idem, 'České 13. století: „privatizace" státu', *Český časopis historický*, ci (2003), 509-41.

It was already King Przemysl Otakar I who introduced a division between the king and the kingdom when he complained in a letter to Honorius III from 1217 about problems which Bishop Andres caused 'both to my person and to my kingdom' (*tam persone mee, quam regni mei*). He thus captured the essence of emerging dualism. This change also affected the nomenclature of dignitaries. Adjectives which expressed personal relationships to the ruler, such as *regis, curie, aule regie* (royal, of the court, of the royal palace) were gradually replaced by the terms *terrae, regni, Bohemiae, Moraviae* (of the Land, of the kingdom, Bohemian, Moravian). Around the mid-13th century this tendency strengthened. The earlier *terra Bohemiae* was ousted by the term *regnum Bohemiae* which expressed the constitutional relationship of both major countries. Henceforth, the development led to the Luxembourg Crown of the Kingdom of Bohemia (*Corona regni Bohemiae*), which had its predecessors in English (11th century), then French and Hungarian parallels. Namely, the first two models might have influenced the Bohemian Johannites. After all, their environment produced two charters of Wladislaw II in the 1160s, where the term 'the crown of the kingdom' (*corona regni mei, corona mea*)[9] still apears rather sporadically.

In addition, the era of early medieval colloquia at which constitutional, judicial and public agenda converged was gradually coming to an end. The link to St. Vitus's Day (15 June) and St. Wenceslas Day (28 September), which were connected to the political life of the 'old era', weakened and diminished. There started an intense formation of royal ideology, extracting the hereditary king from previous stereotypes. Even in this, the major shift took place during the reign of Przemysl Otakar I. The tradition of St.

---

[9] CDB II, No. 139, p. 129, No. 245, p. 215, No. 246, p. 217. On the document from 1217 see Vaníček, *Velké dějiny II*, 158, then Joachim Prochno, 'Terra Bohemiae, Regnum Bohemiae, Corona Bohemiae', in Manfred Hellmann (ed.), *Corona regni. Studien über die Krone als Symbol des Staates im späteren Mittelalter* (Weimar, 1961), 198-224; Ferdinand Seibt, 'Land und Herrschaft in Böhmen', *Historische Zeitschrift*, cc (1965), 284-315. The concepts *corona regni* in England, France and Hungary were researched by Jozef Karpat, *Corona regni Hungariae v dobe arpádovskej* (Bratislava, 1937); idem, 'K dejinám pojmu corona regni vo Francúzsku a Anglicku', in Václav Vaněček (ed.), *Miscellanea historico-iuridica. Sborník prací o dějinách práva napsaných k oslavě šedesátin Jana Kaprasa* (Prague, 1940), 91-141.

Wenceslas feasts disappeared; dietary and judicial session rather seemed to avoid St. Vitus and St. Wenceslas' Days. The extensive framework of colloquia diminished and the courts became separate. Prague continued to be the frequent location for diets and judicial proceedings, with the Cathedral Church of Prague as the venue. There, under the supervision of St. Wenceslas, justice could be best found; promises of gifts and concluded treaties were of a more permanent nature. For this reason, too, the section of St. Vitus's episcopal church dedicated to 'Wenceslas' (*ecclesia sancti Wenczlai*) gained more prominence. At the same time the ecclesiastical venue served purely 'lay' purposes only seemingly, since the world of justice and oaths was bound with Christian symbolism and the superiority of Divine law. Simultaneously it documented the continuing property relation of dukes and now kings to 'their' principal church. The former central role of ducal courts (such as Sadská and Knín) was replaced only temporarily by the first towns (Litoměřice, Hradec Králové). Since the mid-13th century Prague dominated unilaterally thanks to Land diets and the judiciary becoming more professional, and thus more stationary.[10]

Changes within society could not bypass law and the judiciary. The first half of the 13th century introduced merely a new stage of 'legal' development. Further impulses were provided by the measures of Przemysl Otakar II and Wenceslas II; however it is only in the 14th century that we can talk about the full experience and the finishing touches to not merely the Land court and its agenda but to the justice and legal system and law of the early Middle Ages. However, trends in the judiciary were not sweeping; they were not simply the result of proclamations and regulations but they spread from central regions to the outlying ones. The land law gradually applied ever more consistently to the 'high born', the nobility. Rural population, in the mass, came under the jurisdiction of their landed superiors, while there were also deviations and local exemptions. The remnants of provincial officials of

---

[10] Cf. Šimeček, 'K charakteristice středověkých kolokvií v Čechách', 593-601, amendments to some of his views in Žemlička, '„Politický kalendář" přemyslovských Čech', 31-48. On the role of the 'Church of St. Wenceslas' documentary data from 1225 (CDB II, No. 270, 263).

lesser importance and beneficiaries continued to lay claim to different rights and services. In addition there was a lack of clarity due to leases, leasebacks and rentals or other complex property deals concerning both temporal and ecclesiastical estates. In the neighbourhood of royal castles, and aristocratic castles in some places, too, manorial systems with their own laws and judiciary began to emerge. Some monasteries (Třebíč) secured their property similarly. Parts of emerging towns, often with their rural backgrounds, exercised their own laws. The spread of canon law, which the clergy observed, also progressed markedly. Formally and in reality, the clergy made a clean break with the mass of laymen. As shown in the example of Jihlava, mining law was another example of special laws. Generally, it can be said that the medieval legal system, completed throughout the 13th century, preserved its fundamental features until the reforms of the 18th century.[11]

If the ruler wanted to preserve his elevated status throughout the transformation upheavals, he had to adapt to new conditions. In bygone times the Przemyslid Dukes continued to be closely bound with the 'Bohemians' thanks to elections enthronements and their manner of government. It was expressed in their title: not the Duke of Bohemia but of 'the Bohemians' (*dux Boemorum)*. A ruling Duke seemed to represent his ancient predecessor Wenceslas, the holy heir and protector of the dynasty, later considered even more as the patron of the Land. It was the royal title that was to assist in breaking free from this dependence. After his great grandfather Wratislav (1085/1086) and father Wladislav (1158), Przemysl Otakar I (1198) attained the royal crown, this time in heredity. For him it was not merely an external acknowledgment, he also appreciated the ideological significance of his title. As king he towered high above the medley of his cousins, who were just about to die out, each of whom was still entitled to call himself a duke (*dux)*. Przemysl did not intend to hand over his acquired power to his relatives. On the contrary, he was establishing the royal branch of the family, rising above

---

[11] On the law in the Bohemian Lands and its institutions throughout the Middle Ages and the Estates' Monarchy in the outline: Karel Malý et al., *Dějiny českého a československého práva do roku 1945* (Prague, 1997), 79-125. On the manorial organization of the Třebíč Monastery Rudolf Fišer, *Klášter uprostřed lesa. Dvě studie o třebíčském benediktinském opatství* (Brno, 2001), 66-137.

the remaining 'ducal' lines. The new ennoblement simultaneously introduced innovative elements into the concept of the sovereign's authority.[12]

We do not know which of the Bohemian dukes was the last to sit on the stool of stone in Prague Castle. Was it Przemysl when he took power for the first time (1192) or for the second time (1197), or his brother Wladislaw Henry (1197)? The last traditional election took place in 1216. King Przemysl had his son Wenceslas elected as his successor but he probably did not sit on the stool of his ancestors. Old customs were interrupted at the end of the 12th century and the following development was merely marked by royal coronations. The first of them took place on 6 February 1228 in the Cathedral Church of Prague when Przemysl Otakar had the young Wenceslas and his wife Kunhuta of the Stauff family 'ennobled.' The ceremonial act was carried out by the Archbishop Siegfried of Mainz. Both kings of 'the Bohemians' (*Odacharus et Wenezlaus, Boemorum reges incliti*) then confirmed his exclusive right to crown and give the last rites to the Bohemian kings.[13]

The coronation day was not chosen randomly; 6 February fell on Quinquagesima Sunday (in the words of a chronicler, when *Esto mihi* is sang). From other evidence we know that the coronations of the Bohemian kings belonged amongst important events, as elsewhere, and exceptional dates in the ecclesiastical calendar were reserved for them. The Prague coronation of Wratislav II fell on 15 June 1086, the feast day of St. Vitus. Wladislav II and Przemysl Otakar I had coronations outside Bohemian territory, in Regensburg, Mainz and in front of the besieged Mersenburg, so that Prague finally celebrated its day with Wenceslas I and his successors. The coronation of Przemysl Otakar II took place on the feast day of Our Lord's Birth (25 December 1261), Wenceslas II on the feast day of the Holy Ghost (2 June 1297), similarly his second wife Elisabeth Rejčka was crowned on the feast day of the Holy Ghost (26 May 1303). Wenceslas III did not live to receive this honour but his Hungarian coronation took place on Sunday 27 August 1301, the eighth day after the feast day of St. Stephen, the first King of Hungary and its patron saint. All these coronations took place in Prague Cathedral according to ecclesiastical-liturgical tradition, symbolically only a few metres from the old stone stool. But this 'old piece of stone' was forgotten so quickly that soon no memory of it was preserved. Nothing seems to express more succinctly the demise of the old times and the dawn of a new era.[14]

Ceremonial events full of symbolism were integral to medieval government and political power. Royal coronations were afforded the most dignified status in this hierarchy. An anointed and crowned king was the bearer of legitimate power and of its sacred contents; the institution of kingship guaranteed the heredity of power and the throne. The 'King' as a personification of this abstract idea, so close to the thinking of the Middle Ages, never died. His physical death did not interrupt the divine work of his ancestors or that of his heirs. Despite the fact that the Gregorian Papacy reduced the sacred contents of the royal inauguration, a righteously elevated king retained the aura of his direct link to God. Based on that, a belief in the healing powers of kings developed, which in France and England even acquired specific attributes. Beginning with Sigmund, the King of Burgundy (d. 523) the formal canonization of king-martyrs, Christ followers and others as saints spread especially from Gaul. They played a prominent role in the ideologies of states and Lands (St. Wenceslas is also recognized as being one of the 'holy' kings).[15]

---

[12] On the enthronement of Bohemian dukes R. Schmidt, 'Die Einsetzung der böhmischen Herzöge auf den Thron zu Prag', in H. Beumann und W. Schröder (eds.), *Aspekte der Nationenbildung im Mittelalter* (Sigmaringen, 1978) (= Nationes, 1), 439-63; M. Kulecki, 'Ceremonial intronizacyjny Przemyślidów w X-XII wieku', *Przegląd Historyczny*, lxxv (1984), 441-51, comprehensively Josef Žemlička, *Čechy v době knížecí (1034-1198)* (Prague, 1997), 69-75, 328-33.

[13] Václav Novotný, *České dějiny, I.3. Čechy královské za Přemysla I. a Václava I.* (Prague, 1928), 580-2.

[14] Joint Charters of Przemysl and Wenceslas CDB II, No. 309, p. 307, No. 310, 307-308. On the Przemyslids' coronation days Michal Dragoun, 'Den všední, den sváteční a politika přemyslovských Čech', *Mediaevalia Historica Bohemica*, iv (1995), 49-50.

[15] For example Eduard Eichmann, *Die Kaiserkrönung im Abendland. Ein Beitrag zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des kirchlichen Rechts, der Liturgie und der Kirchenpolitik, I* (Würzburg, 1942), 78-128; Fritz Kern, *Gottesgnadentum und Widerstandsrecht im früheren Mittelalter. Zur Entwicklungs-*

In the year 1198 the Przemyslids entered the ranks of European kings for good. From the very beginning their coronations were not merely acts of prestige. They represented a breakthrough into the ducal ideology in which the ruler physically represented the true lord of the Land – ever immortal Good King Wenceslas. The Przemyslids, through their royal title, detached themselves from the role of being representatives of this saint, who transformed into a symbolical property of the Land, kingdom, the aristocratic community. They began to construct their charisma upon a different ideological construct. A duke whose 'pagan' roots and mysterious enthronement became more sophisticated through the worship of St. Wenceslas and the ecclesiastical-Christian element of the election ritual, transformed into a king through the grace of God. He was no longer to be the representative and curate of one of a number of saints but of Christ himself. The difference between the contents of the ducal and royal titles lies herein.[16]

This new ideological concept is not reflected merely in portrayals (the tympan of the west portal of the abbey church at Tišnov) but it also permeates official documents. The proems of some of Przemysl Otakar I's charters already speak about receiving goverment from the hands of God (*Dum gubernacula Boemici principatus a Domino ...*); other documents emphasize

---

geschichte der Monarchie, ed. Rudolf Buchner (3rd edn Darmstadt, 1962), 46-120; Percy Ernst Schramm, *Kaiser, Könige und Päpste. Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Geschichte des Mittelalters, IV.1* (Stuttgart, 1970), 123-33; M. Borgolte, 'Über Typologie und Chronologie des Königskanonikats im europäischen Mittelalter', *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, xlvii (1991), 19-44. On the sacred contents of royal power Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *Die zwei Körper des Königs. Eine Studie zur politischen Theologie des Mittelalters*, 2nd ed. (Munich, 1994), cf. also Marc Bloch, *Die wundertätigen Könige*. Mit einem Vorwort von Jacques Le Goff (Munich, 1998); Robert Folz, *Les saints rois du Moyen Âge en Occident (VIe - XIIIe siécle)* (Bruxelles, 1984).

[16] Josef Žemlička, 'Raně feudální monarchie a královský titul u západních Slovanů', in idem (ed.), *Typologie raně feudálních slovanských států* (Prague, 1987), 77-92; idem, *Přemysl Otakar I. Panovník, stát a česká společnost na prahu vrcholného feudalismu* (Prague, 1990), 248-54. The importance of the first Bohemian royal coronations merely from an aspect of international prestige was also researched by for example Rostislav Nový, *Přemyslovský stát 11. a 12. století* (Prague, 1972); 15-6; Zdeněk Fiala, *Přemyslovské Čechy. Český stát a společnost v letech 995-1310*, 2nd ed. (Prague, 1975), 152-3.

---

that the king acquired authority over people by the grace of God (*nos, qui deo largiente principatum inter homines adepti sumus*). The royal ideology was imprinted with even higher aims by the court circle around Przemysl Otakar II, which in some aspects emphasised the supremacy of the Bohemian King over the Holy Emperor.[17]

The legitimacy of the accession to the throne was confirmed by the inauguration ritual. The anointment and coronation were to ensure heavens' grace and the loyalty of one's subjects. In Latin Europe the ceremonial itself followed mutually interlinked coronation rites, known as *ordines* (their forms were complex) dating back to early Franconian-Roman models and prescribing the sequence of the liturgical steps in the ceremony. We do not know much about the forms laid down for the Bohemian kings. The majority of the first coronations took place beyond Bohemia as ennoblement from the hands of the Salzs and the Stauffs for assisting them militarily. Only the coronation of Wenceslas I carried out during the lifetime of his father (1228) started coronations in their true place. The last Przemyslids probably applied their own coronation service. It followed local traditions, but was generally based on the German coronation order. It could have been introduced to Prague and put into practice starting in 1228, by those who crowned the Bohemian kings, i.e. the Archbishops of Mainz. Charles IV incorporated key elements of the Przemyslid Order (such as a procession to Vyšehrad on the eve of the coronation, the vespers in St. Vitus's Church) into his 'Order of the Coronation of the King of the Bohemians' (*Ordo ad coronandum Regem Boemorum*).[18]

---

[17] CDB II, No. 58, pp. 51-52, No. 74, p. 66. On Przemysl Otakar II. Antoni Barciak, *Ideologia polityczna monarchii Przemysła Otokara II. Studium z dziejów czeskiej polityki zagranicznej w drugiej połowie XIII wieku* (Katowice, 1982), 71-3; Marie Bláhová, '... Kako jest koruna z Moravy vyšla... („Translatio regni" ve Staročeské kronice tzv. Dalimila)', *Mediaevalia Historica Bohemica*, iii (1993), 165-76. On Tišnov Jiří Kuthan and I. Neumann, 'Ideový program tišnovského portálu a jeho kořeny', *Umění*, xxvii (1979), 107-18.

[18] The Coronation Order of Charles IV was researched and compared with other orders, and its Przemyslid features were defined by Josef Cibulka, *Český řád korunovační a jeho původ* (Prague, 1934). On coronations before 1228 comprehensively Žemlička, *Čechy*, 106-7, 237-9, 394-7, on Wratislav II also Demeter Malaťák, 'Korunovace Vratislava II.', *Časopis Matice moravské*, cxxi (2002), 267-86; David Kalhous, 'Koruna

Despite changes, Prague Castle thus preserved its central role in the ceremonial confirmation of the dukes of 'the Bohemians' (the stool of stone) and Bohemian kings (the Cathedral). The Vyšehrad halt was merely a reminder of the past in which even Vyšehrad, also furnished with an array of sanctuaries, had high aspirations. It is not known where the sandals made of straw, which according to Cosmas's account were kept in the Vyšehrad 'ducal chamber,' have gone. They were to remind the successors of Przemysl the Ploughman of their forefather's lowly birth and to protect them against temptations of pride. There is no further evidence of them, perhaps because the farmer's sandals did not fit in with the royal aspirations of the Przemyslids.[19]

In earlier times the Dukes' attributes were the throne, sometimes the sceptre but primarily the spear with a flag which transformed into the spear of St. Wenceslas. As such it entered public consciousness after the Battle of Chlumec in 1126 (*hasta sancti Wenceslai*). The question of its connection with the spear of St. Moritz (*regalis lancea*), used by Wratislav II after 1080, remains a matter of debate. St. Wenceslas is usually depicted with it, either standing or sitting down. It is possible to see analogies with the Polish environment where from the Gniedzno events of the year 1000 the Piastow dynasty's symbolism used another, earlier copy of the holy (St. Moritz) spear, now deposited in Cracow.[20]

česká a polská? Střetávání Boleslava II. a Vratislava II. na cestě za královskou korunou', *Sborník prací filozofické fakulty brněnské univerzity*, C, xlviii (2003), 5-16.

[19] Cosmas I.7, p. 17. Using the example of Vyšehrad, early medieval ruling residences and their role in a ruling ideology were researched by Andrzej Pleszczyński, *Przestrzeń i polityka. Studium rezydencji władcy wcześniejszego średniowiecza. Przykład czeskiego Wyszehradu* (Lublin, 2000) (about the sandals 225-6).

[20] The spear of St. Wenceslas was researched by Rostislav Nový, 'Symboly české státnosti v 10.-12. století', *Folia Historica Bohemica*, xii (1988), 47-63, who identified it with the Melk Monastery spear; supposedly it got there as Rudolph the Habsburg's spoil from the Battle of the Moravian Field. On the Polish spear from Cracow Zbigniew Dalewski, *Władza, przestrzeń, ceremoniał. Miejsce i uroczystość inauguracji władcy w Polsce średniowiecznej do końca XIV w.* (Warsaw, 1996), 127-32.

From the beginning of the 13th century the headwear changed into the principal royal insignia. Even prior to that the Przemyslids were depicted ceremonially on the throne with a ducal cap with narrow bands at the nape, turning into a helmet on some coins. The crown of Przemysl Otakar I is particularly depicted on coins, on one of the King's bracteates he is seated with the crown on his head, holding the sword in his right hand and the sceptre in his left hand. The King's Bulla from 1224 displays his majestic picture, which is even more elaborate there. The beardless ruler sits on a decorated throne with armrests. In his right hand he clenches a lily-shaped sceptre, in his left the orb with a distinctive cross. His temples wear the crown in the shape of a broad band with lilies. His crown resembles the funereal crown of Przemysl Otakar II made towards the end of the 13th century on the occasion of the second interment of the King's remains in Prague Cathedral. The fact that lilies and crosses alternate on this other crown, made of gold-plated silver band, might refer to the funereal character of this royal symbol.[21]

However, the royal title did not represent an upheaval for the development of the seals of the ruler. The fundamental scheme of double-sided mint seals stabilized (obviously with exceptions) under Wladislav II. The front side usually depicted a ruler – seated (throne type), standing or finally as a horseman; on the reverse St. Wenceslas as the eternal protector of the Duke, the Dynasty and 'all the Bohemians'. Certifications of the seals proclaimed this and often elaborated further as to the reverse side that 'the peace under Duke XY rested in the hands of St. Wenceslas.' Portrayals on the seals of Przemysl Otakar I were along the same lines. 'The Third King of the Bohemians', as Przemysl often called himself, returned to the throne type of his father Wladislav after his coronation, yet with a greater emphasis upon the Wenceslas motif, which appears on both sides. The front declares: 'Peace

---

[21] The portrayal of Przemysl Otakar, seated on the throne, on the front of the Gold Bulla from 1224 for Břevnov (CDB II, No. 259, pp. 248-251). On the monarchic symbols Anna Skýbová, *České korunovační klenoty* (Prague, 1982), 5-18. On the distinctions of the Moravian Dukes based on numismatic evidence Tomáš Krejčík, 'Ikonografie morav-ských denárů', in *Denárová měna na Moravě. Sborník III. Numismatického symposia* (Brno, 1986) (= Numismatica Moravica, 6), 369-78.

under King Przemysl rests in the hands of St. Wenceslas,' on the reverse
with the seated St. Wenceslas: 'St. Wenceslas the Duke of the Bohemians.'
Minor amendments appeared in other types of the Przemysl seals, and his
son Wenceslas followed this trend. He used his own seal not merely as the
Duke of Pilsen and Budyšín but also after his coronation of February 1228 as
'the junior king of the Bohemians' (*iunior rex Boemorum*). As King he had
the last type of his father's seal amended, replacing the name Przemysl with
Wenceslas. This tradition was only changed by Przemysl Otakar II (1253-78)
since his seals abandoned the motif of St. Wenceslas and introduced the
portrayal of a galloping horsman.[22]

The development of the Bohemian coat of arms was complex and has
not yet been fully exposed. Through his armorial bearings the Bohemian
ruler represented not merely himself, his dynasty and family but also 'his'
country as a whole. In time the eagle came closer to the motif of St.
Wenceslas. Finally, the eagle disappeared from royal seals and a lioness
motif enforced itself. Recent interpretations come to the conclusion that the
Bohemian kings adopted the new dynastic symbol of the Stauffs (a black
lioness on a golden field) in a period when lions as heraldic beasts came to
be favoured by ambitious dynasties. It could have happened around 1212
when Przemysl Otakar and the young Friedrich II became friendly. It is of
some interest to note that Margrave Wladislav Henry first started to use it in
his rider seal, from c. 1213, also followed by Margrave Przemysl, brother of
Wenceslas I. While the armorial bearings of the eagle ablaze, connected with
St. Wenceslas, aimed at the 'Land' dimension, the portrayal of a lioness,
transformed into a twin-tailed lion (for the first time around 1247 with
Margrave Przemysl, son of Wenceslas I), soon with a royal crown, trans-
formed into the symbol of the royal family. The lion, in this form, also

---

[22] The fundamental work continues to be Jiří Čarek, *O pečetech českých knížat a
králů z rodu Přemyslova* (Prague, 1934), 12-5; these seals were analysed from an art-
historical aspect by Jaromír Homolka, 'K ikonografii pečetí posledních Přemyslovců', in
Jiří Kuthan (ed.), *Umění doby posledních Přemyslovců* (Prague, 1982), 159-79 (with
illustrations). On the term 'peace' (*pax*) Dušan Třeštík, 'Mír a dobrý rok. Státní ideologie
raného přemyslovského státu mezi křesťanstvím a „pohanstvím"', *Folia Historica
Bohemica*, xii (1988), 23-45.

permeated the seals of royal towns (Brno, Menší Město pražské, Jihlava and
others). The horseman with a helmet bearing a bejewelled closed wing of the
eagle appeared on the reverse of the third seal of Przemysl Otakar II,
introduced after his coronation in December 1261. Simultaneously, the
Moravian coat of arms with the crowned eagle was included. Yet, at the
same time another change was underway. The armorial bearings of the twin-
tailed lion came to symbolise the entire supra-territorial formations under the
reign of the Przemyslids, i.e. the Kindgom of Bohemia as the principal
country and the Margravate of Moravia as the second pillar of the Bohemian
regnum. The black eagle was preserved on the shield of St. Wenceslas,
whose upright figure was adopted for the shield of the so-called citatory seal
of the Land Court of Bohemia during the reign of Przemysl Otakar II (both
of its preserved types have lion-shaped handles). It seems that for a while the
development headed towards the adoption of the eagle of St. Wenceslas as
the coat of arms of Bohemia but towards the end of the 13th century it was
ousted by an increasingly more prominent armorial bearings with a lion. The
eagle transformed into a permanent attribute of the Land patron St. Wenceslas.
Further changes were ushered in during the era of Charles IV but did not
represent fundamental changes.[23]

All these developments, be it the beginning of royal ideology, motif
changes in sovereigns' seals or state-dynastic symbolism, have another
dimension, also. It is only possible to talk openly about the Bohemian state
when the old 'noble family' dukedom transformed into a monarchy of the
early Middle Ages. This involves the political meaning of the word not the
ethnic one because Bohemian Slavs had lived there for centuries. Alongside
the king, hereditary nobility, arisen from 'the Bohemians', from 'all the
Bohemians', from the family of the Holy Wenceslas, began to participate in
power. Step by step the ruler had to relinquish his position of the exclusive
representative of 'his' land; increasingly he had to respect the corporate
voice of his closest ally and rival in one person. The time was nigh when he

---

[23] Similarly Nový, *K počátkům II*, 147-72, also Vaníček, *Velké dějiny II*, 228-30.
The transformation of the Bohemian coat of arms throughout history is outlined by Josef
Petráň, *Český znak* (Prague, 1970).

acted thus, not only with regard to powerful individuals or aristocratic clans, but towards the corporate aristocratic community and the Land law. The king *(rex)* and the institutional 'kingdom' *(regnum)* both split. However, they continued to form a symbiotic unity, as if retaining the front and reverse sides of one coin. Whereas the king tranformed into the protector of the integrity of the state and people living therein, 'the land' and 'the kingdom' merged with the aristocratic land community. This was a tranformation which influenced further development comprehensively.

Translated by Alena Linhartová

Political Culture of Central Europe in the High Middle Ages: Aggression and Agreement

Zbigniew Dalewski

In the year 1088, a Czech knight named Beneda decided to return to Bohemia to seek reconciliation with King Vratislav II, having been engaged in a long-standing dispute with the monarch resulting in his two-year exile in Poland. His first point of call was Meissen, where he sought the counsel of Count Wiprecht of Groitzsch, son-in-law to Vratislav, in an attempt to regain the king's favour. Wiprecht suggested that Beneda convince Bishop Benno of Meissen to support his cause and intercede with the king on his behalf. On hearing the news of Beneda's appearance, Vratislav, who himself had just recently arrived in Meissen, summoned Beneda to appear before him, first guaranteeing his safety. What followed was that the king, in blatant disregard of his given word, ordered Beneda seized. The knight, however, refused to be captured and was killed in the ensuing struggle. Prior to his death, though, he managed to wound the king and kill one of his knights.[1]

This tragic tale of Beneda, depicted in Cosmas of Prague's *Chronicle,* seems to provide us with a good starting point for reflecting on the means used by the monarchs of Central Europe to resolve political conflicts; for contemplating the existence of specified rules of political activity in public life; and for a closer examination of the tools and forms of political manoeuvring. In short, it serves us in gaining insight into the political culture of the High Middle Ages through the filter of instruments designed to settle

---

[1] *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Boemorum*, ed. Bertold Bretholz (Monumenta Germaniae Historica [hereafter MGH], Scriptores, nova series, ii, Berlin, 1955), II, c. 40, 143-5.

differences between adversaries and have a constructive effect on social order, while at the same time determining the resilience and cohesiveness of the political establishment. Let us now return to Cosmas' text.

In wishing to make amends with the king and regain his favour, Beneda decided not to approach Vratislav directly, but sought instead the aid of intermediaries: first Wiprecht and then, on his advice, Bishop Benno. They were to intercede on his behalf with Vratislav, establish the terms of an agreement and bring about reconciliation between the two antagonists.

Mediators who, like Wiprecht and Benno in Cosmas' narrative, undertook the task of mediating a dispute, reconciling the opposing sides and bringing about a peaceful resolution, appear rather frequently in sources from the High Middle Ages. In a society in which conflict constantly redefined relations between players on the political scene, mediators, interceding to bring about an amicable resolution of a dispute, played an extraordinarily important role, making significant contributions towards a stable social order in a society which also lacked institutionalised forms of resolving political conflicts. The standing of these mediators, as well as the many family and political connections, enabled them to exert influence on both parties in a given dispute, convincing them to forego the use of force and, instead, to seek consensus. Such form of mediation was thus able to prevent an excessive escalation of the conflict, which posed a threat to political cohesiveness, and had the effect of restoring order and facilitating a return to proper political interdependencies and hierarchy.[2]

A settlement arrived at through mediation was usually affirmed and reinforced by means of diverse ceremonial activities. Complex rituals of restoring peaceful relations played a significant part in the political reality of the High Middle Ages. This was so because they demonstrated the cohesiveness and durability of current systems of relations and interdependencies – previously undermined by a conflict. What is more, new systems of political relations and dependencies were revealed and affirmed. Depending on the specifics of the situation, the military and material potential of the parties

---

[2] See Hermann Kamp, *Friedensstifter und Vermittler im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt, 2001).

involved in the dispute and, finally, their political and social position, the conclusion of a mediated conflict was regulated by a variety of ceremonial forms, which to a greater or lesser degree accentuated the relative superiority of one of the antagonists or, alternatively, allowed the sides affected to reach a compromise fully satisfactory to both.[3]

It is not known what form Beneda's reconciliation with Vratislav was supposed to take. In any case, numerous sources, both from the territory of the Empire and, to a lesser extent, France, argue convincingly that in the High Middle Ages political conflicts involving royal authority – dynastic disputes, aristocratic rebellions and the like – were typically resolved through a ceremony, most commonly termed *deditio*, or *satisfactio*, wherein the rebel humbled himself before the monarch.[4]

Sources describing the act of *deditio* reveal a rather uniform picture of the ceremony of submission. The aristocrat in conflict with the monarch would eventually attempt to secure an amicable resolution of the dispute and to

---

[3] Cf. e.g. Stephen D. White, 'Feuding and Peace-Making in the Touraine around the Year 1100', *Traditio*, xlii (1986), 195-265; Patrick Geary, 'Living with Conflicts in Stateless France: a Typology of Conflict Management Mechanism, 1050-1200', in his *Living with Dead in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca and London, 1994), 145 ff.; William Ian Miller, *Bloodtaking and Peacemaking: Feud, Law and Society in Saga Iceland* (Chicago, 1990); Geoffrey Koziol, 'Monks, Feuds and the Making of Peace in Eleventh-Century Flanders', in Thomas Head and Richard Landes (eds.), *The Peace of God: Social Violence and Religious Response in France around the Year 1000* (Ithaca and London, 1992), 239-58; Klaus Schreiner, '„Gerechtigkeit und Frieden haben sich geküßt" (Ps 84, 11): Friedensstiftung durch symbolisches Handeln', in Johannes Fried (ed.), *Träger und Instrumentarien des Friedens im hohen und späten Mittelalter* (Vorträge und Forschungen, 43, Sigmaringen, 1996) 37-86; Josep Salrach, 'Les modalités du reglement des conflits en Catalogne aux XIe et XIIe siècles', in *Le reglement des conflits au Moyen Âge* (Paris, 2001), 117-34; Adam Kosto, *Making Agreements in Medieval Catalonia: Power, Order, and the Written Word* (Cambridge, 2001).

[4] See e.g. Gerd Althoff, 'Das Privileg der *deditio*: Formen gütlicher Konfliktbeendigung in der mittelalterlichen Adelsgesellschaft', in his *Spielregeln der Politik: Kommunikation in Frieden und Fehde* (Darmstadt, 1997), 99-125; see also his 'Genugtuung (*satisfactio*): Zur Eigenart gütlicher Konfliktbeilegung im Mittelalter', in Joachim Heinzle (ed.), *Modernes Mittelalter* (Frankfurt, 1994), 247-65; Geoffrey Koziol, *Begging Pardon and Favor: Ritual and Political Order in Early Medieval France* (Ithaca and London, 1992), 185 ff.

regain the king's favour. In similar fashion to Beneda in the writings of Cosmas, he sought the aid of intermediaries – mediators, who were usually bishops and the most powerful secular magnates – who on the strength of their authority and social standing, were able to dissuade the ruler from the use of force and direct the situation towards a peaceful outcome. It was also during intercessional talks, of which these mediators were a part, that mutually acceptable terms for capitulation were negotiated. The conditions agreed upon were then formalised by means of a public act of humiliation. The repentant rebel appeared before the monarch barefoot, clothed in the dress of a penitent, often with a sword hanging around his neck or held above his head. Then, throwing himself at the king's feet, he would confess his wrongdoings and beg for mercy. The ruler showed his clemency by lifting the rebel from the ground and exchanging with him the kiss of peace. In addition to regaining the king's favour, the rebel recovered his previous title and status, though often with certain restrictions and at a high price.

Nevertheless, it was not always so that *deditio* allowed the rebel to regain the monarch's favour immediately. Sometimes, especially in the case of those guilty of serious misdeeds – from the king's perspective – forgiveness took place only after a certain period of imprisonment. The reconciliation which ultimately resolved the dispute usually coincided with an important Church holiday and took the form of a complex ceremony at which bishops and secular magnates declared before the king that the imprisoned had served his penance and requested his release.[5]

The significance of the ceremonies of *deditio* and *satisfactio* as tools in resolving political disputes and restoring order made a particularly clear mark on German political reality in the Early and High Middle Ages. It was one of the most important means of exercising political influence, serving to overcome obstacles standing in the way of the royal authority and connected to maintaining social order and effective implementation of government policy. Furthermore, it allowed for peaceful resolution of political disputes

---

[5] Cf. Althoff, 'Das Privileg der *deditio*', 99-125.

by way of a concord, which outlined the conditions of future cooperation of the heretofore antagonists.[6]

The aim of the ceremony of *deditio* was not just to humiliate the defeated rebel, which was simply a consequence of a negotiated agreement; it also guaranteed both sides the opportunity to emerge from the conflict with honour. Characteristic of the ceremony of *deditio* was the integration of acts of submission and reconciliation, which suggests that it is correct to see in it a ritual whose primary function was to bring to life a compromise satisfactory to all major players on the political scene and which would allow the orderly conduct of state affairs to continue. In a society in which ritual defined areas of political activity, of expressing political interests and of manifesting one's position within the existing power structure,[7] the ritual of *deditio* was fundamental in the establishment of political and ideological order of the monarchy in the Early and High Middle Ages. The complex network of relations between ruler and aristocrats was most fully able to find its expression. Offering satisfaction to the king by way of public self-humiliation allowed rebellion to be classified in terms of a kind of religious offence, thanks to overt references to the ceremony of penance, and provided the monarch with an opportunity to demonstrate a truly Christian mercy and

---

[6] Karl J. Leyser, *Herrschaft und Konflikt: König und Adel im ottonischen Sachsen* (Goetingen, 1984), 153 ff.; Timothy Reuter, 'Fehde, Rebellion, Widerstand: Gewalt und Frieden in der Politik der Salierzeit', in Stefan Weinfurter (ed.), *Die Salier und das Reich*, 3 vols. (Sigmaringen, 1991), iii, *Gesellschaftlicher und ideengeschichtlicher Wandel im Reich der Salier*, 320 ff.; Gerd Althoff, 'Königsherrschaft und Konfliktbewältigung im 10. und 11. Jahrhundert', in his *Spielregeln der Politik*, 21-56; cf. also his, 'Konflikt-verhalten und Rechtsbewußtsein: Die Welfen im 12. Jahrhundert', *ibid.*, 57-98; and 'Huld: Überlegungen zu einem Zentralbegriff der mittelalterlichen Herrschaftsordnung', *ibid.*, 199-228; David A. Warner, 'Thietmar of Merseburg on Rituals of Kingship', *Viator*, xxvi (1995), 55-63.

[7] See e.g. Jean-Claude Schmitt, *La raison des gestes dans l'Occident médiéval* (Paris, 1990); Karl J. Leyser, 'Ritual, Zeremonie und Gestik: das ottonische Reich', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, xxvii (1993), 1-26; Gerd Althoff, 'Zur Bedeutung symboli-scher Kommunikation für das Verständnis des Mittelalters', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, xxxi (1997), 370-89; see also his 'Die Kultur der Zeichen und Symbole', *Frühmittel-alterliche Studien*, xxxvi (2002), 1-17; Hagen Keller, 'Ritual, Symbolik und Visualisierung in der Kultur des ottonischen Reiches', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, xxxv (2001), 21-57.

readiness to forgive, essential factors in shaping his public image.[8] Meanwhile, undergoing *deditio* enabled the rebel to regain the king's favour according to existing custom and in such a way that did not result in dishonour, while at the same time allowing for the retention – at times restricted – of previous status and title.[9]

It is clear that during the period between Ottonian times and Salian rule, or that of the Hohenstaufen, fundamental changes in the organisation of state affairs and methods of governance took place in Germany.[10] Nevertheless, it can be confidently assumed that belief in the need to resolve disputes by way of compromise had a significant influence on the rules according to which the political game was played – at least until the end of the twelfth century – and the ceremony of *deditio* or *satisfactio* retained an important position in the tools of governance of German kings.[11]

There is no doubt that Polish, Czech, or Hungarian rulers of the High Middle Ages were well aware of the meaning of the ritual of submission and reconciliation, and understood its significance in the public life of the Empire. Close links between the Piasts, Premyslids or the Arpads and various political circles in Germany most certainly facilitated the incorporation of German norms of political behaviour into their political life. The widespread incorporation by rulers of Central European monarchies of various political and ideological policies developed in Germany, as well as of many types of ceremonial behaviour,[12] fostered favourable conditions for the spread of

---

[8] See Leyser, *Herrschaft und Konflikt*, 153 ff.; Reuter, 'Fehde, Rebellion, Widerstand', 321; Koziol, *Begging Pardon and Favor*, 187; Ludger Körntgen, *Konigsherrschaft und Gottes Gnade: Zu Kontext und Funktion sakraler Vorstellungen in Historiographie und Bildzeugnissen der ottonisch-frühsalischen Zeit* (Berlin, 2001), 136 ff.

[9] Cf. Althoff, 'Das Privileg der *deditio*', 100 ff.

[10] See e.g. Gerd Althoff, *Die Ottonen: Königsherrschaft ohne Staat* (Stuttgart, 2000); Hagen Keller, *Zwischen regionaler Begrenzung und universalen Horizont: Deutschland und Imperium der Salier ud Staufer 1024 bis 1250* (Berlin, 1986).

[11] See Gerd Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale: Symbolik und Herrschaft im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt, 2003).

[12] See e.g. József Deér, 'Aachen und Herrschersitze der Arpaden', *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, lxxix (1971), 1-56; Roman Michałowski,

---

ritualised forms of resolving political disputes and restoring order in Poland, Bohemia and Hungary. It should be remembered that the ritual of submission was used by German monarchs to shape political relations not just within Germany. This ceremony was also used to strengthen their influence in certain Italian cities[13] as well as to create and maintain bonds of dependency between them and Central European monarchs.

In 1015, at a royal audience granted to an envoy of the Polish ruler Bolesław I the Brave, the Emperor Henry II accepted the submission of several rebellious German noblemen, who had to cast themselves at his feet and beg for mercy. Through this, Henry, who for over a dozen years had persisted in a sharp conflict with Bolesław, aimed to convey a clear message to the envoy and, at the same time, to demonstrate his conception of what an end to this dispute would look like and what his expectations were of the Polish duke. Akin to how rebellious German aristocrats could regain the emperor's favour by undergoing the ritual of submission, so too could Bolesław regain Henry's friendship and good-will by humbling himself before him and giving him the requisite *satisfactio*.[14]

Bolesław the Brave did not humble himself before Henry, but his son, Mieszko II, was forced to recompense the Emperor Conrad II in 1034 by

---

Princeps fundator: Studium z dziejów kultury politycznej w Polsce X-XIII wieku (Warsaw, 1989), 85 ff.; Andrzej Pleszczyński, *Przestrzeń i polityka: Studium rezydencji władcy wcześniejszego średniowiecza. Przykład czeskiego Wyszehradu* (Lublin, 2000), 185 ff.; Zbigniew Dalewski, 'Die Heilige Lanze und die polnische Insignien', in Alfried Wieczorek and Hans-Martin Hinz (eds.), *Europas Mitte um 1000: Beträge zur Geschichte, Kunst und Archäologie*, 3 vols. (Stuttgart, 2000), ii, 907-11.

[13] See Thomas Zotz, 'Präsenz und Repräsentation: Beobachtungen zur königlichen Herrschaftspraxis im hohen und späten Mittelalter', in Alf Lüdtke (ed.), *Herrschaft als soziale Praxis: Historische und sozial-anthropologische Studien* (Goetingen, 1991), 177 ff.; Schreiner, '„Gerechtigkeit und Frieden haben sich geküßt"', 69 ff.; Althoff, 'Das Privileg der *deditio*', 104 ff.; Knut Görich, *Die Ehre Friedrich Barbarossas: Kommunikation, Konflikt und politisches Handeln im 12. Jahrhundert* (Darmstadt, 2001), 229 ff.

[14] *Thietmari Merseburgensis episcopi Chronicon*, ed. Robert Holtzmann (MGH, Scriptores, nova series, ix, Berlin, 1935), VII, c. 9, p. 408; see Knut Görich, 'Eine Wende im Osten: Heinrich II. und Bolesław Chrobry', in Bernd Schneidmüller and Stefan Weinfurter (eds.), *Otto III. – Heinrich II.: Eine Wende?* (Sigmaringen, 1997), 160 ff.; Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale*, 74.

submitting to the act of submission.[15] Similarly, in 1041, Duke Bretislav I of Bohemia had to appear barefoot before Emperor Henry III in Ratisbone, dressed in sackcloth, and throw himself at his feet and beg for mercy.[16] In 1157, during Emperor Frederick Barbarossa's campaign in Poland, Duke Bolesław IV was forced to go to the Emperor's camp in Krzyszkowo, near Poznań, barefoot, wearing a penitential garb, with a sword held above his head, and then cast himself at the Emperor's feet and beg for mercy.[17]

Acts of submission on the part of Polish and Czech rulers are a certain indication of the might wielded by German monarchs and their domination of an opponent forced into capitulation. However, their purpose was not only, or perhaps not primarily, to humiliate one of the parties and elevate the other. The act of submission always culminated in the act of forgiveness and reconciliation. Humiliation opened the way not only to ending the conflict, but also to cooperation between the two antagonists, and even friendly relations.[18] In exchange for his submission to Conrad II, Mieszko II, who at the time faced opposition from his cousins, obtained confirmation of his claim to the Piast monarchy.[19] Bretislav's case was similar in that the ceremony of humiliation in Ratisbone allowed the Czech duke not only to

win certain concessions in negotiating the outcom of a lost war, but also to forge an alliance with the victorious Henry.[20] Bolesław IV's surrender to Frederick Barbarossa should be seen in much the same way. By giving the Emperor due satisfaction for his earlier disobedience, Bolesław, along with a kiss of peace given him by Frederick, also gained recognition of his right to rule and an abandonment by the latter of attempts to restore Bolesław's exiled older brother to power.[21] In this sense the ceremony of *deditio* facilitated the resolution of a dispute in a way that was acceptable to both sides while giving hope for a stable, long-term agreement.

As can be deduced, it was precisely the merging of the acts of submission and reconciliation that constituted the essence of the ritual of *deditio* and determined its significance in political endeavours undertaken in the High Middle Ages by monarchs in Poland, Bohemia and Hungary. Certainly, the acknowledgement of the ceremony of submission and reconciliation as a valid form of normalising relations in the political life of Central European polities was aided by the fact that its rites contained a clear reference to the ceremony of public penance.[22] Key concepts in reflecting the sense of the ritual of *deditio*, namely *humiliatio, satisfactio, reconciliatio*

---

[15] *Annales Hildesheimenses a. 1032*, ed. Georg Waitz (MGH, Scriptores, viii, Hannover, 1878), 37.

[16] *Annales Althahenses maiores*, ed. Edmund von Oefele, (MGH, Scriptores, iv, Hannover, 1891), 27.

[17] *Vincenti Pragensis Cronica*, ed. Josef Emler (Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum, ii, Prague, 1874), 424 ff.

[18] For the meaning of the term 'friendship' in political relations in the Early and High Middle Ages, see Verena Epp, *Amicitia: Zur Geschichte personaler, sozialer, politischer und geistlicher Beziehungen im frühen Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 1999); Verena Epp, 'Rituale frühmittelalterlicher *amicitia*', in Gerd Althoff (ed.), *Formen und Funktionen öffentlicher Kommunikation im Mittelalter* (Vorträge und Forschungen, 51, Stuttgart, 2001), 11-24; Gerd Althoff, *Verwandte, Freunde und Getreue: Zum politischen Stellenwert der Gruppenbildungen im früheren Mittelalter* (Darmstadt, 1997), 85 ff.; see also his *Amicitiae und Pacta: Bündnis, Einung, Politik und Gebetsgedenken im beginnenden 10. Jahrhundert* (Hannover, 1992).

[19] See Gerard Labuda, *Mieszko II król Polski (1025-1032): Czasy przełomu w dziejach państwa polskiego* (Cracow, 1992), 89 ff.

[20] See Barbara Krzemieńska, *Boj knížete Břetislava I. o upevněni českého státu (1039-1041)* (Prague, 1979), 60 ff.; Gerd Althoff, 'Ungeschriebene Gesetze: Wie funktioniert Herrschaft ohne schriftlich fixierte Normen?', in his, *Spielregeln der Politik*, 297 ff.; Josef Žemlička, *Čechy v době knížecí (1034-1195)* (Prague, 1997), 60 ff.

[21] See Zbigniew Dalewski, 'Między Krzyszkowem a Mediolanem', in Stanisław Bylina et al. (eds.), *Kościół, kultura, społeczeństwo: Studia z dziejów średniowiecza i czasów nowożytnych* (Warsaw, 2000), 131-41.

[22] Cf. Althoff, 'Das Privileg der *deditio*', 116 ff.; Koziol, *Begging Pardon and Favor*, 177 ff.; Mayke de Jong, 'What was public about public penance?: *Paenitentia publica* and justice in the Carolingian world', in *La giustizia nell'alto medioevo (secoli IX-XI)*, 2 vols. (Settimane di studio del CISAM, xlii, Spoleto, 1997), ii, 880 ff.; Mayke de Jong, 'Transformations of penance', in Frans Theuws and Janet L. Nelson (eds.), *Rituals of Power: From Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2000), 185-224; Jean-Marie Moeglin, 'Pénitence publique et amende honorable au Moyen Âge', *Revue Historique*, no. 298 (1997), 225-69; Klaus Schreiner, '*Nudis pedibus*: Barfüßigkeit als religiöses und politisches Ritual', in Althoff (ed.), *Formen und Funktionen*, 99 ff.; Sarah Hamilton, *The practice of penance, 900-1050* (Woodbridge, 2001), 184 ff.

or *gratia,* were rooted in and based on the practice of public penance. This facilitated relating the ritual acts connected with the above concepts to the domain of political activity, which at the same time created an opportunity for Central European monarchs to classify their rule more fully within a Christian order of values, thereby securing for themselves a position accorded to a Christian monarch. Through the ritual of submission they could, on the one hand, demonstrate their Christian mercy by forgiving the rebels prostrating themselves at their feet, and, on the other, by demonstrating their own willingness to humble themselves, prove their humility and readiness to offer satisfaction.

In 1106, Duke Almos, who had entered into conflict with King Coloman of Hungary, his elder brother, and had been forced to leave Hungary several years earlier, decided to return and, with the support of Polish forces, took over one of the castles. Upon hearing news of Almos' actions, Coloman immediately summoned an army and set out against his brother, laying siege to the occupied castle. In the face of Coloman's overwhelming strength, Almos decided to capitulate and, prostrating himself at the king's feet, threw himself upon his mercy. In response to Almos' actions, Coloman decided to forgive him and take him into his favour once again, returning his dispossessed estate.[23]

Most probably it was in the same year in Poland that Bolesław III Wrymouth undertook to oppose his elder brother Zbigniew and assume power over a divided monarchy. He quickly defeated Zbigniew's army and occupied a large portion of his territory. In light of this situation, Zbigniew decided to enter into peace talks with his brother, with Bishop Baldwin of Cracow and the Ruthenian Duke Iaroslav acting as intermediaries. The negotiations culminated in an agreement, ending the conflict. According to a chronicler documenting the affair, Zbigniew was brought before his brother in order to offer him satisfaction and declare his subordination. After

---

[23] *Chronici Hungarici compositio seaculi XIV.*, ed. Alexander Domanovszky (Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum, i, Budapest, 1937), 426-7.

Zbigniew acknowledged the superiority of his younger brother, Bolesław accorded him rule over the region of Mazovia.[24]

Fulfilling the act of *deditio* also enabled Zbigniew to bring to a close an earlier period of conflict with his father, Duke Władysław I Herman. In 1096, Władysław Herman, who three years earlier had been coerced by Zbigniew to grant him a separate province to govern, decided to confront his rebellious son and force him to submit. Zbigniew attempted to challenge Władysław on the battlefield but was defeated. He therefore decided to negotiate and, after obtaining a guarantee that he would not be physically harmed, he surrendered to his father. In this case, however, probably on account of the extent of the transgressions of the young duke, the act of submission did not immediately allow Zbigniew to regain his father's favour. The victorious Władysław ordered his son imprisoned until the ceremony of reconciliation, which take place several months later, coinciding with a celebration marking the consecration of a cathedral in Gniezno. In response to requests by numerous bishops and secular magnates, who attested to the fact that satisfaction for Zbigniew's transgressions had sufficiently been rendered, Władysław Herman agreed not only to free his son and once again accept him into his favour but also to grant him a separate duchy.[25]

In similar fashion, the ceremony of submission allowed several Moravian dukes to resolve a conflict by way of compromise with the Czech duke Vladislav II, who in 1143 led an armed campaign against Moravia. Vladislav's invasion of Moravia was a response to an attempt a year earlier by Duke Conrad of Znojmo, who was supported by the remaining Moravian dukes, to capture Prague and dethrone him. The Czech forces thoroughly plundered Moravia, taking rich spoils away with them. In light of this, two Moravian dukes – Otto of Olomouc and Vratislav of Brno – decided to give up

---

[24] *Galli Anonymi Cronica et gesta ducum sive principum Polonorum,* ed. Karol Maleczyński, (Monumenta Poloniae Historica [hereafter MPH], nova series, ii, Warsaw, 1952), II, c. 38, p. 108; see Zbigniew Dalewski, 'Konflikt i ceremonial v Polsze rannego srednevekovja', in Stanisław Bylina (ed.), *Ruś Kijowska i Polska w średniowieczu (X-XIII w.)* (Warsaw, 2003), 109-29.

[25] *Galli Anonymi Cronica,* II, cc. 4-5, pp. 69-73.

Conrad's cause and instead sought reconciliation with Vladislav, with Bishop Henry Zdik of Olomouc interceding on their behalf. They concluded that they had done wrong and, according to the chronicler, bowing their heads before Vladislav's sword, they regained his favour and obtained confirmation of their right to govern their provinces.[26]

Thus, in the political reality of High Middle Age Central European polities, like in Germany, the ritual of submission and reconciliation appears to have demarcated the boundaries of political endeavours and outlined the principles of playing the political game and resolving political conflicts. By enabling a conflict to be resolved in a way that could be accepted by all those involved, the ritual of submission was able to normalize relations between the parties and stabilise the political situation. Consequently, besides functioning as one of the most fundamental tools of social interaction, it also functioned as an instrument which shaped political relations and introduced into them elements of law and order essential to the proper functioning of society. The readiness with which Polish, Czech and Hungarian rulers resorted to the ceremony of *deditio* or *satisfactio*, as well as their ability to take advantage of it in response to the demands of a given situation or opportunity, leaves no doubt as to the fact that it was widely accepted into the local political tradition.

In 1126 Duke Sobeslav I of Bohemia successfully repulsed an invading force led by the German king Lothar III. In the battle of Chlumec the Czech army dealt a crushing blow to Lothar's forces. Sobeslav's forces surrounded the defeated king, who along with a handful of surviving knights took refuge on a small hill. The ensuing peace talks culminated in a surprising ceremony – in light of the outcome of the confrontation at Chlumec – in the king's camp. The victorious Sobeslav came before the defeated Lothar and, filled with humbleness, threw himself at Lothar's feet and begged for mercy. Sobeslav then swore allegiance to him and received confirmation of his princely rights.[27]

---

[26] *Vincenti Pragensis Cronica*, pp. 410-3.

[27] *Ottonis episcopi Frisigensis et Rahewini Gesta Frederici seu rectius Cronica*, ed. Franz-Josef Schmale (Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters,

Resorting to the ritual of submission following the victory at Chlumec indicates that Sobeslav was fully aware of the significance and implications of this act, and knew full well the rules of the political game and possessed the ability to use them to best serve his own needs. By humbling himself before the hopelessly situated Lothar, Sobeslav salvaged the remains of the king's authority, which had been dealt a serious blow as a consequence of the defeat at Chlumec, and allowed Lothar to return home with honour intact. At the same time it opened the way for future cooperation between the victor and the defeated and did, in fact, restore peaceful relations between them. Lothar could appreciate the significance of the Czech duke's gesture and, on many occasions thereafter, demonstrated his special regard for Sobeslav.[28]

A similar set of events took place a quarter of a century earlier, in connection with a conflict between Duke Władysław I Herman of Poland and his sons – Bolesław Wry-mouth and Zbigniew. Around the year 1100, the young dukes opposed their father, demanding he remove from authority the all-powerful palatine Sieciech. Władysław rejected the demands of his sons and both sides began preparations for war. Ultimately, however, no military conflict took place. In negotiations conducted through emissaries, Zbigniew and Bolesław succeeded in coercing their father into agreeing to Sieciech's removal. The agreement was affirmed by means of a ceremony that was almost identical to that in which Sobeslav submitted to Lothar. After forcing their father into fulfilling their demands, Zbigniew and Bolesław went to his encampment unarmed and manifested their obedience to his authority by humbly bowing down before him.[29]

---

xvii, Darmstadt, 1965), i, c. 21, pp. 164-6; cf. *Canonici Wissegradensis continuatio Cosmae*, ed. Josef Emler (Fontes rerum Bohemicarum, ii/1, Prague, 1874), 203-4; see also Johannes Laudage, 'Symbole der Politik – Politik der Symbole: Lothar III. als Herrscherpersönlichkeit', in Jochen Luckhardt and Franz Niehoff (eds.), *Heinrich der Löwe und seine Zeit: Herrschaft und Repräsentation der Welfen 1125-1235; Katalog der Ausstellung*, 3 vols. (Munich, 1995), ii, 99-100.

[28] See e.g. Arnold Köster, *Die staatlichen Beziehungen der böhmischen Herzöge und Könige zu den deutschen Kaisern von Otto dem Großen bis Ottokar II.* (Breslau, 1912), 138; Žemlička, *Čechy v době knížecí*, 223.

[29] *Galli Anonymi Cronica*, II, c. 16, pp. 82-3.

It was thus that Władysław Herman, practically forced by his sons to capitulate, got the chance to emerge from a difficult situation with his ducal dignity intact and the opportunity to demonstrate once again his monarchic stateliness. By contrast, through the public manifestation of subordination, the young dukes were able to achieve their intended aims without having to prove their point on the battlefield.

Additionally, events that took place in Prague in 1117 attest convincingly to the large extent to which the ways of resolving political conflicts contained in the ceremony of *satisfactio* were rooted in the political culture of Bohemia. It was at that time that Duke Vladislav I decided to reconcile with his older brother, Borivoj II, whom he had beaten in a battle for the Czech throne several years earlier, and called him back from exile. Next, after giving him satisfaction and acknowledging his superiority, i.e. fulfilling the ritual of submission, Vladislav sat him down on the duke's throne.[30] Because of this, reconciliation between the two brothers could take place and normal relations between them were resumed. Borivoj's response to Vladislav's *satisfactio* was to agree to transfer half of the recently recaptured portion of the duchy back to Vladislav and to promise always to heed his counsel.

In emphasising the significance of amiable conflict resolution in the political traditions of High Middle-Age Central European monarchies, we must, of course, not unduly exaggerate. Certainly the types of behaviour described by the ceremony of *deditio* had a significant influence on political events and the actions of the participants. What the ritual of submission and reconciliation did was solidify bonds between them, impose well-defined norms of conduct and demarcate boundaries within which the political game could be played. But we should not forget that whenever the ritual of submission was resorted to in a situation of conflict, certain political sensibilities drove the two sides involved to seek a negotiated solution and end the conflict by way of compromise. The willingness of victors to undergo the ritual of submission did not come about as a result of their good will or a particular fondness for peace. It was usually circumstances that forced their hand: pressure from mediators and an inability to win a decisive victory over

---

[30] *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica*, III, c. 43, pp. 217-8.

an opponent. It was thus that after his accession to the throne in 1101, the new Czech duke Borivoj II agreed – not, according to the chronicler, from his heart but pressured by circumstances – to accept into his favour noblemen who had been exiled by his predecessor and return their estates to them.[31] When circumstances allowed, however, a military solution to a dispute was usually sought. Force and aggression were the norm in the political conflict, because of their effectiveness, not compromise and concord.

Even at a cursory glance, High Middle Age Polish, Czech or Hungarian history appears as one long string of betrayal, deception, treachery, broken promises and a lack of respect for any kind of rules or principles. The tragic fate of Beneda is no exception in this regard.[32] Many other Czech noblemen paid for entering into conflict with the monarch with their lives, or by gouging out of eyes, castration or dispossession of their estate.[33] The violent acts only rarely took on institutionalised forms.[34] Much more frequently – as in Beneda's case – they were clear acts of brutality, not bound by any kind of procedural norms.[35] In Hungary, as well, the political debate most frequently

---

[31] *Ibid.*, III, c. 14, p. 176.

[32] Cf. Lisa Wolverton, *Hastening Toward Prague: Power and Society in the Medieval Czech Lands* (Philadelphia, 2001), 85 ff.

[33] See e.g. *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica*, II, c. 11, p. 99; III, c. 4, p. 165; III, c. 32, p. 203; III, c. 45, p. 219. It is worth recalling, however, that sometimes the victims of conflict with the aristocrats were princes themselves. In 1038 Jaromir was murdered by an assassin, sent by the Vršovci clan, see *ibid.*, I, c. 42, p. 79. Bretislav II met with a similar fate in 1100, see *ibid.*, III, c. 13, p. 173, and in 1109 so did Svatopluk, see *ibid.*, III, c. 27, p. 196; *Galli Anonymi Cronica*, III, c. 16, p. 142.

[34] It is in these categories that we can judge the trial in Vyšehrad in 1130, brought by Sobeslav against a group of noblemen accused of plotting; see *Canonici Wissegradensis continuatio*, 207-13; see also Josef Žemlička, 'Vyšehrad 1130: soud, nebo inscenace? (K „nekosmovskému" pojetí českých dějin)', in Jaroslav Pánek, Miloslav Polívka and Noemi Rejchrtová (eds.), *Husitství – Reformace – Renesance: Sborník k 60. narozeninám F. Šmahela*, 3 vols. (Prague, 1994), i, 47-68; Wolverton, *Hastening Toward Prague*, 210-12.

[35] It was by these means that Svatopluk dealt with the Vršovci clan in 1108, see *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica*, III, cc. 33-4, pp. 203-25; cf. Wolverton, *Hastening, Toward Prague*, 206 ff., or the elimination of the Slavníkovci clan by Boleslav II in 995, see.

took the form of a bloody dispatching of opponents, such as during a rebellion against Stephen II in 1128, for which many noblemen paid with their lives, or the assembly in Arad in 1131, when followers of the newly elected Bela II murdered magnates who were not supportive of the new monarch.[36] In Poland, also, magnates who entered into conflict with the monarch had to contend with loss of sight or possessions.[37]

Acts of violence were not, however, used against the noblemen exclusively. Betrayal, brutality and violence all served as means of resolving conflicts among members of the ruling dynasty. Besides the well-known bloody conflicts which shook the Premyslid, Arpad or Piast dynasties in the tenth or eleventh centuries,[38] several illustrative examples are found at the beginning of the twelfth century.

Cosmae Pragensis Chronica, I, c. 29, p. 53; see also Jiří Sláma, 'Slavníkovci – významná či okrajová záležitost českých dějin 10 století?', *Archeologické rozhledy*, xlvii (1995), 182-224. See also *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica*, II: c. 11, p. 99; c. 15, p. 106; c. 19, p. 111; c. 44, pp. 150-1.

[36] *Chronici Hungarici*, pp. 444, 446-47, Bálint Hóman, *Geschichte des ungarischen Mittelalters*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1940), i, 366. It is worth recalling the account by Otto of Freising regarding the persecution of disobedient magnates by the Hungarian king: even minor infractions were punished by torture and death, see *Ottonis ... Gesta Frederici*, I, c. 33.

[37] In 1117, at the behest of Bolesław Wry-mouth, his palatine Skarbimir was blinded, see *Rocznik Kapituły Krakowskiej*, ed. Zofia Kozłowska-Budkowa (MPH, series nova, v, Warsaw, 1978), 55. In 1145, as a result of a conflict with Władysław II, his palatine Peter Wlostowic was blinded (see e.g. *Rocznik Traski*, ed. August Bielowski [MPH, ii, Warsaw, 1961 repr.], 833).

[38] See e.g. Dušan Třeštík, *Počatky Přemyslovců: Vstup Čechů do dějin (530-935)* (Prague, 1997), 428 ff.; Barbara Krzemieńska, 'Krize českého státu na přelomu tisíciletí', *Československý časopis historický*, xviii (1970), 497-532; Hóman, *Geschichte des ungarischen Mittelalters*, 236-40, 267-78; Henryk Łowmiański, *Początki Polski: Polityczne i społeczne procesy kształtowania się narodu do początku wieku XIV*, 6 vols. (Warsaw, 1963-1985), vi, pt.1, 59 ff. Violence was used to resolve disputes not just within the dynasty but also in interdynastic conflicts. In 1003, Duke Bolesław I the Brave of Poland first imprisoned and then blinded the Czech duke Boleslav III the Red, see *Thietmari ... Chronicon*, V, c. 30, p. 293. In 1032, Duke Oldrich of Bohemia ordered King Mieszko II of Poland castrated when the latter, exiled from his country, attempted to find refuge in

---

In the year 1111, Duke Bolesław III Wry-mouth of Poland recalled from exile his brother Zbigniew and subsequently blinded him.[39] In like fashion, in 1113, King Coloman of Hungary reached an understanding with his brother Almos and agreed to allow him to return, only to subsequently order him and his son, Bela, blinded.[40] In 1130, Duke Sobeslav I of Bohemia also had his nephew, Bretislav, blinded.[41] It was the fate of many Polish, Czech and Hungarian dukes to be imprisoned – sometimes for many years – or cast into exile.[42]

Negotiating the terms of peace, taking an oath, or fulfilling the ritual of reconciliation – none of these factors could guarantee a lasting accord. Almost immediately after agreeing to remove Sieciech from power and accepting the submission of his sons, Władysław Herman left the camp secretly in order to join up with Sieciech and continue the struggle against his sons.[43] Also, the peace between Duke Vladislav I of Bohemia and Borivoj, who had been recalled from exile, did not last long, and shortly thereafter Borivoj was cast into exile once again.[44] Similarly, shortly after accepting Zbigniew's *satisfactio*, Bolesław Wry-mouth removed him from Mazovia, which had been ceremoniously accorded to Zbigniew.[45] No differently did Coloman treat Almos, whom he had earlier accepted into his favour, by once again

---

Bohemia, see *Galli Anonymi Cronica*, I, c.17, p. 40. In 1060, King Bela I of Hungary was to capture and then blind Duke Spytihněv II of Bohemia, see *Chronici Hungarici*, 357.

[39] *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica*, III, c. 34, p. 205; see also Karol Maleczyński, *Bolesław III Krzywousty* (Wrocław, 1975), 71 ff.

[40] *Chronici Hungarici*, 429-30; Hóman, *Geschichte des ungarischen Mittelalters*, 376-79.

[41] *Canonici Wissegradensis continuatio*, 212; see also Žemlička, 'Vyšehrad 1130', 49.

[42] See e.g. Wolverton, *Hastening Toward Prague*, 200 ff.; Hóman, *Geschichte des ungarischen Mittelalters*, 267-78; 376-79; 393-94.

[43] *Galli Anonymi Cronica*, II, c. 16, p. 83.

[44] *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica*, III, c. 46, p. 219.

[45] *Galli Anonymi Cronica*, II, c. 41, p. 111.

taking back the province given to him a year earlier.[46] It is not surprising, then, that in 1090, duke Bretislav decided not to return to the king's court after a dispute with his father, the Czech king Vratislav II, preferring instead to leave the country and seek refuge in Hungary, despite reconciliation having taken place.[47] This is because ritual did not create reality. It was but one instrument in the shaping of political relations. Its efficacy was determined solely by the political interests of the parties involved and by their ability to access other instruments of political manoeuvring. The Czech duke Sobeslav II became painfully aware of this truth. In 1161, after having spent a considerably long time in exile, he returned to Bohemia and took control of Olomouc. His coup was met with a decisive response from King Vladislav II of Bohemia, who immediately assembled an army and prepared to lay siege to Olomouc. In the light of Vladislav's military superiority, Sobeslav decided to try to negotiate a peaceful settlement. An agreement was reached thanks to the intercession of the Moravian dukes. Sobeslav surrendered to the king, who accepted him into his favour, exchanged with him the kiss of peace and promised him an autonomous province. Next, he ceremoniously brought him to Prague, whereupon he immediately had Sobeslav arrested.[48] Sobeslav regained his freedom 12 years later, in 1173, thanks to the intervention of Emperor Frederick Barbarossa.[49]

At a time in which violence and brutality, treachery and betrayal prevailed, what divided peace from war, and friendship from hostility was an indistinct line that was often too easily crossed. In 1116, after the death of King Coloman of Hungary, his successor, Stephen II, turned to Duke

---

[46] *Chronici Hungarici*, 427.

[47] *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica*, II, cc. 46-8, pp. 153-5.

[48] *Vincenti Pragensis Cronica*, 452.

[49] *Gerlaci abbatis Milovicensis continuatio*, ed. Josef Emler (Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum, ii, Prague, 1874), 465-6. It should be of no surprise that after taking the prince's throne in 1173, Sobeslav II personally killed his prison guard, the *comes* Conrad Sturm, see *ibid.*, 467. The *comes* Mstis, who over 100 years earlier kept Vratislav II's wife imprisoned at the behest of Duke Spytihněv II, was luckier. After Vratislav took power, only escape beyond the country's borders saved Mstis from the duke's vengeance, see *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica*, II, c. 19, p. 111.

Vladislav I of Bohemia with a proposition to renew and reaffirm the peace and friendship which had existed between him and Coloman. In response to Stephen's request, which was delivered by Hungarian emissaries, Vladislav agreed to a peace treaty and swore to honour this commitment. It was decided that a grand meeting of the two rulers and a ceremonious renewal of friendship would take place on the Olšava, a river marking the boundary between Moravia and Hungary. Both Vladislav and Stephen, as if forgetting that the purpose of their meeting was to cement amicable relations, arrived at the helms of large armies. Shortly, it became clear that the two sides were closer to war than to peace. Vladislav took offence at the response his emissaries received from the Hungarian noblemen and refused to participate in a council with them. Suspecting treachery on the part of the Czech duke, the Hungarians decided to mobilise their forces and arrange them in opposition to the Czech forces. Vladislav, on the other hand, convinced that a Hungarian offensive was imminent, decided on a pre-emptive strike on the Hungarians. The bloody battle that ensued resulted in a Hungarian defeat and Stephen's escape.[50]

It is apparent that the only constant norm of conduct in the political life of Central European monarchies of the High Middle Ages was the lack of regard for any kind of principles. Acts of brutality, betrayal or aggression could occur at any time by any one. Thus, no one could be trusted, no oath be relied on.

Around the year 1105, King Coloman of Hungary refused to attend a meeting with Duke Bolesław Wry-mouth of Poland, at which the two were supposed to affirm their friendship and brotherly love for one another through a ceremony. According to the chronicler documenting these events, the Hungarian king was wary of a trap on the part of Bolesław because Coloman's exiled brother Almos resided in Bolesław's court. It was only after a certain period of time had passed and after several envoys had been dispatched at different times, that Coloman decided to meet Bolesław and confirm their shared bond of friendship and brotherhood.[51] Similarly in 1110,

---

[50] *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica*, III, c. 42, pp. 215-7; cf. *Chronici Hungarici*, 434-37.

[51] *Galli Anonymi Cronica*, II, c. 29, p. 98.

Duke Otto II of Olomouc decided to reject an invitation from his cousin, Duke Vladislav I of Bohemia, to celebrate Easter together for fear of a treacherous ruse. When Otto finally did agree to meet him and swear an oath of peace, he arrived under the protection of a sizeable retinue. It soon turned out that Otto's suspicions regarding Vladislav were entirely justified. Not much more than two months later Otto once again met Vladislav. This time, however, foolishly trusting the solidity of the recently taken oaths, the former arrived accompanied by a light security entourage. He was immediately seized and thrown into prison at Vladislav's command.[52] In light of this situation, it is not surprising that Vladislav's younger brother, Sobeslav, when invited to a feast by the former in 1113, arrived with a force of three hundred knights. Later, summoned to the royal court in Vyšehrad, Sobeslav concluded that he should no longer tempt fate and decided to leave the country.[53]

The political realities of the Piast, Premyslid and Arpad dynasties, so steeped in violence, brutality, treachery and betrayal, provided no room for rituals of reconciliation and consequent clear rules of conduct. Reaching an agreement was conditional upon the existence of at least a minimum amount of trust in the expectation that mutual obligations would be met. Only then could the concord be effective and contribute to underpinning law and order.

Meanwhile in practice, as we have been able to ascertain, a lack of trust in the credibility of the opposing side did not at all translate into abandoning allusion to the principles of compromise and reconciliation in public life. For the lack of trust in the credibility of a partner in a political dialogue did not preclude faith in values connected with the ritual of reconciliation nor did it undermine the conviction that they were significant in shaping political reality. Nor was there a sense that they were necessary to apply in the practice of political manoeuvring.[54] Even rulers who regularly broke the oaths that they had ceremoniously taken and who showed no respect for

agreements made continued to refer to ideas of peace and accord that were linked to the ritual of reconciliation. Similarly, peace accords, made between Duke Vladislav I of Bohemia and his brothers and cousins, were subsequently almost immediately broken without fail took the form of elaborate rituals of reconciliation, which served to express brotherly sentiments marking the bonds between members of the Czech dynasty.[55] Likewise, Duke Bolesław III Wry-mouth of Poland, whose nickname came about most probably as a consequence of his frivolous attitude regarding making promises,[56] constantly sought ceremonious confirmation through ritual acts of reconciliation in each subsequent agreement with his brother Zbigniew.[57] Violence and trickery were certainly decisive factors in determining the effectiveness of political undertakings. They allowed political aims to be realised and political adversaries to be eliminated. They did not, however, constitute a sufficiently stable foundation on which a lasting and cohesive political structure could be built. That is why, regardless of how frequently the principles connected with the ritual of reconciliation were broken in the practice of political manoeuvring, the idea of compromise and agreement was a fixed point of reference for state policy and a model of political correctness.

Translated by Tom Ozimek

---

[52] *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica*, III, c. 33, pp. 203-4.

[53] *Ibid.*, III, c. 39, p. 211.

[54] Cf. Philippe Buc, *The Danger of Ritual: Between Early Medieval Texts and Social Scientific Theory* (Princeton, 2001).

---

[55] See e.g. *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica*, III, c. 41, p. 214.

[56] See Elżbieta Kowalczyk, 'Krzywousty – skaza fizyczna czy moralna?', *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, ci (1994), 3-14.

[57] See e.g. *Galli Anonymi Cronica*, II, c. 32, p. 99.

Hungary's Political Culture
under the Árpád Dynasty

Ján Lukačka

During the three centuries of its existence, Hungary under the Árpád Dynasty made significant progress. For the first two centuries, it was a typical patrimonial monarchy dominated by a king who had at his disposal vast land holdings, along with their officials and dworniks (udwornici). This old system of state administration lasted until the late twelfth century. During the thirteenth century, the economic system, along with the rest of society, underwent a gradual transformation. The Hungarian aristocracy, which benefited from the collapse of royal holdings, began to insist that it be allowed to participate in the governance of the kingdom. This process peaked in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century with the decline of royal power and the emergence of strong oligarchic families.[1]

The formation of political culture in medieval Hungary from the early eleventh century to the late thirteenth century is seen as a long and slow process. Old traditions from the pre-state period played an important role in this, and they only gradually adapted themselves to the new value system represented by Western Christianity. In the case of the Hungarian kingdom, the pre-state period is considered to be the tenth century, when the original nomadic, tribal society merged relatively rapidly with the settled Christian

---

[1] The following synthetic works provide a general overview: *Magyarország története*, vols. I-II (Budapest, 1984) and a *Concise history of Slovakia* (Bratislava, 2000). Some aspects of political culture are examined in the works of Jenő Szűcs, *Utolsó Árpádok* (Budapest, 1993) and Ágnes Kurcz, *Lovagi kultúra Magyarországon a 13.-14. században* (Budapest, 1988).

population. Hungarian historiography regards this transformation as an autonomous process that was influenced only to a certain extent by external factors. In contrast, Slovak historiography stresses that the presence of an earlier Slavic ethnic substratum must also be taken into account, as it also influenced this complex process. The Slavic linguistic borrowings present in the Old Hungarian (Magyar) lexicon present undeniable evidence of this participation. It should be emphasized that these borrowings come from a vocabulary related to both economic and social arenas, suggesting that phenomena in these areas were broadly accepted into the Hungarian (Magyar) vocabulary.

Contacts with neighboring states also played an important role in the development of the newly constituted kingdom's political culture. Most important were the German Empire and evidently Byzantium, also. In both of these states, a political culture had already been established for several centuries at that time. Foreign princesses and their escorts from nearby European courts also served as a catalyst for the introduction of new trends into the Hungarian political culture. The Bavarian Princess Gizela clearly had an important role in this respect. Along with Stephen I, she influenced the formation of a variety of laws in the young kingdom. She is also rightly attributed with having had a major influence on the coronation rituals of Hungarian kings. A way of organizing the royal court also originated in Bavaria. The presence of a large number of foreigners at the very center of the royal court sometimes prompted xenophobic reactions on the part of the Hungarian aristocracy.[2]

Christianity and the Church played an important role in the formation of the political culture in Hungary. To a certain extent, Christianity quashed expansionary aspirations of some of the ruling courts, although it did not always manage to prevent bloody wars that from time to time broke out between Christian kings. Members of the clergy, particularly the high-ranking clergy, were the only educated people in their country. For that reason, it was

---

[2] An extreme example of such a stance by the Hungarian aristocracy was the murder in 1213 of the wife of Andrew II, Gertrude, because she favoured foreigners at the royal court.

natural that the highest representatives of the Church (the prelates) had a direct influence on the political culture of the royal court. This was because they sat on the royal council together with the representatives of the lay aristocracy and had a direct impact on the king's decisions. Most of the royal envoys that carried out diplomatic tasks at other royal courts and at the Holy See were also chosen from high Church circles.

The political culture of the Arpadian period rested on the traditions that are generally considered to be part of the foundations laid by kings Stephen I and, to a lesser extent, Ladislaus (László) I – both of whom were canonized. The seeds of these traditions can actually be found in the oldest Hungarian legal codes and in some narrative sources. Of these, *Libellus sancti Stephani regis de institutione morum ad Emericum ducem*[3] is the most highly regarded. This work comprises ten chapters, in which a father advises his son on how best to rule. The first three chapters are devoted to the relationship of the ruler and the Church. The king should maintain the Catholic faith; take care that the Church remains in good order and show respect to the bishops. The fourth chapter is interesting: in that, Stephen advises his son to respect his princes, counts and knights, rather than treat them like his servants, since they are supposed to fight for the king and not to serve him. In the fifth chapter, the king calls on his son to uphold the law, and to be patient and merciful in meting out his justice.

The sixth chapter is also interesting: in it, the king advises his son how to receive guests from various countries – guests with different languages and customs, teachings and weapons. He tells him that all of this adorns and elevates the royal throne. The king is to receive them with dignity and provide them with hospitality and whatever they need. He even says that a kingdom with only one language and one set of customs is a weak and fragile one. From this, one may rightly conclude that King Stephen was fully aware of the multi-ethnic nature of own his kingdom.

In the seventh chapter, the king calls on his son to respect the existence of the royal court and to surround himself with older, experienced and wiser

---

[3] Imre Szentpétery (ed.), *Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum* (henceforth, *SRH*), vol. II, (Budapest, 1938), 619-627.

people, who can provide him with valuable advice. In the eighth chapter, the king recommends that his son follows the example of his ancestors, and that he honours and obeys his parents. The last two chapters once again return to the need for prayer, piety, mercy and similar virtues.

One cannot be sure, however, how many of these ideals their originator himself and his successors were able to uphold. Many of the rulers who succeeded Stephen I followed his example; many others, however, were far from the ideal he had outlined. In the power struggles that took place between the members of the dynasty, individuals did not take these principles very much into account. In particular, it was the Árpádian subordinate principality of Nitra that was involved in systemic struggles between the subordinate princes and the Hungarian kings. They used intrigue, tricks and even military clashes, in which Hungarian mercilessly fought Hungarian. The common method of eliminating one's opponent from the field was to blind him. This was the end met by Dukes Vazul, Álmos and his son Bela II.[4] This behaviour was not actually the specialty of the Hungarians, since similar tactics could be observed throughout Europe at that time.

Various twelfth century sources have survived that at least in part help shed some light on the political culture of the Hungarian royal court. The Hungarian kings consulted the royal council when there were important decisions to be made, but they did not have to respect its opinion. It was not customary for someone to speak openly against the king. The first public opposition to the anointed head of state is mentioned in the year 1123. At that time, during a military campaign to Galicia, one of the most influential magnates, Count Kozma of the Poznan family, on behalf of all the barons involved in the campaign, refused to obey King Stephen II. He resolutely demanded that the King end the military operation and they return home.[5] For King Stephen, this undoubtedly came as an unpleasant surprise, but the

---

[4] This kind of behavior was not a Hungarian specialty, since one finds similar examples in neighbouring countries, such as Bohemia and Poland, as well as in Western European.

[5] Július Sopko (ed.), *Kroniky stredovekého Slovenska* (Budmerice, 1995), 57.

united stance of leading Hungarian aristocrats did, in fact, force him to concede and return early to Hungary.

Another important magnate, Lampert of the Hunt family, had less luck in this respect. With his son, Nicolas, he participated in the Battle of the Slaná River in 1132 with a contender for the Hungarian throne, Boris, and his Polish troops. At a meeting of the royal council, along with others, he expressed his opposition to the king and some of his courtiers. He also agreed that it would be better if Boris ruled, rather than the blind Bela II. His furious opponents lunged at him and his cohorts and beat them to death with the stools they had been sitting on during the meeting.[6]

Bishop Otto of Freising also saw the conditions at the Hungarian royal court as not being wholly democratic. Along with the German King Conrad III, he participated in the Second Crusade to the Holy Land. While travelling through Hungary, he mentioned the political culture of the royal court, in addition to his descriptions of the country and its inhabitants. He noted that the Hungarians seemed to possess a Byzantine ingenuity in that they did not solve any important matter without long, protracted meetings. Individual magnates carried their stools with them and met at the royal court, and did not neglect meetings regarding the affairs of the state. Being only subordinates of the ruler, none of them dared to anger the king by openly contradicting him, or even by furtively broaching matters that went against his will. Bishop Otto also noted that if one of the counts or magnates offended the ruler, even in some small matter, or if one of them accused him unjustly of having done so, then he would be arrested by a royal guard dispatched by the court, deprived of his entourage, shackled and brought to be interrogated. Various methods of torture would be employed. The accused's cohorts would not dare request an explanation from the king for his behaviour, as was the custom in the German lands. The accused did not have the opportunity to defend oneself, because everyone regarded the expressions of the ruler's will

---

[6] I. Szentpétery (ed.), *SRH*, vol. I (Budapest, 1938), 448-9.

as final.[7] Otto of Freising's comments clearly showed that the situation and political culture in Hungary were different from those in the German lands.

As mentioned earlier, the thirteenth century brought fundamental changes to all areas of medieval Hungarian society. During the reign of Andrew II (1205-35) in particular, relations between the king and some of his courtiers deteriorated to such an extent that during his absence in 1213 the conspirators murdered Queen Gertrude in a cruel fashion.[8] During the rest of his reign, Andrew II did not manage to bring all of the culprits to justice. The king's ill-conceived policy of patronage prompted great unrest even among his lower-ranking nobility (servientes), who rightly feared they might lose their privileged position. In 1222, they forced Andrew II to issue a Golden Bull in which their rights and obligations were codified for the first time in writing. Some of the sections of this Bull may also serve as a source for our understanding of the political culture of the first two decades of the thirteenth century. These include the following:

The king pledged to summon a diet every year on the feast of St. Stephen at Székesfehérvár. There, all disputes regarding the lower nobility were to be discussed. No one was to be prevented from participating. From the way this passage is formulated, it is clear that no diets had been convened up to that point. In another passage, the members of the lower nobility are given a guarantee that they cannot be imprisoned without first being convicted and tried. It allowed the Palatine to resolve all disputes, but he could not carry out sentences passed upon the members of the lower nobility regarding the loss of property or execution without the King's knowledge. It is even stated here that magnates should not interfere in this process. Counts are also banned from making decisions regarding the fate of property belonging to members of the lower nobility. In the Bull, the king also guarantees that the lower nobility's property is untouchable and inheritable. He forbids his horsemen, falconers and kennel men from staying on their estates. The Bull

---

[7] Ferencz A. Gombos (ed.), *Catalogus fontium historiae Hungaricae aevo ducum et regum ex stirpe Arpad descendentium ab anno Christi DCCC usque ad annum MCCCI*, Tomus III (Budapest, 1938), 1767.

[8] *SRH*, vol. I, 465.

also contains regulations attesting to the xenophobic stance of the Hungarian nobility regarding foreigners, Jews and Moslems (Ishmaelites). In response to pressure from the lower nobility, the king also promises not to re-assign their property or court titles, and will not lease their regal rights. In the Bull, the king also promises not to permit the accumulation of court and count titles in the future.[9]

If the resolutions put forth in the Golden Bull had been fully implemented, they would have undoubtedly meant that the awareness of political culture in Hungary would have increased. King Andrew II was, however, not interested to uphold them, and strove to reign as before. He clearly had his favourites at the royal court; he conferred all the highest court titles on them and granted them large land estates. Even when these favourites committed various transgressions and misdemeanors, he protected them from severe prosecution.[10] Even the king's first-born son, Bela IV, expressed his dissatisfaction with his father's rule and unsuccessfully attempted to rectify some of his mistakes. The chronicles note that after his father's death in 1235, his first gesture as ruler was to chop up the stools that the members of the royal council used to bring to sessions, and burn them.[11] With this dramatic act, he wanted to advertise his effort to strengthen the royal power. This turned out to be just an empty gesture, however, because the nobility's position in Hungarian society continued to grow unimpeded.

The good name of the Árpád dynasty in the neighboring countries and in the Papal Curia began to deteriorate in the early 1270s. Bishop Bruno of Olomouc, apparently at Rome's instigation, sent the Pope a detailed account of the situation in Hungary. Above all, he drew attention to the dangerous situation in the kingdom that had come about as the result of the incorporation

---

[9] Richard Marsina (ed.), *Codex diplomaticus et epistolaris Slovaciae I* (Bratislava, 1971), 199-201, No. 270.

[10] The king for example protected the knight Fabian of the Hunt-Poznan family, who attacked and destroyed the estate of the Benedictine abbey in Panonhalma, in south-western Slovakia. Ján Lukačka, *Formovanie vyššej šľachty na juhozápadnom Slovensku* (Bratislava, 2002), 57 ff.

[11] Vladimír Segeš, *Kniha kráľov: Panovníci v dejinách Slovenska a Slovákov* (Bratislava, 2003), 118.

of a considerable number of pagan Cumans. He accused them of killing
Christians not only in Hungary itself, but also in neighbouring countries. He
found it particularly dangerous that the Cumans captured young Christians
and converted them to their pagan faith. According to Bruno, however, the
Cumans threatened Christianity in Hungary itself most of all by their
destruction of churches and plundering of the Church estates. Under the
Cumans' pernicious influence, many Christians allegedly began to convert to
paganism. Bishop Bruno concludes by noting that various heretics and
schismatics (followers of the Eastern rite) were beginning to spread in
Hungary, against whom no one seemed to be able to intervene. These
schismatics found support at the royal court itself, and even members of the
royal family itself were not portrayed in the best light in Bruno's account.
Two Princesses married schismatics, and a third married an enemy of the
Church, while Queen Elizabeth herself came from a Cuman (pagan) family.[12]
The situation in Hungary grew worse in the autumn of 1272, when Stephen
V died suddenly and his ten year old son succeeded him to the throne –
Ladislaus (László) IV the Cuman. His mother Elizabeth attempted
unsuccessfully to rule on behalf of her underage son. This, however, ended
in her internment, while powerful groups of magnates gained real power.
These groups then began vying with one another for influence at the royal
court. The Roman Curia knew about these unfortunate circumstances, but
waited for the young king to come of age, when he would be able to assume
power in earnest. The country gradually fell into anarchy, which neither
Queen Elizabeth nor her son managed to prevent. Dignitaries at the royal
court changed so often that it is impossible to reconstruct who was holding
which office at what time, attesting to the seriousness of this split. Neither is
it possible to trace the enormous transfers of property to the most important
noble families (such as the Csáks, Kőszegs, Abas and Gutkeleds) in any
great detail, since they passed from the king into noble hands without any
donation charters being granted in these transactions. The anarchy in
Hungary reached such a degree that on 22 September 1278, Pope Nicholas

---

[12] Augustin Theiner (ed.), *Vetera monumenta historica Hungariam sacram
illustrantia*, Vol. I (Rome, 1859), 307, No. 535.

III decided to send a personal legate – Bishop Philip of Fermo, who was
supposed to try to improve conditions there. In April of the following year,
the energetic legate was already in Buda and called a Church synod
immediately, at which members would search for ways of improving not
only the unsatisfactory conditions in the Church, but the whole of Hungarian
society as well. Bishop Philip invited King Ladislaus (László) IV Cuman to
the Synod as well, but the king only appeared after a long prevarication. Not
hesitating for a moment, the Papal legate accused him of serious
machinations against the Church; chaos in the country; and his open support
for heretics and pagans (Cumans). The humbled young ruler, just seventeen,
promised to make amends for all these shortcomings. In the Golden Bull
issued on 23 May 1279, the king formally pledged his obedience to the
Roman Church and committed himself to improve conditions in Hungary
immediately. His main task was to pacify the Cumans and return the Church
property that had been plundered.

After Ladislaus (László) IV left Esztergom, he quickly forgot these
promises and continued 'ruling' as he had before. He did not intend to be
bound by any laws or edicts, since he considered himself to represent the
highest form of law. He spurned his legal wife and publicly met with various
Cuman concubines, who even advised him to have the inconvenient legate
murdered, thus solving the whole problem.[13]

Legate Philip, seeing his efforts to better the King were in vain, turned
his attention to improving conditions within the Church. After acquainting
himself thoroughly with the current state of affairs, he drafted laws that
would eliminate the worst abuses among the clergy. In mid-September 1279,
he summoned the Church synod in Buda, where representatives voted
publicly on these laws. From these laws, it is apparent that the Church in
Hungary lagged far behind Church ideals in the rest of Europe. Priests for
example held Mass without being properly dressed, and were often even
barefoot. Taverns were often located in clergymen's houses, and the clergy's
way of life was too secular. Clergymen commonly carried weapons and took

---

[13] For details, cf. the study by the author: 'Vzťah Rímskej kúrie a posledných
Arpádov-cov', *Historický zborník Matice slovenskej*, vii (1997), 19-26.

an active part in conflicts and skirmishes in Hungary. Clergymen partici-
pated in secular festivities, and some of them even kept concubines. Philip
sharply denounced these practices and prohibited these transgressions by
synodal decrees.[14] He also did not approve of the habit of most Hungarian
men who did not shave their beards or cut their hair. He decreed that men
should shave and cut their impressive braids. He was also against the wearing
of Cuman-style hats, which were also worn by some Christians. Philip's
activities in Hungary culminated in the excommunication of the King and
declaring an interdict on his kingdom.[15] The last decade of Ladislaus
(László) IV the Cuman's rule saw his royal power progressively destroyed.
His prestige declined so much that the most powerful noble families began to
speak out openly against him. It even came to military confrontations, in
which the aristocratic armies were often successful. In practice, the King left
his power to the most influential families of the oligarchy, which began
vying with each other for influence in the country. The lower strata of
society became increasingly impoverished, while general dissatisfaction with
the conditions in the country grew.

The collapse of political culture was accompanied by the general
decline of traditional values. At the royal court, old rituals were no longer
observed, and there were even armed skirmishes and other violence. It was
not unusual for the King to 'be lost' for long periods of time in the Cuman
camps. The extreme conditions in the country can best be illustrated through
the tragic-comic story of Bishop Paško (Pascasius). Prior to 1288, Ladislaus
(László) IV once sent him as his envoy on a secret mission to Albrecht, the
son of Emperor Rudolph of Habsburg. Paško carried out his mission
successfully and wanted to tell about it to the king. Unable to find him, he
went in search of him at the Cuman camps to the east of the country. The
Bishop's journey to see the King was a fateful one, because Cumans attacked
his entourage. They beat up most of the entourage as well as five of his

relatives; robbed the Bishop and took him captive. The king found out about
his envoy's fate only much later, upon which he had him released. He made
amends in a kingly fashion, by granting a bishopric to the royal city of Nitra in
1288.[16] The epilogue to this unfortunate reign was the unprecedented
measure taken by the Papal Curia. In March 1287 Pope Honorius IV called
for a crusade to be organized against the pagans of Hungary. He even asked
neighbouring monarchs to support this campaign, which should be seen as
a call to speak out against the wayward Hungarian king.

Just three weeks after the Cumans killed Ladislaus (László) IV in 1290,
Andrew III, known as 'the Venetian' was crowned new king. His education,
mild manner and abilities destined him to become a successful ruler. In
a country gone wild, however, he had little chance of taking advantage of
these personal qualities because most of the Hungarian oligarchs did not
want to see the establishment of a consolidated royal power. The Papal Curia
did not support him, either, as it had already chosen its own candidate –
Carol Martell from Naples.[17]

The representatives of leading Hungarian noble families accumulated
real power for themselves during the reigns of the last Árpádian kings. When
the royal power was at its lowest, changes occurred in Hungary's political
culture, which were not compatible with conditions in the rest of Europe.
The country's political culture was at its most apparent to outsiders during
encounters with the royal courts of Europe on a variety of levels. Contacts
usually occurred through envoys, usually members of the clergy. Personal
meetings between monarchs were much more important and impressive, and
a generally accepted etiquette was then observed. The first such meeting in
Hungary is mentioned in the *Hungarian-Polish Chronicle*, which says that in
the year of 1001, Stephen I of Hungary and Bolesław Chrobry of Poland met
near Esztergom. At this, their first meeting, they kissed each other as a sign
of peace (*osculum pacis*), and then shook hands and went to St. Adalbert's
Cathedral in Esztergom. After a special Mass, they spent eight days together,

---

[14] Carolus Péterffy (ed.), *Sacra concilia ecclesiae Romano-catholicae in regno
Hungariae celebrata ab anno Christi 1016 usque ad annum 1715*, vol. I (Vienna, 1742), 94.

[15] The Interdict on Hungary did not, however, become valid, because the Legate's
harsh measures did not find support in Rome, either.

[16] Gabriel Fusek and Marián R. Zemene, *Dejiny Nitry od najstarších čias po
súčasnosť* (Nitra, 1998), 162.

[17] Segeš, *Kniha kráľov*, 128.

engaging in various entertainments. After bestowing gifts on each other, they parted.[18]

Not all friendly meetings ended in fun and games, however. In the year 1116, the Hungarian king Stephen II and the Czech Prince Vladislav met at their joint border on the Olšava River. What had started out as a friendly meeting developed into a merciless battle which ended in a Czech victory. The chroniclers blame Zsolt, a Hungarian intriguer, for this unhappy end. He allegedly convinced both sides that the other was planning an underhand attack.[19]

As the Crusaders' expeditions headed towards the Holy Land, meetings between Hungarian kings and rulers from Western Europe became even more frequent – and were sometimes unwelcome. As early as 1096, Duke Godefroi (Godfrey) of Lower Lorraine asked King Koloman to allow him passage through Hungarian territory. Koloman allegedly conferred with his magnates for eight whole days about whether to let him enter Hungary. In the end, he agreed to the Crusaders' request, but only on the condition that there be no violence and that the King be given hostages. Then King Koloman and his magnates pledged that they would not harm the Crusaders. When the Crusaders left Hungarian territory, Koloman released the hostages and presented Duke Godefroi and his brothers with lavish gifts.[20]

The meeting between the French King Louis VII and King Gejza II, which took place on Hungary's western border, running along the Danube, followed a similar pattern. Gejza then gave gifts to Louis, who, with his dukes and bishops, swam across the Danube. When they first met, they hugged and kissed each other. Then they made peace and agreed to let the Crusaders pass safely through Hungary.[21]

An even more important and more splendid meeting took place in the first half of 1189. The leader of the Third Crusade, Emperor Friedrich

---

[18] *SRH*, vol. II, 311.

[19] *SRH*, vol. I, 434-5.

[20] J. Chmeľová, 'Križiacke výpravy a Uhorsko', *Zborník FFUK – Historica*, xlvi (2004), 28-9.

[21] *Ibid*, p. 34.

Barbarossa, met with the Hungarian King Bela III. In the late May, the Emperor arrived at Bratislava and set up his camp. Ten days later, King Bela III, together with his wife, Margerita, received him with full pomp. The royal couple bestowed lavish gifts on the Emperor. In particular, it is stressed that the Queen presented the Emperor with a very large and beautiful scarlet tent. After the official ceremony finished, the rulers spent two days hunting together on the royal island of Csepel. The meeting's highpoint was the betrothal of Bela's daughter Constancia to the Emperor's son, Friedrich, the Duke of Swabia.[22]

Later in the thirteenth century, meetings were sometimes preceeded (or followed) by knightly tournaments and games whose aim was to relax the two sides meeting and to foster more informal contact. The meeting between King Andrew III and Albrecht of Habsburg in 1291 near Vienna concluded in just the same way.[23]

The level of political culture in Hungary under the Árpáds underwent many transformations. One can conclude that during the periods when royal power was stable, competent and broad-minded rulers stood at the head of the state, the level of political culture also increased, and benefited from contacts with neighbouring royal courts. During the reigns of weak and ineffective rulers (such as Ladislaus [László] IV the Cuman), the kingdom's prestige and its political culture declined dramatically and ceased to be a part of the larger medieval European civilization.

Translated by Christina Manetti

---

[22] Ferencz A. Gombos (ed.), *Catalogus fontium...*, vol. I (Budapest, 1937), 291-2.

[23] Vincent Sedlák (ed.), *Regesta diplomatica nec non epistolaria Slovaciae*, vol. I (Bratislava, 1980), 59, No. 75

Political Culture of the Nobility
in Late Medieval Poland

Wojciech Iwańczak

The available literature on assorted aspects of the history of the nobility (*szlachta*) in Poland is extremely copious. The nobility's extraordinary size, though variously estimated, and its key role and impact in former times, combined with the decreased importance of towns, accounts for this fact. Another explanation for the large literary output is the noble ancestry of a large part of the nineteenth-century intelligentsia, whose members investigated their roots with great diligence and inquisitiveness. Not so long ago we experienced in Poland a wave of so-called heraldic snobbery; as a rule, the quest for noble ancestry, which became the favourite pastime of many Poles, involved a projection of dreams and not genealogical facts.

Studies relating to the history of the nobility concentrated mainly on attempts at explaining the origin of knights, the configuration of the noble estate, and assorted questions associated with its stratification, economic activity, and so forth.[1] Up to now, the theme of my work, i. e. the political culture of the nobility during the Middle Ages, has not been the object of great interest among historians. The very concept of 'political culture' appeared in Polish historiography during the inter-war period in the writings of Józef Siemieński, although his field of research encompassed the sixteenth

---

[1] Cf. Antoni Gąsiorowski (ed.), *The Polish Nobility in the Middle Ages: Anthologies* (Wrocław, 1984); see esp. Janusz Bieniak, 'Knight Clans in Medieval Poland', *ibid.*, 123-76.

century.[2] Subsequently, this subject was neglected, only reemerging at the 11th General Congress of Polish Historians, held in Toruń in 1974, were scholarly discussion started with the 1500s. The collection of papers, that came out of the conference, is entitled *Dzieje kultury politycznej w Polsce* (The History of Political Culture in Poland).[3] The conclusion drawn within this context seemed to be rather obvious – since the Middle Ages had been ignored, then the titular phenomenon did not transpire until the modern era. In order not to prolong this historiographical introduction, it must be added that also in later periods the political culture of the epoch of interest to us did not attract the attention of researchers, although upon certain occasions its assorted aspects had been examined. What are the reasons for this state of the historiography? Apparently, apart from the relatively short lineage of the titular problems, and the frailty of its methodological foundations, the basic reason lies in the condition of the sources at our disposal. The sixteenth century offers incomparably more material, which has been well examined, while the Late Middle Ages are, from this point of view, a much less rewarding object of research. The existing knowledge about the nobility pertains mainly to the elites, and much less is known about the thinking of the 'gentry masses'.

The period of interest to us, i. e. from the unification of the Polish state after feudal disintegration to the end of the fifteenth century, constitutes a rather coherent whole. In the new reality, the knights-gentry faced equally novel challenges. Groups which had played a leading role in the past now *de facto* departed from the historical scene, and, in the monarchy of Władysław the Short and Casimir the Great the 'new people', who bound their present and future with strong central authorities, came to the forefront. Political education progressed at varying rates; rather monotonous periods of stagnation were interspersed with moments of considerable acceleration. The ideology of the community of the noblemen emerged gradually, and the new political situation in which the state found itself still lacked theoretical bases which

---

[2] Józef Siemieński, 'Polska kultura polityczna w XVI wieku', in *Kultura staro-polska* (Cracow, 1932), 119-67.

[3] Józef A. Gierowski (ed.), *Dzieje kultury politycznej w Polsce* (Warsaw, 1977).

would accurately describe the boundaries of *maiestas* and *communitas*. The noblemen built their rights on earlier obtained immunity privileges, existing customs, and praxis. The political foundations of the gentry, in which we are particularly interested, became recognizable together with the consolidation of state authority and the expansion of its bureaucratic apparatus. It was precisely the royal officials, overzealously fulfilling their duties, who became the object of complaints; protests against the abuses committed by the *starostas* were accompanied by declarations of full support for the royal authority. In addition to the numerous pieces of evidence which justified such postulates, the medieval stereotype of the 'good ruler' and the evil officials and advisers served to embed this image even further.[4]

From the legal point of view, the community of nobility (*communitas nobilium*) in Poland created an identity, markedly different from that based on financial situation, prestige, family traditions, education or territorial affiliation. For the purpose of demonstrating this profound stratification, let us cite the opinion of Benedykt Zientara, who wrote that, during the mid-fifteenth century:

> in Little Poland alone there lived within the same social estate one Jan Głowacz of Oleśnica (the brother of Cardinal Zbigniew), Grand Marshal of the Crown, the voivode of Sandomierz, the owner of a town and 59 villages, and 47 noblemen, owners of shares in the village of Krzyszkowice in the region of Proszowice.[5]

The absence of sources makes it impossible to identify those 'gentry masses' and the financial situation of people located between those two extremities of prosperity, although such attempts had been made. This is a question of great importance in view of the fact that, as we know, financial status was linked

---

[4] Cf., i. a. the so-called princes' mirrors (*Specula principis*), frequent in the Middle Ages and containing directives about governance addressed to monarchs; cf. also comments by Wojciech Fałkowski, 'Możnowładztwo polskie wobec króla: Zabiegi i działania polityczne wokół monarchy w XV stuleciu', in Wojciech Fałkowski (ed.), *Kolory i struktury średniowiecza* (Warsaw, 2004), 9 ff.

[5] Ireneusz Ihnatowicz, Antoni Mączak and Benedykt Zientara, *Społeczeństwo polskie od X do XX wieku* (Warsaw, 1979), 161.

to political power, which leads us straight to the subject of the remarks below.

Investigations concerning the political culture of a social group call for some sort of working definition of our comprehension of this concept. The conception admitted by Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba is pertinent here. Writing about political culture, they accentuated the psychological aspect of politics, and tried to recreate the psychological motivation of the behaviour of individuals and groups conceived as one of the essential and, heretofore under examined, factors determining political activity: 'When we speak about the political culture of a society we have in mind the political system, internalised in the cognition, emotions and evaluations of the population'.[6] In their studies on political culture, they suggest establishing a degree of familiarity with political and legal institutions and the interests taken in them. It seems worth adding that the notion proposed by Almond and Verba exerted different impacts on Polish studies, though most attempted to apply their ideas to other relevant studies.[7] We must also keep in mind the fact that a precise establishment of the conceptual range of 'political culture' as opposed to 'legal culture', 'the history of the system', or 'the history of the state and law', poses considerable difficulties.[8] While dealing with the

Middle Ages, in a situation when we are limited by the sources available for the recreation of assorted psychological aspects of the political conduct of the gentry, much more can be deduced by a closer examination of the functioning of certain public institutions in which this particular social stratum played a key role.

The sixteenth century is recognised as the golden age of the nobility's democracy, but its roots certainly reach much deeper. True, the application of an overly-detailed chronological caesurae, as in the case of Karol Górski, who enclosed the development of 'the nobility's democracy' in the 1454-1573 period,[9] might appear exaggerated, but the second half of the fifteenth century unquestionably constitutes an essential period. It was then that Sejm (Diet) and the land dietines functioned in the whole of Poland and comprised a convenient forum for the realization of the political ambitions cherished by the *szlachta*. Their structural and institutional progress has been examined in numerous publications, but many aspects of the customs and certain political norms applied at the gentry gatherings still remain unclear.[10] We know little about the sites of the debates, the manner of passing statutes, and, frequently, the basic topics. In many instances, the prime source of knowledge is still the writings of Jan Długosz, although he was not an enthusiastic advocate of the public activity of the gentry.[11] Let us look at the way in which Długosz depicted the Election Sejm which chose Władysław III to be king of Poland (at the same time, we shall refer to comments by Józef Siemieński). During the first day of the debates, the gathered deputies reached a consensus, but the discussed issue was not resolved definitely. On the following day, they set off for the royal chambers (the debates were conducted at Wawel Castle), with the higher ranking noblemen entering the White Chamber and the rest –

---

[6] Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Princeton, 1963).

[7] Cf. Marek Sobolewski, 'Z badań nad kulturą polityczną w Polsce', *Studia Nauk Politycznych* (1979), no. 1; Wacław Uruszczak, 'Kultura polityczna i prawna w sejmie polskim czasów odrodzenia', *Czasopismo Prawno-Historyczne*, xxxii (1980), no. 2; Stanisław Russocki, 'Kultura polityczna i prawna (Refleksje historyka ustroju)', *Historyka*, xi (1981); Stanisław Russocki, 'Wokół pojęć kultura polityczna i prawna', *Państwo i Prawo*, xl (1981), no. 3; Marek Sobolewski, 'Polska kultura polityczna i prawna w dawnych wiekach: Próba charakterystyki', *Czasopismo Prawno-Historyczne*, xxxv (1983), no. 2, 69-95; see also his 'O kulturze politycznej raz jeszcze', *Historyka*, xiii (1983), 17-32; Stanisław Russocki, 'Historia porównawcza a kultura: Element wspólnoty ustrojowo-prawnej Europy Środkowej XV-XVI w.', *Przegląd Humanistyczny*, xxix (1985), nos. 11-12; Edward Opaliński, *Kultura polityczna szlachty polskiej w latach 1587-1652: System parlamentarny a społeczeństwo obywatelskie* (Warsaw, 1995).

[8] See reflections by Stanisław Russocki, 'Uwagi o kulturze politycznej Polski XVI-XVII wieku', in Gierowski (ed.) *Dzieje kultury politycznej w Polsce*, 15 ff.

[9] Karol Górski, 'Rządy wewnętrzne Kazimierza Jagiellończyka w Koronie', in Marian Biskup and Karol Górski, *Kazimierz Jagiellończyk* (Warsaw, 1987); 1st edn in *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, lxvi [1959], 726-59), 127.

[10] A summary of studies in Jerzy Michalski (ed.), *Historia sejmu polskiego*, 3 vols., i, *Do schyłku szlacheckiej Rzeczypospolitej* (Warsaw, 1984).

[11] *Joannis Dlugossii Historiae Polonicae libri XII*, ed. Aleksander Przeździecki, 5 vols. (Cracow, 1873-77), iv, XI, 542 ff.

multitudo – remaining in the courtyard. After the debate, the lords (*consiliarii et primores Regni*) decided which of the motions would be supported by all the elders, and the Marshal made an appropriate announcement to the crowd gathered in the courtyard, demanding that its members express either disapproval or support. The final acceptance was disturbed by three delegates who came to the rostrum and started to speak, but were pushed away, thus thwarting the protest.

Regardless of the veracity of the description provided by Długosz, it demonstrates vividly certain mechanisms of the binding procedure. First and foremost, it indicates two distinguished circles: the narrower circle, which made the decisions after a discussion, and the second, whose task was to accept or to reject the measures. Naturally, their rank was uneven, but the impact of the gathered crowd upon the final resolution remains an open question. The assembled members of the gentry probably did not passively wait for decisions of the first group, but would have exchanged views and became involved in discussions; it was here that public opinion and the convictions of the widely noblemen's community assumed shape. Such gatherings proved to be an excellent school of political education and an opportunity for the more enterprising individuals, to use this as a springboard for a political career.[12]

The legislative assemblies in Poland went through many stages before assuming a form based on elected representatives – deputies. The dignitaries made various attempts at retaining their power to make decisions, even at the price of expanding the group of the initiated to more than ten persons. This was the situation at a dietine in Łęczyca (1448), which debated ways of rendering court procedures more effective. The dignitaries were accompanied by twelve representatives of the gentry, entitled to speak on behalf of the whole community.[13] On certain occasions, the monarch became directly involved in attempts at excluding the 'gentry masses' from influencing various

---

[12] Józef Siemieński, 'Od sejmików do sejmu 1454-1505', in *Studia historyczne ku czci Stanisława Kutrzeby* (Cracow, 1938), i, 449 ff.

[13] Jerzy Włodarczyk, 'Sejmiki łęczyckie do początku XVI w.', *Czasopismo Prawno-Historyczne*, xii (1960), 32.

---

decisions. In 1452, the plenary sessions of the General Sejm held in Sieradz were suspended. Długosz recorded:

> When noblemen from among the gentry community spoke harsh words against members of the council, who governed the Commonwealth, the king asked to suspend the public debates of the Sejm and render them private. Once this took place, he summoned eight lords of the council, excluding all the rest.[14]

It was precisely this group of eight lords who constituted the privy council. Not always did proceedings of this sort produce effects. The *szlachta* systematically increased its influence upon decisions pertaining both to their land and the state as a whole. In 1477, once again at a land dietine in Łęczyca, the commissary judges appointed by the king, all of whom were high-ranking dignitaries: the voivode, castellan, and *starosta* of Łęczyca, announced that they had decided to adjourn the case which they were to adjudicate until the king's arrival. The reason was the refusal of the gentry gathered at the dietine to recognise the court, whose appointment was regarded as contrary to the law of the land.[15] This protest, which openly infringed upon royal privileges, illustrates well the atmosphere in which the gentry attained political maturity.

The process of sanctioning new principles took place at the end of the fifteenth century, when the General Diets were attended only by deputies elected by the nobility, and land officials no longer appeared in their capacity as representatives of the king. It would be an exaggeration, however, to speak about full democratisation and a stronger position won by the noblemen *communitas* in relation to the magnates. In the first extant list of all the parliamentary deputies in 1504, as many as 16 out of a total of 54 without doubt belonged to the group of dignitaries and magnates, thus enabling it to maintain a dominating position.[16]

---

[14] *Joannis Dlugossii, Historiae Polonicae libri XII*, v, XII (XIII), 115; Michalski (ed.) *Historia sejmu polskiego*, i, 17; cf. Fałkowski, 'Możnowładztwo polskie wobec króla', 22.

[15] Włodarczyk, 'Sejmiki łęczyckie do początku XVI w.', 32 ff.

[16] Stanisław Russocki, 'Początki Zgromadzeń Stanowych w Europie Środkowej', *Przegląd Historyczny*, lxvi (1975), 178.

The increasing importance won in public life by the gentry was accompanied by a collective belief in its achievements and exceptional role in the state, frequently expressed in an aspiration to sanction this privileged rank. This was the domain of the nobility's privileges, which also went through assorted phases. The foundation and point of departure for all the freedoms enjoyed by the nobility was the privilege of Koszyce from 1374, while the privilege granted in Nieszawa in 1454 was already evident proof of the fact that the noblemen's community not only wished to possess separate rights, but intended to impose them on other social groups.[17] When in 1505 King Alexander, confirming the laws of the realm, declared: 'If we had acted in any manner contrary to the freedoms, liberties and laws of the Kingdom, we recognise such conduct *ipso facto* as invalid',[18] he had in mind not the state, but actually the community of the noblemen. In this way, a certain social-ideological process had come to an end; by equalising the interests of the Kingdom and the nobility, it actually identified 'the political nation' with *communitas nobilium*. In order to detail the political ambience of the period, it seems worth adding that some of the privileges were obtained in an atmosphere of upheaval and even war, when the gentry, assisting the homeland at the hour of its supreme need, exploited the situation for the purpose of placing effective pressure on the ruler. While on the subject of gentry privileges, we should return to the differentiation of this stratum's community. Privileges constituted a programme formulated by the elite and produced immediate benefits; their impact upon the life of the 'masses' is less tangible – apparently, it did not affect them to the same degree as the upper strata.[19]

The conviction about the liberty and equality of the nobility, stemming from natural law and the influence of *eo ipso* on the law established by the monarchs, assumed different institutional forms, one of them being confederacies. The origin and assessment of those undertakings remains the theme of discussions held by historians; one must agree, however, that confederacies performed an essential role in the life of the country.[20] On the one hand, they originated from the medieval right of resistance. Their objectives included protection against some policies of encroachment of rulers, such as the confiscation of landed estates without a court verdict; on the other hand, their goals encompassed 'state-building' strivings. Not by accident did the Confederacy of Nowy Korczyn, set up in 1438 on the initiative of Zbigniew Oleśnicki, intend to cast out 'disobedience towards universal land law, disturbances convulsing the kingdom, and the errors of heretics'.[21] The Confederacy of Spytek of Melsztyn, which took place a year later, aspired to act 'for the sake of the venerable Crown, that is, the republic'.[22] The identification of the concept of *corona* with *respublica* was characteristic; and in the second half of the fifteenth century it became introduced into chancery praxis. Mention has been made of the fact that the question of the confederacy is extremely complex, and that it certainly involved a multitude of intersecting aspects; universal interests and the moulding of group consciousness 'running' alongside egoism or anarchistic attitudes – hence the researchers' different appraisals of the effects of the confederacies.

One of the elements of political culture, and to a considerable degree its very essence, was legal consciousness and the emergence of court procedures. Apparently, land courts contained discernible traces of *sui generis* customs and habits. For example, a given case could not be examined during the

---

[17] Stanisław Roman, *Przywileje nieszawskie* (Warsaw, 1957).

[18] *Volumina Legum*, i, ed. Józef Ohryzko (St. Petersburg, 1859), 356.

[19] Cf. Henryk Samsonowicz, 'Relacje międzystanowe w Polsce w XV wieku', in Stefan K. Kuczyński (ed.), *Społeczeństwo Polski średniowiecznej*, ii (Warsaw, 1982), 264; Edward Potkowski, 'Pismo i polityka. Początki publicystyki politycznej w Polsce XV w.', in *Kultura, polityka, dyplomacja: Studia ofiarowane prof. Jaremie Maciszewskiemu w sześćdziesiątą rocznicę jego urodzin* (Warsaw, 1990), 336 ff.

[20] Cf. Wanda Moszczeńska, 'Rola polityczna rycerstwa wielkopolskiego w czasie bezkrólewia po Ludwiku Wielkim', *Przegląd Historyczny*, xxv (1925), 81; Jerzy Łojko, 'Konfederacja Macieja Borkowica', *Roczniki Historyczne*, xliii (1977), 29-58; see also remarks by Bronisław Geremek, 'Życie polityczne i kultura polityczna', in idem (ed.), *Kultura Polski średniowiecznej XIV-XV w.* (Warsaw, 1997), 591 ff.

[21] Jacek Wiesiołowski, 'Kultura szlachecka', *ibid.*, 175.

[22] *Ibid.*; cf. A. Sochacka, 'Konfederacja Spytka z Melsztyna z 1439 r.: Rozgrywka polityczna czy ruch ideologiczny', *Rocznik Lubelski*, xiii (1973).

absence of one of the parties, and the initiation of brawls was prohibited as was insulting one's adversary. Nor could a person make disclosures that would hinder a fair trial or make charges that questioned the impartiality of the judge.[23]

It is by no means an easy task to define the origin of certain forms of behaviour and practices of the gentry. Keeping in mind a great differentiation, it seems that the gentry indubitably witnessed a transference of certain models from regal or magnate courts to the provinces.[24] The particularism probably remained a predominating tendency throughout the whole country. We know that the consequences of feudal disintegration were evident for an extremely long time, e. g. the land dietines of Little Poland came into being much later than those in Greater Poland. Disintegration and parochialism were evident also in limited knowledge about the more distant world – court registers from Łęczyca (third quarter of the fifteenth century) do not contain a single world about the Thirteen Years' War, waged at the time.[25] The absence of wider political interests was accompanied, however, by references to historical tradition, employed as a political argument in the testimonies of witnesses at the Polish-Teutonic Order trials.[26] Other factors which fall under the subject also contributed to an integration of the lands of the Commonwealth, discernible in the eastern terrains. The Lithuanian boyars successfully urged Władysław Jagiello to grant them privileges which evidently emulated the privileges of the Polish nobility; the first was announced in 1387, already soon after the treaty of Kréva. In turn, in 1436 the nobility of Halicz Rus',

incorporated into the Crown, set up a confederation whose objective was to mobilise all dignitaries and the common gentry for the purpose of guaranteeing them an active part in the dietines; furthermore, it was recommended that the resolutions of the dietines should be accepted under the penalty of property confiscation.[27] This confederation testified to the emancipation of the gentry, which by means of taking part in public life wished to become independent of magnate domination.

Ending these remarks it seems suitable to add that the political culture of the nobility in late medieval Poland assumed different forms and provoked historians to formulate equally varied assessments. Well-aware of the numerous shortcomings of, and gaps in research, we assume that one of the possible tasks in the future will entail extensive comparative studies. Already thirty years ago Stanisław Russocki wrote:

> From the viewpoint of contents and method, we would be inclined to seek the most appropriate *tertium comparationis* for the emergent nobility's culture in Poland in the relations which prevailed in Hungary from the end of the fourteenth century to the first half of the sixteenth century.[28]

Translated by Aleksandra Rodzinska-Chojnowska

---

[23] Wiesiołowski, 'Kultura szlachecka', 186.

[24] Cf. Georges Duby, 'La vulgarisation des modèles culturels dans la société féodale', in Louis Bergeron (ed.), *Niveaux de culture et groupes sociaux: Actes du colloque réuni du 7 au 9 mai 1966 a l'Ecole Normale Supérieure* (Paris, 1967), 33-40; Wojciech Iwańczak, 'Zamki królewskie i arystokratyczne w Czechach jako miejsce tworzenia, recepcji i przekazywania wzorów kultury', in Krzysztof Wachowski (ed.), *Kultura średniowiecznego Śląska i Czech: Zamek* (Wrocław, 1996), 13-20.

[25] Włodarczyk, 'Sejmiki łęczyckie do początku XVI w.', 44.

[26] Helena Chłopocka, *Procesy Polski z Zakonem krzyżackim w XIV w.* (Poznań, 1967); Wiesław Sieradzan, *Świadomość historyczna świadków w procesach polsko-krzyżackich w XIV i XV wieku* (Toruń, 1993).

[27] Michalski (ed.), *Historia sejmu polskiego*, 26 ff.

[28] Russocki, 'Uwagi o kulturze politycznej Polski', 16 ff.

The Political Culture in the Bohemian Kingdom of the Luxembourg Period

(from the Beginning of the 14th Century until the Outbreak of the Hussite Revolution of 1419)

Miloslav Polívka

Towards the end of the 13th century it was clearly evident that, apart from the King, the nobility was the principal force determining the political and administrative development in the Bohemian Kingdom. It formed a community, which demarcated its rights within the Land during the reign of the last Przemyslids and attempted to define rules on the basis of which it would either support the sovereign or hinder his activities not only within his royal domain but also with regard to foreign policy. The situation finally came to a head under the reign of Przemysl Otakar II (1253-78), when the King and his courtiers had to give serious thought to finding a common ground with the representatives of the aristocratic community, whose importance had been on the increase. It seems that the Sovereign and his close advisers underestimated the new balance of power, on the other hand the free aristocratic community was unable to exercise its new powers prudently. It united itself and successfully fought against the formulation of a mandatory written law, as well as any excessive taxation of their property by the Sovereign, which would have provided the King with huge sums for his own consumption and representation. The nobility did not always further its estate freedoms and goals in a straightforward and gentlemanly manner. In tense situations, which were likely to cause clashes with the king, interest groups would appear and clandestinely approach foreign countries nearby to gain support for their vested interests. The failure of both leading powers to co-operate in the 1270s resulted in the fateful defeat of Przemysl Otakar II at

the Battle of Marchfeld (1278) and in the administration of the Czech Lands being subordinated to Otto of Brandenburg and Rudolph I Habsburg until the underage son of Przemysl, Wenceslas II, acceeded to the royal crown.[1]

Within a few years of the interregnum and foreign administration the Bohemian nobility realised that the country without its own sovereign and with foreign regents faced serious pitfalls. The nobles on their own were unable to muster sufficient authority for the administration of the country despite their high ambitions and a wider scope for their political activities. One of the main obstacles was that the absence of a sovereign splintered the nobility's unity. This led them to enforce their factional interests, which caused unrest to the country's political, legal and economic system. A weak status of the nobility was also evident in foreign policy and diplomacy, where persons uncrowned or undecorated with at least ducal titles had little chance of participating in important discussions held at the courts of neighbouring rulers, and even less so in representing the country and promoting its interests successfully with a Holy Roman Emperor or the Papal Curia.

The Bohemian nobility was well aware of the ambivalency of its relationship with a king and great importance attached to his personality and for this reason they strove for the release of young Prince Wenceslas from Brandenburg captivity from the early 1280s. In 1283 the nobility warmly welcomed the accession of Wenceslas II to the throne and confirmed it through his election in 1297. Representatives of the Bohemian Estate community considered the acceptance of the Polish Crown in 1300 by the Czech King as an expression of their increasing prestige beyond the borders of their country. For similar reasons, the election of Wenceslas III (1305), who had earlier received the title of Hungarian King (1301), followed the same course. It seemed that the restoration of the dynastic reign of the

Przemyslid house and its increasing influence in Central Europe would bring peace and prosperity to the Czech Lands and that the preceding development of relations between the sovereign and the near-constituted aristocratic community would be again imitated. The doors to the arena of foreign policy were once again wide open for the sovereign; his fundamental rights to enjoy the resources of the Land were respected, such as the right to mint coins and to share in the high profits of precious metal mining; to collect taxes and the duty to maintain peace in the Land. The nobility also had its rights re-affirmed by the sovereign, namely to rule over their own property and to define, judge and administer jurisdictional and property rights within its own community through its own organs, especially the Land Court.[2]

However, the assassination of the very young Bohemian King Wenceslas III in 1306 and the following four years of repeated changes to the Bohemian throne dashed any hopes of such a straightforward game on the political chessboard. The immaturity of the Bohemian aristocratic community and a lack of fully developed political ideas regarding the further development of the Bohemian state repeatedly manifested themselves. Whereas one section of the nobility, tempted by a promise to have all the current estate privileges confirmed, voted for Henry of Carinthia as Bohemian King during the September Diet of 1306, the rival faction of noblemen decided to elect Rudolph of Habsburg (d. 1307), son of the Roman King Albrecht I (1298-1308) at their convention held one month later. He also acknowledged the ancient privileges of the Bohemian Kingdom and its nobility, including a charter called the Golden Sicilian Bull (1212), which guaranteed the right to elect a sovereign by noblemen and yeomen. Thus, both instances document how highly the Bohemian nobility valued the close link betwen a new candidate and the ancient privileges of the Bohemian Kingdom and also the privileges of aristocratic corporations but above all the dynastic tradition.

[1] Dušan Třeštík and Miloslav Polívka, 'Nástin vývoje české šlechty do konce 15. století', in Ján Čierny, František Hejl and Antonín Verbík (eds.), *Struktura české společnosti na území Československa a Polska do přelomu 15. a 16. století* (Prague, 1984), 99-133; Josef Žemlička, *Století posledních Přemyslovců. Český stát a společnost ve 13. století* (Prague, 1986); Vratislav Vaníček, *Velké dějiny zemí Koruny české III, 1250-1310* (Prague and Litomyšl, 2002); Jan Urban, *Lichtenburkové. Vzestupy a pády jednoho panského rodu* (Prague, 2003).

[2] Jan Janák and Zdeňka Hledíková, *Dějiny správy v českých zemích do roku 1945* (Prague, 1989), 49-87. From foreign general publications on this period cf. especially Friedrich Prinz (ed.), *Böhmen und Mähren* (Berlin, 1993), 113-33; Jörg K. Hoensch, *Die Luxemburger. Eine spätmittelalterliche Dynastie gesamteuropäischer Bedeutung 1308-1437* (Stuttgart, 2000).

Henry of Carinthia was married to Anne, daughter of Wenceslas II. Envoys sent to negotiate with Rudolph I also enquired whether he would promise the Diet to marry the widow of Wenceslas II, Elisabeth Rejčka. This was not merely a matter of geneaology but also that of power and property. In the former sense a hereditary claim of the Bohemian kings to the Duchy of Carinthia was involved and in the latter to the Polish Kingdom itself.[3] The idea of maintaining the international status of the Bohemian Kingdom was very important for the nobility. A fierce interest in the Bohemian throne shown by some foreign candidates after 1306, made the Bohemian nobility aware of its importance for the election of a sovereign and simultaneously strengthened the nobility's confidence that it might influence, at least partly, the succession of a new sovereign to the throne. However, the nobility itself was still unable to select a single candidate, owing to mutual disunity.

One of the witnesses of those events, the author of the earliest Czech written chronicle in verse, called Dalimil (d. after 1314), returns to this period in several chapters. Although he himself was probably of noble origin, he did not spare the nobility his biting criticism. After the election of Rudolph of Habsburg he wrote: 'Oh Czechs, have you not grown a little wiser over the years? You have given the throne to the enemy, the son of King Albrecht, Rudolph, a Duke from Austria, and thus you have placed a new yoke over your shoulders, you will fare badly in this country ...'.[4] Twice he expressed an opinion about Henry of Carinthia then sitting on the Bohemian throne saying: 'he was indeed a good person but a sort of bungler ... he cares not for the land, he commits a great sin since nothing else interests him but his own big belly'.[5] In a longer account he blames the nobility for this state of affairs 'Czech nobles picked up bad manners and

---

[3] Alois Niederstätter, *Österreichische Geschichte 1278-1411. Die Herrschaft, Österreich. Fürst und Land im Spätmittelalter* (Vienna, 2001); Miloslav Polívka, 'Habsburci cestou na výsluní (1278-1490)', in Václav Veber (ed.), *Dějiny Rakouska* (Prague, 2002), 135-98.

[4] Jiří Daňhelka, Karel Hádek, Bohuslav Havránek and Naděžda Kvítková (eds.), *Staročeská kronika tak řečeného Dalimila*, Vol. II (Prague 1998), 476.

[5] *Ibid.*, 477.

started to play dice [vrhcáby] for amusement... However, has someone ever seen such dimwits in another country, who would invite arrogant foreigners to their conventions. In this matter Czechs indeed rank first ... to follow the custom which will disgrace and dishonour them ...'.[6]

The chronicle (*Aula regia*), which was written in the first third of the 14th century by the first abbots of the Zbraslav monastery, built near Prague, is not as sarcastic in its tone, yet it harshly criticises the state of affairs in the Bohemian Kingdom, e.g. the nobility had mis-selected candidates for the vacant royal throne; it did not manage to govern the country on its own; and for the third time it was unable to agree on a new king: 'some of the nobles ... discussed the Austrian Duke Friedrich among themselves, others the Margrave of Meissen ... yet another group some Polish Duke'.[7]

The years 1306-10 can be described as the period of steep decline of the political culture in the Czech Lands. The role of a sovereign and that of the aristocratic community functioned no more, likewise the mutual links and communication between these two pillars of the country, upon which the administration, wealth and strength of the Kingdom was based. Sources complain of the disorder and chaos which engulfed the Czech Lands and created scope for the theft of property on a large scale and the loss of security for inhabitants and visitors alike. This was also captured in words by the Zbraslav Abbot Conrad: 'I have come from the Bohemian Kingdom, which used to be held in high esteem and shone like the blossom of the early spring, but now, unfortunately, when the reins of peace and unity have been removed, it is no longer respected and has slipped into silence, crushed by the burden of its grief'.[8] In addition the Abbot regretted the extinction of the Przemyslid dynastic tradition and that the Bohemian Kingdom had lost its significant status among prominent European countries.

Allegedly, these were the words which Abbot Conrad delivered during his audience with the newly elected Roman King Henry VII of Luxembourg

---

[6] *Ibid.*, 501.

[7] *Chronicon Aulae regiae*, ed. Josef Emler, in: Fontes rerum bohemicarum, Vol. IV, Prague 1884, 124.

[8] *Ibid.*, 125.

in Heilbronn in August 1309. He was received by King Henry VII together with Peter Žitavský, who described the course of their audience in the Zbraslav Chronicle. However, he was also the spokesperson of a broadly based group of the Bohemian and Moravian aristocratic community, the clergy and towns, united in their approval for this discreet negotiation. Then, Peter of Aspelt, one of Henry's advisers, who had become familiar with the conditions in Bohemia during time spent there as Lord Chancellor to Wenceslas II, gave support to the Abbot. Conrad then suggested a marriage between Henry's son John and Elisabeth Przemyslid, daughter of Wenceslas II, which would have somewhat continued the Przemyslid dynastic tradition.[9] Peter of Aspelt embraced the Bohemian matter wholeheartedly and worked towards its successful completion one year later.[10]

After his return to Prague, Abbot Conrad informed the circle who were the most intimate insiders to this plan. The chance of its success increased as this group succeeded in finding more supporters for this solution, not only within the aristocratic community, but also amongst the clergy and burghers. Although they could not be directly involved in the election of a king, the clergy and burghers sought protection of their property through this solution; additionally, the burghers envisaged a further growth in international trade which had suffered greatly during the time of military conflicts. Although the nobility was involved in addressing disputes affecting the existence of the Bohemian Kingdom, it did not manage to achieve much, not even during the interregnum, due to their disunity. The nobility had to moderate their condescending attitude towards the clergy which offered to mediate help from abroad, out of fear for the existence of their institutions and ecclesiastical property.[11] It happened at the moment when the Bohemian nobility realised

---

[9] *Ibid.*, 125-6.

[10] On the issues of this development cf. Jiří Spěváček, *Jan Lucemburský a jeho doba 1296-1346. K prvnímu vstupu českých zemí do svazku se západní Evropou* (Prague, 1994); Michel Pauly (ed.), *Johann der Blinde, Graf von Luxemburg, König von Böhmen 1296-1346* (Luxembourg, 1997); and the most recent publication with an extensive bibliography by Lenka Bobková and Milena Bartlová, *Velké dějiny zemí Koruny české 1310-1402.* IV/a-b (Prague, 2003).

[11] František Kadlec, *Přehled českých církevních dějin,* Vol. I (Rome, 1987), 137-211.

that it had become entangled in inter-state politics for which it lacked relevant contacts, who might mediate access to places of influence abroad, as well as the experience of conducting competent negotiations. The burghers also had to be accommodated, although the nobility held the mercantile class in contempt, as their help was needed; indeed, the burghers bore the brunt of the taxes necessary for the administration of the country and for financing the costs of foreign negotiations. In additon, the patricians of Cheb, Kutná Hora and Prague maintained links with their contacts in Imperial towns, which had their own patrons at the Royal Court. Since the Bohemian towns occupied a precarious ground in society, they expected to be rewarded with political and economic privileges for their involvement. They begrudged the contemporary curatorship of royal officials over their administration and finances.[12]

Following one year of intense negotiations with the Roman King, the Bohemian 'pro-Luxembourg' faction suceeded in gaining Henry VII's approval in the spring of 1310. They also persuaded the majority of the Bohemian nobility that there were clear advantages to the election of John of Luxembourg as Bohemian King. As early as January 1310 the Roman King acknowledged all the contemporary rights, customs and freedoms of the Bohemian Kingdom to the Bohemian aristocratic community. Although both he and his son John, after his election as Bohemian King, confirmed the privileges of the nobility and those of the ecclesiastical institutions and towns (so-called Inauguration Diplomas), John of Luxembourg did not make any mention of the question of the estates of an entire country in politics, and the aristocratic community remained his only counterpart. For several of the following decades the Church and towns continued to be excluded from official political life, the domain of the ruling powers, because they did not have access to Diet discussions and to the offices of the Land.

John of Luxembourg, together with his advisor Peter of Aspelt and other members of the Royal Court and the Chancery, who were foreigners, expected that John, having granted the nobility their wish to have him as Bohemian King and by acknowledging their ancient rights, would be assisted by the aristocratic community in the restoration of royal power and its

---

[12] František Hoffmann, *České město ve středověku* (Prague, 1992), 43-61, 247-75.

misappropriated property. So did the ecclesiastical institutions headed by the Bishop of Prague, John IV of Dražice (1301-43). King John and his advisors, however, met with stiff resistance on the part of the nobility, who refused to return both royal and ecclesiastical estates.

In addition the nobility were strongly opposed to having the country ruled over by foreigners who arrived with the Sovereign from Luxembourg or from the German Lands. The nobles also had some reservations to the lifestyle at the Royal Court to which John introduced a whole range of Western, especially French, customs during his stays in Prague. Bohemian lords accustomed to communicating in their native tongue, were irritated by the fact that customary amusements at the court, such as polite conversation, the reading of literature and singing, were done in a language which was incomprehensible to the majority of the local participants.

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *</p>

After several years the relationship between the nobility and the Royal Court came to a head. The nobility remained united in their belief that it would keep their possessions and privileges regardless of the King's view. In addition, two aristocratic groups began to plot against the King and his wife Elisabeth with the intention of gaining a leading role in the Kingdom. This open conflict between the King and the nobility only ended in the truce of 1318 when the King, in fact, recognised all the rights of the nobility to administer the country, including his acceptance of the nobility's proposals for the re-distribution of Land offices. The Bohemian nobility conducted themselves with an uncharacteristic inflexibility towards John and demonstrated that it made a large step forward in terms of the dualism of royal and aristocratic powers. King John was allocated an exclusive place in the domain of foreign policy, which he realised abroad – partly in the interests of the expansion of the Bohemian state – especially in the Empire and Northern Italy. His territorial conquests and successful diplomacy thus allowed him to lay the foundations of the concept of the Crown of the Bohemian Kingdom (*Corona regni Bohemiae*). He heralded the emergence of a large union of the countries subordinated to the authority of the Bohemian King – the permanent domain of the Luxembourg dynasty.

During his extended stays abroad, John of Luxembourg appointed some of his loyal lords to administer his Kingdom. In 1333 he was, however, visited in Italian Merano by a delegation of the Bohemian nobility who demanded the presence of the Sovereign in the country because of troubles in the country and diplomatic disputes with their Austrian neighbours. John sent his eldest son Charles to Bohemia and granted him the title of the Margrave of Moravia. In reality, Charles became John's co-ruler. He arrived acquainted with the situation in the Bohemian Lands not merely from information regularly dispatched to the French and the Reich's courts, and to the temporal and ecclesiastical Electors, with whom both his father and he himself were in contact. In addition he learned from John's accounts of the conditions in the Kingdom, which reminded the first Luxembourg of an unbroken horse. Despite his youth, the highly perceptive Charles demonstrated his ability to analyse the situation and to use it as a springboard for strengthening his position in the Bohemian Kingdom. His wife Blanche of Valois gave him a willing hand with his work, as she joined in representative and diplomatic responsibilities and tried to assimilate herself within the Czech environment. The ruler's determination to learn Czech also helped him to acquaint himself with his new surroundings and establish his contacts there.

Based on these facts, he avoided the fatal mistake committed by his father. He did not combine his accession to power with a reckless struggle againt the nobility, which was a well recognised force in the Bohemian state. He exploited the occasion for appointing some of the lords present at the negotiations in Merano to important positions. For example, the important position of the Lord Chamberlain was given to a member of an important South Bohemian magnate family, Peter of Rosenberg, and that of his Deputy to Wilhelm of Landstein. It is true that he added a number of foreigners to his Chancery but this was nothing unusual in terms of its territorial competence. He, however, silenced any potential objections by appointing Nicholas of Brno, a Moravian, as the Chancellor. Similar to his father, the King began to grant various privileges to the towns, because they contributed abundant finances to the treasury. In addition, he cleverly exploited the Crown Land assets (namely the royal claim to an income from mining precious metals and minerals), which was rather profitable for him. Using these finances,

Charles IV properly bought back royal properties held as security without incurring the displeasure of the nobility.

Naturally, the Church became his most important ally in diplomacy and politics, also. Both at home and abroad he had staunch supporters in high ecclesiastical posts. They were the Prague bishops John IV of Dražice (d. 1343) and then Ernest (Arnošt) of Pardubice (d. 1364, from 1344 onwards the first Archbishop of Prague), who were indebted to Charles for protecting ecclesiastical property and for his generous donations towards the establishment of the local ecclesiastical system and certain grandiose constructions. In terms of the European dimension of patronage, the young Prince Charles could also rely upon the important spiritual dignitaries of the Empire, primarily Balduin, the Archbishop of Trier, his father's brother, and the former Parisian tutor of Charles, now Pope Clement VI (1342-52).

The fact that Charles succeeded in having the Prague bishopric elevated to an archbishopric (1344) must have made a positive impression. This also brought liberation from the former bond of dependence on the German Archbishopric of Mainz. The ecclesiastical dues, formerly payable abroad, could be diverted towards the administration of the local Church and its construction. The title of the highest ecclesiastical authority in the Land was acquired by Ernest of Pardubice, himself educated at foreign universities. He was one of the King's foremost advisers and he introduced the elements of a Western European political culture into the life of the Church.

In the summer of 1346 Charles IV was elected the new Roman King and soon after the death of his main rival, Emperor Louis IV of the Bavarian Wittelsbach Family (1347), he became the true ruler of the Holy Roman Empire. Charles considered both of his titles – Roman and Bohemian – to be of exceptional significance. He was only able to make minor changes to the Imperial rituals, yet he had the Imperial insignia and holy relics displayed in Nuremberg, a strategically important and rather wealthy Imperial city, which was to become the second most important centre of the Empire after Prague. The Sovereign made elaborate preparations for the festivities connected with his coronation in Prague. As early as 1341 he was aware that it was imminent, because his sick father John pronounced his son's claim to the Bohemian throne at that time. Soon afterwards Charles IV had a new Bohemian crown made, which he dedicated to Good King Wenceslas, the

patron of the Land. It was to adorn the Saint's head resting in the Prague Cathedral of St. Vitus.

The exquisite crown of St. Wenceslas was to symbolise the Luxembourgs' connection with the Przemyslid tradition.[13] The preparation of the new *Coronation Order of the Bohemian Kings* and *The Order of the Blessing of the Queen* followed in this vein. In the former, Charles and his advisors combined traditions observed during the coronations of Roman emperors with the customs observed by the Przemyslid Princes and Kings. Most likely, the French model, which emphasised greater pomp in the ritual, manifested itself here. Following the agreement between Charles and the Pope, the right to annoint a King and to hand him other royal insignia was vested in a Prague Archbishop. In accordance with the Przemyslid model, the official ceremony lasted two days. It began at Vyšehrad, the alleged earliest seat of the Przemyslids, and finished at Prague Castle on the second day. After a ceremonial hymn of *Te Deum laudamus*, the ritual was concluded with an Old-Bohemian Christian song *Hospodine pomiluj ny*. In the consequent festivities and feasts, the Bohemian magnates had an opportunity to present themselves as the holders of high office, and the lower nobility demonstrated their fighting prowess in tournaments.

The establishment in 1348 of a Prague university, once the Pope had granted his consent, was significant for the improvement of the level of general education and for the consequent transformation of the political culture. This institution of higher learning was the first one situated north of the Alps and east of the River Rhine. The King and the Archbishop succeeded in attracting prominent personalities from the ranks of teachers and graduates of the Italian and French universities to staff this University. Its students came from various regions of the German Lands, from Poland and Austria. Naturally, it was also open to candidates from South-Western Europe. The University soon established its reputation and a number of Bohemian students from the burgher and aristocratic circles also valued it highly. Here,

---

[13] Bobková, *Velké dějiny*, IV/a, 221-6.

they acquired the necessary skills especially for professions in the Church, law and medicine.[14]

Charles IV, as the Roman King and from 1355 its Emperor, too, received a huge revenue from the Empire. He was able to pursue a broad policy of territorial expansion. He primarily concentrated upon the acquisition of towns and castles to the west of the Bohemian borders and established the region of so-called New Bohemia. These territories were linked to the Bohemian Kingdom through vassalage in order to guarantee a safe corridor between Prague as the imperial seat and the Rhineland and France via Nuremberg. The seriousness with which he viewed this project and its inter-connection with the Bohemian environment is documented in the visual arts. At his favourite castle of Lauf he had more than one hundred Bohemian coats of arms painted; in the small town of Hersbruck, the intersection of trading routes between South Germany and Bohemia, he had the Bohemian lion depicted on a stained glass panel, and in other places the Bohemian patron St. Wenceslas.[15]

Charles also initiated construction activity on a grandiose scale in Bohemia. He invited foreign master builders in order to introduce new archi-tectural elements then widespread in South-Western Europe. The Frenchman Matthias of Arras began to build Karlstein, an impregnable castle constructed near Prague for the safe-keeping of Imperial treasures and the royal insignia. It is renowned for the beauty of its Holyrood Chapel, decorated with a gallery of Saints painted by Master Theodoricus.[16] The same architect also built the church at Karlov, which was to resemble Aachen Cathedral where the majority of the Roman Kings, starting with Charlemagne, were crowned. The arrival of the master builder Peter Parler from Swabia provided the

reconstruction of the Prague Castle and especially the Cathedral of St. Vitus with the characteristic features of mature South German architecture combined with French influences.[17] Following the example of the Royal Court, the ecclesiastical and aristocratic institutions also adopted innovative impulses in their architecture. Bishop John IV of Dražice introduced the elements of Southern French Gothic especially during the reconstruction of his seat at Roudnice on the Elbe, the Rosenbergs in the construction of churches and the reconstruction of Český Krumlov Castle, the Lords of Kunštát in their Prague palace. The representative buildings belonging to patricians and other burghers did not lag far behind.

Following his successes on the international political scene and decreased tension with the nobility, the King revived his idea to provide the country with a unified legal code, which would be codified in writing. This work started in the Royal Court circles, most likely with a significant support from the ecclesiastical authorities there, at the beginning of the 1340s. Its aim was to restrict the power of the aristocracy and to abolish the right of the Land Court to 'find' a verdict. For example, some methods of physical punishment for the serfs, within the nobility's competence, were to be banned. On the other hand the versions of the code, indirectly preserved, show that Charles intended to protect the inalienability of the royal estates and competences not merely in the principal but also in the subsidiary lands of the Bohemian Crown. The adoption of such a legal code, called *Maiestas Carolina*, was, however, unacceptable to the aristocratic community. It objected so strongly to its proclamation that Charles decided to announce that the manuscript of the code had been partly destroyed by fire and partly lost. The situation in the Kingdom soon settled down.[18]

Immediately afterwards Charles turned his attention to legislation for the Holy Roman Empire as a whole. He submitted a broad-based Bill to the Imperial Diet sitting in Nuremberg. It was to regulate legal affairs within the Empire but in addition to general Imperial affairs, Charles was interested in

---

[14] František Šmahel, *Pražské universitní studentstvo před husitskou revolucí* (Prague, 1967); Michal Svatoš (ed.), *Dějiny Univerity Karlovy 1347/48-1622,* I (Prague, 1995), 27-100.

[15] Lenka Bobková, *Územní politika prvních Lucemburků na českém trůně* (Ústí nad Labem, 1993); Hartmut Scholz, *Die mittelalterlichen Glasmalereien in Mittelfranken und Nürnberg extra muros* (Berlin, 2002).

[16] Jiří Fajt (ed.), *Magister Theodoricus. Dvorní malíř císaře Karla IV.* (Prague, 1997).

[17] Anton Legner (ed.), *Die Parler und der Schöne Stil 1350-1400,* 4 vols. (Cologne, 1978).

[18] Bobková, *Velké dějiny,* IV/a, 315-8.

those matters which related specifically to the Bohemian Kingdom. He stipulated that the Bohemian King was to be the first among all the electors; the electors were to speak the mother tongues of the nations belonging to the Empire, including Czech; he had the fiefs acquired within the Empire incorporated within the union of the Lands of the Bohemian Crown; he also banned the inhabitants of the Bohemian Kingdom from submitting their cases to courts beyond the country's borders and foreign courts were not to exercise any authority over them. The most important part of this Reich statute, which was in principle valid until the beginning of the 19th century was that the Bohemian Kingdom was pronounced as inalienable and its political community was afforded the right to elect its own king.[19]

There were no objections to this Code in Bohemian society. On the contrary, the representatives of the Bohemian aristocratic community, arriving to Reich diets in Nuremberg enjoyed the spectacle of watching the horologe at the Church of Our Lady on the main square – at the stroke of noon each day the Reich electors walked round the seated Bohemian King Charles IV to the tune of trumpet players. Members of a prominent Bohemian family the Zajícs of Hasenburg were even appointed the hereditary lord protectors of Nuremberg Royal castle.[20]

King Charles suceeded in avoiding any fundamental conflict with the Bohemian aristocratic community. He left well alone and made it possible for certain individuals chosen from its ranks to participate in political life. He made good use of the support of the Church for the administration of the country and in diplomatic relations on the international arena, for which he was given the nickname of the 'Popish King' *(Pfaffenkönig)* in Germany. He understood the economic strength of towns and by supporting their economic privileges he acquired resources for his political activities. Despite minor

---

[19] Bernhard-Ulrich Hergemöller, *Der Nürnberger Reichstag von 1355/1356 und die „Goldene Bulle" Karls IV.* (Münster, 1978); Bobková, *Velké dějiny*, IV/a, 318-24.

[20] On the questions of Charles IV's relations to Nuremberg and South Germany in recent publications see Miloslav Polívka, 'Das Bild Frankens im mittelalterlichen Böhmen', in Johannes Merz and Robert Schuh (eds.), *Franken im Mittelalter, Francia orientalis, Franconia, Land zu Franken: Raum und Geschichte* (Munich, 2004), 297-306.

conflicts, the Bohemian Kingdom was in a good shape when he handed it over at the time when the entire society was threatened by a papal schism. Contrary to his father John who had never enjoyed his stays in the Bohemian Lands, Charles settled well into the Bohemian Kingdom. He had more time on his hands to understand the different environments of the Bohemian and Western European countries. Where his father faced conflicts boldly, starting with a settlement between the King and the nobility in political affairs and up to their different cultural lifestyles, Charles trod much more carefully. He identified his allies in the Church and towns and together they challenged the expansionist might of the Bohemian nobility. He introduced acceptable elements of a European culture into a Bohemian environment, thus providing it with universal dimensions.

The oldest of Charles's sons, who was symbolically christened Wenceslas, like his father himself, followed in his footsteps. He was already crowned Bohemian King at the age of two (1363) and the Roman King (1376) two years prior to the Emperor Charles's death. Wenceslas IV thus found himself amongst the foremost personalities of the European Continent, yet no thanks to his competence and experience. Indeed, when Charles's political testament came into force after his death, the standing of Wenceslas in the Lands of the Bohemian Crown was suddenly under threat. His ambitious cousin Jošt acquired the Moravian Margravate, his stepbrothers Sigismund the electorate of Brandenburg and John territory of Zgorzelec. Thus, the parameters for constant feuding in terms of influence not only in the Crown Lands but also in the Empire were defined.[21]

At the beginning of his reign King Wenceslas relied on the advisors from his father's circle, whose influence, however, declined towards the end of the 1380s. The Sovereign did not tackle this generational change of guard too cleverly. Whereas he left skilled Czech and German officials in his Chancery, he appointed his personal favourites to Court posts. In their majority they came from the ranks of the lower nobility or burghers raised to noble rank. Regardless of their meteoric rise in the royal service, they lacked a broader outlook not only in terms of local politics but also they were not

---

[21] Jaroslav Mezník, *Lucemburská Morava 1310-1423* (Prague, 1999), 250-301.

seen as worthy partners for diplomatic negotiations with high dignitaries of the Empire and the Papal Curia. The clergy and the high nobility, which until now had been reluctant to attack royal power, were also highly suspicious of the personal motives of these courtiers. Tensions in Bohemian society increased from the late 1380s and the early 1390s onwards. The aristocratic opposition had some of the King's favourites murdered and it even imprisoned the Sovereign himself for a short period.

The humiliated ruler vented his anger on individual nobles in minor skirmishes but he also turned against the Bohemian ecclesiastical hierarchy, which had until then supported the Sovereign. In 1393 Wenceslas IV had John of Pomuk (later canonised as John of Nepomuk), Vicar-General to the Archbishop of Prague, drowned in the River Vltava because he had foiled the King's attempt to have another bishopric founded. The King planned to appoint one of his favourites as its head. Thus, the King found himself in conflict with the Bohemian ecclesiastical hierarchy and its Archbishop John of Jenstein (1379-96), who was highly-thought of abroad.[22] The fact that Wenceslas IV increasingly abandoned the active politics cultivated by his father, culminated in the Empire in 1400 when he was deposed as a 'ruler of little use to the Empire'. His conflicts with prelates and the rebellious nobility continued on the domestic political front, and were further inflamed by his brother Sigismund.[23]

Towards the end of the 14th century some representatives of the secular power also considered the political events of the previous decades in their theoretical deliberations. While Wenceslas IV cultivated the royal cult of personality through his commissioning and collection of illuminated manuscripts with symbols of royal power,[24] the most far-sighted representatives of the nobility were worried by the conflicts in contemporary society. Andrew

of Dubé was convinced that the law should be stabilised and he attempted to combine the principles of ancient common law with the draft code of *Maiestas Carolina*. In an ideal world Andrew's attempt would establish legal security, but once again it remained merely a wishful dream.[25] Complex relations between the nobility and the King were reflected in popular contemporary genre of the so-called 'opinions'. Following his personal experience from the conflicts with the Land Court and the Royal Court, Smil Flaška of Pardubice, another nobleman, decided to compose his opinions in Czech verse so that the King and the Land elite as a whole might rule successfully.[26] The South Bohemian yeoman and the supporter of the emerging reform movement Thomas Štítný of Štítné dealt with the structure and relations in contemporary society in his treatises and he searched for the best model for its proper operation.[27] The ever increasing need to provide Czech terms for the events relating to the reform of the Church and social conditions led to the appearance of a Czech-Latin dictionary, the work originating from the circle of Klaret, an otherwise unknown scholar.[28]

Towards the end of the 14th century the Bohemian Lands were also engulfed by a new wave of religiosity *(devotio moderna)* and criticism of the Church connected with it. Under Charles, the Church greatly expanded its significance and acquired huge estates. Aiming to weaken the position of the Bohemian ecclesiastical hierarchy and to use the situation for his own political goals Wenceslas IV began to support the movement attempting to reform the local Church. It was led by a group of Masters from Prague University headed by John Huss.[29] They adopted the teachings of the English

---

[22] Jaroslav Kadlec, *Přehled českých církevních dějin I* (Rome, 1987), 219-33; Jaroslav V. Polc and Václav Ryneš, *Svatý Jan Nepomucký*, Vol. I (Rome, 1972), 180-310.

[23] Jörg K. Hoensch, *Kaiser Sigismund. Herrscher an der Schwelle zur Neuzeit 1368-1437* (Munich, 1996), 93-118, 191-244.

[24] Josef Krása, *Rukopisy Václava IV.* (Prague, 1974).

---

[25] František Čáda (ed.), *Nejvyššího sudího Království českého Ondřeje z Dubé Práva zemská česká* (Prague, 1930).

[26] Smil Flaška z Pardubic, *Nová rada*, ed. Jiří Daňhelka (Prague, 1950).

[27] Tomáš ze Štítného, *Knížky o hře šachové a jiné*, ed. František Šimek (Prague, 1956).

[28] *Klaret a jeho družina*, I-II, ed. Václav Flajšhans (Prague, 1926-1928).

[29] Ferdinand Seibt (ed.), *Jan Hus zwischen Zeiten, Völkern, Konfessionen*, (Munich, 1997); Miloš Drda, František Jindřich Holeček and Zdeněk Vybíral (eds.), *Jan Hus na přelomu tisíciletí* (Tábor, 2001).

religious reformer John Wycliffe on the remedy of the Church which was to be deprived of its property and secular powers.[30] This idea attracted a large number of supporters from all social classes at the beginning of the 15th century. It drew the attention of the nobles, burghers and a section of the clergy, too, who received education at the Prague institution of higher learning. Once they had completed this, they found positions in different corners of the Bohemian Kingdom and also well beyond its borders.[31] On the other hand this idea was loathed by the Papal Curia and the Bohemian prelates. Wenceslas IV did not support the Hussite group because of its reform ideals but primarily in order to have its support for the implementation of his personal vested interests in international politics connected to the resolution of the papal schism.

As the University was not united in its decision-making on this matter, the Sovereign used his right to intervene in its internal affairs. The University community was composed of four University 'nations' *(nationes)* – Bavarian, Saxonian, Polish and Bohemian. In reality this did not involve the nationality principle but a territorial one based on the geographic origins of the masters and students of the University. Each of these 'nations' cast one vote during important decision-makings. Since the Hussite group, grateful to the King for his support, dominated the representation of the Czech nation, and other 'nations' had agreed not to support Wenceslas's views, the King changed the relationship of the University's nations through the publication of the *Kutná Hora Decree* on 18th January 1409. The local Bohemian University nation was allocated three votes against one vote to be shared in the future by all the other 'nations.' The response to this change was more serious than anybody could have imagined. Foreign students and professors in their hundreds left Prague for other higher institutions in Vienna, Cracow and Erfurt or even contributed towards the establishment of a new university of Leipzig. There was a vicious campaign against the Bohemian King and the ideas of Church reform. The supporters of the Hussite concept of a remedy

[30] Vilém Herold, *Pražská universita a Wyclif* (Prague, 1985).

[31] John Martin Klassen, *The Nobility and the Making of the Hussite Revolution* (New York, 1978), 27-35, 99-113.

for the Church were given scope for the implementation of their ideas. Wenceslas IV only supported them for pragmatic reasons until 1411, when he realised that his intentions in the Empire had failed. Thereafter he gradually gave up his role of being the actual ruler of the Bohemian Lands and left future developments to fate.

Bohemian society within all of its classes split into either supporters or enemies of the Hussite Reform of the Church. In addition, the nationality question gained prominence, because reform agitation was more focused upon the Czech audience than other nations, particularly the Germans.[32] The key role in political developments was played by the divisions within the aristocratic community. One section opposed the teachings of Master Huss, the other courageously demonstrated its resistance to the Council of Constance, which in 1415 sentenced John Huss to be burned at the stake, and to the Roman King Sigismund.[33] It was not willing to let the Czech nation be labelled with heresy. One faction of the Catholic nobility even identified itself with the Czech nation and attempted to prove that the Bohemian Lands and their inhabitants belonged to the Christian community. After the death of Wenceslas IV the warring parties only took four years before they found themselves in open conflict which lasted more than fifteen years and acquired an all-European dimension during the Hussite wars.[34]

More than one hundred years of Bohemian history in the late Middle Ages demonstrates that the power struggle between the sovereign and aristocratic community was its principal axis. Any swings away from it came about as a result of both sides continuously attempting to outweigh each other. If the nobility was in a position to dictate at the beginning of the 14th century, it also manifested its own immaturity and the rashness of its

[32] František Šmahel, *Idea národa v husitských Čechách* (Prague, 2000), 54-89.

[33] Miloslav Polívka, *Mikuláš z Husi a nižší šlechta v počátcích husitské revoluce* (Prague, 1982); *ibid.*, 'The Bohemian Lesser Nobility at the Turn of the 14th and 15th Century', *Historica. Les sciences historiques en Tchécoslovaquie*, xxv (1985), 121-75.

[34] Petr Čornej, *Velké dějiny zemí Koruny české, V. 1402-1437* (Prague and Litomyšl, 2000); František Šmahel, *Die Hussitische Revolution I-III* (Hannover, 2002). Both publication comprise extensive bibliographies on this topic.

decisions, which affected the fate of the Bohemian Kingdom. It managed to force John of Luxembourg to resign on the exercise of power in the country but the King became actively involved in foreign politics. Thanks to his efforts he acquired new territories and foreign fiefdoms for the Bohemian Kingdom. Moreover, he prepared his talented son Charles well to reign the country which was to remain strange to John himself. He also cleared Charles's path to the Bohemian throne, as well as for the post of the Roman King. The international outlook and experience gained in a Bohemian environment led Charles IV to re-assess the formerly confrontational relations with the Bohemian nobility. He respected its status but he obviously suspended its powers. He drew it into international politics and acquainted Czech society with a Western European political culture without conflict. His Court became the meeting point for Italian and German representatives of early Humanism (contacts with Petrarca, Cola di Rienzo, the activity of John of Středa and so on).[35] He utilised the support of the Church, which introduced new spiritual impulses, for his own benefit and for the cultural development of the country. Since he regarded the Bohemian Lands as the basis of his dynasty, he identified himself with a part of their cultural heritage, which he demonstrated in rituals and symbolism. Simultaneously he bequathed his successor a very complicated legacy. He was expected to manage the Kingdom in which the interests of the ruler, the nobility and the Church were to clash. Wenceslas IV found it difficult to find his way in the new international situation. On the domestic front he resigned his royal authority soon after he opened the path to the ideological and nationalist clash between the nobility and the Church. This naturally affected other social classes in society and led to the explosion of the Hussite revolution in 1419. There is no doubt that the Luxembourgs helped to stabilise the political conditions in the Bohemian Lands and that they linked them with the advanced states of Western Europe in a political culture. The future development, however, showed that this was not a final solution. After the Hussite wars, a divided and exhausted Czech society turned in the opposite

---

[35] František Kavka, *Am Hofe Karls IV.* (Leipzig, 1989), 78, 151-70.

geographic direction. It replaced its 'pro-Western' policy with a pro-Central European orientation during the reign of the Jagiellonians and the Habsburgs.

Translated by Alena Linhartová

Political Identities of Towns in Central Europe during the Late Middle Ages

Halina Manikowska

Studies dealing with the political identities of towns during the Late Middle Ages have been perused and now offer very little to a researcher interested in the towns of Central Europe. The central themes of this particular problem are only side issues in the present work. I shall primarily examine Silesian and Prussian towns within the context of nation-building processes and regional integration at the end of the Middle Ages, and conclude that political identities of these cities were not developed sufficiently to create the possibility of the emergence of a state based on the towns' leagues in the manner of Switzerland at the time and later The Netherlands. My second objective involves deliberations about political expression in a period when – in the wake of the great colonisation and modernization break-through of the thirteenth century – one may no longer speak about this part of Europe as a distant periphery of the western culture. The first group of arguments poses questions about relations between local (town) consciousness and its regional counterpart, as well as between regional and national consciousness. Inquires are made about the significance of regional integration, conceived as a nation- and state-building factor at the time of the formation of the estate monarchy and the territorial state. Due to numerous incorporations, in many cases the state not only retained its particular character but even reinforced it. The modernization of the ruling and administrative framework, which accompanied these transformations, produced an inner consolidation of the incorporated provinces, yet still retained their own distinctive features. The regional identity not only facilitated the formulation of strivings for a political-systemic autonomy within a wider framework of the monarchy, even outright political separatism, but also acted as a vehicle

for the reception of this particular type of aspiration outside the range of the leading elite. In Silesia the role of the towns in those processes was important, and in Prussia it remained foremost. The second issue – the political culture of the town elite – deals with education, the various ways in which political thought was received, the impact of universities and legal experts, and the cultural climate in which two generations acted during the era of conciliarist councils and the crystallisation of the institution of Central European estate assemblies.

Both regions belonged to the most urbanised territories of Central Europe. In Silesia, where up to the end of the fifteenth century 169 towns (128 in the thirteenth century) had been located upon the basis of German law, the urban population comprised at least 18 % of the total number of inhabitants; in Prussia 20-23 % of the population lived in 94 towns.[1] Taking into consideration the similar degree of urbanisation and number of large towns, regional impact exerted by particular urban centres discloses features that result from autonomy and political independence. Three groups of factors account for this: the size of a given town, its economical importance, and the power of its elites; local relations between the superior authorities, the knights, and the towns; and the political situation and policy of the territorial ruler *vis a vis* the given town. From at least the tenth century, Wrocław (Breslau) was the largest Silesian town, whose dynamic development during the Middle Ages and the functions it fulfilled (for example it was the see of the only bishopric, and it issued legal instructions for the remaining Silesian towns, etc.) unquestionably rendered it the capital of the province, attracting people from the entire region, and, in a number of ways,

even drawing knights from other duchies. No other town played a comparable role in the whole region.[2] The situation in Prussia was quite different. There was a clearly distinct group composed of six main cities: Chełmno (Kulm), Gdańsk (Danzig), Toruń (Thorn), Elbląg (Elbing), Königsberg, and Braniewo (Braunsberg, ruled by the bishop of Warmia [Ermland]).[3] This group assumed shape at the Hanseatic conventions as a representation of Prussian towns, and already during the mid-fourteenth century it constituted a unity distinguished according to a territorial-state principle.[4]

Apart from the diverse degrees of the towns' regional integration, disparities occurred also in systemic solutions and the scope of municipal self-government. In Silesia, the largest town centres gained considerable autonomy earlier, thanks to their status as royal cities (Wrocław, and from the end of the fourteenth century – Świdnica). In the case of ducal towns, self-goverment was expanded as a result of political instability, changes of frontiers between the duchies, and the financial difficulties endured by territorial rulers. Already during the fourteenth century the degree to which Wrocław relied on self-government could be compared to the autonomy enjoyed by the free imperial towns – the ruler intervened only at the time of the greatest revolts and power struggles. During the second half of the fifteenth century, which witnessed conflicts and war with King Georgie of Podiebrad (1458-71), one could even speak about Wrocław's autocephaly.[5]

---

[1] In the land of Chełmno as many as 40 % in 1410; according to certain estimations even 27 % in Lower Silesia during the mid-fourteenth century. See Marian Biskup, 'Etniczno-demograficzne przemiany Prus Krzyżackich w rozwoju osadnictwa w średnio-wieczu', in his *Opera minora: Studia z dziejów Zakonu Krzyżackiego, Prus, Polski i krajów nadbałtyckich* (Toruń, 2002), 129-50 (1st edn in *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, xcviii, no. 2); Roman Heck and Ewa Maleczyńska, *Historia Śląska*, i, pt. 1 (Wrocław, Warsaw and Cracow, 1961), 17 ff. See also Maria Bogucka and Henryk Samsonowicz, *Dzieje miast i mieszczaństwa w Polsce przedrozbiorowej* (Wrocław, Warsaw and Cracow, 1986), 84, 120-1.

[2] See esp. Cezary Buśko, Mateusz Goliński and Michał Kaczmarek, *Historia Wrocławia*, 3 vols., i, *Od pradziejów do końca czasów habsburskich* (Wrocław, 2001).

[3] Seven towns by the end of the epoch, since Knipau (the second town of Königs-berg) gained the rank of an autonomous centre on the national and Hanseatic arena. In Prussia, all the large towns, with the exception of Chełmno, were multipartite and composed of at least two self-governing communes. Owing primarily to source documentation our reflections take into consideration only the main towns (Main Town Gdańsk, Old Town Toruń, Old Town Elbląg, etc.).

[4] Cf. Jürgen Sarnowsky, 'Die preußischen Städte in der Hanse', *Hansische Geschichtsblätter*, cxii (1994), 97-114.

[5] According to the comprehension of 'autocephaly' proposed by Max Weber, who distinguished between 'autonomy' and 'autocephaly', see Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und*

In Prussia, however, the self-governance of local cities remained restrained by the Order authorities up to the late 1420s.

The political awareness of the townspeople and their political identification concerned assorted dimensions of politics: local (within the town), regional, state, and external – from Hanseatic, in the case of the Prussian towns, to the policy of the Empire or the papacy and the Church councils, which at certain historical moments were of importance for the towns of both Silesia and Prussia. The documentary evidence reveals such a construct though only in reference to the ruling groups and the partisan clergy. This fact is predominantly the consequence of the town system characteristic for the area under discussion; the majority of the cities had been located according to regional variants of the Magdeburg law. This system, known as conciliary, consisted, in general, of the full authority enjoyed by the town council which, although temporary, was created by means of a procedure in which the old, retiring council co-opted new members.[6] The oligarchic system of appointing city authorities was reinforced by the annual ritual of elections and the assumption of office by the new councillors. Emphasis was thus placed on the fact that the legitimisation of the power wielded by a narrow ruling group was not the will of the town *communitas*, but the inherent right of the group.[7] Its social exclusiveness was augmented and accentuated by forms of religious life reserved for members of the town

---

Gesellschaft: Grundriß der verstehenden Soziologie, 5th edn by Johannes Winckelmann (Tübingen, 1972), 789.

[6] On the social composition and oligarchisation of city government see: Krzysztof Mikulski, 'Elity władzy wielkich miast pruskich w XIII-XVIII wieku (Próba analizy dynamicznej procesu długiego trwania)', in Andrzej Radzimiński and Jan Wroniszewski (eds.), *Genealogia: Rola związków rodzinnych i rodowych w życiu publicznym w Polsce średniowiecznej na tle porównawczym* (Toruń, 1966), 311-40; Roman Czaja, 'Das Patriziat in den preußischen Städten: Ein Beitrag zur Wahrnehmung der sozialen Gruppen in den Hansestädten im Mittelalter', in Roman Czaja (ed.), *Das Bild und die Wahrnehmung der Stadt und der städtischen Gesellschaft im Hanseraum im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit* (Toruń, 2004), 173-4.

[7] See Dietrich W. Poeck, *Rituale der Ratswahl: Zeichen und Zeremoniell der Ratssetzung in Europa (12.-18. Jahrhundert)* (Cologne, Weimar und Vienna, 2003), esp. 61-5, 238-86.

---

authorities and their families, as well as by chivalrous-courtly cultural aspirations, which in Prussian towns were implemented at the courts of Arthur and the fraternities of St. George.[8]

In Silesian and Prussian towns, civic assemblies were relegated to the margins or ceased being convoked in the course of the fourteenth century. During times of social peace, the burghers' right to govern the town lay 'dormant'; it was universally accepted that the active right to decide about issues of the city was reserved for *homines divites et boni*.[9] The political potential and awareness of *communitas burgensium* became noticeable only at times of social tension and war with the council, or of conflict with the ruler, which entangled also the *Gemeinde*. It is of utmost importance to understand that the legitimisation of municipal authority by a consensus of *communitas burgensium* and the questioning of the representational system appeared only at a time of an acute conflict with the municipal authorities, and assumed the aggressive form of a revolt which expelled the council or forced it to introduce new councillors recruited from among the craft-guilds.[10]

---

[8] See Roman Czaja, 'Die Identität des Patriziats der preußischen Großstädte im Mittelalter', in Stefan Kwiatkowski and Janusz Małłek (eds.), *Ständische und religiöse Identitäten in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit* (Toruń, 1998), 9-19; and esp. his *Miasta pruskie a Zakon Krzyżacki: Studia nad stosunkami między miastem a władzą terytorialną w późnym średniowieczu* (Toruń, 1999), 208-29; Halina Manikowska, 'Religijność miejska', in Halina Manikowska and Hanna Zaremska (eds.), *Ecclesia et civitas: Kościół i życie religijne w mieście średniowiecznym* (Warsaw, 2002), 25-8.

[9] In his extremely meaningful note, Kasper Weinreich, a Gdańsk burgher who was not a member of the municipal authorities, wrote about an assembly of the estates held in Elbląg in 1487: '... man das die war, wust ich nicht, dan der rat, wan sie von tagefart zu hausekomen, sagten die gemeine nich von sich, als es plag in eher zeiten zu sein, sonder allen bleib by in' (*Scriptores rerum Prussicarum* [hereafter SRP], ed. Theodor Hirsch, Max Toeppen and Ernst Strehlke, 5 vols. [Leipzig, 1861-1874], iv, 763 f.), quoted from Jolanta Dworzaczkowa, *Dziejopisarstwo gdańskie do połowy XVI w.* (Gdańsk, 1962), 136.

[10] These charges are illustrated by a complaint filed by the guilds in Chełmno in about 1400, see Roman Czaja, 'Spór cechów chełmińskich z radą miejską: Przyczynek do konfliktów społecznych w miastach pruskich w średniowieczu', in Andrzej Radzimiński and Jan Tandecki (eds.), *Prusy – Polska – Europa: studia z dziejów średnio-*

For both sides, such conflicts represented a specific school of political thought and activity, and a quest for arguments supporting one's reasons within law, municipal privileges and political conceptions. One of the most mature expressions of the political attitude represented by the *Gemeinde* in the fifteenth century was the programme of reforms of the regime formulated by the Gdańsk rebels under the leadership of Martin Kogge, who in 1456, during the Thirteen Years' War, opposed the town authorities – a result of the burdens created by the hostilities.[11] The postulated limitation of the power wielded by the city council and the co-rule of the merchants and the guilds were to have been guaranteed by a new structure of the council, a new magistrate composed of merchant and guild elders, and a permanent 36-person strong representation of the *Gemeinde* (with control and judicial privileges as well as a right to attend land conventions). Further demands included granting court autonomy to the guilds, the expansion of court appeals, and a rigorous prohibition of referring secular cases to ecclesiastical courts. This programme contained a distant echo of the solutions which the victorious *popolo* introduced into the Italian communes during the second half of the thirteenth century. The failure of the reformers annulled the projects and denoted a return to the rule of the council, albeit with a retention of the participation of the craftsmen which, however, was minimized by increasing the size of the council – an old and enduring practical solution. In this sense, we may speak about a strategy typical for the German towns (and not only), and not about a reference to the *mixtum governum* theory.

---

wiecza i czasów nowożytnych. Prace ofiarowane profesorowi Zenonowi Hubertowi Nowakowi (Toruń, 1999), 327 ff.

[11] Cf. Edmund Cieślak, *Walki ustrojowe w Gdańsku i Toruniu oraz w niektórych miastach hanzeatykich w XV w.* (Gdańsk, 1960); see also his 'Rewolty gdańskie w XV w.', *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, lxi (1954), no. 3, 110-42. The fullest political programme of the *Gemeinde* was presented to the governor of Prussia in January 1457, who acted in the name of the king of Poland (SRP, iv, 539 ff.). After the initial success of this party (the new council, elected in October 1456, was composed also of artisans), the far-reaching reform programme produced a counter-action of the council and ensuing repressions; Kogge was beheaded in February 1457 (several days earlier a similar fate befell five of his supporters, and 22 were sentenced to exile).

The political program of the Gdańsk rebels does not entitle us, however, to draw conclusions confirming the notion of the 'sacral corporation', launched by Bernd Moeller;[12] according to Moeller, every burgher understood that he was part of the whole, and, due to his duties and privileges, was responsible for the welfare of the greater organic community to which he belonged. Examples of the realisation of such a corporation are scarce in both regions. A confederation of the bench, the councillors, the elders, the merchant guild, the guild aldermen and the whole *Gemeinde* of Wrocław, directed against Georgie of Podiebrad, could be recognised as an isolated and short-lived case. The confederation, created in 1458 by the impact of the political propaganda proclaimed by the town preachers, came into being at a time when the dukes and the estates withdrew from the all-Silesian confederation. In Prussian and Silesian towns, the league ideal appeared to have been shared primarily by the elite;[13] this fact limits the possibility of applying the concept of republicanism as interpreted by Heinz Schilling,[14] or even its wider understanding, i.e. as a political idea. A narrower understanding, employed for describing the Communes in north-central Italy, can be used probably only in the case of late mediaeval Wrocław, which Richard Hoffmann compared to a city-

---

[12] Bernd Moeller, *Reichsstadt und Reformation* (Gütersloh, 1962; new edn Berlin, 1987).

[13] One could even say that during the Late Middle Ages the town authorities and social elites augmented elements of sacral corporationism, cf. Manikowska, 'Religijność miejska'; Czaja, 'Die Identität des Patriziats'; see also John H. Elliot, 'Revolution and Continuity in Early Modern Europe', *Past and Present*, xlii (1969), 48-9; Thomas A. Brady, *Communities, Politics and Reformation in Early Modern Europe* (Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought, lxviii, Leiden and New York, 1988), 18.

[14] Heinz Schilling, *Religion, Political Culture and the Emergence of Early Modern Society: Essays in German and Dutch History* (Leiden, New York and Cologne, 1992); see also his 'Gab es im späten Mittelalter und zu Beginn der Neuzeit in Deutschland einen städtischen „Republikanismus": Zur politischen Kultur des alteuropäischen Stadtbürgertums', in Helmut G. Koenigsberger (ed.), *Republiken und Republikanismus im Europa der Frühen Neuzeit* (Schriften des Historischen Kollegs, Kolloquien, xi, Munich, 1988), 101-43; see also Rolf Kießling, 'Städtischer Republikanismus: Regimentsformen des Bürgertums in oberschwäbischen Stadtstaaten im ausgehenden Mittelalter und der beginnenden Frühneuzeit', in Peter Blickle (ed.), *Politische Kultur in Oberschwaben* (Tübingen, 1993), 1-31.

state.[15] These similarities are made possible by the urban autonomy, political independence, and administrative-judicial authority enjoyed by the city council (fleetingly already during the fourteenth century) over the duchy of Wrocław, as well as the domination of the local burghers (strictly speaking, the town nobility), noticeable at the end of the epoch within the estate institutions of the duchy. For the purposes of characterising the system of rule in Silesian and Prussian towns, in which the council was the recognised *emanation* of the commune, the concept of *Kommunalismus*, proposed by Peter Blickle, appears to be more suitable than Schilling's conception of urban republicanism.[16] The political order of the commune reached this area only slightly later than the great town reform, during the second half of the thirteenth century, when it became theoretically and ideologically supported by political Aristotelianism.[17] The relegation of the *Gemeinde* from government rendered it, however, distant from the theoretical construction of urban political order conceived by Bartolo di Sassoferrato and other Italian lawyers.

On the local level, the identification of the town, whose significant elements included also the urban lifestyle (*vita civilis*), was built upon the conceptions of town liberties and law. The constant application by the

---

[15] Richard C. Hoffmann, 'Towards a „City-State" in East-Central Europe: Control of Local Government in the Late Medieval Duchy of Wrocław', *Societas: a Review of social history*, v (1975), 173-99. The term *respublica* was used in Wrocław at the end of the Middle Ages, see e.g.: 'Promovenda res publica posteritatique consulendum est, placuit itaque magistratui [=council] annales, quantum ex vetustissimis libris civitatis huius et aliis colligi poterit, ut visis antiquis historiis vicissitudinibusque rerum perspectis et Reipublicae et privatis negotiis fructuosius imcumbere possit magistratus' – *Annales magistratus Wratislawiensis (1514)*, ed. Wilhelm Arndt (Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores, xix, Hannover, 1866), 526-31.

[16] Peter Blickle, 'Komunalismus: Begriffsbildung in heuristischer Absicht', in André Holenstein, *Landgemeinde und Stadtgemeinde in Mitteleuropa: Ein struktureller Vergleich* (Historische Zeitschrift, NF, xiii, Munich, 1991), 5-39.

[17] See Klaus Schreiner, 'Teilhabe, Konsens und Autonomie: Leitbegriffe kommunaler Ordnung in der politischen Theorie des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit', in Peter Blickle (ed.), *Theorien kommunaler Ordnung in Europa* (Schriften des Historischen Kollegs, Kolloquien, xxxvi, Munich, 1996), 39; Antony Black, 'The Commune in Political Theory in the Late Middle Ages', *ibid.*, 102.

---

fifteenth-century town elites and, more rarely, by the rebellious *Gemeinde* of such concepts as 'freedom' (in place of earlier town liberties), 'peace', 'unity' ('harmony') and 'general welfare' belonged to the standard political vocabulary of the epoch;[18] in Silesian and Prussian towns it was adapted without the significant participation of jurists and the consideration of Roman law. The codification of town law, a task upon which the largest cities embarked during the Late Middle Ages, was attained by practising lawyers and the chancery staff, who generally had no legal training. Peter Eschenloer, the town scribe of Wrocław at the time of the war with George of Podiebrad, made use of the circumstances to turn his chronicle into a manifesto of the communal ideology of the ruling circles and a treasury of civic *paidea*: the supreme principles of good governance and civic virtue are *concordia* and *unanimitas*. Everyone should occupy a suitable place – good rule can be guaranteed only by a council, responsible for the town and its condition, and not by the *populus* which, in the manner of a child, is prone to rebellion, ill-informed, easily manipulated, and dangerous as a result of eruptions of hatred towards the council; nor can this role be played by preachers meddling in politics. Pride of place in such ideology is linked to theological collectivism, and a dominant conviction that harmony was indispensable for the human community, both by the will of God and by the nature of things.[19] Political thought in late mediaeval towns, more pragmatic than philosophical, legal or

---

[18] Antony Black, 'Harmony and Strife in Political Thought c. 1300-1500', in Jürgen Miethke and Klaus Schreiner (eds.), *Sozialer Wandel im Mittelalter: Wahrnehmungsformen, Erklärungsmuster, Regelungsmechanismen* (Sigmaringen, 1994), 355-63.

[19] Eschenloer was the author of two versions of the town chronicle – Latin and German, as well as translations into German of *Historia Bohemica* by Enea Sylvio Piccolomini and *Historia Hierosolymitana* by Robertus Monachus, commissioned by the council. See: Peter Eschenloer, *Geschichte der Stadt Breslau*, ed. Gunhild Roth, 2 vols. (Quellen und Darstellungen zur schlesischen Geschichte, xxix, New York, Munich and Berlin, 2003). See also Volker Honemann, 'Historiographie latine et vernaculaire: le cas de Pierre Eschenloer de Breslau', in Jean-Philippe Genet (ed.), *L'histoire et les nouveaux publics dans l'Europe médiévale (XIIIᵉ-XVᵉ siècle): Actes du colloque international organisé par la Fondation Européenne de la science à la Casa de Vélasquez, Madrid 23 - 24 Avril 1993* (Paris, 1997), 201-12; Black, 'Harmony and Strife', 357.

theological,[20] was, therefore, based upon a system of social and political values and a universal reception of slogans dominant in the prevalent conception of authority.

An important novelty during the Late Middle Ages was an awareness of the distinct nature of the town system and its place within the political-legal construction of the state as a whole. In the cases of Silesia and Prussia, the role played by the town in regional integrative processes and the emergence of domestic estate assemblies in the fifteenth century appears to have been particularly interesting. Especially in Prussia, where since the 1430 the main towns regarded themselves to be the second – next to the *Ordenstaat* authorities – most decisive factor in the political life of the land. The same holds true for the role played by towns in moulding strong land identity, a feature which distinguished both those regions from neighbouring Poland, where the vitality of regional ties possessed importance primarily, if not exclusively, for the knights.

A definition of the region conceived as a territorial community, aware of its distinctness but not recognising itself as a nation, is particularly useful for analyses of regional identity. True, the factors which such analyses of regional conscious take into consideration – the objective existence of a strictly defined territory with a single or several main towns, as well as institutional, economic, linguistic and, more widely, cultural unions – do not exhaust the more extensive collection of elements embraced by research dealing with the formation of a national and state community, but they do remain concurrent. This fact makes drawing distinctions between these types of group consciousness difficult, especially when studying the Late Middle Ages, i.e. an epoch in which national communities assumed form. The processes of shaping national, regional and state awareness appear to be independent, at least to a certain degree. Sources indicate that townspeople, especially in the ethnically disparate towns of Central-Eastern Europe ruled by German merchants, possessed a better developed regional and state

---

[20] Cf. Schilling, 'Gab es ... einen städtischen „Republikanismus"', 137.

identity than a national one.[21] In certain respects, however, late medieval regional awareness in Prussia reveals the features of state consciousness, and in both regions – the traits of an embryo of national consciousness, which ultimately did not emerge owing to the absence of a state framework and a state elite. The equivalent character of the terms encountered in Silesian sources: 'Silesia' – 'Bohemia' – 'Poland', 'Silesians' – 'Bohemians' – 'Poles', appears to testify to an obliteration of differences between national and regional consciousness upon the level of group consciousness.[22] This was because at the end of the fifteenth century an intensified distinction of the region in relation to the state took place upon the basis of the conception of the *natio*.

Regional identity in Prussia and Silesia is discernible in sources dating from the end of the fourteenth century. It was first expressed in writings by clergymen-chroniclers, and during the fifteenth century was also vividly testified to by the town elite. The two environments were German both in language and culture. A specific feature of their identity (although by no means exceptional in German-speaking countries) was an individual awareness of being a German, much more than at the level of community. This fact does not come as a surprise. After all, the supra-estate regional bond assumed shape in an ethnically differentiated region. Prussian identity was so strong and conspicuous during the fifteenth-sixteenth century that certain historians have written about the emergence of *Neustamm Preussen* (a new tribe of the Pruthenians, a new Prussian nation), and about its co-existence (especially among the knights) with the national awareness of the Poles and the Germans.[23] Distinguishing national identity of the land elites became

---

[21] Bronisław Geremek, 'Metody badań nad świadomością społeczeństwa polskiego w średniowieczu', *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, lxxxv (1978), 313.

[22] Halina Manikowska, 'Świadomość regionalna na Śląsku w późnym średnio-wieczu', in Aleksander Gieysztor and Sławomir Gawlas (eds.), *Państwo, naród, stany w świadomości wieków średnich* (Warsaw, 1990), 253-66.

[23] Erich Maschke, 'Preussen: Das Werden eines deutschen Stammesnamens', *Ostdeutsche Wissenschaft*, ii (1955), 116-56 – situated this Prussian identity extremely close to national consciousness, and regarded it as unambiguously German. This approach was opposed by Biskup, 'Etniczno-demograficzne przemiany', 131.

a more serious problem in the wake of the Thirteenth Years' War, when it created a cultural distance also between the town patriciate and the gentry; the latter had been included in the Polish political nation, encompassed within its privileges, and fortified by means of arrivals from Poland. Initially, this distinction, however, did not cause greater conflicts, although references mentioned threats to local interests, as in the case of a controversy involving appointments to the bishopric of Warmia and the deprivation of newcomers from Poland of access to the chapter of Warmia (the turn of the 1490s).[24]

The national awareness of the burghers was initially strengthened by the Hanseatic identity of the Prussian merchants, universally comprehended as an affiliation to the German nation, the merchant profession, and a political union with the Emperor and the Reich.[25] The description of a given community as German became, however, the cause of many dilemmas. Apparently, at least certain demonstrations of German national awareness could be recognised more as an expression of wider cultural identity (similarly to Italian identity among peoples in the Apenine Peninsula). This tendency is demonstrated, for example, by the introduction of the term *lingua Slesiana* at the end of the fourteenth century for the purpose of describing the local dialect of the German language, or by the fifteenth-century dissemination of the names of the local population – *Schlesier* and *Preussen*, introduced by people who, upon the basis of their language and culture, regarded them-selves as Germans. Moreover, in national categories they could have regarded other Germans, such as the Teutonic Knights from Swabia, Bavaria or Franconia, who ruled the Order at the time of the growing internal conflict, as almost alien.[26]

Silesian sources, which from the turn of the fourteenth century recorded examples of German-Polish or Bohemian-Polish tension, suggest the great significance of the awareness of ethnic distinction in shaping the regional identity of the clergy and the town elite. The vitality of the Silesian-Polish antagonism or, more precisely, the German-Polish antagonism – despite altered state affiliation! – should be recognised as an outright Silesian specificity. It was sustained during the first half of the fourteenth century by Polish-Bohemian controversies relating to this particular province, as well as by a conflict concerning the payment of St. Peter's pence, a burden encumbering all the territories subjected to the Church metropolis of Gniezno (the bishopric of Wrocław belonged to this archbishopric).[27] Sub-sequent reasons are found in numerous cases of friction or outright open conflict in the economic relations between Silesia and Poland, as well as in the involvement of the fifteenth-century Jagiellons in Bohemian affairs. The increasingly complicated Church relations in Silesia during the Late Middle Ages appear to have been one of the sources of the revival of Silesian (German)-Polish tension, and the precise definition of Silesian identity. The Wrocław cathedral chapter, dominated by Silesians headed by sons of the Wrocław patricians, protected itself against admitting newcomers from Poland. At the time of the court trial conducted in 1436 upon the order of the Council of Basel, the chapter argued that Polish and Silesian *nationes* differed as a consequence of *vitae, morum et conversationum diversitates*. In the evidence given by seven witnesses, Silesia appears to have been a closed entity, *patria*, in the territorial and political meaning of the word.[28]

---

[24] 'If the bishop [of Warmia] is to be a Pole ... he will want to have Poles as his canons .... If they [the Poles] do not want to have a German bishop in Poland, then we should have even less of them here' – quoted from Karol Górski, *Communitas – Princeps – Corona Regni* (Roczniki Towarzystwa Naukowego w Toruniu, lxxviii, no. 1, Warsaw, Poznań and Toruń, 1976), 52. Additional anxieties concerned a gentry 'invasion' threatening the chapter, whose representatives were recruited mainly from clergymen of burgher origin.

[25] Henryk Samsonowicz, 'Die Wahrnehmung der Hanse von außen', in Czaja (ed.), *Das Bild und die Wahrnehmung*, 79.

[26] Cf. Marie-Luise Heckmann, 'Krieg und historische Erinnerung im landes-herrlichen und im städtischen Milieu des Hanseraums', *ibid.*, 158.

[27] The Polish side mentioned the payment of St. Peter's pence as one of the most important arguments during the Church trials, in which it accused the Teutonic Order of seizing Polish lands; as a result, this issue remained an element not only of Polish state consciousness of the period but also of national consciousness.

[28] See Tomasz Jurek, 'Die Entwicklung eines schlesischen Regionalbewußtseins im Mittelalter', *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung*, xlvii (1998), no. 1, 36-7.

The relation of Silesians towards the Kingdom of Bohemia and the Bohemians was marked by a much greater ambivalence, although it was precisely this attitude which was to ultimately produce short-lived political separatism. The awareness of the distinction of Silesia within the Bohemian monarchy had been well-grounded already prior to the Hussite revolution. The latter additionally reinforced this awareness by introducing hostility, initially expressed only towards the insurgents, and after the election of Georgie of Podiebrad – towards all the Bohemians, who were regarded as heretics and were held responsible for choosing a heresiarch as their monarch. During the second half of the fifteenth century, the towns of Silesia and particularly, Wrocław, became the scene of a growing awareness of the profound distinction of creed, law and customs, German tradition, and the 'Germanic' character of Silesian culture.[29] A response to Hussite messianism and the national patriotism of the Hussites, who shouted anti-German slogans, assumed the form of Silesian messianism or, more precisely, its Wrocław variant. Its apogee coincided with the period of the so-called 'rule of the preachers' in Wrocław, when the town, isolated in its struggle against Georgie of Podiebrad, and abandoned and attacked by its recent allies (e.g. Świdnica), regarded itself as the sole defender of the true faith. For the most active participant of the region's international policy – the Council of Wrocław –, the religious division of the Kingdom of Bohemia, which pitted Silesia against the Bohemian ruler and estates, constituted the strongest ideological justification of pro-separatist strivings; the latter were either rejected, or more weakly expressed by the majority of the other large towns and the Silesian dukes. Neither the Hussite wars nor even the refusal to obey Georgie of Podiebrad generated a vivid contestation of Silesia's affiliation to the Kingdom of Bohemia. After the division of Bohemia in 1469, when rule

---

[29] The distinctness of Silesia, based on German culture, was expressed vividly at the beginning of the sixteenth century by Bartholomeus Stenus, a monk from Wrocław, the author of an apologetic description of Silesia and its capital, *Descriptio totius Silesiae et civitatis regie Wratislaviensis*, ed. Hermann Markgraf (Scriptores rerum Silesiacarum [hereafter SRS], xvii, Wrocław, 1902).

over the Silesian province was seized by Mathias Corvinus, it was demanded that he seal his documents *sub sigillo Bohemico*.[30]

At the end of the fifteenth century, the provincial (land) estate assemblies managed to specify the concept of 'land' (*Land, terra*) and its application for designating a regional corporation which linked particular estates into a single whole; earlier, it expressed predominantly the bond between the knights and a given territory.[31] The notion in question had important contents and carried values which in Prussia, after its incorporation into the Polish Kingdom, were guarded by the local estates. They included territorial inviolability, land privileges, an awareness of sovereignty, legal distinctness, and a guarantee of offices and honours only for the indigenous population.[32] In Silesian 'political language', *nobilissimus Slesie principatus* (1466), became a better defined *Land Slesien* (= *terra ducatuum Slesie*) with recognised borders (*grentzen Slesie*, 1484). The concept of *patria* was a counterpart to the term 'land', endowed with a more emotional and colloquial character. A comparison of the contexts in which those words were used makes it possible to speak about their synonymity, and to ascribe to both of them the function of a carrier of an awareness of territorial integrity and its distinction within the political-legal structure of the country as a whole. Despite the division of Prussia (1466) and the political, social and national consequences of this act, an awareness of the unity of the country was maintained until 1526 – the conventions held by the estates of Royal Prussia were attended by deputies from Ducal Prussia. This perception possessed fundamental importance for protecting the distinctness of the incorporated part of Prussia, which Poland wished to treat as one of the provinces of the Crown, deprived of a political autonomy comparable with the one enjoyed in Prussia.

---

[30] SRS, xiv, nr 86. See also: Manikowska, 'Świadomość regionalna na Śląsku', 262.

[31] Karol Górski and Janusz Małłek, *Prusy Książęce i Królewskie w XV w. i XVI w.*, pt. i, *(1466-1548)* (Toruń, 1971), 22; Kazimierz Orzechowski, *Ogólnośląskie zgromadzenia stanowe* (Warsaw and Wrocław, 1979), 94.

[32] Janusz Małłek, 'Die Entstehung und Entwicklung eines Sonderbewußtseins in Preußen während des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts' in his *Preußen und Polen: Politik, Stände, Kirche und Kultur vom 16. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1992), 71-81.

Apparently, the survival of this awareness owed much to an important element of regional identity, i.e. separate history. In Silesia, it was also supported by the extremely strong and conspicuously regional cult of St. Hedvig – the duchess of Silesia – depicted as a propagator of the faith in heathen Poland. During the fifteenth century, history written anew and, at least to a certain degree, independent of earlier chronicles, became an important element of regional awareness among the townspeople. During the 1430s the councils of the Prussian towns considered themselves the descendants of the first newcomers in Prussia, who arrived to battle the pagans; proof was sought in the privilege of Chełmno (1233 and 1251).[33] This conviction assumed new significance in a situation determined by the reinforced dichotomy between the Order and laymen. In Silesia, Polish roots were severed. In 1459, slightly more than a year after the election of Georgie of Podiebrad, a letter addressed to the pope by the Silesian dukes, the Wrocław chapter, acting in the name of the whole diocesan clergy, the gentry of the duchy of Wrocław, and the Wrocław *communitas* presented a *sui generis* political memorial, which included a propaganda interpretation of the history of the Silesian dukes, brought up to date, with a construction similar to *origo gentis*, and intent on recalling and emphasising bygone sovereignty.[34] By resorting to historiographic tradition dating back to the times of Master Wincenty Kadłubek, and linking the distant past of Poland with the Roman Empire, the authors derived the origin of the Silesian dukes from Leszek, one of the ancestors of the Piast dynasty, and his wife, Julia, a sister of Julius Caesar. The multiplication of the dynasty resulted in a division of land, civil wars and, finally, the loss of freedom once the dukes paid homage to John Luxemburg.

The appearance of the town chronicles, which in such centres as Gdańsk and Wrocław erupted suddenly in about the mid-fifteenth century during a war against the ruler, was accomplished by the town scribes, who were

---

[33] Czaja, *Miasta pruskie a Zakon Krzyżacki*, 219.

[34] SRS, viii, no. 19.

professional bilingualists, educated and experienced.[35] The chronicles, much belated in comparison to the development of historiography in those towns of the Reich with which the Silesian and Prussian centres maintained permanent contact (such as Lübeck, Bremen or Magdeburg[36]), were to play a double role. They were to be used as an *aide-memoire*, containing enormous documentation and serving the council in the realisation of its policies, and as a chronicle of current events, assisting domestic and foreign propaganda, documenting wrongs incurred by the ruler, and conducting a sharp polemic with his stand and propaganda. This fact demonstrates the profound awareness of the significance of a given historical moment, and a confidence in the correctness of the selected political stance, which also had to be explained to the citizens.[37]

The striking similarities between the contents of the regional conscious-ness of the Silesian and Prussian towns, and their strivings for a political autonomy which in certain periods assumed a separatistic nature, can be explained by referring to the political culture of the epoch, together with its arsenal of conceptual categories as well as legal and ethical principles used for constructing such a consciousness and expressing it in writing. Political culture supplied a set of arguments for the purposes of territorial disputes, making it possible to validate the reasons of the state, and the aspirations of the estates to co-participate in governance, or those of towns embroiled in conflicts with territorial authorities. The introduction of historical arguments

---

[35] Mention is due, first and foremost, to Johann Lindau, the town scribe in Gdańsk, the author of a diary of the Thirteen Years' War and possibly a chronicle of the Prussian Federation, as well as Peter Eschenloer. They were preceded by Konrad Bitschin, the town scribe first in Gdańsk (1420-30), where he established a new series of town books – correspondence copies (*Libri missivarum*), and then in Chełmno, where he embarked upon a continuation of the chronicle by Peter Dusburg. See: Dworzaczkowa, *Dziejopisarstwo gdańskie*; Heckmann, 'Krieg und historische Erinnerung', 146-50.

[36] Town historical writings appeared late also in such cities as Nuremberg, which maintained close contacts with Wrocław, or in Rostock (contacts with Prussian towns).

[37] Part of the extensive documentation of the Wrocław correspondence and papal bulls, contained in Enschenloer's *Geschichte...*, was translated by him from the Latin at the time of fervent political agitation not only for the councilors, but also for the gathered *communitas civium*.

into the fifteenth-century political discourse was the joint feat of university circles, lawyers and secular elites. At precisely this time, Italian humanists viewed history as a science, while to the north of the Alps its practical application grew increasingly more extensive.[38]

The dissemination of historical knowledge and political thought among the town environments of the fifteenth century took place in conditions different from the ones prevailing during the previous century. Participation in a growing number of regional town and estate conventions, together with the growth of the town bureaucracy and diplomacy, transformed the councillors, the town chancery scribes, and the clergy serving the town authorities into people conversant with legal thought and political discourse.[39] Thanks to the universities, newly established in Central Europe during the second half of the fourteenth century and at the beginning of the fifteenth century, the number of people who had studied at a local university, even briefly, grew rapidly. Students from Prussia and Silesia were dominated by the sons of burghers, whose a large part came from patrician families.[40] In the new model

of education, which at the end of the Middle Ages became common among the upper strata of the townspeople and constituted an important element of cultural legitimisation and affiliation to the town elite, at least one son in every generation was expected to study. As a rule, however, his university education was much too short to regard him as versed in Aristotle, law, and political thought. Experts should be sought rather in the chanceries of the great towns and among the fifteenth-century municipal scribes, many of whom had received the degree of *magister artium*. The impact exerted by at least some of them upon the policy of the towns was enormous.

The above reflections evoke an image of the breakthrough in the 1430s, which in Prussia and Silesia meant an attainment of political subjectivity by the estates, the institutionalisation of their conventions, the maturity of regional consciousness, and the onset of political separatism. Notwithstanding the differentiation of local situations, these were the years in which Central and Northern Europe could be described as 'the spring of estates'. The establishment of the Prussian Federation in 1440 was not, therefore, something exceptional or dictated exclusively by the growing conflict between the estates and territorial authority, but an element of a wider process, in which a prominent part was played by the political conceptions of the period. The Erection Act of the Federation was probably the work of the town scribes of Toruń and (or) Elbląg, who patterned the measures on similar acts issued by the Wendish towns.[41] Its statute was aimed against the monopolistic rule of the Order, conceived as state authority, and against its judicial privileges of spiritual authority. The first political consequence of creating the Federation was the refusal in 1441 to pay homage to the whole Order, envisaged as a land authority; homage was paid only to the new Grand Master, Konrad von Ehrlichhausen, recognised as a territorial lord. Naturally, the dualism of

---

[38] This is clearly discernible in, e.g. the arguments used by the Polish side in court trials involving Poland and the Teutonic Order, see *Lites ac res gestae inter Polonos Ordinemque Cruciferorum*, ed. T. Działyński (Poznań, 1855); cf. Halina Manikowska, 'Więź narodowa i państwowa', in Bronisław Geremek (ed.), *Kultura Polski Średnio-wiecznej, XIV-XV w.* (Warsaw, 1997), 906-9; see also: Karol Górski (ed.), *Związek Pruski i poddanie się Prus Polsce: Zbiór tekstów źródłowych* (Poznań, 1949).

[39] Cf. by way of example the activity of Johann Sterz, the mayor of Chełmno and one of the leaders of the Prussian opposition in Zenon H. Nowak, 'Burmistrz chełmiński Jan Sterz, dyplomata i przedstawiciel opozycji antykrzyżackiej w pierwszej połowie XV wieku', in *Studia nad dziejami miast i mieszczaństwa w średniowieczu*, ii (Toruń, 1996), 236-42. See also Helmut G. Walther, 'Die Macht der Gelehrsamkeit: Über die Meßbarkeit des Einflusses politischer Theorien gelehrter Juristen des Spätmittelalter', in Joseph Canning and Otto G. Oexle (eds.), *Political Thought and the Realities of Power in the Middle Ages* (Goetingen, 1998), 264-7.

[40] In the diocese of Warmia the sons of burghers comprised as many as 96 % of all persons recorded in the university registers to 1525, see: Gerhard Matern, *Die kirchlichen Verhältnisse in Ermland während des späten Mittelalters* (Paderborn, 1953), 24 ff. Among students originating from the two towns of Toruń as many as 38 % came from families whose representatives were members of the town authorities, see Robert

Ruciński, 'O sposobach finansowania studiów przez mieszczan z wielkich miast pruskich w średniowieczu', *Roczniki Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych*, lxiii (2003), 89.

[41] Górski (ed.), *Związek Pruski*, p. xxxvi. See also: Irena Janosz-Biskupowa and Marian Biskup, 'Ze studiów nad konceptem aktu erekcyjnego Związku Pruskiego z 14. III. 1440 r.', *Studia Źródłoznawcze*, iii (1958), 125-38; Marian Biskup, 'Der Preussische Bund 1440-1454 – Genesis, Struktur, Tätigkeit und Bedeutung in der Geschichte Preussens und Polens', *Hansische Studien*, iii (1975), 210-29.

rule, which came into being in Prussia after the establishment of the Fede-ration, affected the political awareness of the estates, its contents and expression. This was one of the foremost factors in the further development of the political situation in the *Ordenstaat*, whose pivotal proof was the role performed by Chełmno in the anti-Order opposition; this economically weak town was capable of meeting the political and ideological challenges of the leaders.

It thus appears appropriate to take a closer look at such people as the mayors of Toruń and Chełmno – Herman Rusopp and Johann Sterz, who belonged to a generation which, born in 1390-1400, took over rule in Prussian towns at the time of the Council of Basel and the emergence of a land estate representation (1430s). Together with the leaders of the knights estate, this generation first hindered the war between the Teutonic Order and Poland, and then initiated passive resistance and the establishment of the Prussian Federation; finally, it denied obedience towards the Order and led to the submission of Prussia to the king of Poland. The attitude represented by the leaders of the estates disclosed a new element in the relation between them and the ruler, namely, a certitude of their reasons and tenacity.[42] The co-incidence between their undertakings and the Council of Basel, together with its triumphant conciliarist thought, was by no means accidental. The doctrine of the consensus and free elections developed by the conciliarists could easily reach the Prussian town elites.

The conciliary movement took root at Central European universities, including those in Cracow, Leipzig, Vienna, Erfurt, Cologne and Heidelberg, which the students from Silesia and Prussia chose most often. This process was achieved early on, and to a great extent thanks to the migration of scholars in the wake of the Great Schism. Slightly later, it was inspired by the disputes which accompanied the general councils and offered one of the most important opportunities for contacts between the professors of those universities and Italian humanism. This is important since the legal experts appointed not only by the monarch but also, albeit more rarely, by the town councils, originated from university milieus and possessed an essential impact upon the political views of their principals. The stands represented by Central European scholars assumed their final form in an atmosphere imbued by assorted types of tension and disputes conducted upon an intellectual and Church level, and especially heated at the University of Prague; the clashes involved nominalists and realists, the supporters and opponents of radical reforms, and, upon the national level, the Bohemians and the Germans. Ultimately, they led to a secession of part of the professors and students and the ensuing establishment of the University of Leipzig; they also facilitated the development of the Cracow Academy after its revival. In this part of Europe, the Hussite movement constituted a challenge which had to be tackled on a level that was not exclusively religious, but also encompassed social and political thought.

Attention had already been drawn long ago to the probable influence exerted upon the political stand of the Prussian estates by the views expounded by the Cracow-based scholar Paulus Vladimiri.[43] Paulus proclaimed that subjects were obligated to profess disobedience in the case of an unjust war (the estates recognised the war with Poland initiated by the Order in 1431 to be precisely such a conflict), and would commit a sin of the conscience if they were to take part in hostilities of this sort. The manner in which those ideas became disseminated appears to be obvious – they were proclaimed in Constance as the official Polish stand in the dispute between Poland and the Teutonic Order examined at the Council; first and foremost, they constituted a fragment of social-political thought predominant at Cracow University during the first half of the fifteenth century.[44] The concurrence between the

---

[42] Marian Biskup, 'Rola miast w reprezentacji stanowej Królestwa Polskiego i Prus Krzyżackich w XIV i XV wieku', in Biskup, *Opera minora*, 214-7. See also Karol Górski, 'La Ligue des États et les origines du Régime réprésentatif en Prusse', in *Album Helen Maud Cam*, 2 vols. (Louvain, 1960-61), i, 173-86.

[43] Cf. Erich Weise, *Das Wiederstandsrecht im Ordenslande Preußen und das mittelalterliche Europa* (Goetingen, 1955).

[44] See *Pisma wybrane Pawła Włodkowica*, ed. Ludwik Ehrlich, 3 vols. (Warsaw, 1966-69). Mention is due also at the very least to the 'father' of the Cracow conciliarists – Matheus de Cracovia (d. 1410), author of *De praxi Romanae curiae* (1404), and Stanislaus de Scarbimiria, who wrote *De bellis iustis* (1409-15). Naturally, it is difficult to negate the impact of Cracow University, but on the other hand it is simply impossible

opinions voiced by the Cracow scholars and the political attitude of the Prussian towns and estates, which historians have found so striking, could be, however, merely ostensible, and stem more from the methodological premises of the Cracow-based social-political thought which accentuated this similarity (a rigorous distinction between that which belongs to the realm of natural and positive law, and that which belongs to theology) than from its contents. The anti-speculative approach, characteristic for this milieu, the utilitarian stand based on political Aristotelianism,[45] and the practical features of its intellectual stance were indubitably accepted more widely among persons dealing with political practice; nonetheless, they were not excessively original. A transition from this metodological level to conceptual categories demonstrates that the views expressed by the Cracow scholars suited the tendencies of the epoch. Only in Italy did they assume a new, already humanistic, rhetorical guise. The Cracow scholars suggested that the foundation and source of all legal norms (within the range of human positive law), is human nature, based on man's perceptive activity and his *recta ratio*. Thus a comprehended natural law is founded primarily on man's rationality and the ensuing equality and liberty of all people; the concepts of the law of nature and the law of nations are universal and binding for all: rulers and subjects, clergymen and laymen. The concept of the natural law was understood in a new manner, and identified with the autonomous nature of man envisaged as a political being in the Aristotelian meaning of the term. The conceptual and erudite apparatus for this thinking was borrowed to a considerable extent (not only in Cracow) from earlier commentators of canon law. This fact explains the ease with which such conceptions reached the political elites and, on a wider scale, the strata of European towns, and provided them with theoretical arguments in their battle for co-participation in rule. Students, as well as governing groups which benefited from legal expert opinions,

came into contact with academic political thought. At the court trial instigated by Frederick III against the Prussian Federation, the latter chose Martin Mayer of Nuremberg, a known conciliarist, to represent its arguments.[46]

The impact of political thought formulated in Cracow was unquestionably vital during the 1450s, a period which witnessed the activity of a successive generation ruling in Prussia.[47] The accomplishments of political thinkers from Cracow reached the Prussian leaders through the intermediary of Polish jurists. Faced with the threat of a dissolution of the Federation (1450), help was sought from lawyers in the Włocławek see, who prepared a defence based on arguments borrowed from canon and imperial law as well as theology: the right to oppose unjust rule and tyranny, and the necessity to protect the oppressed. Four years later, the Prussian legation, a part of the Polish Royal Council, and the Cracow scholars joined forces and referred to the *bellum iustum* doctrine in order to devise a legal justification of the Federation's disobedience towards the Order and the submission of Prussia to the Polish monarch. The most radical postulate, calling for the liquidation of the territorial rule of the Order, required arguments that referred both to the legitimacy of applying the right to resist and the necessity of refusing obedience towards authorities conducting unjust wars. The Prussian side found it easy to provide concrete examples of violations of peace committed by the Order. Already at the time of the revolt, the Council of Gdańsk, which was engaged in seeking financial support and backing amongst Hanseatic towns (especially Lübeck), was compelled to substantiate the validity of its disobedience. This procedure was even more important (albeit it proved to be ineffective) in view of the fact that the Emperor countered the diplomatic campaign conducted by the Prussian towns, and demanded that court procedure be respected as the only legal solution of the dispute with the Teutonic Order. The Council of Gdańsk considered the notorious perpetration of all sorts of acts of lawlessness to be a sufficiently justified cause for the

---

to ignore the fact that during the first half of the fifteenth century it held only third place as regard the number of students from Prussia at European universities (and was preceded by Leipzig and Vienna).

[45] See Juliusz Domański (ed.), *Filozofia i myśl społeczna XIII-XV wieku* (Warsaw, 1978).

---

[46] Biskup, 'Rola miast', 216.

[47] Members of the same generation include also the Wrocław councilors who headed the opposition against George of Podiebrad, as well as their most eloquent spokesman – Peter Eschenloer.

outbreak of a revolt. The argument of violating peace – a charge launched by both sides – was a universally applied justification, and the political vocabulary of the epoch frequently referred to the words of Isaiah in order to introduce Satan, the sower of war, into every conflict and violation of the *status quo*.[48] On the other hand, this particular argument proved insufficient. Historical writings from Gdańsk elaborated the charge launched against the propaganda of the Order, which accused the Prussian Federation of heresy: the Teutonic Knights, bound with the vows of chastity, were notoriously guilty of rape (their victims were not only townswomen) and changed convents into brothels.[49]

The political identities of the main Silesian an Prussian towns assumed their form during a period when the states of Central-Eastern Europe underwent transformation and territorial consolidation. In Bohemia, these alterations were disturbed by the Hussite uprising, and in Prussia – by the anachronism of the Teutonic Order state. At the end of the Middle Ages, both regions became the sites of various processes linked with the above mentioned factors, favouring strong regional integration and the development of 'land' identity – outright regional patriotism – expressed in a vocabulary close to that of the state consciousness or national identity of the period. A foremost role was played by the towns and the struggle for their autonomy, co-participation in rule, and, at least to a certain degree, political independence. In relation to all the citizens, the city councils acted in the manner of a ruler who, by co-operating with the councils of other towns and estates, was capable of taking upon himself responsibility for *bonum commune* of the town and the country. When threats endangered this general welfare and city liberties, the urban government was authorised to oppose superior authorities for the sake of guaranteeing peace. The autonomy-related

strivings of the towns did not, however, possess an anti-monarchic character; they were concerned with changing the ruler, but not with his ejection as such. The attempted construction of an autonomous town republic of Wrocław was devoid of an ideological foundation which would have made it possible to implement the actual domination of the town within the duchy of Wrocław. Similarly, the reference to Silesian regionalism during the war with Georgie of Podiebrad produced political separatism, short-lived and ideologically limited. In the course of fifteenth-century conflicts with the ruler, the policy pursued by the main towns of Silesia and Prussia aimed at inter-estate co-operation and the regionalization of politics. In this particular domain, it proved successful. Nevertheless, town leagues in Prussia and Silesia attached supreme importance to the protection of economic interests, and thus aimed at excessively narrow targets which, in contrast to The Netherlands, could not become a point of departure for the construction of a state. Ultimately, the process of involving the nobility changed the position held by the towns and the foundation for their participation in inter-estate regional politics. The weakness of the land-based aristocracy in both regions, and the political evolution of multi-ethnic monarchies during the second half of the fifteenth century and the sixteenth century contributed to the peripheral situation of the incorporated provinces in relation to the political centre; the political role played by the towns became relegated to the margins.

Translated by Aleksandra Rodzinska-Chojnowska

---

[48] Isaiah, 9:6 and Matthias, 13:25-40; see, e.g. *Lettera regis Poloniae* and *Littera missa concilio per Magistrum generalem ordinis beatae Mariae Theutonicorum* (1416), in Joannes Dominicus Mansi (ed.), *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio* (Paris, 1901, repr.), 27, 931-6.

[49] This historiography was discussed in greater detail by Heckmann, 'Krieg und historische Erinnerung', 145 ff.

II

Early Modern Era

'Libertas'-Vorstellungen in der ständischen Gesellschaft Polens, Böhmens und Ungarns

Joachim Bahlcke

Kollektive Freiheitsvorstellungen waren im gesamten partizipations-
starken Osten des ständischen Europa während des Spätmittelalters und der
Frühen Neuzeit Teil einer ausgeprägten Libertaskultur, die jeder monarchi-
schen Herrschaftsintensivierung enge Grenzen setzte.[1] Diese Libertaskultur
wurde bereits von den Zeitgenossen als raumtypologisches Phänomen wahr-
genommen und beschrieben. Vom polnischen Großkanzler und Großhetman
Jan Zamoyski ist mehrfach das Urteil überliefert, daß Polen, Böhmen und
Siebenbürger für die 'Freiheit' geboren seien, Deutsche und Schweden
jedoch für eine strenge Monarchie.[2] Gewiß, auf Gruppen bezogene oder von

---

[1] Der vorliegende Beitrag geht auf einen Vortrag bei der internationalen Fach-
tagung „Politická kultura ve střední Evropě ve středověku a raném novověku" am 16.
Juni 2004 in Pardubice (Tschechien) zurück. Er wurde angesichts seines essayhaften
Charakters für die Drucklegung nur mit den wichtigsten Anmerkungen versehen. Zum
Stand der gegenwärtigen historischen Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung vgl. allgemein Jerzy
Kłoczowski (ed.), *Historia Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, Bd. 1-2 (Lublin, 2000);
Joachim Bahlcke, Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg und Norbert Kersken (eds.), *Ständefreiheit
und Staatsgestaltung in Ostmitteleuropa. Übernationale Gemeinsamkeiten in der
politischen Kultur vom 16.-18. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig, 1996); Hugo Weczerka (ed.),
Stände und Landesherrschaft in Ostmitteleuropa in der frühen Neuzeit (Marburg, 1995);
Robert J. W. Evans und Thomas V. Trevor (eds.), *Crown, Church and Estates. Central
European Politics in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (London, 1991).

[2] Hans Roos und Günter Barudio, 'Politische Ideen und Verfassungsstrukturen in
Ost- und Nordeuropa im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert', in Iring Fetscher und Herfried
Münkler (eds.), *Pipers Handbuch der politischen Ideen*, Bd. 3 (München und Zürich,
1985), 163-200; Hermann Vahle, *Die Rezeption römischer Staatstheorie in der zweiten
Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts durch Jan Zamoyski* (Bochum, 1968).

Gruppen geteilte Freiheitsbegriffe finden sich auch im westlichen Europa in vielfältiger Form, und auch hier waren entsprechende Freiheitsdiskurse mittelbar oder unmittelbar mit politischem, religiösem und kulturellem Wandel verbunden. Die Intensität jedoch, mit der in den Ständegesellschaften zwischen Ostsee und Adria seit dem 14. Jahrhundert über Freiheit, Recht, Herrschaft und Glauben nachgedacht und so eine innere Absolutismusresistenz ideell gefestigt wurde, scheint auf ein Strukturmerkmal der Gesamtregion hinzudeuten.[3] Es ist bezeichnend, daß sich eine forcierte Staatsmacht in diesem Raum nur als machtpolitische Überwältigung von außen durchsetzen konnte. Mehrfach wurde in der Forschung darauf hingewiesen, daß die drei politischen Nationalkulturen – bei aller Eigenständigkeit – in dieser Phase untereinander aufs engste zusammenhingen und eine europäische Regionalkultur bildeten.[4] Diesen Befund wird man auch auf die politische Ideengeschichte ausweiten dürfen. Der Obertitel der 1992 von Piotr S. Wandycz vorgelegten Gesamtdarstellung Ostmitteleuropas – 'The Price of Freedom' – scheint daher gut gewählt.[5] Bestätigt wird diese Hypothese auch durch den bisher einzigen Versuch einer vergleichenden Betrachtung, das 1998 in Paris publizierte Sammelwerk 'Histoire des idées politiques de l'Europe centrale',

---

[3] Die meines Wissens bisher einzige vergleichende Studie stammt von Józef Leszczyński, 'The Part Played by the Countries of the Crown of St. Wenceslaus and by Hungary in the Freedom Ideology of the Polish Gentry (1572-1648)', in František Hejl und Josef Kolejka (eds.), *Otázky dějin střední a východní Evropy*, Bd. 2 (Brno, 1975), 25-64.

[4] Jenő Szűcs, *Die drei historischen Regionen Europas* (Frankfurt am Main, 1990); Werner Conze, *Ostmitteleuropa. Von der Spätantike bis zum 18. Jahrhundert* (München, 1922); pointiert zusammenfassend und thesenhaft zugespitzt Gottfried Schramm, 'Polen – Böhmen – Ungarn: Übernationale Gemeinsamkeiten in der politischen Kultur des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit', in Joachim Bahlcke, Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg und Norbert Kersken (eds.), *Ständefreiheit und Staatsgestaltung in Ostmitteleuropa. Übernationale Gemeinsamkeiten in der politischen Kultur vom 16.-18. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig, 1996), 13-38.

[5] Piotr S. Wandycz, *The Price of Freedom. a History of East Central Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present* (London und New York, 1992).

---

das einen umfangreichen Abschnitt über Freiheitsbegriffe im frühneuzeitlichen Polen, Böhmen und Ungarn enthält.[6]

Die folgenden Ausführungen können selbstverständlich keinen erschöpfenden Überblick über die Genese des Freiheitsbegriffes in allen Gesellschaften des östlichen Mitteleuropa vermitteln. Sie sollen lediglich einen Ausschnitt der politischen Kultur in diesem Zeitraum im überregionalen Vergleich vorstellen. Und sie sollen gleichzeitig die Notwendigkeit unterstreichen, sich stärker als bisher mit der Entwicklung und Veränderung der politischsozialen Sprache zu beschäftigen. Ich werde mich dabei auf drei Punkte konzentrieren: Erstens soll das Wesen von Freiheitsdiskursen, ihr Inhalt und ihre Funktion angesprochen werden; zweitens sollen exemplarisch einzelne Beispiele aus unterschiedlichen Jahrhunderten herausgegriffen und vorgestellt werden, um die Vielschichtigkeit vormoderner Freiheitskonzepte vor Augen zu führen. Dabei werde ich mich notgedrungen in Böhmen auf das 16., in Polen auf das 17. und in Ungarn auf das 18. Jahrhundert konzentrieren; drittens schließlich sollen diese Einzelbefunde zusammengeführt und mit Blick auf die politische Kultur insgesamt thesenhaft zugespitzt werden.

Zum ersten Punkt, zu einigen allgemeinen Beobachtungen: 'Libertas'Vorstellungen finden sich weniger in theoretischen Grundlagenreflexionen zu Macht, Souveränität und Widerstand als vielmehr in der politischen Praxis: bei den zahlreichen Kämpfen um Privilegiensicherung, politischen Konsens und konfessionelle Koexistenz.[7] Eine signifikante Ausnahme in unserem Raum stellt das Beispiel Polen dar, wo wir für die Frühe Neuzeit zusätzlich eine Vielzahl gedruckter Texte zur Verfügung haben, die sich explizit mit dem Wesen von Freiheit, deren Nutzen, aber auch deren

---

[6] Chantal Delsol und Michel Masłowski (eds.), *Histoire des idées politiques de l'Europe centrale* (Paris, 1998), hier besonders die Beiträge von Michael Soubbotnik, Matei Cazacu, Ferenc Szakály, Josef Válka, Zbigniew Ogonowski, Vladimír Urbánek und Jerzy Kłoczowski.

[7] Zur historiographischen Produktion vgl. detailliert Norbert Kersken, 'Entwicklungslinien der Geschichtsschreibung Ostmitteleuropas in der Frühen Neuzeit', in Joachim Bahlcke und Arno Strohmeyer (eds.), *Die Konstruktion der Vergangenheit. Geschichtsdenken, Traditionsbildung und Selbstdarstellung im frühneuzeitlichen Ostmitteleuropa* (Berlin, 2002), 19-53.

möglichen Mißbrauch und Schaden auseinandersetzen.[8] In ihrer Gesamtheit haben diese auf hohem Reflexionsniveau argumentierenden Schriften, von den klassischen Staatstheoretikern Andrzej Frycz-Modrzewski und Stanisław Orzechowski über die Vielzahl oftmals anonymer Traktate bis hin zu den publizierten Predigten eines Jakub Olszewski oder Piotr Skarga, kein Pendant in Böhmen und in Ungarn. Hier sind es traditionell eher die großen, an der Wende vom 15. zum 16. Jahrhundert entstandenen Kodifikationswerke des Landrechts, die als Bezugsgröße ständischer Freiheitsrechte galten und im politischen Denken der Stände entsprechend gegenwärtig waren: von der mährischen *Kniha Tovačovská* bis hin zu István Verbőczis *Tripartitum* in Ungarn.[9] Noch spärlicher sind entsprechende Referenzwerke in kleinen oder in sich wenig gefestigten Territorien: in Kroatien etwa, wo sich der Hochadel auf das ungarische Gesetzbuch stützte und dieses ins Kroatische übersetzen ließ,[10] oder in Schlesien, wo man ein einzelnes Landesprivileg bis in das 17. Jahrhundert hinein als 'Kleinod unserer Freiheit' bezeichnete.[11]

---

[8] Henryk Barycz, *Szlakami dziejopisarstwa staropolskiego. Studia nad historiografią w. XVI-XVIII* (Wrocław u. a., 1981); Andrzej Zajączkowski, *Główne elementy kultury szlacheckiej w Polsce. Ideologia a struktury społeczne* (Wrocław u. a., 1961).

[9] Karel Malý, Jaroslav Pánek und Dalibor Janiš (eds.), *Vladislavské zřízení zemské a počátky ústavního zřízení v českých zemích (1500-1619)* (Praha, 2001); Armin Wolf, *Zur Gesetzgebung in Europa 1100-1500. Zur Entstehung der Territorialstaaten* (München, [2]1996); Karel Kadlec, *Verbőczyovo Tripartitum a soukromé právo uherské a chorvatské šlechty v něm obsažené* (Praha, 1902).

[10] Olga Šojat, 'Ivanus Pergošić (?-1592)', in eadem (ed.), *Hrvatski kajkavski pisci. I: Druga polovina 16. stoljeća* (Zagreb, 1977), 71-99; Karel Kadlec, 'Pergošićův překlad Verbőczyova Tripartita', in *Zbornik u slavu Vatroslava Jagića* (Berlin, 1908), 209-11.

[11] Kazimierz Orzechowski, 'Rola przywileju króla Wladysława z 1498 r. w dziejach śląskiego stanowego parlamentaryzmu', in Karel Malý, Jaroslav Pánek und Dalibor Janiš (eds.), *Vladislavské zřízení zemské a počátky ústavního zřízení v českých zemích (1500-1619)* (Praha, 2001), 153-163; Jan Harasimowicz, '"Was kann nun besser seyn, dann für die Freyheit streiten und die Religion". Konfessionalisierung und ständische Freiheitsbestrebungen im Spiegel der schlesischen Kunst des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts', in Klaus Bußmann und Heinz Schilling (eds.), *1648. Krieg und Frieden in Europa*, Bd. 2 (Münster, 1998), 297-306.

Freiheitsdiskurse sind stets kontextgebunden, das heißt sie enthalten neben nahezu klassischen Versatzstücken – biblischen Vorstellungen etwa oder der Rezeption antiker Schriftsteller – eine Fülle autochthoner Basiselemente und Argumentationsmuster, die der jeweiligen Geschichtskultur und Traditionsbildung entlehnt werden. Deutlich wird dies etwa bei dem tschechischen Kleriker Bohuslav Balbín in einem handschriftlichen Werk, das erst 1775, ein Jahrhundert nach seinem Tod, unter dem Titel *Dissertatio apologetica pro lingua slavonica, praecipue bohemica* im Druck erschien.[12] Zu einem Zeitpunkt, als die Habsburger die ständische Verfassung beseitigt und ihr Erbrecht fest verankert hatten, schrieb Balbín in Anlehnung an Tacitus, es sei stets ein Zeichen von Freiheit, von den Seinen regiert zu werden.[13] Nur selten beruft er sich auf jüngere Autoren wie Justus Lipsius, dessen Urteil, daß jede Veränderung für einen Staat gefährlich sei, er sich anschließt; im Kern zielte sein Angriff, in dem er sich besorgt über das Vordringen der Deutschen in Böhmen und die Zurückdrängung der tschechischen Sprache äußerte, auf die neue, landfremde Oberschicht, die das Regnum nach 1620 in die Hand bekommen habe.[14] Balbíns Verteidigungsschrift ist nicht nur ein gutes Beispiel für die historische Fundierung der eigenen Freiheit; sie zeigt auch, daß Freiheit in antik-humanistischer Tradition eng zum semantischem Feld 'Vaterland' gehört, das seit dem 17. Jahrhundert immer häufiger auf die tschechische Sprach- und Kulturnation

---

[12] *Bohuslai Balbini Dissertatio apologetica pro lingva slavonica, praecipve bohemica* (Pragae, 1775). Herausgegeben wurde die Schrift von Franz Martin Pelzel (Pelcl).

[13] „*pars libertatis est, ait prudentissimus scriptor Tacitus, a suis gubernari*", ibid., 27. Zur Person und zum Werk Balbíns vgl. Jan P. Kučera und Jiří Rak, *Bohuslav Balbín a jeho místo v české kultuře* (Praha, 1983).

[14] Ludger Udolph, 'Bohuslav Balbín als Landeshistoriker', in Gertraude Zand und Jiří Holý (eds.), *Tschechisches Barock. Sprache, Literatur, Kultur – České baroko. Jazyk, literatura, kultura* (Frankfurt am Main u. a., 1999), 163-78; idem, 'Bohuslaus Balbins sog. „Dissertatio apologetica". Themen und Quellen', in Karl Gutschmidt, Helmut Keipert und Hans Rothe (eds.), *Slavistische Studien zum XI. internationalen Slavistenkongreß in Preßburg/Bratislava* (Köln, Weimar und Wien, 1993), 593-609.

bezogen wurde.[15] Vergleichbare Beobachtungen lassen sich vor allem in Polen machen, wo Freiheit der Reichsbürger (cives), de facto also des Adels, Freiheit der *res publica* und Freiheit der *natio polonica* in vielen Fällen einen Gesamtzusammenhang bilden.[16] Ideen- und mentalitätsgeschichtlich sind diese Freiheitsdiskurse daher im Zusammenhang mit der Bildung und Veränderung politischer Identitäten, mit Formen der Aneignung und Vergegenwärtigung von Vergangenheit, mit Zeitbewußtsein, Erinnerung und Wandlungen des kollektiven Gedächtnisses zu sehen.

Bei allen regionalen Eigenheiten weisen entsprechende 'Libertas'-Vorstellungen funktional zahlreiche Ähnlichkeiten auf. Ich beschränke mich hier auf wenige Beispiele: 'Freiheit' stiftet Identität, sie weckt Emotionen, und sie taugt für integrative, oft überständische Wertvorstellungen. Besonders deutlich wird eine solche Funktion als Propaganda- und Kampfbegriff naturgemäß bei Konflikten, die sich selbst, wie der Aufstand Ferenc Rákóczis Anfang des 18. Jahrhunderts, als 'Freiheitskampf' (szabadságharc) titulieren.[17] 'Freiheit' läßt sich dabei, als Faktor kulturell-gesellschaftlicher Eigenzuschreibung wie als spezifisches Abgrenzungsmerkmal, gleichermaßen gegen innere Feinde, Fremde und äußere Gegner in Stellung bringen: Das kann wie im Fall der ungarischen Aufstände die regierende Dynastie sein, die als die 'fremde' dargestellt wird,[18] das kann wie im Fall von Balbíns *Dissertatio* die konkurrierende Ethnie im eigenen Land sein, oder das können Spannungen sein, wie sie zwischen der *Rzeczpospolita szlachecka* und den Wettinern

---

[15] Eduard Maur, 'Der Begriff der Nation in der böhmischen Historiographie der Aufklärung', in Otto Dann, Miroslav Hroch und Johannes Koll (eds.), *Patriotismus und Nationsbildung am Ende des Heiligen Römischen Reiches* (Köln, 2003), 171-89.

[16] Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg, 'Das polnische Geschichtsdenken und der Piasten- und Jagiellonenkult in der Frühen Neuzeit', in Joachim Bahlcke und Arno Strohmeyer (eds.), *Die Konstruktion der Vergangenheit. Geschichtsdenken, Traditionsbildung und Selbstdarstellung im frühneuzeitlichen Ostmitteleuropa* (Berlin, 2002), 193-220.

[17] Béla Köpeczi (ed.), a *Rákóczi-szabadságharc és Európa* (Budapest, 1970).

[18] Mit zahlreichen Beispielen Lajos Hopp, 'Die ungarische Publizistik in der zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts', in Béla Köpeczi und Andor Tarnai (eds.), *Laurus Austriaco-Hungarica. Literarische Gattungen und Politik in der zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Budapest und Wien, 1988), 47-68.

Anfang des 18. Jahrhunderts an der Tagesordnung waren.[19] In Polen-Litauen wurde das Argument der Freiheit überdies genutzt, um die Zugehörigkeit des eigenen Landes zum lateinischen Kulturkreis zu unterstreichen: Denn die Garantie der ständischen Freiheiten, so Sebastian Petrycy im Vorwort seiner Übersetzung der *Politik* des Aristoteles, belege diese Zugehörigkeit zum Westen geradezu zwingend. Noch deutlicher wurde der bereits genannte Stanisław Orzechowski, der seinen Landsleuten den Zusammenhang vom Bewußtsein persönlicher Freiheit und Kampfeswillen zu verdeutlichen suchte: 'Die echten Türken, die Türken Asiens', schrieb er, 'wissen nicht, was Freiheit ist, und deshalb ist ihnen das nicht zuzeigen, was einem Soldaten wirkliche Kampfeskraft verleiht: die Liebe zur Freiheit und die Hoffnung der persönlichen Rechte.'[20]

Ich komme zu meinem zweiten Punkt, zu thematischen Schwerpunkten einzelner Territorien aus unterschiedlichen Jahrhunderten. Im Böhmen des 16. Jahrhunderts, meinem ersten Beispiel, gilt es zunächst eine Besonderheit zu vergegenwärtigen: den historischen Vorsprung in der Geschichte von Widerstand, Oppositionsbildung und Revolution. Denn die böhmischen Laienstände hatten bereits Anfang des 15. Jahrhunderts erstmals in der Geschichte der Christenheit Widerstand 'in causa fidei' realisiert und damit die mittelalterliche Tradition ständischer Renitenz durch transzendentale Legitimation vertieft.[21] Für die Ausprägung und Behauptung kollektiver Freiheitskonzepte

---

[19] Kennzeichnend für diese Spannungen ist das höchst aufschlußreiche „Rozmowa poufała rycerza polskiego z Saksonem", das Ende 1715 entstand. Vgl. Józef Gierowski, 'Personal- oder Realunion? Zur Geschichte der polnisch-sächsischen Beziehungen nach Poltawa', in Johannes Kalisch und Józef Gierowski (eds.), *Um die polnische Krone. Sachsen und Polen während des Nordischen Krieges 1700-1721* (Berlin, 1962), 254-91, hier 276-9.

[20] Alle Zitate in der herausragenden Fallstudie von Edward Opaliński, 'Die Freiheit des Adels. Ideal und Wirklichkeit in Polen-Litauen im 17. Jahrhundert', in Ronald G. Asch (ed.), *Der europäische Adel im Ancien Régime. Von der Krise der ständischen Monarchien bis zur Revolution (ca. 1600-1789)* (Köln, Weimar und Wien, 2001), 77-104.

[21] Ausführlich František Šmahel, *Husitská revoluce*, Bd. 1-4 (Prague, ²1993); besonders zur ideengeschichtlichen Entwicklung Winfried Eberhard, 'Herrscher und Stände', in Iring Fetscher und Herfried Münkler (eds.), *Pipers Handbuch der politischen Ideen*, Bd. 2 (München und Zürich, 1993), 467-551.

war dies von grundlegender Bedeutung, erhielt doch so der Kampf um Bekenntnis- und Glaubensfreiheit einen ungleich höheren Stellenwert als in anderen Ländern.[22] Über die klassischen ständepolitischen Kontexte hinaus finden wir hier gleichwohl nur wenige Texte, die sich explizit dem Phänomen von Freiheit im hier zugrundeliegenden Verständnis widmeten. Ein typischer Repräsentant der um die *libertas Bohemiae* kämpfenden Intellektuellen begegnet uns in Paul Stránský, der 1618 mit seinem Werk *Proti hostinským, v Čechách se do kosteluv tlačícím jazykum na nedbalého Čecha učiněný okřik* eine ideengeschichtlich bedeutsame Verteidigungsschrift der tschechischen Sprache vorlegte. Seine Argumentationskette: Fremde Sprache bringe fremdes Joch, fremdes Joch Sklaverei, diese den schnellen Verderb eines Volkes; als Gegenbild dienten ihm die Altvorderen, die Vaterland, Freiheit und Sprache stets als ihre höchsten Güter verteidigt hätten.[23]

Hier begegnet uns bereits jener Topos der 'alten Tschechen', die wenig später dann in Stránskýs Hauptwerk, der 1634 in Leiden gedruckten *Respublica Bohemiae*, am Anfang einer von den slawischen Ursprungsmythen von Čech, Krok, Libuše und Přemysl her entwickelten Rechts- und Freiheits-tradition standen.[24] Nach dem Zusammenbruch von 1620, der den Anfang einer gespaltenen Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtsschreibung markiert, verlagerten sich Freiheitsdiskurse bis zur nationalen Wiedergeburtsbewegung in weiten Teilen in das Exil.[25] Stránskýs gesamtes Werk kreist im Kern um

einen einzigen, vielfach variierten Begriff, denjenigen der Freiheit – und das in einer solchen Dichte und Überzeugungskraft, daß sogar Ignaz Cornova, der die *Respublica* in der Zeit der Aufklärung wiederentdeckte, respektvoll feststellen mußte: 'So spricht ein Freyheitsschwärmer des 17ten Jahrhunderts.'[26] Die eigenwillige Mischung von Freiheitsverständnis, religiösem Pathos und unterschiedlichen Nationsbegriffen finden wir verstreut auch in anderen historiographischen Zeugnissen: in Exulantenliedern, Predigten und Selbstzeugnissen.[27] Zu den allgemeineuropäischen Freiheitspostulaten im Umfeld der Französischen Revolution konnten diese Exulanten kaum einen ideellen Beitrag leisten. Sie gewannen allerdings in dem Moment erneut an Aktualität, als sich die moderne tschechische Nationalbewegung des 19. Jahrhunderts als eine Wiederaufnahme ihrer religiösen Sendung, das heißt ihrer hussitischen Tradition, erklärte.[28]

In Polen mit seiner in ganz Europa einmaligen Verfassung, die zwischen Ständewesen, Parlamentarismus und Demokratie in merkwürdiger Weise oszillierte, scheinen uns während des 16./17. Jahrhunderts auf den ersten Blick gänzlich andere Freiheitsdiskurse zu begegnen. Hier, wo es keine inneradeligen *status et ordines* wie in Böhmen und Ungarn gab, stand Freiheit in der Hierarchie der politischen Werte unmittelbar neben Gleichheit.[29]

---

[22] Jaroslav Pánek, 'K úrovni českého politického myšlení na počátku novověku', in *Časopis Matice moravské*, cxvii (1998), 453-64.

[23] Josef Volf, 'Pavla Stránského Okřik na nedbalého Čecha učiněný 1618', in *Časopis musea království Českého*, lxxxiv (1910), 23-40; Ludger Udolph, 'Der Streit um die čechische Sprache in Böhmen vom Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts bis 1620', in Hans-Bernd Harder und Hans Rothe (eds.), *Später Humanismus in der Krone Böhmen 1570-1620. Studien zum Humanismus in den böhmischen Ländern* IV (Dresden, 1998), 169-80.

[24] Pavel Stránský, *Respublica Bohemiae* (Lugdunum Batavorum, 1634).

[25] Eduard Maur, 'Pojetí národa v díle českých pobělohorských exulantů', in Michaela Hrubá (ed.), *Víra nebo vlast? Exil v českých dějinách raného novověku* (Ústí nad Labem, 2001), 174-83; Vladimír Urbánek, 'Patriotismus pobělohorského exilu', in *Historické Listy*, iv (1995), 3-6; Joachim Bahlcke, 'Theatrum Bohemicum. Reformpläne, Verfassungs-ideen und Bedrohungsperzeptionen am Vorabend des Dreißigjährigen Krieges', in Winfried

Schulze (ed.), *Friedliche Intentionen – Kriegerische Effekte. War der Ausbruch des Dreißigjährigen Krieges unvermeidlich?* (St. Katharinen, 2002), 1-20.

[26] Ignaz Cornova (ed.), *Paul Stransky's Staat von Böhmen*, Bd. 1-7 (Prag, 1792-1803), hier Bd. 7, 120 Anm. a.

[27] Alexander Schunka, *Gäste, die bleiben. Zuwanderer in Kursachsen und der Oberlausitz im 17. und frühen 18. Jahrhundert*, phil. Diss (München, 2003); idem, 'Exulanten in Kursachsen im 17. Jahrhundert', in *Herbergen der Christenheit*, xxvii (2003), 17-36; idem, 'Exulanten, Konvertiten, Arme und Fremde. Zuwanderer aus der Habsburger-monarchie in Kursachsen im 17. Jahrhundert', *Frühneuzeit-Info*, xiv (2003), 66-78.

[28] Květa Mejdřická, *Listy ze stromu svobody* (Praha, 1989); Zdeněk Hojda, 'Náboženská perzekuce po Bílé hoře jako součást českého mýtu. Příspěvek k poznání výtvarných a literárních zdrojů historického vědomí v 19. století', in Ivan Hlaváček und Jan Hrdina (eds.), *Facta probant homines. Sborník příspěvků k životnímu jubileu Zdeňky Hledíkové* (Praha, 1998), 181-203.

[29] Anna Sucheni-Grabowska (ed.), *Między monarchą a demokracją. Studia z dziejów Polski XV-XVIII wieku* (Warszawa, 1994).

Als 'Juwel', 'Augapfel' und 'Trutzburg' der Freiheit galt die Königswahl durch die Gesamtheit des Adels, eine Praxis, die in vielfältiger Form auf das Selbstwertgefühl der polnischen Edelleute zurückwirkte. Das Bewußtsein der Überlegenheit der eigenen Verfassung im Vergleich zu anderen politischen Systemen in Europa umfaßte die politischen ebenso wie die religiösen Freiheitsrechte.[30] Die Gegenüberstellung der freien polnischen Nation und der unfreien, 'servilen' Völker, wie sie uns in der Instruktion des Landtags von Halicz im Mai 1661 begegnet, findet sich in ähnlichen Metaphern an vielen Stellen: 'Unter den Freiheiten unseres Volkes, durch die wir uns von den unterwürfigen Nationen unterscheiden, ist die erste und vornehmste die Wahl der Könige, die unser Vaterland bewahrt, eine Freiheit, die von den Vorfahren stammt und mit unserem Blute errungen worden ist.' Das *liberum veto* dagegen, das später als Hauptmerkmal dieser Freiheit überhaupt gelten sollte, wurde in der ersten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts noch ganz als Zeichen der Unfreiheit wahrgenommen. Es scheint mir der Freiheit unvereinbar, heißt es im Protokoll des Sejm von 1616, 'daß eine einzelne Person das Gesetz bestimmt und in der Art eines Tyrannen herrscht'.[31] Diese Auffassung wandelte sich erst, als das königliche Souveränitätsstreben nach 1650 immer bedrohlichere Ausmaße annahm. In jener Zeit vollzog sich im politischen Denken ein spürbarer Wertewandel vom freien Wahlrecht zum freien Stimmrecht.

Bemerkenswert am polnischen Beispiel sind überdies diejenigen Stimmen aus dem adeligen Umfeld, die nicht vorrangig auf eine Ausweitung von Freiheit abzielen, sondern umgekehrt – aus unterschiedlichen Interessen – selbstkritisch vor deren Ausuferung warnen, die den Zusammenhang von Freiheit, Anarchie und Zerstörung des Vaterlandes herausarbeiten einen verantwortungsbewußten Umgang mit ihr anmahnen. Und bemerkenswert sind

schließlich auch jene Belegstellen, die auf einen im gesamteuropäischen Vergleich frühzeitigen Nationalisierungsschub kollektiver 'Libertas'-Vorstellungen in der polnisch-litauischen Rzeczpospolita hindeuten, auf den Zusammenhang also von Freiheit und Ethnogenese. Was konkret unter 'polnischer Freiheit' zu verstehen war, konnte zwar in der Eigenwahrnehmung wie in der Fremdwahrnehmung zwischen hoher Bewunderung und tiefer Verachtung schwanken; es hatte jedoch stets, anders als die oft zitierte Metapher der 'teutschen libertät', eine über das Politische und Religiöse hinausweisende Konnotation. Der Begriff der Freiheit wurde so, über den rechtlichen Status hinausgehend, immer mehr auf andere Loyalitätsgruppen übertragen.[32]

Kommen wir zu unserem dritten Beispiel, zu Ungarn, im 18. Jahrhundert: Einen aufschlußreichen Vergleich der strukturell zunächst sehr ähnlichen polnischen und ungarischen Freiheitstraditionen finden wir in einem fiktiven Streitgespräch zwischen einem Polen und einem Italiener, den der polnische Humanist Łukasz Górnicki in der zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts über die Vor- und Nachteile des politischen Systems in der Adelsrepublik zur Zeit der Wahl König Sigismunds III. verfaßte.[33] Nach Auffassung des katholischen Autors war es einzig die Uneinigkeit der Ungarn, ihre Abwendung von der römischen Kirche also, die jenen Freiheitsentzug als Gottesstrafe notwendig nach sich gezogen habe: ein gängiges, der älteren *religio vinculum societatis*-Formel nachempfundenes Argument.[34] Im Vergleich blieben jene Freiheiten, namentlich diejenigen des Adels, gleichwohl

---

[30] Norbert Kersken, 'Geschichtsbild und Adelsrepublik. Zur Sarmatentheorie in der polnischen Geschichtsschreibung der frühen Neuzeit', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, lii (2004), 235-60; Leszczyński, 'Freedom Ideology', 25-64; Robert I. Frost, 'The Nobility of Poland-Lithuania, 1569-1795', in Hamish M. Scott (ed.), *The European Nobilities in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, Bd. 2: Northern, Central and Eastern Europe* (London und New York, 1995), 183-222.

[31] Alle Zitate nach Opaliński, 'Freiheit des Adels', 77-104.

---

[32] Janusz Tazbir, 'Polska świadomość narodowa XVI-XVIII wieku', in Roman Heck (ed.), *Studia nad rozwojem narodowym Polaków, Czechów i Słowaków* (Wrocław, 1976), 25-47; aus der großen Zahl zeitgenössischer Freiheitsdiskurse vgl. exemplarisch: *Die Pohlnische Freiheit durch ein gelehrtes Gespräch eines Pohlen mit einem Franzosen erörtert* (Philocopolis, 1739); Georg Schmidt, 'Die „deutsche Freiheit" und der Westfälische Frieden', in Klaus Garber und Jutta Held (eds.), *Der Frieden. Rekonstruktion einer europäischen Vision*, Bd. 2 (München, 2001), 323-47.

[33] Hier zitiert nach der – nicht zufällig in deutscher Sprache Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts besorgten – Neuedition: Lucas Gornicki, *Unterredung von der Wahl, Freyheit, Gesetzen und Sitten der Pohlen, zur Zeit der Wahl Sigismund des Dritten verfestiget* (Breslau und Leipzig, 1753).

[34] *Ibid.*, 9.

beachtlich, auch über die Wende vom 18. zum 19. Jahrhundert hinaus.[35] Noch 1765 fiel der Wiener Regierung angesichts der 'so tief eingewurzelten republicanischen Freyheit', wie es ein Mitglied des Staatsrats formulierte, kein anderes Mittel zur Disziplinierung der ungarischen Stände ein, als zentrale Ämter unbesetzt zu lassen und den Reichstag zu umgehen. Gerade die Spannungen jener Jahre, die ihren Niederschlag in zahlreichen Traktaten und Flugschriften mit Titeln wie *Passio Libertatis* oder *Moriens Libertas* fanden, werfen ein Licht auf das Freiheitsverständnis in Ungarn.[36] Knapp auf den Punkt gebracht könnte man den damaligen Kampf als einen solchen des Übergangs charakterisieren: von der *nobilis constitutio* zur *constitutio nationalis*. Um die 'reliquias Libertatis Hungaricae', die Reste der ungarischen Freiheit zu verteidigen, wählte man als Vorbild interessanterweise die Adelsrepublik unter Stanisław Poniatowski, die, anders als im Westen Europas, in Ungarn unverändert als Hort ungebrochener Libertät gesehen wurde.[37] Die Bedeutung von Freiheit für die neuzeitliche Staats- und Nationsbildung tritt im Fall Ungarns mit besonderer Klarheit hervor. Ein bis heute kaum gewürdigtes Referenzwerk ist in diesem Sinne József Benczúrs staatstheoretische Schrift 'Ungaria semper libera', in dem der Verfasser jede Abhängigkeit Ungarns vom römisch-deutschen Kaiser, vom Papst und vom Sultan verneinte und eine eigene Souveränitätstheorie entfaltete, die einzig und allein die 'defensio domesticae libertatis' vor Augen hatte.[38]

Fassen wir die hier skizzierten Einzelbefunde abschließend unter übergeordneten Gesichtspunkten zusammen. 'Freiheit' begegnet uns in den ständischen Gesellschaften Ostmitteleuropas als ein geschichtlicher Grundbegriff, bei dem der Übergang vom klassischen Begriffsinhalt der 'iura et libertates' im Mittelalter hin zur modernen Freiheit im Kollektivsingular, also *der* Freiheit, fließend ist.[39] In allen drei großen Ständemonarchien finden wir nebeneinander Freiheitsvorstellungen, die auf eine bloße Verteidigung adeliger Privilegien abzielen, und solche, die ständische Grenzen überwinden und moderne, protobürgerliche Inhalte besitzen. Bei allen konkreten Unterschieden im einzelnen zeigt sich doch, daß 'Freiheit' als politisches Postulat und als Kernbegriff der politischen Kultur in allen hier betrachteten Staaten einen ähnlich hohen Wert besaß. Was uns für die historische und kulturwissenschaftliche Forschung freilich für diesen Raum vollständig fehlt, ist ein modern konzipiertes Lexikon der politisch-sozialen Sprache, wie wir es etwa für den deutschsprachigen Raum in den 'Geschichtlichen Grundbegriffen' besitzen. Denn über den Wandel der einzelnen Begriffe, die für das Verständnis der politischen Kultur Polens, Böhmens und Ungarns zentrale Bedeutung besitzen, wissen wir bis heute nahezu nichts. Ein solches Grundlagenwerk könnte zugleich die verbreitete, aber falsche Vorstellung beseitigen, daß 'Freiheit' ausschließlich ein Moment des Westens in der europäischen Geschichte ist.[40]

---

[35] György Spira und Jenő Szűcs (ed.), *Nemzetiség a feudalizmus korában. Tanulmányok* (Budapest, 1972); Robert J. W. Evans, *Der Adel Ungarns in der Habsburgermonarchie im 18. Jahrhundert*, in: Ronald G. Asch (ed.), *Der europäische Adel im Ancien Régime. Von der Krise der ständischen Monarchien bis zur Revolution (ca. 1600-1789)* (Köln, Weimar und Wien, 2001), 345-62.

[36] Éva H. Balázs, *Bécs és Pest-Buda a régi századvégen, 1765-1800* (Budapest, 1987).

[37] Joachim Bahlcke, 'Élites religieuses et politiques dans le sud-est de la monarchie des Habsbourg. Clergé, constitution aristocratique et Église d'État en Hongrie à l'époque de Marie-Thérèse', in Jean-Michel Boehler, Christine Lebeau und Bernard Vogler (eds.), *Les élites régionales (XVIIᵉ-XXᵉ siècle). Construction de soi-même et service de l'autre. Épique de recherche en sciences historiques* (Strasbourg, 2002), 215-32.

[38] Iosephus Benczur, *Ungaria semper libera, suique iuris, et nunquam vel principi, vel genti alicui externae, obnoxia* (Vindobonae, 1764). Über Benczúr (Pseudonym Eusebius

Verinus), einen der bedeutendsten und produktivsten Vertreter der ungarischen Aufklärung, ist bis heute trotz des umfangreichen Oeuvre so gut wie nichts bekannt. Die wichtigsten Lebensstationen und eine Auswahl seines Werkes in *Slovenský biografický slovník* 1 (Martin, 1986), 203 f.

[39] Zur Begriffsgeschichte vgl. Werner Conze et al., 'Freiheit', in Otto Brunner, Werner Conze und Reinhart Koselleck, (eds.), *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, Bd. 2 (Stuttgart, 1979), 425-542; Clausdieter Schott, 'Freiheit und Libertas. Zur Genese eines Begriffs', *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte. Germanistische Abteilung*, civ (1987), 84-109.

[40] Günter Birtsch (ed.), *Grund- und Freiheitsrechte im Wandel von Gesellschaft und Geschichte. Beiträge zur Geschichte der Grund- und Freiheitsrechte vom Ausgang des Mittelalters bis zur Revolution von 1848* (Göttingen, 1981), ist eines von vielen Beispielen für wissenschaftliche Unternehmungen aus der Zeit der Teilung Europas während des Kalten Krieges, in denen der ostmitteleuropäische Raum vollständig

Perceptions of 'Libertas' in the Corporate Societies of Early Modern Poland, Bohemia, and Hungary

Joachim Bahlcke

Summary

During the late Middle Ages and the early modern period, collective notions of liberty in Eastern Europe were part of a widespread culture of 'libertas', limiting attempts of the rulers to increase their power at the expense of the estates in their respective countries. Even the contemporaries noticed the remarkable intellectual intensity in which intellectuals since the 14th century dealt with issues such as freedom, justice, government, and belief. Thus, an inner resistance against absolutist tendencies was linked to this distinctive area between the Baltic and the Adriatic Seas. The paper consequently presents an aspect of political culture in a comparative perspective and underlines the need to research the evolving political and social languages more thoroughly than before.

unbeachtet blieb. Zur Situation in Mittel- und Westeuropa vgl. vor allem Peter Blickle, *Von der Leibeigenschaft zu den Menschenrechten. Eine Geschichte der Freiheit in Deutschland* (München, 2003); Johannes Fried (ed.), *Die abendländische Freiheit vom 10. zum 14. Jahrhundert. Der Wirkungszusammenhang von Idee und Wirklichkeit im europäischen Vergleich* (Sigmaringen, 1991); Klaus Schreiner und Ulrich Meier (eds.), *Stadtregiment und Bürgerfreiheit. Handlungsspielräume in deutschen und italienischen Städten des Späten Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit* (Göttingen, 1994); Theodor Mayer (ed.), *Das Problem der Freiheit in der deutschen und schweizerischen Geschichte* (Lindau und Konstanz, 1955) [Neudruck Sigmaringen, 1970]; Jurrien R. G. Schuur, 'Die spätmittelalterliche „friesische Freiheit" und ihr Untergang zur Zeit Karls V.', in Bernhard Sicken (ed.), *Herrschaft und Verfassungsstrukturen im Nordwesten des Reiches. Beiträge zum Zeitalter Karls V.* (Köln, Weimar und Wien, 1994), 89-104; Wilhelm Hanisch, 'Friesische Freiheit, Sater Freiheit, Chodenfreiheit und Künische Freiheit. Ein Beitrag zum Problem der Freiheit in der deutschen und schweizerischen Geschichte', *Tijdschrift voor Rechtsgeschiedenis – Revue d'Histoire du Droit*, xxxiii (1965), 1-37.

Notions of 'libertas' can be found in political practice rather than in theoretical treatises on ruling power, souvereignty, or resistance. They appear in the numerous struggles for privileges, political consensus, and confessional co-existence. However, a significant exception is Poland with its large number of early modern printed works on the nature and necessity of liberty as well as on the dangers of its abuse and damage. Such discourses on liberty were always linked to concrete contexts and therefore consisted not only of classical motives taken from the bible or antiquity. Instead, they were strongly influenced by genuine elements and arguments taken from local histories and domestic traditions. They should therefore be seen in the context of emerging political identities, of reshaping and representing the past, and of preserving and changing the collective memory in the respective societies. Apart from their regional peculiarities, the notions of 'libertas' share some common features in a functional sense. 'Liberty' fosters feelings of identity, it evokes emotions, and it contributes to develop standards of behaviour, sometimes transcending the values of certain social groups. In this respect, 'liberty' serves as a means for group cohesion as well as for separation from opposing groups within society, from strangers or enemies from the outside. The great significance of 'liberty' in the corporate societies of East Central Europe makes the notion a historical essential, where the floating shift from the medieval meaning of 'iura et libertates' towards the modern, singular 'liberty' / 'Freiheit' becomes apparent. In the three corporate monarchies mentioned we can on the one hand trace notions of liberty as a mere defense of nobles' privileges whereas on the other hand 'liberty' transcends these social boundaries towards modern meanings of almost-citizenlike character. Apart from minor regional differences, the equally high importance of 'liberty' for the region must therefore be emphasized.

Money in the Political Culture
of 16th Century Central Europe

Petr Vorel

In late medieval times the geographical horizon of Central Europe was defined by the territories, which belonged to what was known as the Holy Roman Empire. The internal structure of this medieval political formation, which upheld the constitutional traditions of the early Christian Western Roman Empire, was re-defined in 1356 by Charles IV of Luxembourg, Holy Roman emperor and king of Bohemia. At that time the Holy Roman emperor was the principal elected representative of this Central European Empire, which was a complex power structure composed of many tens of smaller and larger territories with different levels of sovereignty and with their own rulers (princes), interconnected through a wide range of vassal relationships. The Holy Roman Empire bordered on the Kingdom of Poland to the east; the Kingdom of Hungary to the south-east; the Venetian Republic and the Papal state to the south; the Kingdom of France to the west; and the Kingdom of Denmark to the north. In present-day Europe, the historical territories of the late Medieval Holy Roman Empire embrace the western part of Poland, the Czech Republic in its entirety, Austria, Slovenia, part of north and north-western Italy, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, the eastern borders of France, Luxembourg, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany.

The Emperor himself had extensive powers in relation to the Empire's territory, but his real influence depended on many circumstances. He was an elected ruler. The most important representatives of the Empire after the Emperor himself were the electors of the Emperor. From 1356 onwards the rank of elector was bound with strictly defined ruling posts in Bohemia, Saxony, Brandenburg and the Rhine Palatinate; three votes of the ecclesiastical electors were reserved for the archbishops of the Catholic Church in Cologne

on the Rhine, Mainz and Trier. This seven-member college of electors not only elected the emperor but it could also have him dethroned. Thus, the electors were relatively very important in the political life of Central Europe, especially the secular electors, provided their political activity in the Empire was also underpinned by their own power base.

One period of deep decline of imperial power in Central Europe is said to be the mid-15th century when the Holy Roman Empire was under the rule of the Habsburg Emperor Frederick III (1440-93). The decline of the Emperor's authority and his factual inability to act as a unifying element in late medieval Central Europe were the result of deep economic and political problems. These were one of the manifestations of the crisis of the late medieval European society. Among other things it presented itself throughout the observed territory in the instability of currency, culminating in the inflation of worthless credit monies in the 1450s.

The change in the emperor's status in Central European politics only arrived with the onset of the early Modern Age, symbolically linked to the persona of a new Habsburg ruler of the Holy Roman Empire, Maximilian I (1493-1519). His efforts to restore the Empire's universalism; to strengthen the imperial symbols of power and the influence of the emperor as such came to fruition primarily in the mid-1490s, but were typical of the entire period of his reign. Among other things Maximilian I came up with the novel idea of creating a common monetary and tax system within his Empire. Subsequently this intention became one of the major challenges for Maximilian's successors on the imperial throne in all their attempts to integrate Central Europe in the 16th century.

The attempts at integration by Emperor Maximilian I found favour in that part of the Holy Roman Empire where primarily Germanic languages were spoken, which later provided the basis for standard German. Maximilian I began to use the term 'the Holy Roman Empire of the Germanic Nation' for this territory accurately defined by the borders of the Imperial Districts (1512) and under the authority of the Imperial Chamber Count. Attempts to restore the immediate influence of the imperial court in other parts of the earlier medieval Holy Roman Empire failed, although Maximilian I even resorted to military intervention in some cases. This concerned the territory of present-day Switzerland and the North-Italian principalities

and city-states. The Emperor's authority and the legislative activities of the Imperial Diets were not legally binding throughout the extensive and territorially compact complex of several countries under the rule of the king of Bohemia (Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia and Lusatia). However, during the 16th century the rulers of the above mentioned territories used, in some cases, if it suited them, their affiliation to the Holy Roman Empire, which was at that time only formally demonstrated. One of the political effects, which would have wider implications for integration, was the actual attempt to establish a common currency.

The idea of a common currency throughout the Empire became one of the most important political issues of the 16th century, in which both the Emperor and concerned Imperial Princes took an interest. In general, all of them managed to agree on the need to have a common currency. Yet, it proved very difficult to reach an agreement on the physical shape of the new currency, namely a title for monetary numerical units and the metrological parameters of coins, although this was a side issue when looking at the function of money from a medieval point of view. When attempting to transform the Holy Roman Empire into a strong Modern Age state, whose very existence called for the more efficient internal circulation of money, the question of a common currency became one of the priorities and was regularly high on the agenda of the Imperial Diets.

Thus, the efforts of Central European rulers to establish a new model of the early modern monetary system enable us to observe the signs of a real political culture in Central Europe.[1] It is chiefly possible because the most important territorial complexes, which then co-formed Central Europe (i.e. the Holy Roman Empire of the Germanic Nation and the Lands of the Czech Crown alongside), were constitutionally Estates' monarchies, whose ruler was elected. As a result neither the Holy Roman emperor nor the king of Bohemia could introduce a new monetary system at will but required

---

[1] Alfred Kohler, *Das Reich im Kampf um die Hegemonie in Europa 1521-1648* (Munich, 1990); Joachim Bahlcke, Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg and Norbert Kersken (eds.), *Ständefreiheit und Staatsgestaltung in Ostmitteleuropa (Übernationale Gemeinsamkeiten in der politischen Kultur vom 16.-18. Jahrhundert)* (Leipzig, 1996).

a political consensus, unlike most rulers of the territorial principalities within the Holy Roman Empire. It was not easy to achieve this consensus, because the effort needed to establish a common European currency was seen as a further strengthening of Habsburg centralism by the Estates' opposition within the Empire and the Bohemian Lands, also.

I will venture to clarify the fundamental change resulting from the fact that the rulers of the Holy Roman Empire were politically interested in the introduction of a common Central European currency, by having a look at the development of monetary relations which had preceded the adoption of The First Imperial Currency Order from 1524.

During the period of the Middle Ages the rulers of the Holy Roman Empire did not feel the need to create a common currency for this state entity. Indeed, it was not necessary because the purchasing power of coinage was directly based on the contents of precious metal. Coinage from different emitters of money, whose trustworthiness was proven in the commercial environment, could be used as currency in most European countries because its purchasing power in a specific Land currency could be derived with reference to the gold or silver it contained.

The world of commerce in medieval Europe most commonly used silver coins of those emitters who had at their disposal their own particular mineral resources of this metal. For this reason the role of the most important silver tender in the Central Europe of the mid-14th century was played by coins minted by Emperor Charles IV himself. At that time, as king of Bohemia he controlled the most important Central European resources of mined silver in Bohemia, which entered the monetary market in the form of traditional Bohemian Land coins, the so-called Prague groats. Despite the massive spread of this coinage throughout the entire Central European space and their imitation by other mints (primarily in the Meissen Margravate) there did not appear a stable metrological standard in the 14th and 15th centuries, against which the value of other concrete mintages could be judged or measured.

The situation was very different with gold coins. From the 14th century onwards the generally accepted metrological standards of gold coins were gradually established in Central Europe, originally derived from the gold standard of the medieval commercial coins of a North-Italian provenance (florins and ducats), and minted from gold attained as a result of commercial

activities. At the turn of the 15th and 16th century there were two main gold nominals, i.e. 'ducat' and 'Rhine gold' (Goldgulden). The gold content in minted ducats was stable; all full-value gold coins of this type, issued by different emitters, were fully exchangeable. The standard ducat was to weigh 3.55 g, with the metal composition of 98,9 % Au (to contain 3.51 g of pure gold). Gold ducats entered the Central European circulation of money in the second half of the 15th century, primarily from the kingdom of Hungary where the mining of gold increased significantly (territories of present day Slovakia and Rumania) under the reign of Mathias Corvinus (1458-90). Coins, called 'Rhine gold' (Goldgulden) had a lower content of gold. Their suppliers for Central European monetary circulation were Imperial Princes in the Rhineland and the bishops of Salzburg, who then had at their disposal their own supplies of mined gold. The Goldgulden was minted from less fine gold; in the mid-15th century the normative content of gold stabilized at 2.72 g of pure metal. If some of the emitters failed to observe the set metrological parameters for gold coins, it was possible to compare the purchasing power of one's coinage with the norm and express it as a fraction of the ducat or Rhine Gold. Similarly, it was possible to express, in terms of Central European gold currency, the value of gold coins from other parts of Europe which had different metrological parameters and entered its monetary system.

However, a similar metrological standard did not exist with reference to silver coins at the onset of the Modern Age. At the beginning of the second half of the 15th century Europe experienced a deep monetary crisis, also caused by the shortage of newly excavated native silver. However, from the 1460s onwards the Central European monetary market was once again supplied by sufficient quantities of this metal from mines, either re-opened or newly discovered, especially in the Tyrol (Schwaz), Bohemia (Kutná Hora) and Saxony (Freiberg).[2] Even after the restoration of Central European monetary systems in the 1460s, silver coins put into circulation by different

---

[2] John H. Munro, 'The Central European Silver Mining Boom, Mint Ouputs and Prices in the Low Countries and England 1450-1550', in Eddy van Cauwenberghe (ed.), *Money, Coins and Commerce* (Leuven, 1991), 119-83.

emitters differed substantially in terms of weight and purity of metal; younger coinages of the very same ruler were usually of an inferior quality than currency of the same type from the beginning of his reign. This situation greatly complicated the deployment of Central European silver coins in both internal monetary exchange and long-distance trade with precious metals, although there was an abundance of newly excavated and consequently monetised silver on the market in this region during the last quarter of the 15th century.

Silver was traditionally an important part of local and transcontinental commercial transactions, during which experienced traders made full use of different rates of exchange between gold and silver in different parts of the world. The ratio of the value of gold to silver differed in individual parts of Europe. Throughout the 15th century the ratio between the value of gold and silver ranged widely from 1:8.9 to 1:13 with significant regional and temporal swings; the average value oscillated around 1:10. It was usually possible to get hold of gold most cheaply in Italian commercial centres, while it was more expensive in the north of Europe. Thus, North-Italian commercial companies, primarily from Genoa and Venice, benefited most from these commercial transactions.

In these trades, gold acted as a more stable and more easily traded commodity. It was of high value; thanks to its physical properties it was the most malleable metal and the purity of gold coins could easily be verified. It was a more complex matter with silver. The purity of metal, influenced by a potentially higher proportion of copper or lead in the silver compound, could be ascertained much less easily than with gold. Compared to gold, the exchange value of silver was one degree lower, and in addition its processing, because of its relatively worse malleability, more demanding. It was necessary to exert much greater effort to transform mined silver into the normative form of minted coins. Compared to gold coinage production costs related to the manufacturing of silver coins of a certain purchasing power were much higher because of the value of metal contained in them. This was one of the reasons why medieval Central Europe did not establish the more

stable metrological norm[3] of commonly accepted silver coins, with the constant content of precious metal, although their purchasing power derived from the content of precious metal, similar to gold coins.

However, huge quantities of silver which began to flood the European market in the final third of the 15th century did not provide any impulse for the fundamental change of the external shape of coins produced in the first decades of the revival of Central European silver mining, namely in the 1460s and 1470s. Currency reforms, through which contemporary European producers of silver tackled the consequences of the inflationary devaluation of silver currency in the mid-15th century, merely led to the restoration of traditional medieval Land currencies. They were based on the coins of the groat type, with a weight of around 2.5 g and stamped on a thin piece of silver, 24 mm in diameter and around 50 % fine.

It was possible, even in the medieval mints, to produce cast or stamped medals, large in diameter and weighing several tens of grams. However, Central European rulers in the second half of the 15th century did not proceed with the mass production of silver coins of heavy weight, even though this would have been advantageous for trade with precious metals. At that time production of such coins was technically demanding; it could not be done en masse, in runs of hundreds and thousands of kilograms of processed metal and was, thus, unprofitable.

Towards the end of the Middle Ages silver was mined in Europe on a larger scale only in Saxony, Bohemia and the Tyrol.[4] However, the first impulses for the introduction of large outputs of silver mintage did not

---

[3] Around 1300 this was the aim of the king of Bohemia Wenceslas II when introducing the Prague groat, which was to be 'a permanent coin' with a constant amount of silver of high purity (around 93 % Ag). His project, founded on the experience of North Italian financiers, was made possible as a result of relatively low costs of mining high metallic content silver ore in the newly discovered deposits in the neighbourhood of the present-day town of Kutná Hora in the Czech Republic.

[4] Edwin S. Hunt and James M. Murray, a *History of Business in Medieval Europe 1200-1550* (Cambridge, 1999), 172-4. However, all the main deposits of silver ore in Bohemia are localized wrongly in its map supplement, see 130-1 'Trading, Tourism and Silver-mining Centres of Late Medieval Western Europe'.

originate in those regions where there was an abundance of mined silver. Far from it. In the first half of the 1470s their production was initiated in the north-Italian towns of Venice and Milan, where silver was not mined.[5] Local commercial companies, however, mediated export of Central European silver all over the world and required to have it at their disposal, as fine as possible and of guaranteed quality. The main raw material resource for them were the coins of Central European producers which were supplied to the market in many metrological variants, however, usually merely 50 % Ag fine. Yet, the finest possible silver was required for commercial purposes.

The true reason for the launch of a large-scale production of European silver from good quality metal was not any immediate shortage of gold or the urgent need to monetise newly discovered stocks of silver. This explanation, often presented as an important impulse of the economic history of late medieval Europe,[6] is not valid for Central Europe. There was an abundance of gold in Central Europe in the last third of the 15th centrury. The market was regularly supplied with stamped ducats or native metal in large quantities by rulers of the kingdom of Hungary[7] primarily and also other producers, from those deposits of gold which enjoyed a mining boom at the very end of the 15th century (for example rich gold fields in historical Silesia close to the contemporary Polish town of Złoty Stok or gold mines in the Bishopric of Salzburg in present-day Austria). At that time Central Europe did not experience any lack of gold. This happened later, in the second half of the 15th century, and destabilised the currency system of West European

monarchies[8] as a result of the interruption of traditional commercial links in the Mediterranean. On the contrary. At a time when the king of Hungary Matthias Corvinus in addition to Hungary as such also ruled the Austrian Lands and most territories belonging to the Bohemian co-state (until 1490), ducats made of Hungarian gold became the stable and common currency in the eastern part of the Holy Roman Empire. They also became the universal equivalent that made it possible to compare the purchasing power of less stable local silver currencies. The main reason for commencing the regular production of silver coins of a new type, i.e. heavy in weight and of excellent purity, in the last quarter of the 15th century were primarily the commercial interests of metal exporters, not the needs of currency circulation in Central Europe.

In late medieval times one limiting technical factor during the production of silver coins of a heavier weight was the ratio between the diameter of a coin and the thickness of its plate. Coins from a thinner plate could not have too large a diameter because they would be easily damaged. The production of coins from a thick plate was technically much more complex and more time-consuming so that it had not been profitable until then for the monetisation of large quantities of mined silver. Individual emitters gradually tried the production of coins which were increasingly of a heavier weight and made of as pure silver as possible. Unalloyed silver was not too suitable for coin production because it was too soft and coins would be subject to rapid wear and tear; yet a copper-base alloy was harder and hand-made production of coins with a thick plate was difficult. In the last quarter of the 15th century the production of silver coins of high purity, oscillating around 93 % Ag, and weighing around 6 grams (Venetian lira) or around 10 grams (Milanese teston) was found to be the most viable. It was necessary to process and re-mint Central European groat mintages in smelteries into this form, which meant additional costs for the trade.

---

[5] Karl Moeser and Fritz Dworschak, *Die große Münzreform unter Erzherzog Sigismund von Tirol* (Vienna, 1936); Jean François Bergier, 'From the 15th Century in Italy to the 16th Century in Germany: a New Banking Concept?', in *The Dawn of Modern Banking* (New Haven, 1974), 105-29.

[6] Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism: 15th-18th Centuries*, Vol. 2 (London, 1982); Carlo M. Cipolla, *Before the Industrial Revolution: European Society and Economy 1000-1700* (London, 1976).

[7] Artur Pohl, *Ungarische Goldgulden des Mittelalters* (Graz, 1974); Jörg K. Hoensch, *Mathias Corvinus (Diplomat, Feldherr und Mäzen)* (Graz, Vienna and Cologne, 1998).

---

[8] Michael North, *Das Geld und seine Geschichte (Vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart)*, (Munich, 1994), 41-3; Nicholas Mayhew, *Sterling – The Rise and Fall of a Currency* (London, 1999), 29-33.

Sigismund of Habsburg, the Duke of Tyrol, was one of the first major producers of silver in Late Medieval Europe who complied with the requirements of his trading partners to have the physical form of supplied commercial silver changed. He carried out the reform of the currency system in the Tyrol through a new regulation in 1482,[9] which introduced large coins (the so-called 'pfundners'), similar to Venetian coinages (93,8 % Ag; weight 6,366 g). They were worth 12 kreutzers and were the equivalent of one fifth of 'Rheine gold' (Goldgulden) in terms of contemporary gold currency. The second metrological model of silver coins (Milanese teston) spread further to Western Europe and became the predecessor of the French and Swiss testons of the 16th century. Central Europe, however, followed a different path in its development of commercial silver coins because towards the end of the 15th century and in the first half of the 16th century the rulers of current countries had at their disposal significantly greater amounts of silver than any other part of 'the Old Continent.' However, from the mid-16th century onwards the amount of precious metal imported from America significantly exceeded domestic European production.

After the introduction of the pfundner (1/5 of the Rhine gold) in 1482 other attempts to increase the weight of manufactured silver coins rapidly followed in the Tyrol. Very soon coins dated 1484 came to be minted from an equally fine silver and they were worth one half of the Rhine gold. At that time the Hall Mint probably tried and experimented with various technologies to transform the excavated precious metal into mass-produced coins of the highest possible purchasing value. Following several years of experiments, they finally arrived at a definite shape for the coin, containing the required amount of pure silver (the prescribed norm was 31.832 g). The diameter of a coin was extended to approximately 41 mm and its thickness adjusted to about 2 mm. The coins of a new type were minted in this form with the date 1486. They were called 'guldens' (Guldiner, Guldengrosch), because they contained silver of the same purchasing power as did a golden coin 'the Rhine gold' (Goldgulden), parallelly minted in the Tyrol. The term 'Uncialis'

---

[9] K. Moeser and F. Dworschak, *Die große Münzreform*, 26-34; Heinrich Moser and Heinz Tursky, *Die Münzstätte Hall in Tirol 1477-1665* (Innsbruck, 1977).

was also used for silver guldens in Latin texts, because they contained approximately one ounce of pure silver. However, this term was not commonly adopted. As early as the end of the 15th century similar silver coins gradually came to be minted in other countries north of the Alps; in the Savoy region, Switzerland and in Western Germany.

The original idea of establishing and maintaining the parity between the gold coin (Goldgulden) and its silver equivalent (Guldiner), however, proved to be a big problem. This concept could only work to service some greater debt claim in the short-term, for example if a debtor and the creditor agreed on a repayment in silver instead of gold. This procedure would correspond to the economic situation of Sigismund of Habsburg who had huge debts and had to lease the output of the Tyrol mines to South-German finance houses to cover his debt repayments. Yet, it was unrealistic as a permanent principle ruling the production of full-value silver coins whose purchasing power should permanently correspond to the concrete gold nominal. It was not possible to preserve the set metrological parameters of new silver coins while simultaneously maintaining the permanent parity of their purchasing power in relation to the cognitively constant gold coin.

The price ratio of gold and silver gradually changed and it also displayed territorial differences. For this reason silver guldens produced at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries in different parts of Europe contained different amounts of silver. Therefore, they could not fulfil the role of the direct equivalent of gold coins. In general they were of an occasional or representative character and they were not designed as common money in circulation, similar to minted or cast Renaissance medals of that time. Compared to coins of a lower weight their production was still too expensive. Indeed, even the first mass produced Tyrolean guldens from 1486 are no exception, as sources do not document them as active money at a larger scale towards the end of the 15th century.

It was Saxony that responded most rapidly to the contradiction inherent in attempts to maintain the metrological stability of commercial silver coins and simultaneously their parity with gold Goldguldens. Its rulers controlled lucrative silver mines on the northern side of the Ore Mountains. The Saxon currency reform of 1500 still contained the principle of the above mentioned parity of the silver Gulden and the Goldgulden made of gold. At the

beginning of the 16th century the Dukes of Saxony practically finished minting their own gold coins and they fixed the silver content of their gulden metrologically without regard for the development of gold currency. This approach based on the separation of gold and silver currencies offerred good prospects. Yet, even the earliest Saxon silver guldens from the beginning of the 16th century did not significantly influence the circulation of money in Central Europe because they were minted in small quantities as a result of high production costs.

It was at this time, when the first attempts to produce large silver coins of a new type appeared, Maximilian I of Habsburg came up with his vision of establishing common currency normatives for the entire empire. Towards the end of the 15th century he himself ruled over lucrative silver mines in the Tyrol, which supplied the European market with significant amounts of silver. He was also interested in the unification of monetary circulation with regard to his planned tax reforms for the empire. In addition, the increasingly influential South-German finance houses, which financed the current Habsburg policy through generous loans (and which de facto controlled the mining of Tyrolean silver) were also interested in the simplification of payment operations between the individual territories of the Holy Roman Empire.[10] Not a single one of the Reich's Estates doubted the need to establish a new common silver currency. Common gold currency already existed and had proved its stability. However, discussions related to the external form of this new silver currency proved to be a huge political and not merely an economic problem.

As a result of Emperor Maximilian I's debts and other priorities in his practical political activities, discussions on a common imperial currency did not arrive at any concrete conclusions by the time the Emperor died (†1519), although the role of silver coins at the international market significantly changed in the declining years of his reign. Technological advances of the emerging Early Modern Age made this change possible. Progressive

improvements of metallurgical processes and the introduction of simple mechanical devices managed to simplify the preparation of the semi-finished product (mint metal) and thus reduce the costs of producing large silver coins. Towards the end of the 1520s it paid in terms of production costs to monetise newly excavated native silver in the form of large high-value coins, whereas the minting of coins of a groat type (if they preserved their originally fixed purity), prevalent until that time, became loss-making.

The modernisation of silver mining and smelting in Central Europe primarily occurred thanks to the expertise of miners and smelters in Saxony. From the early 1520s silver guldens, produced according to Saxon parameters, increasingly dominated the commercial world (and especially trade with Eastern Europe). Three main emitters were involved and their large silver coins were metrologically nearly identical: 1) princely mintage of both branches of the Dukes of Saxony (one of which held the title of Elector); 2) new Bohemian coins produced in West-Bohemian Town of Jáchymov on the family estates of the Šliks of Pasoun; 3) coins of several branches of the Princes of Mansfeld, monetising silver excavated in the German Harz Mountains. The mintages of the Mansfelds in Harz and production of coins by the Šliks on the Bohemian side of the Ore Mountains were subject to putative monitoring by the Dukes of Saxony. New deposits of silver in West Bohemia were discovered in a wooded valley, called St. Joachim's Valley (in German – Sanct Joachims Thal), nowadays Jáchymov in the Czech Republic. However, unprocessed native silver could not be exported beyond the borders of the kingdom of Bohemia, according to Land law. Therefore, the majority of local silver was processed in the form of new coins in line with the Saxon metrological standard, to be exported in immense quantities to the precious metal market at nearby Leipzig in Saxony between 1520 and 1528. These Bohemian coinages thus became the most traded form of silver on the European market and their name 'thaler', which originally served merely as a designation of their place of origin,[11] became a common name

---

[10] Geofrey Parker, 'The Emergence of Modern Finance in Europe 1500-1730', in Carlo M. Cipolla (ed.), *The Fontana Economic History of Europe II: The 16th and 17th Centuries* (London, 1974), 527-94.

[11] The original form of this designation was 'Sanct Joachimsthaler Guldengrosch', i.e. 'gulden from St. Joachim's Valley'. Very quickly this rather long name was abbreviated to 'Joachimsthaler' and finally merely 'Thaler' and all other language mutations (Dutch

for large silver coins made of high quality metal, with a diameter of around 40 mm and weighing around 30 grams.

The adoption of the Saxon model as the standard throughout the Empire would have represented the simplest route to the unification of currency during diplomatic discussion on the shape of common silver currency which intensified after the new king Charles V of Habsburg (1519-56), later annointed as Holy Roman Emperor, succeeded to the throne. Guldens of the Saxon type (thalers) had already been the well tested and widespread form of commercial silver coins in the early 1520s and they were traded with trust on the European market. Contrary to that guldens based on Tyrol (Habsburg) metrological standards were not yet produced on a large scale; Habsburg silver arrived at the market usually in the form of 1/5 of the gulden (12-kreutzer) and 1/10 of the gulder (6-kreutzer). The adoption of the Saxon model of a common currency was, however, politically unacceptable for the Habsburgs. The external form of the intended common currency went far beyond the purely economic level and became an issue of power and prestige.

Friedrich III (1486-1525), Elector of Saxony, did not hide his ambitions to achieve priority status within the Empire, which he also demonstrated through the iconography of some of his coins. At the time when he acted as Imperial Governor (the Emperor's representative during his absence) he had representative silver coins made, which used clear imperial symbolism (1508). The rivalry between the Wettins of Saxony and the Habsburgs was prominent in the contentious election struggle to annoint the successor to Emperor Maximilian I (†1519), in which the Elector of Saxony was the main contender. He had at his disposal his own financial resources from silver

'Daalder', English 'Dollar'). In Eastern Europe, the common designation 'jefimok' ('ефимок') caught on for coins of the dollar type and it was commonly used until the 18th century. It also originated in the 1520s and referred to Bohemian coinages which portrayed a prominent figure of St. Joachim (Russian ' Ефим'). The origin and genesis of this name is interpreted differently even in the most recent academic publications; a rather muddled interpretation can be found in Norman Davies, *Europe – a History* (Oxford, 1996), 525. For the most recent summary which pays more attention to Central Europe in the 16th century see Petr Vorel, *Od českého tolaru ke světovému dolaru (Zrození tolaru a jeho cesta v evropském a světovém peněžním oběhu 16.-20. století)* (Prague, 2003).

mines in the Ore Mountains comparable to the amount of money which the Habsburgs were able to raise thanks to loans from the Fuggers and other south-German bankers and to distribute in the pre-election battle.

At the same time, the Elector of Saxony became the most important proponent of the religious Reformation movement, during which the Imperial Princes, who opposed the Habsburgs' attempts to centralize, gradually adopted the teachings of Martin Luther (1517). In the early twenties discussions on the common imperial currency seemed to have shifted to rank second in the order of political priorities as a consequence of the historical upheavals in Central Europe. Yet, it was far from it. The exceptional interest of the Habsburg court to have the decisive say in the issues of the common currency demonstrated itself in a diplomatically unusual form in the very first political agreement which involved a common currency.

The unilateral dominance of guldens of the Saxon type (thalers) in international trade with precious metals became one of the arguments during the decision-making on the form of a common imperial currency, which had been such a long-term project. The Habsburg concept of its form was based on the earlier project of Tyrolean guldens (obviously with a lower content of silver than in 1486), equivalent to 60 kreutzers, similar to the gold coin ('Rhine gold in gold', Goldgulden). Archduke Ferdinand of Habsburg declared his determination to insist on this form of a currency system by introducing it to the hereditary Habsburg Lands (a part of present day Austria, Slovenia and the Italian part of historical Tyrol) at the beginning of 1524. At that time joint discussions on the new form of an intended common currency held by the envoys of the Imperial Princes were still under way in German Esslingen. They resulted in the adoption of the First Imperial Currency Order only on 10 November 1524.

The adoption of this Imperial law was the result of the political dominance of Saxony in the politics of the Empire, which the Habsburgs were then unable to overturn. The main imperial silver coin was to be the so-called imperial gulden, metrologically derived from Saxon thalers. The character of the common currency was to be expressed on its reverse, which was to portray the Emperor's symbol and his titularies; the front of the coin was to be reserved for the persona of the emitter (a concrete secular or ecclesiastical Prince or an imperial town). In addition to coins valid in the

Empire in its entirety, the Currency Order allowed for the continuing existence of independent Land currencies. Their validity was restricted territorially but their exact rate of exchange for the common imperial currency[12] was also determined.

The Habsburgs, who did not succeed in promoting their own model of a currency system amongst the Imperial Estates, considered the reflection of Saxony's interests in the final form of the Imperial currency as their political failure. The final discussions on the new imperial currency were not attended by either Charles V, ruler of the Empire, or his brother Ferdinand, who was the Imperial Governor at that time. However, the decision of the Imperial Diet was to be mandatory even for them, so that these new coins, according to the new Imperial Currency Order, were to be produced in those Habsburg countries which were part of the Holy Roman Empire. In the case of Charles V this involved territories in the north-west of the Empire (the Habsburg part of Burgundy and the possessions in present-day Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands) while in Ferdinand's case in the south-east (the majority of present day Austria, Slovenia and the smaller territories in south-western Germany and northern Italy, including the Italian part of historical South Tyrol).

The Habsburgs decided to challenge the obvious dominace of the Lutheran Court of the Elector of Saxony in currency matters via a non-standard diplomatic manner. On account of being ruler of the Holy Roman Empire, Charles V issued the Madrid Charter of 10 March 1525 which exempted the Habsburg rulers and their descendants from an obligation to respect the decisions of the Imperial Diet in matters of currency.

As a result of this decision the project of a common imperial currency, formally approved by the Diet, was de facto cancelled, although thalers of the Saxon type minted after 1524 in Saxony and also Bohemia in general corresponded to the parametres of coins of the imperial currency. However,

---

[12] Technical circumstances, metrological standards and mutual rates of exchange between individual local currencies which were affected by the imperial currency orders of the 16th century have most currently been summarized by Lubomír Nemeškal, *Snahy o mincovní unifikaci v 16. století* (Prague, 2001).

none of the Imperial Princes, with few exceptions, respected the agreement according to which the Emperor's depiction was to appear on one side of the imperial coins.[13]

This situation did not principally change even after the election of Archduke Ferdinand as king of Bohemia, following the death of Louis Jagiello in 1526. Thanks to his successful diplomatic initiative he managed to gain control of coin production in west-Bohemian Jáchymov in 1528. Yet, he could not change its metrological parameters of his own free will, since this right was vested in the Bohemian Land diet. As a hereditary ruler of the Austrian Lands, Ferdinand of Habsburg had guldens, which were based on the Austrian standards, minted in the Tyrol and in Upper Austria, yet as the elected king of Bohemia he issued thalers in his name, which were based on the Saxon metrological model.

Even this unusual situation well reflects the factual contradiction between the Habsburg vision of a common imperial currency and its reality. The original goal of implementing the Habsburg currency system was postponed as a consequence of other topical political problems, yet between the 1530 and the 1540s it remained on the agenda of political discussions on the level of both the Empire in its entirety and Land diets in Bohemia. The decisions of the Imperial Diet were not mandatory for Ferdinand of Habsburg as king of Bohemia and he did not have to exercise the right of ruler for any possible change of the currency system in the Bohemian Lands. Obviously, as an elected king of Bohemia he could not change the well-established currency system against the will of the local nobility and towns, represented at the Land diet. He was prevented from doing that by the internal political system of the so-called Estates' monarchy. It restricted the rights of a sovereign ruler in the kingdom of Bohemia, similar to Imperial diets which restricted the decision-making powers of the Emperor throughout the territory of the Empire.

---

[13] Wolfgang Schulten, *Deutsche Münzen aus der Zeit Karls V. (Typenkatalog der Gepräge zwischen dem Beginn Talerprägung (1484) und der dritten Reichsmünzordnung (1559)* (Frankfurt am Main, 1974).

Compared to other periods, the Imperial Diets convened between 1521 and 1559 often became important platforms on which individual Imperial Princes formed their political standpoints throughout the second quarter of the 16th century. The Habsburgs' efforts to unify the imperial currency on the basis of their own model, which regularly re-appeared on the agenda of contemporary Diet discussions,[14] were a higly sensitive issue for the opposition in the Empire, as were any attempts to implement religious unification. In both cases the Habsburgs had to tread very carefully because they did not command sufficient resources of power to enforce their own concept of a new settlement of the Holy Roman Empire. Charles V was bound from a military point of view by his long-term conflict with France and his struggle for supremacy in the Mediterranean; his brother Ferdinand of Habsburg, from 1526 also the elected king of both Bohemia and Hungary, strove to establish a wider power base which would make it possible for him to withstand the pressure exerted by the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans. After the conquest of a major part of Hungary the Ottoman armies directly threatened the south-eastern part of the Holy Roman Empire, namely the hereditary Habsburg Lands in the Danube basin. King Ferdinand was unable to withstand this pressure using the resources of his own Lands and therefore he strove to gain the support of the entire Holy Roman Empire.

The establishment of an efficient mechanism for the passage and collection of taxes throughout the Empire, ring-fenced for the defence of Central Europe against the Ottoman Empire's expansion became (especially after the failed Siege of Vienna by the Ottoman armies in 1529) the primary aim of fiscal reforms within the Holy Roman Empire. Because of the lack of finances for the defence of their Lands the Habsburgs had to moderate their hostility against the Reformation in the short-term as they urgently needed the good will and co-operation of the Lutheran princes and towns in the collection of imperial taxes. Even the attempt to repel the First Currency

Order of 1524, which was totally unacceptable for the Habsburgs, had to be shelved for a significant period of time.

In practice the system of individual Land currencies even within the Holy Roman Empire was preserved. Silver thalers and Austrian guldens (with a lower content of silver) fulfilled the role of commercial coins whose concrete purchasing power, expressed in Land currencies, changed over time, similar to gold coins. However, the practical result of the unification efforts from the 1520s was to establish the standard monetary unit (not a concrete coin) called 'Rhine gulden'. It was applied when converting the amount of imperial taxes payable to the Treasury. For example in 1526 'Rhine gulden' was expressed in four main land currencies widespread on German territory (i.e. in tax regions in the narrower sense of the contemporary Empire) in the following ratios: 1 Rhine gulden = 15 batzens = 21 Saxon groschen = 26 albatas = 60 kreutzers.[15]

The Habsburgs shifted their political preferences only towards the end of the 1540s and the early 1550s. After the conclusion of peace treaties with France and the Ottoman Empire Emperor Charles V, supported by his brother King Ferdinand, attempted to gain control over the opposition, which allied the Reich barons and towns in the so-called Schmalkalden League, headed by the Elector of Saxony. This conflict ended in a short-lived victory for the Habsburg side in April 1547. Both Habsburg brothers used this victory to implement currency reforms in the co-states they ruled.

The Bohemian Lands were not directly dragged into the military conflict between the Habsburg brothers and the opposition Imperial Estates between 1546 and 1547, because the local Estates' representatives refused to provide their king with the Land militia for war in the neighbouring German Lands. However, following the Habsburg armies' victory in Saxony, King Ferdinand interpreted that refusal as a rebellion and made full use of the new state of affairs to enforce some economic, political and religious reforms.

---

[14] Johann Christop Hirsch (ed.), *Des Teutschen Reichs Münz-Archiv, bestehend in einer Sammlung Kayserl. und Reichs-Münz-Gesetze, Ordnungen, Privilegien über das Münz-Recht, nebst zuverlässigen Nachrichten vom Teutschen Münzwesen überhaupt* (Nuremberg, 1756-1768) (Reprint Bd. I-IX, Munich 1977-1978)

---

[15] These conversions are contained in the decision of the Speyer Imperial Diet, 1526, which for the first time also approved the finances for military assistance to protect Central Europe against the Ottoman Empire. See *Aller deß Heiligen Romischen Reichs gehaltener Reichstaeg Ordnung, Satzung und Abschied, wie die von Jahr 1356. biß auff das 1613. auffgericht* (Mainz, 1615), 169.

One of them was the agreed reform of the currency system from September 1547. According to it, Bohemian governmental mints were to continue minting thaler coins which complied with the Austrian metrological standards, although with regard to other nominals (gold ducats, groat coins and small-denomination coinages) the Bohemian Estates managed to defend their own Land currency, well adapted to the needs of local currency circulation. King Ferdinand agreed to this compromise but no later than the following year he adopted measures which in fact meant that the coins of local Bohemian currency system (Prague groats) ceased production. He wanted to achieve the unification of currency affairs in the Austrian and Bohemian Lands in this manner.[16]

Discussions on the adoption of new currency standards were more complex within the framework of the Empire, even though the anti-Habsburg opposition was markedly weakened after the defeat in what came to be known as the Schmalkanden War. Discussions related to the new imperial currency in the mid-16th century were also considerably influenced by the fact that already at that time the opinions of silver mine owners no longer pre-dominated. The import of precious metals from Spanish colonies overseas (in Central and South America) already surpassed the volume of domestic European production. The production of smelting silver by mining was not as profitable as in the first quarter of the 16th century because larger amounts of sterling silver for coin production could be obtained through trade. The purchasing power of silver in Central and Eastern Europe was significantly higher than in Spain. It was more profitable to monetise imported Spanish colonial silver directly in those countries which were commercially linked with Central Europe, namely in the Spanish Netherlands. For this reason discussions about the new imperial currency system were primarily dominated

---

[16] Petr Vorel, 'Landesfinanzen und Währung in Böhmen: Finanz- und Münzpolitik im Spannungsfeld von Ständen und Königtum während der Regierung Ferdinands I. und Maximilians II.', in Friedrich Edelmayer, Maximilian Lanzinner and Peter Rauscher (eds.), *Finanzen und Herrschaft (Materielle Grundlagen fürstlicher Politik in den habsburgischen Ländern und im Heiligen Römischen Reich im 16. Jahrhundert)*, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung, Band 38 (Vienna and Munich, 2003), 186-214.

by the vested interests of Emperor Charles V, who simultaneously ruled Spain and its colonies. Thus, a very ambitious project emerged, which was to interconnect currency systems not only within the Holy Roman Empire but also involve countries which were directly ruled by Charles V as king of Spain. The realisation of this project would have significantly simplified the journey of Spanish colonial silver heading for the European market.

This was the main political idea behind the Second Imperial Currency Order, whose adoption was enforced by Emperor Charles V in 1551. The principal coin of the Empire, the Imperial gulden, was to correspond in its silver content to the main silver nominal of the Spanish currency system, which was the 8-real. In the mid-16th century commercial coins made of precious metals were not produced in larger quantities in Spain but 8-reales constituted the main form of provisionally monetised silver imported from the Spanish colonies overseas. Consequently these imported silver semi-products were processed in the mints of both the Spanish Netherlands and the south-Italian possessions of Charles V into the standard form of European coins.

In the very interests of the unification of currency systems over this much wider territory, the new imperial gulden was ascribed the seemingly illogical nominal value of 72 kreutzers, which was to be stamped on the coin. Thanks to this nominal value, the imperial gulden was to represent the integration of the currencies of the Spanish Habsburgs, the Austrian Habsburgs and also that of the newly reformed currency system of Saxony (one imperial gulden = 72 imperial kreutzers = 24 Saxon groschen = 8 Spanish reales; i.e. 1 real = 3 Saxon groschen = 9 kreutzers) and to be simultaneously easily convertible to the current currency unit 'Rhine gulden = 60 kreutzers' (i.e. 1 imperial gulden = 1 and 1/5 of Rhine gulden).

However, the imperial gulden was in the end minted in this approved form by merely a few emitters, primarily the imperial towns, over which the Emperor could exercise more influence also with regard to the external form of coins. In the hereditary Austrian Lands Ferdinand of Habsburg proceeded relatively late to minting coins in line with the Second Imperial Currency Order. In general the entire project of the Second Imperial Currency Order disintegrated together with the resignation of Charles V in the mid-1550s and the subsequent inflationary collapse of the Spanish monetary system (1558).

Yet, the metrological standard of Spanish 8-reales continued as the basis of some Dutch and south-Italian tolar coinages of the Spanish Habsburgs. After all, the Second Imperial Currency Order of 1551 remains the most ambitious project of European monetary unification in the history of the Early Modern Age.

The abdication of Charles V from all his ruling posts provided scope for his younger brother Ferdinand of Habsburg to realize some of his plans for the re-organization of the Holy Roman Empire. Having learnt from the failure of the previous policy of Charles V, the new ruler adopted a more consensual approach to the main religious and political problems. One of the first political projects, impacting on the Empire in its entirety, which he managed to implement was the adoption of the Third Imperial Currency Order of 1559. It introduced a new common currency for the entire Empire whose fundamental principles were based on the currency reform which Ferdinand of Habsburg (then only an Archduke) had introduced in the hereditary Austrian Lands in January 1524. The principal silver coin of the Holy Roman Empire was to be a gulden with a standard nominal value of 60 kreutzers; the purchasing power of earlier thalers was to be expressed in kreutzers according to the real content of silver. Emperor Ferdinand began to produce coins in this form in the hereditary Austrian Lands and from 1561 onwards in the Bohemian Lands also; by the mid-1560s new metrological standards were extensively observed in the production of coins, primarily in the southern part of the Holy Roman Empire. Yet, not even this currency system was introduced in the end by all the countries which should have been bound by the Reich Diet's decision. Practically, it was the most successful of the three Currency Orders thanks to the stability of power relations in the Holy Roman Empire after a political compromise (the so-called Religious Peace of Augsburg) was approved in 1555.

However, the idea of full implementation of a common currency in the Empire was ahead of the reality of the current political situation and difficult to realise in practice. Primarily the smaller denominations of the kreutzer system (2-kreutzers and 3-kreutzers) proved to be a huge problem. Some Imperial Princes began to produce huge quantities of small coins, which complied with the requirements of the Third Imperial Currency Order as to their external form; they even displayed the imperial eagle and paraphrased

the ruling Emperor's titulary on the reverse. However, they contained a significantly lower amount of silver than prescribed by the imperial standard. Small-denomination kreutzer coins of the imperial system began to be produced in some Swiss mints and went on to flood the Central European currency market in large quantities. Thus, the paradoxical situation evolved in the 1560s when small-denomination Swiss coins, declaring support for the common imperial currency through their external form, caused problems in the currency system of the kingdom of Bohemia, on which the project of the imperial currency was imposed by King Ferdinand. Neither Switzerland nor the kingdom of Bohemia were at that time integral parts of the Holy Roman Empire and they did not participate in the discussions on a common imperial currency. However, as a result of the emergence of a formal currency union they mutually influenced their circulations of money, although there were practically no direct commercial links between these distant regions of Europe.

The ambitious project of a common imperial currency did not outlive its main creator, Emperor Ferdinand I (†1564) for long. Its collapse was facilitated by an increased import of overseas silver and also the shift of major centres of current trade and finance from south-German imperial towns to the Netherlands. The de-facto resignation from the common imperial currency was an amendment of the Third Imperial Currency Order of 1566, by which the production of silver thaler coins, never suspended in fact, was legalised within the framework of the imperial standards. Other discussions on a potential joint currency reform within the Holy Roman Empire were shifted towards the margins of diplomatic affairs, since there was no political goodwill at the time of heightened confessionary tensions in the last third of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th century. Yet, therein lie the origins of later different routes towards the unification of Central European currency systems, which culminated in the Austrian-Prussian polarization of the mid-18th century.

Translated by Alena Linhartová

Political Culture of the Burghers in Bohemia and Central Europe during the Pre-White Mountain Period

Jiří Pešek

Political culture 'has its principal axis in the integration of processes of influence and power and the application of these processes – if they are linked to the functioning of the state and its institutions and organizations for the regulation of the social system in its entirety at various structural levels.'[1] If we enquire about the political culture of the Bohemian burghers of the pre-White Mountain decades, we must question its status in the system and exercise of influence and power within the state structure of that time, as well as a reflection of these coordinates.[2]

There were several horizons, to which the Bohemian towns' burghers related (the Moravian and Silesian, or Lusatian, situation was somewhat different and will be left outwith the attention of this contribution). They were primarily the inhabitants and members of the Estates' society of the

---

[1] Zdeněk Štěpánek, 'Kultura politická', in *Velký sociologický slovník I.* (Prague, 1996), 552 with reference to Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture* (Princeton, 1963).

[2] For the most current summary of this theme in relation to the Bohemian environment cf. Zdeněk Vybíral, 'Stavovství a dějiny moci v českých zemích na prahu novověku (Nové cesty ke starému tématu)', *Český časopis historický*, ic (2001), 725-59. However, the key thoughts on this theme have been presented in a number of studies by Jaroslav Pánek. Cf. 'Města v politickém systému předbělohorského českého státu', in idem (ed.), *Česká města v 16.-18. století* (Prague, 1991), 15-36.

kingdom of Bohemia.[3] This particular horizon was obviously the most decisive for the deliberations of burgher politicians. Yet, in so far as the practical economic, cultural and confessional life of burghers in Bohemian towns also included the nearby German territories of the Empire, namely the Upper Palatinate, Franconia and Saxony, possibly Thuringia, it also forced them to be open to contexts of Reich politics.[4] With regard to commercial interests in the East and partially also in East-South Europe, or more precisely with regard to the permanent Ottoman threat; the burden of tax and military expense, which ensued from the Ottoman theatre of operations, yet also created an opportunity for profit in the context of military supplies, Bohemian burghers were forced by all these factors to take into considerations also this section of a wider horizon.[5] The context of the Holy Roman Empire (from the mid-16th century increasingly viewed with a postscript 'of the Germanic Nation') intermingled with their sense of belonging also to the Empire of the Austrian Habsburgs.[6] The latter, based on the working arrange-

ment of Charles V with Ferdinand I of 1522 and quite obviously from the division of the world-wide Habsburg Empire at the end of Charles V's reign, transferred its centre of gravity further to the East. Through its emphasis on wider 'Hungarian' questions (similar to the reign of Sigismund of Luxembourg) it accentuated its 'supra-German' character with its focal point outwith 'the over-concentrated' core of the Holy Roman Empire.[7] The Alpine and Bohemian Lands belonged to this very new centre of Habsburg possessions. And burghers were well aware of it.

The excessive centrism on Bohemia in the first half of the 16th century (until the Schmalkanden War of 1547), devoted to securing a power role for towns and their burgher class as opposed to the Land nobility and to the Sovereign, to a large degree, was replaced by a greater reflection of both the Imperial and European political and thus also dynastic and confessionary framework of Bohemian events.[8] This was in response to the shocking defeat and especially drastic sanctions of 1547, which deprived the Bohemian burgher class of the majority of their current direct political powers. The key moment was not so much the relationship of the burgher class towards the King and state, but rather defining themselves against the nobility which ever since the end of the Middle Ages repeatedly utilised political crises – perhaps even to their own detriment and especially without regard for the interests of the Land as a whole – and attempted to undermine the contemporary status of the burgher class as its most important political rival.[9] At the very least the nobility was willing to weaken the basis of the Estates community's struggle

---

[3] Jaroslav Pánek, 'Das politische System des böhmischen Staates im ersten Jahrhundert der habsburgischen Herrschaft 1526-1620', *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, xcvii (1989), 53-72.

[4] Cf. using an analysis of Prague Town Hall correspondence by Olga Fejtová, 'Das Verhältnis zwischen den Nationalitäten in den Prager Städten an der Wende vom 16. zum 17. Jahrhundert', *Berichte und Beiträge GWZO Leipzig*, v (1999), 38-59, juxtaposed with similar Nuremberg material: Václav Bůžek, 'Říšské město Norimberk a české země v předbělohorské době (Stav a perspektivy studia)', *Folia Historica Bohemica*, xviii (1997), 19-70, here summarised on 54.

[5] Jaroslav Pánek, 'Die Türkengefahr und die böhmische Gesellschaft im 16. und zu Beginn des 17. Jahrhunderts', in: *Rapports, co-rapports, comunnications tchécoslovaques pour le IVe Congrès de l'Association internationale d'Etudes du Sud-Est européen* (Prague, 1979), 139-68; idem, 'Turecké nebezpečí a předbělohlorská česká společnost', *Studia Comeniana et Historica*, xi (1981), No. 23, 53-72; Tomáš Rataj, *České země ve stínu půlměsíce. Obraz Turka v raně novověké literatuře z českých zemí* (Prague, 2002), esp. 23-72.

[6] Cf. for example Alfred Kohler, 'Ferdinand I. and the Estates: Between Confrontation and Cooperation 1521-1564', in Robert John Weston Evans and Trevor V. Thomas (eds.), *Crown, Church and Estates. Central European Politics in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (London, 1991), 48-57; Jaroslav Pánek, 'Zápas o charakter české stavovské opozice a sněm roku 1575', *Československý časopis historický*, xxviii

(1980), 863-87 or Jan P. Kučera, 'Stavovská opozice v Čechách a volba Ferdinanda Štýrského českým králem', *Studia Comeniana et Historica*, xiv (1984), No. 28, 5-42.

[7] On this theme cf. Petr Moraw, *Von offener Verfassung zu gestalteter Verdichtung* (Propyläen Geschichte Deutschlands) (Berlin, 1985) and in the link to him Sabine Wefers, *Das politische System Kaiser Sigismunds* (Stuttgart, 1989).

[8] Cf. Petr Vorel (ed.), *Stavovský odboj roku 1547. První krize habsburské monarchie*, (Pardubice and Prague, 1999), here especially Jaroslav Pánek, 'První krize habsburské monarchie', 11-28.

[9] Cf. Jiří Pešek, *Měšťanská vzdělanost a kultura v předbělohorských Čechách 1547-1620 (Všední dny kulturního života* (Prague, 1993), here Chapter 'České měšťanstvo v období 1547-1620', 17-29.

with the ruler (related to religious freedoms and also to the 'imperium mixtum') merely in order that the burgher class, or free royal towns did not advance their political and power status within the Estates' community. However, none of the representatives of the burgher class (except for some remarks by Sixtus of Ottersdorf) attempted to make an issue of this political conflict of interest which had fully demonstrated itself already in the 'undeclared civil war' between 1500 and 1517. It, however, survived in its latent form until the Battle of the White Mountain.[10]

Ever since the Hussite Revolution Prague's Utraquist University[11] continued to be the intellectual centre for the burgher class, ever more so as it grew stronger, promoting its politics, or that of the Estates in their entirety. It is worth mentioning that during the Hussite period the Old Town Hall and the Old Town Mayor's Office became the official central institution of the kingdom, its operation uninterrupted by these events. In addition, from that time onwards we can observe very close links between Prague town hall elites, namely those of the Old Town Hall, and the Utraquist University of Prague, itself bound even more closely with the Lower, i.e. Utraquist, Consistory.[12] This triangle of institutions – usually firmly interlinked, primarily through personal relationships and the common university experience of its key personalities, residing in prestigious buildings of the Old Town of Prague, consequently played a very important role throughout the entire pre-White Mountain period. Their functional, and very productive, alliance was

---

[10] Cf. Zdeněk Beneš, 'Akta aneb knihy památné čili historie Sixta z Ottersdorfu (Studie o genezi jednoho historického textu)', *Český časopis historický*, xc (1992), 188-203.

[11] Jiří Pešek, 'Humanism and Teaching at Prague University in the Pre-White-Mountain Period', in Ivana Čornejová, Michal Svatoš and Petr Svobodný (eds.), a *History of Charles University*, Vol. 1. 1348-1802 (Prague, 2000) 203-17, cf. also Jiří Pešek, 'M. Martin Bacháček z Nauměřic, rektor univerzity pražské', *Acta Universitatis Carolinae – Historia Universitatis Carolinae Pragensis*, xix (1979), No. 1, 73-94.

[12] Jiří Pešek, 'Některé otázky dějin univerzity pražské jagellonského období', *Acta Universitatis Carolinae – Historia Universitatis Carolinae Pragensis*, xviii (1978), No. 1, 129-71; idem, 'Pražská utrakvistická univerzita a náboženské poměry 16. století', *Acta Universitatis Carolinae – Historia Universitatis Carolinae Pragensis*, xxxvi-xxxviii (1996-1998), 31-40.

perhaps the most significant in the dramatic first quarter of the 16th century. The reign of Ferdinand I and primarily the dramatic year of 1547 brought about a far-reaching change of circumstances. Prague was no longer the power house; the university no longer dominated for at least another several decades; however, Prague as a major city opened itself rapidly to the world and, whether it liked it or not, it became internationalised.[13] As Prague, the seat of the Prince and Deputy-Governor Ferdinand II of the Tyrol (1544, or 1548-66) and especially later on as the residence of Emperor Rudolph II (in reality 1576, yet officially 1583-1612) transformed itself into one of the most prominent European cities. It also became as rapidly the supra-regional centre of printing, the book trade and international (printed and manuscript) news.[14] All the above also enhance our chance to get a better insight into a widely understood political self-reflection of the burgher class during the second half of the 16th century.

There are several available possibilities of how to gain an understanding of the concepts of a political culture of a researched period. One of them would be to analyse political concepts, speeches and addresses of town representatives at diets or Estate conventions delivered with regard to the notion and characteristics of one's status in the political system of the Estates' community. Indeed, Jaroslav Pánek has repeatedly followed this path.[15]

---

[13] Jiří Pešek, 'Prague between 1550-1650', in Eliška Fučíková (ed.), *Rudolf II and Prague* (Prague, London and Milan, 1997), 252-69.

[14] Václav Ledvinka and Jiří Pešek, *Prag* (Prague, 2000), 290-316; Václav Bůžek, 'Erzherzog Ferdinand als Statthalter von Böhmen – Residenz, Hof, Alltagsleben und Politik', in Wilfried Seipel (ed.), *Kaiser Ferdinand I.* (Vienna, 2003), 283-95; idem, 'Ferdinand II. von Tirol als Statthalter von Böhmen und die höfische Gesellschaft in Prag. Ein Projektbericht', *Frühneuzeit-Info*, xii (2001), No. 2, 65-70; Alena Richterová, 'Praga – aurea tota. Die Reflexion Prags in Drucken des 16. Jahrhunderts', in *Berichte und Beiträge des Geisteswissenschaftlichen Zentrums Geschichte und Kultur Ostmitteleuropas*, v (1999), 80-110.

[15] Jaroslav Pánek, 'Úloha stavovství v předbělohorské době 1526-1620', *Československý časopis historický*, xxv (1977), 732-61; idem, 'Politický systém předbělohorského českého státu', *Folia Historica Bohemica*, xi, (1987), 41-101 and especially the

The second potential area of research could be an analysis of directly or indirectly expressed opinions of contemporary literature on these themes. Here, the dominant role is played by historical literature, which has, however, already been tackled by Zdeněk Beneš in his Conference presentation.

The third possible path is an analysis of the preserved Bachelor and Magister theses of Prague University submitted in the pre-White Mountain decades, or at least an analysis of the topics registered as being of some interest to younger burgher intellectuals. For them Prague university was a sort of ideological hothouse and latterly a sort of political headquarters. [16] It is evident that there – under a pretext of classical themes, or one might say based on antiquity – West European themes were warmly received and topical political discussions were embraced. Among other things Prague was one of the last Central European centres of the philosophy of Petrus Ramus (Pierre de la Ramée). [17] The openness and instability of local Estates' confessionary situation – especially after the Bohemian Confession of 1575 – made it possible for non-aristocratic intellectuals, especially those close to the university environment, to combine impulses of contemporary ideological movements.

Finally, the fourth research area involving the political culture and self-reflection of the pre-White Mountain burgher class could focus upon the inventories of private burgher libraries, which are recorded in large numbers for Prague. [18] However, we also have the knowledge of a particular number of intellectuals' libraries from 'provincial' royal towns. [19] With regard to them we have to analyse not only the occurrence of pamphlets dealing with contemporary 'politological discourse', but also the extensively documented literature of a legal, religious, historical and geographical nature, which in their entirety and contemporary context well reflected the opinions and preferences of their owners and readers. [20]

Indeed, the focus of my own deliberations, presented at the Conference, will be in the aforementioned approaches to the second and fourth research areas of our topics – with reference to a number of studies which I have carried out on this basis. The register compiled by Karel Beránek contains in total 926 Bachelor and 177 Master theses for the years 1586-1620 (with a gap between 1601-9 for Bachelors and between 1604-6 for Masters). [21] Some themes recurred throughout the years. It is obvious that many topics were derived from reading ancient classics; a large number belonged to a classical canon of disputatious problems. In addition it is not possible to say definitely to what degree the choice of a theme was influenced by university professors or by the students themselves, who were striving for an academic degree. We do not know either – apart from the until now ignored exceptions of preserved marginalia in some theses – how one or the other baccalaureate

most recent, idem, 'K úrovni českého politického myšlení na počátku novověku', *Časopis Matice moravské*, cxvii (1998), 453-64.

[16] On the primary source of such research resulting from Karel Beránek's long-term academic endeavour, *Bakaláři a mistři promovaní na Filozofické fakultě University Karlovy v Praze v létech 1586-1620* (Prague, 1988), cf. Jiří Pešek, 'Nad rekonstruovanou matrikou graduovaných pražské univerzity z let 1586-1620', *Studia Comeniana et Historica*, xlii (1990), No. 20, 84-8.

[17] Jarmila Pešková, 'Ordines lectionum jako pramen poznání výuky na artistické fakultě pražské univerzity v letech 1570-1619', *Acta Universitatis Carolinae – Historia Universitatis Carolinae Pragensis*, xxx (1990), No. 1, 9-30.

[18] Cf.: Pešek, 'Měšťanská vzdělanost a kultura', 80-9.

[19] Literature until the beginning of the 1990s is summarized by Pešek, 'Měšťanská vzdělanost a kultura', among the more recent ones cf.: Olga Fejtová, 'Zum Vergleich der bürgerlichen Privatbibliotheken in Prager Neustadt und Heilbronn im 17. Jahrhundert', in István Monok and Péter Ötvös (eds.), *Bürgerliche Kultur im Vergleich. Deutschland, die böhmischen Länder und das Karpatenbecken im 16. und 18. Jahrhundert* (Szeged, 1998), 23-36; Václav Bůžek, 'Tendencje rozwoju kultury życia codziennego w południowoczeskich mieszczańskich gospodarstwach domowych we wczesnej nowożytności', *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Material-nej*, xlix (2001), No. 1-2, 13-40.

[20] Jiří Pešek and Michal Svatoš, 'Mistr Koldín a právní kultura pražských měst', in *Městské právo 16.-18. století v Evropě* (Prague, 1982), 289-97; Jiří Pešek, 'Protestant Literature in Bohemian Private Libraries circa 1600', in Karin Maag (ed.), *The Reformation in Eastern and Central Europe* (Aldershot, 1997), 36-49; Olga Fejtová and Jiří Pešek, 'Měšťanský čtenář a české kroniky v Praze raného novověku', in Jitka Radimská (ed.), *K výzkumu zámeckých, měšťanských a církevních knihoven. Čtenář a jeho knihovna* (Opera Romanica 4, České Budějovice, 2003), 183-96

[21] Pešek, 'Nad rekonstruovanou matrikou', 87.

or master candidate resolved his thesis, or if they were given the task by their professors to argue for or against. However, these details are secondary in a way: what is most important is the form of the discourse, the range of thematic problems.

In general, Bachelor theses remained 'innocent' until the beginning of the 90's, i.e. they remained within the framework of very general questions on the intellectual capabilities and education of a good ruler, typical for antiquity. An upheaval occurred in the autumn of 1593. At that time, approximately one year after the death of Wilhelm of Rosenberg, an anchor of stability on the Bohemian political scene, and immediately after court proceedings with George of Lobkowitz, the first true upheaval in Land politics indeed, which was no longer able to find a consensus amongst rival confessionary and interest groupings of the Estates,[22] appeared the theme of a constitutional coup (B 135), the theme of a bad ruler or bad counsellors (B 137), an issue over the dignity of civic laws (B 139) or 'the willigness of rulers to listen before they issue commands' (B145).[23] In 1595 theses reflected the issue of holding the laws in contempt and the collapse of a state (B 156) and also a question on the optimality of monarchy (B 165). In 1597 we come across concerns about the security of the state ruled by one person (B 199). The issue of the role of laws or a king for community re-emerges in 1611, 1612 and 1615 (B 592, 616, 691). The issue of the optimality of monarchy (B 404); the relationship between laws and a king (B 441) or the rule of intellectuals (B 444) re-appear after a certain interval, or also a gap in

the sources, in 1605. In 1607 Bachelors also argued the question whether a literary mind excelled over one's noble status (B 477) and whether an applicant's education should be taken into account when awarding public office and position (B 479, 508, in 1616 B 728).

In 1609 there appeared a question whether it was easier to reform a corrupt state or to establish it from scratch (B 517). In 1611 the issue whether foreigners should be admitted to the state, in particular, went beyond the framework of standard questions (B 544). Additionally, the topical political situation was referred to in the thesis of 20. 9. 1611, Does the unity of the Estates preserve community? (B 585). The relationship between rulers and academies or churches was repeatedly addressed (for example B 547 and 549, 560). In 1615 one Bachelor raised the question whether the constitution of the Bohemian state was monarchical (B 715).

A huge avalanche of topical questions for Bachelors resulted from the Bohemian Rebellion of 1618. A baccalaurate candidate was to argue 'No' to the question 'Can a nation be deceived by sophistry?' (B 814). Is it commendable to fight for the motherland? Yes (B 817). In 1619 a question was tabled: 'Should religion be defended by arms?' (B 818) Yet, in the same year some dissertation themes already sound defeatist: Can a citizen desert one's state when an era of disastrous events unfold? (B 856). Another question arises, perhaps as a response to the expulsion of the Jesuits and hard-core Catholics from Bohemia: Are not the exiles themselves often the cause of new wars? (B 859). Issues dealing with the fortification of the country and advantages of fighting battles abroad or at home were repeatedly argued in these theses. An opinion that Peace was the most desirable of all aims was also voiced (B 897).

A thesis from 5. 3. 1620 'Should a young prince be entrusted with a kingdom?' (B 884) might be seen as an echo of the deep public dissatisfaction with Frederick V, the Winter King. Once again, in September 1620, there emerged questions on noble and non-aristocratic counsellors; on a state administered by an individual or a group of people; on the structure and similarities between the state-like community of bees and humans (B 906, 910, 915).

Until 1608 similar themes appeared with Masters – yet are merely documented in a small number of examples. However starting with 1608

---

[22] Cf. Jaroslav Pánek, *Poslední Rožmberk. Životní příběh Petra Voka* (Prague, 1996), 114 ff. On the proceedings with George of Lobkowitz and contemporary reflection of this political drama, or on the remarkable forms of theatrical interpretation of the Lobkowitz case cf.: Jaroslav Pánek, 'Chomutovská divadelní hra z roku 1594. Dramatický obraz náboženských, politických a národnostních rozporů v předbělohorské stavovské společnost', in Petr Rak (ed.), *Comotovia 2002. Sborník příspěvků z konference věnované výročí 750 let první písemné zmínky o existenci Chomutova* (Chomutov, 2003), 21-77, here in particular 33 ff.

[23] Brackets next to the themes of theses include references to the concrete wording of arguments, compiled by Beránek, *Bakaláři a mistři*, 113-57. The letter B stands for a Bachelor thesis, M stands for Master; the number refers to the consecutive numbering of theses in the register: Nos. 1-926 refer to Bachelors, Nos. 927-1103 to Masters.

a wide series of questions followed – on the perniciousness of power in the hands of evil people; the ruler's obligation to abide by the laws; an issue of the optimality of monarchy; the meaningfulness of being brought up to serve the state (M 994, 996, 1001, 1002) and 'the general thesis' of that term read 'do rules originate in and are strengthened by force'? In April 1610 in addition to 'military themes' (M 1011, 1012) a politically important thesis emerges: 'When Princes argue, is full power vested in a people to reconcile them?' (M 1013) Political themes occupied a focal role with Bachelors until the Rebellion, while already in 1616 the question arose: 'Should one obey the laws as a free man?' (M 1065); and then in 1619 'Should subjects rise up against a tyrant?' (M 1088) a 'Is aristocracy preferrable to monarchy?' (M 1101).

Bachelor and Master theses thus embrace the full repertoire of contemporary public agenda and political theory. Simultaneously it is clearly evident that – whether directly or indirectly via 'the internal' Reich territory – Prague university discourse was also penetrated by the opinions of learned French monarchomachs or some Western European republican theories.[24] However, contact with these sources of contentious issues was not merely intermediated by reading. In the second half of the 16th century and at the beginning of the 17th century students from Bohemia travelled to foreign universities and academies to gain education; around 1600 it was practically a precondition for new professors to have previous academic experience abroad before taking a chair at their Prague alma mater.[25] In addition Prague university maintained active 'institutional' contacts with some foreign institutions of learning – primarily with the crypto-Calvinist Nuremberg Academy in Altdorf. It was not in vain that the philosophy of Pierre de la Rameau featured prominently on the curriculum offered by Prague university

at that time. Students, i.e. burgher students in the absolute majority of cases, yet primarily from 'elite families', addressed problems, which the Defender Gremia of the Bohemian Estates or later the Rebels' Diets and the Directorate government had to resolve.[26] Indeed, younger burgher intelligentsia did not lack either an interest or the courage to voice in the academic world those themes, which were without doubt politically 'treasonable' by their nature.

However, it will be more difficult to trace the origins which provided these young men with their inspiration or even directly their themes as such. The literature known to us from the inventories of inheritances cannot be strictly divided according to modern thematic fields: contemporary understanding was much more 'diffused'; for example there were thematic interfaces of literary fields. In each case in the towns of Prague, a wide group of historical, geographic, political, legal and administrative works represented approximately one fifth of all identified books.[27] The political-constitutional role was played not merely by a relatively infrequent literature of an openly political nature but especially by legal and 'administrative' literature.[28] The burghers' keen interest in Roman law, and within its framework in the Justinian Code and its commentaries in particular, were of key importance. This was the branch of law which was unequivocally directed against the aristocratic Land Estates' conception of the state and law and simultaneously corresponded to the sovereign-based centralist conception of the Habsburg rulers.[29] Burgher readers were also keenly interested in *Politica historica*, originally by Karchesius (Lauterbeck) but re-worked and published by Veleslavín, or in the works of Bodin, Lipsius, Sleidan,

---

[24] Jaroslav Pánek, 'Republikánské tendence ve stavovských programech doby předbělohorské', *Folia Historica Bohemica*, xviii (1985), 43-62.

[25] Jiří Pešek and David Šaman, 'Les étudiants de Bohême dans les universités et les académies d'Europe centrale et occidentale entre 1596 te 1620', in Dominique Julia, Jacques Revel and Roger Chartier (eds.), *Les universités européennes du XVIᵉ au XVIIIᵉ siècle. Histoire sociale des populations étudiantes I* (Paris, 1986), 89-111.

---

[26] Cf. Olga Fejtová, Václav Ledvinka and Jiří Pešek (ed.), *Pražské městské elity středověku a raného novověku* (= Documenta Pragensia, xxii, 2004) (Prague, 2004), here especially Jiří Pešek, 'Pražské měšťanské elity středověku a raného novověku. Úvodní zamyšlení', 7-22, or 'Prager städtische Eliten im Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit. Einleitende Überlegungen', 347-66 and Olga Fejtová, 'Měšťanské elity na Novém Městě pražském v 17. století a knižní kultura', 159-74.

[27] Pešek, *Měšťanská vzdělanost a kultura*, 80.

[28] *Ibid.*, 88.

[29] Cf. the most recent and rather emphatic: Jiří Kejř, 'Právní dějiny středověku dnes – a co dále?', *Český časopis historický*, cii (2004), 552-67, here 558 ff.

documented in at least their individual copies, and even Machiavelli as well.[30]

Thus, the burgher political culture of the period under research was not in any manner something specifically 'national' for Bohemia. Within the framework of a widely shared humanist, book-loving and academic culture, it corresponded very closely to the political culture of neighbouring, culturally similar territories of the Empire. Obviously, it also responded vigorously to more remote French impulses, and exceptionally British ones, too, and reflected perceptively the status of contemporary power politics. From the mid-16th century the burghers were well aware that they held neither sway nor influence with regard to the redistribution of power. Yet, they also knew that a modernising state could not do without their professional services and they attempted to utilise their indirect influence in order to strengthen their own standing. Historical analyses of key political events show that an academically educated mercantile intelligentsia, equipped with the experience of their foreign travels, provided a political-intellectual service for the entire Estate community. However, the nobility invited them only exceptionally to share in political decision-making, and even then they were more likely to be on the sidelines as mere observers.

Translated by Alena Linhartová

---

[30] Pešek and Svatoš, 'Mistr Koldín a právní kultura pražských měst', 289-97.

Historiography as both a Reflection and Expression of Political Culture

Zdeněk Beneš

The administration of public affairs is not a frivolous affair but very responsible and demanding work, indeed one of the most prominent, the most difficult and best of the arts; although the interpretation of the Holy Scripture ranks above it. For this reason, only people ingenious and clever by nature are to be involved in this administration – but even that is not enough. In addition to their natural talent, they have to be instructed in an appropriate manner: they have to converse with prudent, wise and experienced people, in addition they have to study diligently. A relevant thesaurus of knowledge and learning will be principally at their disposal in books. The foremost place amongst such books will be held by historical books since *historia magistra vitae est*.

In my introduction I have taken the liberty of partly paraphrasing and recounting in modern language words which we can read in the preface to the Fourth Book of the Czech edition of *Politia historica*, whose author is Daniel Adam of Veleslavín.[1] This pre-eminent Prague publisher and author not only translated Lauterbeck's German model – but also adapted it for

---

[1] Georg Lauterbeck, *Regentenbuch. Aus vielen trefflichen alten und newen Historien mit sondern zhis zusammen gezogen* (Leipzig, 1556). Its Czech version was published under the title *Politia historica* (Prague, 1584), paraphrased words on p. 490. This Veleslavín's preface was most recently reprinted by Milan Kopecký, *Daniel Adam z Veleslavína* (Prague, 1962), the respective passage on p. 105-6.

Czech conditions.[2] Evidently, the passage quoted above does not represent the most profound and brilliant ideas that we can find in Bohemian humanist historiography. However, for that very reason – since it is a repetition of constantly stated and recurring ideas, it is the reflection of a commonly held view. Cicero's characterisation of history as life's teacher[3] was mentioned most. Yet, what were its contents and interpretation? Thirty years ago R. Landfester[4] already showed that the interpretation of Cicero's famous definition varied somewhat in Renaissance Europe; obviously words were, even then, of an instrumental nature. Cicero's famous characterisation of history – I speak rather about characterisation than definition because I include in its semantic field also the real, not merely the possible, diversity of its interpretations – which could also be turned around: it holds (?) not merely that *historia magistra vitae*, but it also holds that *vita magistra historiae est* (!).[5]

There is just one historiography but there are always more histories. This is true not merely of modern times when the boundaries of historical science blur and when historical knowledge is used and abused for many instrumentalities. When history itself was born as '*rerum gestarum*' it was allotted a natural gift to fulfil – at least – three fundamental functions:

the cognitive, the aesthetic and the educational;[6] out of which the first and the third function directly relate to our subject. In recent decades a concept

---

[2] A detailed comparison of the original text and its Czech version has not yet been carried out. A partial comparison was done by Zdeněk Beneš, 'Žena mezi rodinou a obcí. Obraz ženy v Politii historici Daniela Adama z Veleslavína', *Documenta Pragensia*, xiii (1996), 85-90.

[3] Marcus T. Cicero, *De Oratore II, 9*: Historia est testis temporum, lux veritatis, vita memoriae, magistra vitae et nuntia vetustatis.

[4] Rüdiger Landfester, *Historia magistra vitae. Untersuchungen zur humanistischen Geschichtstheorie des 14.-16. Jahrhunderts* (Genéve, 1972). The most recent work but also with reference to Ladfester's amply documented dissertation, Andrzej F. Grabski, *Dzieje historiografii* (Poznań 2003), summarised on 264-8; Gerard Labuda, *Rozwój metod dziejopisarskich od starożytności do współczesności I – do schyłku XIX wieku* (Poznań, 2003), esp. 31-40.

[5] I refer here to the formulation by Labuda, *Rozwój*, 196.

[6] Viz Władysław Tatarkiewicz, *Dzieje sześciu pojęć* (Warsaw, 1982).

---

of culture, accompanied by the relevant adjective, has become customary for encompassing all these functions. Historical culture obviously has become the central category of historiographic research.[7] It can be defined as the sum of historical thought which presents itself in any given society in certain forms of historical presentations and of the handling historical information, and in a variety of functions which it fulfils.[8] The introduction of the category of culture in order to understand the functioning of historiography in this case – in other cases that of legal or political culture – is the expression of an attempt to understand historiography in its wider or deeper social, noetic and symbolic connections, which in their entirety form a certain structured whole, which makes it possible to differentiate not only its internal genetic and causal links, as historiography was accustomed to do, but also its functional connections. The latter are not merely causal, but since the concept of function expresses the interdependence of mutually conditioned changes of individual entities, which form a structured higher whole, they are thus able to express the hierarchy of an order existing in the given society.[9]

The category of a historical culture and possibilities of interpretation, offered by it, can also become a productive tool for the study of Bohemian humanist historiography. It forms a relatively rich body from the point of its genre and functions, comprising both local production and a translated literature adapted for Bohemian conditions.[10] Unfortunately, this subject

---

[7] At present there is already an inexhaustible literature on the very concept of historical culture and its history.

[8] My starting point here is my own conception stated in Zdeněk Beneš, *Historický text a historická kultura* (Prague, 1995), which has been influenced by the Tarsusian semiologic school.

[9] I base it on the definition formulated by Czech structuralism. See Mirko Novák, *Dějiny a hodnoty* (Prague, 1948), 56; Josef L. Fischer, *Zrcadlo doby*, Chapter *Function* (Prague, 1932), 92-3.

[10] Nowadays there is a relative abundance of essays on Bohemian humanist historiography. Let us merely mention those publications which include references to other, specialist studies: Jaroslav Vlček, *Dějiny české literatury I* (Prague, 1893[1], 1951[2]); Jan Jakubec, *Dějiny české literatury I* (Prague, 1929); Arne Novák, *Přehledné dějiny české literatury* (Prague, 1910[1], 1936-1939[4]); *Dějiny české literatury I*, ed. Josef Hrabák et al.

matter has not been fully dealt with, so far. Obviously, the same is also true of the approach which could be used to address it with regard to the category of a political culture. Whether wanted or not my contribution is confined to providing a particular summary, an attempt at classification, also featuring several examples or enquiries. Thus, it does not contain any surprising interpretations. It is rather a re-interpretation, which springs from aspects appertaining to the political culture.

Political Culture from the Perspective of Historiography

How can political culture be comprehended from the perspective of historiography as a body of historical and educational texts? The classical definition of political culture, provided by political science, which defines it as the characteristics of individual attitudes and opinions with respect to politics which can be found amongst members of a political system and the classification of political culture following from it, will not be very useful to us.[11] If we read historiography from the point of the category of political culture, we do not pursue historiography as such but its reflection, its interpretation, and above that reflection and interpretation. This, however, is not without its benefits. It follows from it that three fundamental factors may be included within the political cultural sphere:

Political institutions. This term applies to both real political institutions and the manifestations of their activity in the form of legal systems. The

---

(Prague, 1959); František Kutnar, *Přehledné dějiny českého a slovenského dějepisectví I* (Prague, 1973[1], 1997[2]); Zdeněk Beneš, *Historický text a historická skutečnost* (Prague, 1993); Jaroslav Kolár, *Návraty bez konce. Studie k starší české literatuře* (Brno, 1999); Ivo Hlobil and Eduard Petrů, *Humanismus a raná renesance na Moravě* (Prague, 1992); partly published dissertation work by Lucie Storchová, *Jan Dubravius a jeho Historiae regni Boemiae libri XXXIII* (Prague, 2001) – see eadem, 'Humanistické komunikace a jejich sociální rozměr', *Časopis Matice moravské*, cxxii (2003), No. 1, 61-98.

[11] On the term of a political culture and its usage comprehensively and clearly see Roman Baron, 'Politická kultura v moderní polské historiografii', *Český časopis historický*, ci (2003), 353-75.

Bohemian state, in the narrower sense the Bohemian kingdom, i.e. without the subsidiary lands of the Czech Crown, and finally the community, i.e. town, especially the Towns of Prague, appear as the main political systems in Bohemian humanistic historiography.

The norms of political behaviour and conduct. This involves not merely legal regulations of a most varied nature but also ethical norms, which are related to the political system and the conduct of 'regiments', which was the contemporary term used for national (royal or Estates) organs and officials. The nature of their genesis and the form in which these norms were dealt with varied: the first form of their historiographical presentation was the clearly stated normativeness of the described behaviour and conduct, as represented by political and ethical statements, which are usually of the general, and not of a concrete historical nature. We can find them especially in prefaces to original and translated historical publications. I myself have used one of these statements in its paraphrased version at the beginning of this contribution. However, such deliberations can also be found in works which stand at the opposite side of a theoretical spectrum portraying historical events of a 'rerum gestarum' type, i.e. in town chronicles, which usually responded to current events (Kezelius) or in autobiographical works, such as the *Memoirs* of Nicholas of Dačice. As a rule, they involve generalised moral and legal exhortations, though suggestive of a sort of weariness due to personal experience caused by a real or an imaginary injustice, wrong or slander. Incorporated within a text more or less meant for the public, or at least non-public (Dačický) communication, these reflections take new forms.

The concluding paragraphs of *The Deeds or Notable Books* by Sixtus of Ottersdorf are probably the most obvious example of this transformation. In them the author reflects upon the entire course of the Rebellion and its result, expressing a near-intimate sympathy with the executed leaders of the Rebellion and a lament for the defeat of Prague. In his humanistic literary discourse, he compares it to the destruction of Troy, Carthage and Rome and finds consolation in his belief that *no authority is permanent, it cannot be doubted that God will also determine a certain and quick end of the brutal power, or rather the tyranny of* the victorious King Ferdinand I.

All these variant statements aspiring to normative ethical and political validity share the fact that they elevate historical events, whether real or

fictitious, to the timeless level – thus making the given events or acts ageless, the ever valid examples of good or bad behaviour and conduct. Thus, they become *exempla* of a sort. However, the reverse course also holds true – *exempla* are inserted within historical texts in place of concrete historical events, their timeless validity is, however, maintained:

> We read about one elderly woman who used to pray for Dionysius, the Tyrant, to enjoy a long life, to whom all his subjects wished nothing but death. When she was asked by the tyrant why she prayed for him, she gave the following reply: I do remember, Oh King, your grandfather. He was a person cruel beyond bounds and he tortured us mercilessly. God answered our prayers and he died. Your father rose up and he was much more cruel. Once again we begged for his death, hoping that you, his son, might be better. Yet, you have surpassed both your father and your grandfather in cruelty. Thus I pray for you, worried that someone yet again worse might rule over us after you, and who might bring complete ruin upon us. And it truly thus happens that after David, Solomon comes, after Solomon Roboam. Therefore, the best advice is to rest content with the existing state of affairs and not to ask for changes, which might bring great dangers and occasionally destruction to kingdoms and also to countries.[12]

The real manifestations of behaviour and conduct which can be defined as political activities. These activities are either described by the authors themselves or they witness them or they occur with their involvement. They eventually record them in memoirs or historiographical texts. Based on a selected thesaurus of publications upon which we base our present research,

---

[12] On this example from Valerius Maximus see Karel Dvořák, 'Soupis staročeských exempel', *Acta Universitatis Carolinae – Philosophica et Historica. Monographia*, lxxii (1978), 71 (No. 1678), Valerius and Pliny's exempla can also be found in *Politia historica*, obviously the exempla of a Biblical origin are frequent. See Petr Voit, 'Šimon Lomnický z Budče a exempla v kontextu jeho mravněvýchovné prózy', *Acta Universitatis Carolinae – Philosophica et Historica. Monographia*, cxxvii, 1989 (1991), 54 ff.

this feature is the most prominent in Sixtus's *The Deeds or Notable Books*[13] and in *The Boleslav Chronicle* by George Kezelius Bydžovský.

Kezelius wrote his chronicle in 'the official' manner, i.e. as a chronicle of the town, and in it he suppressed his own personality; in many places he referred to himself in the third person and occasionally he did not even mention his own name.[14] He strives to present as balanced and as comprehensive a picture of the history of the town since its – alleged – foundation in 973 until 1654, when he produced his last manuscript entry. He concentrated his attention upon the legal and economic aspects of the town's life, focusing primarily on the years 1605-27. Despite his 'institutional reservation' towards his own person, he continuously returns to his involvement in the town's life. Obviously, he simultaneously defends his activities and he points out a number of legal and moral shortcomings in the activities of his opponents. In 1623 the new *town sheriff only cared for his own profit, the imperial mayor for his voracious appetite and for merry-making, the primus for flattery and cunning.* And all three of them *cared little for instructions* which the Deputy Governor Charles of Lichtenstein himself had issued *to them and they continued to forget themselves.*[15] This minor example could be multiplied by other similar examples – it would be evident with regard to all of them that we have a type of text called *res gestae* in front of us. We do not find any deeper reflection of the events there, provided we disregard the mentioned instructions, quoted *expressis verbis* immediately after his description in the passage referred above, which is, indeed, a *sui generis* reflection. It is possible to discern a certain hidden, indirect reflection, realized through a reference to valid law in this approach. Kezelius is not an exception in this and a similar argument could be applied in the case of the text construction used in *The Deeds or Notable Books* by Sixtus of Ottersdorf.

---

[13] See Beneš, *Historický text a historická skutečnost*, 77-88.

[14] See Zdeněk Kamper, *Jiříka Kezelia Kronika boleslavská* (Mladá Boleslav, 1935), Introduction, LIII ff.

[15] *Ibid*, 152.

Political Culture in Historiography

We obviously come across all of these three functional fields in contemporary historical literature, also. Humanistic historiography – and not merely the Bohemian one – is rich in its genres, the genesis of its works varies and individual treatises also differ with respect to their intended audience. Therefore, they contain and reflect the three factors mentioned above in different ways. Generally, two fundamental political-cultural types of historical texts can be determined as:

The conceptual type. Texts such as Hájek's *Bohemian Chronicle* on one hand or the prefaces by Veleslavín or Kocín, which belong to this type, give an account of the 'normative form' of a political culture; they determine its principles and its intended ideal form. These two authors simultaneously represent two characteristic approaches to the reflection of a political culture in historiography; Veleslavín reflects it more on a 'historiographical-like level', whereas Kocín does so on a more ethicised level. The following quotations are characteristic of both approaches:

The pragmatic type. It describes real political events themselves; history as *res gestae* takes priority to history as *rerum gestarum*. Here I adapt Hegel's terminology purely for didactic reasons: so that it is made evident that a description prevails (conceptually) over reflection. One example of this type of text can be *The Boleslav Chronicle* of George Kezelius Bydžovský and in fact the entire complex of town historiography. However, this very totality of texts has unfortunately been barely addressed so far, although it involves a type of chronicle, which is probably of huge significance for the study of a historiographical picture of the Bohemian Pre-White Mountain political culture.

Naturally, these are the ideal types and many texts represent composites of both. To introduce one characteristic example, let us name *The Deeds or Notable Books* by Sixtus of Ottersdorf, which directly define the transformation from *res gestae* to *rerum gestarum* through its genesis – from the copier of a town book to a reflective entry on the First Estates' Rebellion of 1547, i.e. a genre tranformation, as well as through the selection of terms in its title. Hájek's Chronicle then portrays nearly ten decades of Bohemian history but it simultaneously creates a new concept of this history.

An Excursion: Wenceslas Hájek's Estates Concept of Bohemian History

The extensive *Bohemian Chronicle* (Kronika česká) of Wenceslas Hájek of Libočany appeared in the 1530s in humanist circles, tolerant of confession and the class, which formed the retinue of John the Elder Hodějovský of Hodějov. Although its author lacked a classical humanist education, he did create the most extensive work of early Bohemian literature with – what we would call today – heuristic assistance. It holds a 'paradigmatic' status and F. Palacký gave the name 'Hájek' to the entire developmental period of Bohemian historiography stretching from the 16th to the second half of the 18th century. The *Chronicle* introduced a new interpretation of Bohemian history, which projected the Estates character of the state to the very beginnings of Bohemian history, to the era of its legendary founders the Princess Libuše and Przemysl the Ploughman.

Przemyslid legend is well rooted in Bohemian historical awareness from its very beginnings in the *Cosmas Chronicle* (12th century), or the second half of the 10th century, if we recognize the validity of the so-called Cristian legend. However, Hájek introduced historiographical attributes, psychologically trustworthy, to the legends of Libuše's rule and the instalment of Przemysl onto the princely throne, and he incorporated these into the chronological scheme of the development of Bohemian history. Hájek placed the arrival of the Czech tribe led by Čech, their Duke, at 644 A.D. After a reign of seventeen years, he was succeeded by Libuše's father Krok, who then ruled until 709, i.e. 48 years. Libuše then ruled another 25 years. These lengthy reigns are rather improbable: the average reign period for Bohemian kings between 1346-1542 (when the *Chronicle* was published) was 27 years, while the reign of Wladislas of Jagiello was the longest, namely 45 years (1471-1516), then Wenceslas IV 41 years (1378-1419).

Thus, Libuše's reign of 25 years had to have been rather than could have been filled with a range of events, as any of Hájek's reader would surely remember events with the mentioned kings in recent years or directly in contemporary times. However, Hájek could not find any models in earlier

chronicles for such desired events. He had to 'invent' them, or more precisely he had to construct them, as Hájek's fabulous tales have their own logic.[16]

Libuše continues her father's work and first of all she lays foundations of 'overlord' castles belonging to her or her sisters (710-13), she builds the power base of the ruling family. It is then followed by a period in which farming estates, villages and towns are founded, which are manifestations of the country's economic growth, accompanied by the development of trade. The castles built in this period are already noblemens' castles. However, the climax of this entire period is preceeded by the disobedience on the part of the common people – in 720 A.D. – which the ruling Princess resolves by forming a government of yeomen and barons. In 723 Prague is founded and then other villages and castles and farming estates. At the same time, deposits of precious metals, gold and silver, are found and the minting of coins begins. The country's entire economic development and the social differentiation accompanying it (as we would call this development nowadays) causes dissatisfaction, a craving for wealth and power. Consequently, the central government has to be strengthened – which is the reason for the instalation of Przemyslid and the proclamation of the laws of the Land. Simultaneously a division of power also occurs, through the establishment of the institutions of yeomen and barons.

In addition the *Chronicle* introduced one new feature which was to have wide-ranging significance for the conception of Bohemian history. In one of the introductory chapters of the *Chronicle*, called *Ancient Thought on the Origins of the Czechs* we can read the following words:

> (...) From all of that it can be understood, that with regard to the opinions of the early chroniclers, they erred considerably when they wrote that the Dalmatians or Slovaks had appropriated for themselves that country, in which the Czechs are now permanently settled, im- mediately after the Flood and have rightly resided in it until the present day, since it can be clearly recognized from its name: Boemus – Czech, that is a great difference; Boemia – the Czech Land, it does not match,

perhaps it should rather be called Czechia after the Czechs, similar to Bavaria after the Bavarians and Meissen after the Mishnaurs. But so that both could be reconciled, some came to agree, and proclaim that we, Czechs, have our motherland from the Germans and our family roots and language from the Slovaks.[17]

Hájek as the very first Bohemian historian thus reflects on the difference between the name of the forefather of the nation, after whom the land was to be called and its common name. The founder of Bohemian historiography, Dean Cosmas, did write that the forefather was called *Boemus* and the country was named after him *Boemia*.[18] Hájek once again resolves this discrepancy ingeniously: he advocates the possibility expressed in the final quoted sentence. He does not rest satisfied merely stating it but he also offers historical evidence. He refers to Ptolemy and Strabo to prove that Boemia was part of Greater Germany and deduces that prior to the Czechs its first inhabitants were Germans (indeed, the date of Čech's arrival in 644 is incompatible with the medieval conception of his tribe's arrival immediately after the Flood).[19] Thereafter he constructs a model of pre-Slav Bohemian history, focusing on the period of Marobud's empire. He writes in much detail about this Celtic ruler (obviously Hájek thought that he had been a German ruler). After all, he was able to rely on the abundance of information in ancient Roman literature for his depiction of this period of pre-Slav Bohemian history. However, he cannot have had first-hand know- ledge of it because his borrowings are inaccurate.

The *Bohemian Chronicle* was not the first text ever informing the Czech reader of pre-Slav inhabitants. This period was first mentioned by Martin Kuthen (1539), shortly before Hájek, very briefly, indeed, in few sentences. Hájek's *Chronicle* presents not merely an extensive narrative, rich in events, but it also firmly links this period with both the history of Rome and also

---

[16] See in more detail Beneš, *Historický text a historická skutečnost*, 68-9.

[17] Václav Flajšhans (ed.), *V. Hájka Kronika česká I* (Prague, 1918), 39.

[18] *"Et unde', inquiunt, 'melius vel aptivus nomen inveniemus, quam, quia tu, o pater, diceris Boemus, dicatur et terra Boemia?"* – Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Bohemorum, ed. Bertold Bretholz (Berlin, 1923), 7.

[19] *V. Hájka Kronika česká I*, 40.

with other periods of Bohemian history through the intermediary of Marobud and his family. He does so by dating and by offering a credible chronology, but also through a whole range of historical processes and features: Prague emerges on – or very close to – the site of the first town, founded by the very first inhabitants of this Land; forefathers Čech and Lech travel to new lands carrying a white banner with a black eagle – the banner – as Hájek would emphasise – which St. Wenceslas would still carry; on their journey Čech's people examine closely the soil's fertility whenever they stop, because they search for land suitable for agricultural cultivation. Arguments about field boundaries, the riches and settlements break out in their newly found homeland, like they did in Croatia which they had left – and that would lead to the establishment of a princely government and the emergence of a state.

It was not merely the awareness that there was an etymological contradiction between the name of the nation's forefather and the designation of the land, which belonged to that nation as its motherland, but primarily its explanation by reason of historical events, which led to the separation of the nation's history and the history of the land; no longer could they be identified. Obviously, Bohemian medieval chroniclers also noted the presence of ethnically different persons or groups in Bohemia – Cosmas makes numerous mentions of Poles, the so-called Dalimil writes about Germans – however, they were new arrivals for them, 'guests' as Dalimil calls them. Czechs were 'locals' to them. Hájek reverses this relationship: Germans were the first historical inhabitants and Czechs only arrived to this land after them. Despite that this land belongs to Czechs, and not to Germans.[20]

One might say that Hájek puts forward a new ground plan in his *Chronicle*. Other Bohemian humanist historians consolidate this historical construct, proposed by the author of the *Bohemian Chronicle*, through further historical argument. Particular attention among them should be paid

---

[20] On the concept of a motherland and a nation with the Bohemian historians of the 16th-18th century see Zdeněk Beneš, 'Vlast a národ v díle D. Adama z Veleslavína', *Acta Universitatis Carolinae – Philosophica et Historica. Studia historica* xxxii (1988), nr. 1, 61-74; Eduard Maur, 'Pojetí národa ve starší české historiografii jako východisko koncepce českého národa v první pol. 19. století', in Milan Skřivánek (ed.), *Národní obrození a rok 1848 v evropském kontextu* (Litomyšl, 1998), 7-20.

to Daniel Adam of Veleslavín, since he elaborated Hájek's concept of Bohemian history into a fully integrated conception between 1585-90. Hájek's concept of Bohemian history remained valid until the emergence of critically-minded Enlightenment historiography; Hájek did not pass its test and was rejected as a historian.

The Historical and Political Culture Connection

It follows from the previous text that the historical culture of Bohemian Renaissance Humanism is connected with the political culture of the Bohemian Estates State through a web of multiple connections. To comprehend them we have to remind ourselves that historiography since its inception in Ancient Greece has fulfilled a triple function: the cognitive, the educational (ethical) and the aesthetical. Humanist historiography, as part of the paradigm of the rhetorical model of historiography, places emphasis on *narratio*, serving *usus rerum* and directed at *prudentia*.

It is obvious from a comparison of the personality profiles of individual chroniclers presented at the end of this text, and the character of their historical works that Bohemian – and not only Bohemian – humanist authors also participated in political events, either directly or at least indirectly. Bartoš the Scribe, the author of the *Chronicle about the Prague Storm of 1542 or The Books about the Revolt of Some against Others in the Community of Prague* (Kronika o bouři pražské r. 1524 neboli Knihy o pozdvižení jedněch proti druhým v obci pražské), was an agent in the struggle between the followers of traditional Utraquism – the Old Utraquists and the Neo-Utraquists, who were influenced by the emerging Lutheran Reformation of Prague in the mid-1520s. The previously mentioned Sixtus of Ottersdorf was one of the most prominent personalities of the First Estates Rebellion 1546-47. The rich historiographical activity of the Unity of Brethren had a prominent political subtext. Its archives and historiographical production, also, were rooted in the necessity to defend the Unity legally under the conditions of its permanent 'semi-legality' caused by the so-called St. James Mandate of the Bohemian Land Diet of 1508, which aimed at the suppression of the Unity's existence. The Mandate was restored several times, but there

was not a real force in the land to impose it.[21] The leaders of the Second Bohemian Estates Rebellion Wenceslas Budovec of Budov[22] or Charles the Elder of Žerotín[23] on the side of the Estates or Wilhelm Slavata of Chlum and Košumberk on the Imperial side can be mentioned here as the authors of works which could be designated as historical.

We can find indirect participation in authors such as Wenceslas Hájek, Daniel Adam of Veleslavín and his circle or the Olomouc humanist centre at the contemporary episcopal court, whose leading representative was John Dubravius. Their role in political events was primarily mediated through their writing and cultural activities connected to the prominent place in society and its life they themselves occupied or the circle in which they moved.

It is natural that a historical text itself became a political factor. A historical work could – and often did – transform into a political text. This fate befell *The Notable Books* by Sixtus of Ottersdorf immediately after the defeat of the 1547 Rebellion; two and a half centuries later to W. Hájek's *Bohemian Chronicle*, in terms of a historiographical and general cultural reflection. It came to be read as a pro-aristocratic and pro-Catholic work, although an analysis of its text and a comparison to other Bohemian pre-White Mountain historical works do not discern any significant trends in this direction.[24]

---

[21] Kamil Krofta, *O dějepisectví bratrském* (Prague, 1946), continues to be consulted as a general summary of Brethren historiography.

[22] Václav Budovec z Budova, *Akta aneb příběhy, kteří se dáli ode tří stavů království Českého, tělo a krev pod obojí přijímajících od r. 1608 do 23. února 1610*; idem, *Antialkoran* (Prague, 1614) (most recently 1989). On Budovec see Noemi Rejchrtová, *Václav Budovec z Budova* (Prague, 1984).

[23] Karel the Elder of Žerotín, *Zápisové o soudě panském 1594-1621, či Popsání sněmů obecních v Brně 1594, 1596 a 1597*. On this prominent personality of the Moravian Estates see Otokar Odložilík, Karel st. ze Žerotína (Prague, 1936).

[24] For the most recent work see Jiří Pešek, 'Václav Hájek z Libočan, vyprávěč mýtů i dějin', in Jarmila Lakosilová (ed.), *Duchem, ne mečem* (Prague, 2003), 100-10.

Summary

In conclusion it befits to summarise the fundamental connections of historical and political culture in a brief survey:

The first of them emerged from the emphasis which historiography placed on the role and the functioning of a state. We come across this emphasis in nearly every Bohemian humanist historical text, the reason being that Bohemian humanist historians were active supporters, in some cases even co-creators, and always the champions of an Estates monarchy. Their principal – paradigmatic – works are theoretical constructs of this political system. This premise also applies to Wenceslas Hájek of Libočany and therefore the opinions of earlier literature have to be revised accordingly.

Historiography formulated the legitimate constituents of political power. In historical texts of the period under research we come across constant references to and descriptions of the role of a sovereign and the Estates in national administration and its paradigmatic works (for example Hájek, Veleslavín, Stránský) also articulate the problems of the genesis of a state and the relationship of the land, the state and the nation. Indeed, it was Hájek's *Bohemian Chronicle* which created the fundamental model of this genesis and freshly formulated the problem of the multi-ethnicity of the Bohemian state, the relationship of the state (i.e. Bohemia) and the Czech nation.

Finally, Bohemian historiography also formulated the fundamental obligations of politics and politicians alike, at every level of political life, starting with the sovereign down to municipal or patrimonial officials. These were presented to the reader as a description of general obligations for one's behaviour and conduct, i.e. forms of 'theoretical' norms, based on the principles of the individual ethic, which rested on common Christian principles, or were 'pragmatical', i.e. mediated through concrete examples, in fact exempla.

Personalities, Careers, Publications

In order to facilitate work with a thesaurus of publications on which this work is based, I provide brief biographies of its authors in alphabetical order:

Adam of Veleslavín, Daniel (1546-99), a Master of Prague University where he lectured in history. Later he left University and acquired the Prague printing house of George Melantrich of Aventinum through marriage. He was involved in the political life of the burgher class, which he also represented at Land diets. His own person and his printing house became the focal point for a circle of authors and thus the most prominent cultural centre of Bohemia in the final quarter of the 16th century; he issued about 140 publications, some of them reprinted in several issues, on politics, poetry, economic literature and other branches of literature. The most important of his historical treatises are *The Historical Calendar* (Historický kalendář), 1578 and in its expanded version of 1590, and a double edition of the Chronicles of Aeneas Silvius and M. Kuthen of Sprinsberg, synchronously arranged, under the common title *Two Chronicles on the Foundation of Bohemia and its First Inhabitants* (Dvě kroniky o založení země české a prvních obyvatelích jejích), 1585, furnished with an extensive preface.

Bartoš, the so-called Písař (Scribe) (1470-1535), a Prague burgher, a scribe for the Lesser Town of Prague. He supported the newly emerging Neo-Utraquist Wing of the Utraquist Church, influenced by Luther's Reformation. He began to write his Chronicle of the Prague Storm in 1529 upon his return to Prague from where he had been expelled by his Old Utraquist opponents in 1524.

Bílejovský, Bohuslav (1480-1555), an Old Utraquist priest, the author of a highly partisan *Bohemian Chronicle* (Česká kronika), 1537, which is the last Bohemian chronicle written from an Utraquist point of view, and devoid of any significant influence of the humanist conception of history and historiography.

Dačický of Heslov, Mikuláš (Nicholas) (1555-1626), the author of memoirs and a poet. His *Memoirs* (Paměti), (manuscript, published 1878[1]), based on the historical notes of his ancestors and complemented by his own entries, is a remarkable achievement, comprising the personal views and perspective of a Czech burgher at the end of the 16th century and in the early

17th century. They also document the author's literary talent, as does his collection of poems *Simple Truth* (Prostopravda), (1902[1], together with a selection from his Memoirs 1955).

Dubravius, Jan/Johannes (John) (1486-1553), a humanist writer and the Bishop of Olomouc (from 1541). He was awarded an LLD in both laws during his studies in Italy. Most noteworthy among his works are *Theriobulia Ioannis Dubravii iurisconsulti et equitis aurati de regiis praeceptis ...* (1520), an economic treatise *De piscinis...* (1547) and in particular his extensive *Historiae regni Bohemiae* (1552), known throughout Europe thanks to its first foreign issue in Basel in 1575 (under the title *Historia Bohemica*).

Hájek of Libočany, Václav (Wenceslas) (?-1553), at first an Utraquist and after 1521 a Catholic priest. A famous preacher. In addition to his *Bohemian Chronicle* (Kronika česká), he also compiled a brief, yet invaluable documentary report on a devastating fire at Prague Castle on 10 June 1541; he translated Biblical books and adapted earlier treatises.

Kezelius Bydžovský, Jiří (George) (1576-1655), in his own name Kožíšek. A lawyer, musician and a town politician. He studied at Prague Carolinum where he received his Master's Degree in 1604; the following year he became a school administrator in Mladá Boleslav and soon after its principal scribe; in 1618 also the primus and burgermeister. He held the post of the principal town official until 1623, when he was stripped of all his offices and forced to emigrate in 1627, he lived primarily in Pirna, Saxony. After twelve years he returned from exile in 1639. He converted to Catholicism and lived the rest of his life in reduced, yet not impoverished, circumstances in Mladá Boleslav. He is the author of *The Boleslav Chronicle* (Boleslavská kronika), written in Czech but re-written several times in Latin, a translator of the treatise *Processus iuris municipalis Pragensis ...* (1585) Ofthalmia Straconicenia in Czech (*Proces práva městského po slavném království Českém ...,* 1607).

Kocín of Kocinét, Jan (John) (1543-1610), a Bachelor at Prague University, after 1578 the Scribe of the Lesser Town of Prague. In addition to Prague he also studied in Strasburg and Padua. He was a humanist poet and writer, an editor and translator. Especially important from amongst his

historical works are prefaces to Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History* (Historie církevní*)* published in its Czech translation in Prague in 1594.

of Ottersdorf, Sixt (Sixtus) (beginning of the 16th century – 1583), a Bachelor at Prague University, a scribe and the chancellor of the Old Town of Prague 1546-7, a politician. His greatest achievement are his memoirs of the First Estates Rebellion 1546-7, which were originally entries in a town book. After the defeat of the Rebellion he returned to them and developed them further into a comprehensive reflection of those two years. They are generally introduced under the title The Deeds or Notable Books, or *The History of Those Two Restless Years in Bohemia 1546 and 1547* (Akta aneb knihy památné čili historie oněch dvou nepokojných let v Čechách 1546 a 1547*)*. Towards the end of his life he also compiled *The Diary of the 1575 Diet* (Diarium sněmu 1575*)*, in which he described the discussions of the Land Diet which adopted the Bohemian Confession.

Slavata of Chlum and Košumberk, Vilém (William) (1572-1652), a prominent Catholic politician of the Catholic side, the Imperial Deputy Governor of Bohemia. He described his interpretation of the events surrounding the Estates' Rebellion 1618-20 in his manuscript memoirs called *Historical Writings* (Historické spisování*)* (14 vols., 1637-51). In these he depicted the period from 1526, with particular attention to the period 1608-19.

Stránský from Zápská Stránka, Pavel (Paul) (158?-1657), a Master at Prague University, then a burgher in Litoměřice, first a town scribe, afterwards also an alderman. During the Second Estates' Rebellion 1618-20 he supported Friedrich of Palatine, as an Utraquist he had to leave his motherland in 1627. He stayed in German Pirna and finally in Polish Torun, where he was awarded full citizenship and taught at the local grammar school. His main work is *Respublica Bojema* (1634).

Translated by Alena Linhartová

Civic Culture of the Polish Nobility in the 16th and Early 17th Century

Edward Opaliński

Civic culture was already fully developed among the majority of Polish, Lithuanian and Ruthenian nobility during the second interregnum (1574-76).[1] What did 'civic culture' consist in? Foremost, as early as the middle of the sixteenth century, noblemen realised that they were 'free citizens' (*liberi cives*) in a 'free Commonwealth' (*libera Respublica*), that they had the right freely to express their opinions on public matters to officials and the monarch, and that they were duty bound to claim their own and other estates' rights and liberties as well as public rights. It is worth stressing that the notions 'free Poles', 'free noblemen' and 'free citizens' were used interchangeably. In his treatise *Quincunx*, Stanisław Orzechowski reflected in 1564 on what constituted the essence of the concept 'a free Polish nobleman':

> a Pole wears a superb robe, freedom, which is equal to the freedom of the king; in addition, he wears a splendid gold ring, that is, nobility, which makes the highest person equal to the lowest one in Poland; he shares an ox with the king, his Master, that is, the common law which in Poland, like an ox, serves equally both him and the king.[2]

---

[1] The term 'political culture' is in this article based on the definition presented by Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba in their work *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Princeton, 1963), 13, 15-20, 23-8. This definition has been slightly modified in my study *Kultura polityczna szlachty polskiej w latach 1587-1652* (Warsaw, 1995), 15.

[2] Stanisław Orzechowski, *Wybór pism*, ed. Jerzy Starnawski (Wrocław, Warsaw, Cracow and Gdańsk, 1972), 556.

This definition means that a nobleman's citizenship consisted in equality within the noble estate and an equal subordination of the monarch and the noble subjects to the law. Consequently, both the king and the citizens were free people. We come across a similar understanding of this conception 70 years later. In the sermon published on the occasion of the funeral of King Sigismund III, Father Jakub Olszewski presented his interpretation of Poles' freedom:

> A Pole is free, thanks to his privileges which therefore he calls his freedom; he puts them on a par with his birth, his honesty and his life; he is free under the law but is not bound by the laws that were passed against his will; he is free to demand boldly the truth from everybody in parliament, as well as from his Master [the king].[3]

Parliamentary records show that these views were deeply rooted in the minds of the nobility. At the Election Sejm in 1632, the Chamberlain of Przemyśl, Felicjan Grochowski, laid stress on freedom of speech, which stemmed from a citizen's rights. He said: 'I am a free nobleman and am free to speak; I may therefore contradict what I do not like and *ad placitum* say the opposite to another person'.[4] During the Diet session held in 1637, Jerzy Niemirycz, an Arian, presented a practical interpretation of the term 'free citizen'. Arguing over the accusation that Arians were not Christians, he said:

> even if our beliefs were completely wrong, the very fact that we were born Polish noblemen and that we are *in libera Republica, liberi cives* means that nobody may forbid us to believe what we want to believe or to claim what the law has granted us.[5]

He thus stressed that membership of the noble estate meant that every free citizen had full religious freedom and the right to demand that the law be observed.

The notion of citizen was connected with civic duties. In his treatise *Policyja Królestwa Polskiego na kształt arystotelesowych 'Polityk' wypisana i na świat dla dobra pospolitego trzema księgami wydana* (1564-66) [The Polish Kingdom's Policy Written on the Basis of Aristotle's 'Politics' and Published in Three Books for Common Good], Stanisław Orzechowski designated virtue as the fundamental pillar on which the Commonwealth was based:

> Why is Polish policy based entirely on the clergy, the king, the nobility, [and] on hereditary rights? There is great conflict and discord between virtue and money; for as the Gospel says, *non potestis Deo servire et mammonae,* that is, 'ye cannot serve God and mammon'. This is why our policy, leading the whole kingdom towards virtue, has placed Poland on exquisite pillars, on these worthy estates for whom nothing is better than virtue.[6]

From Aristotle, Orzechowski adopted the principle of the happy medium to which all virtues should be subordinated:

> *Omnes virtutes in medio positas esse, quarum utraque extrema essent viciosa, ut audacia et timiditas ambo viciosa, sint, habent in sui medio fortitudinem, quae praestantissima virtus est, quae et timet et audet.*[7]

Orzechowski's contemporary, Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski, also thought that virtue played an important role in the state. According to him, the citizens should be guided by the virtue of prudence, justice, restraint and courage. In the first half of the seventeenth century, Szymon Starowolski, in his treatise *Reformacyja obyczajów polskich* [A Reform of Polish Customs], said that the most important foundations of the state were fear of God and virtue. In his opinion, virtuous citizens had the duty to love their country more than anything else, to multiply 'common wealth', to avoid greediness and to defend the state's frontiers:

---

[3] Jakub Olszewski, *Snopek Naiaśnieyszego Zygmunta III, Króla Polskiego i Szwedzkiego...* (Vilnius, 1632), 35.

[4] Biblioteka Raczyńskich, Poznań, MS 30 – Diariusz sejmu elekcyjnego 1632, p. 329.

[5] Biblioteka Czartoryskich, Cracow, MS 390 – Diariusz sejmu 1637, p. 315.

[6] Qouted from Lech Szczucki (ed.), *Filozofia i myśl społeczna XVI wieku* (700 lat myśli polskiej, ii, Warsaw, 1978), 277.

[7] Stanisław Orzechowski, 'Dyjalog albo rozmowa około egzekucyjej Polskiej Korony', in Orzechowski, *Wybór pism*, 403.

For as Demosthenes says, a state shrinks when its private citizens get richer than the common treasury and when people are more interested in looking after their own affairs than after the good of all citizens, and this applies above all to those who hold important posts: *Quo magis res privatae eorum, qui publicas functiones habent, augentur, eo magis rem publicam minui certissimum est. Et profecto ut utilitatis publicae maior quam privati emolumenti ratio habeatur, singulare omnibus bonis debet esse propositum* (said Greek orator).[8]

The views on the role of virtue in the Commonwealth did not change much in the seventeenth century. They were similar to those in the sixteenth century because of the acceptance of the ideas of Aristotle and Cicero. The opinions of contemporary Italian humanists (with the exception of Machiavelli) and Lipsius were also recalled, though not so often. Already by the early seventeenth century, the conviction was that ancestors were more virtuous than generations of the present day.

Service to the Commonwealth and to the king was a duty accepted by all citizens (that is nobility) and the whole population. It was believed that a nobleman should not grudge his personal resources to fulfil this duty. In a letter written in 1615, the Lithuanian Chancellor Lew Sapieha gave the following advice to the Lithuanian Field Hetman, Krzysztof Radziwiłł:

> You want to be a deputy of Sejm in order to serve His Majesty and the country; my opinion is that this is a good idea; you will undoubtedly have to bear some costs, but as I wrote earlier, what you spend will be well invested and will yield a profit.[9]

Was this benevolence a general practice? The dietines' instructions are full of requests for compensations to individual persons who suffered losses or even fell into ruin by serving the king and the Commonwealth. There is probably a dose of exaggeration in the formulation of these requests,

---

[8] Szymon Starowolski, *Wybór pism*, ed. Ignacy Lewandowski (Wrocław, Warsaw and Cracow, 1991), 298.

[9] Quoted from Edward Opaliński, *Elita władzy w województwach poznańskim i kaliskim za Zygmunta III* (Poznań, 1981), 77.

especially when financial ruin was emphasised, but they show that the custom of spending money for public purposes, even when this was an investment in one's own career, was widespread. This was a popular practice as is testified to by the maintenance of private armies, the large sums spent by hetmans on the state's army, the costs borne by deputies sent on various missions to foreign countries, and the loans given to the king or the state. Many magnates, especially in the south-eastern borderlands, maintained their own forces which, because of the small state army, defended not only their own estates but also played an important role in the wars against the Tartars and Turks. But it was not only the magnates who backed the Commonwealth's army by their private troops. For instance, during the reign of Stephen Báthory, Andrzej Leszczyński, who later became Voivode of Brześć Kujawski, took part in the wars against Muscovy with his own detachment, and Piotr Opaliński, the future Voivode of Poznań, fought at the head of his own regiment in the Muscovy campaign of 1617-19 and at Chocim in 1621. The Commonwealth often lacked money to pay its soldiers. As a rule, the hetmans covered the outstanding payments, thus saving the country from devastation. Of course, they got the money back later, sometimes with interest. The persons who were sent abroad on a mission also had to invest their own resources. In 1646, the Voivode of Poznań, Krzysztof Opaliński undertook to bring Władysław IV's fiancée Marie-Louise Gonzaga from Paris. The magnate ran into financial troubles on his way back and had to pawn silver-ware in Amsterdam. But he was generously rewarded for his mission, being appointed *starosta* of the rich district of Kovel in Volhynia. The same procedure applied to loans given to the king and the Commonwealth. In the fifteenth and early sixteenth century, one could make a fortune by lending money to the king. It was worth while to invest personal resources in order to serve the king and the country (even if this money was given voluntarily to the state and the monarch).

It was believed that service to the Commonwealth and the king should be rewarded. In his treatise *Dyalog albo rozmowa około egzekucyjej Polskiej Korony* (1562) [A Dialogue or Conversation about the Execution-of-the-Law Movement in Poland], Stanisław Orzechowski said:

> The Commonwealth takes little or no account of a person's clan or his respectability; it regards as worthy persons all those who work for its

good, enhance its prestige and multiply its profits ... it does not ask a worthy person who has helped it, or has done something useful for it: whether he is a peasant, a nobleman, a *comes* or a king's son, the deed is enough, the Commonwealth is not interested in that person's clan.[10]

There was much truth in Orzechowski's words; even though a great political career was already unavailable to townsmen by the end of the sixteenth century; ennoblement or, in the case of foreigners, naturalisation and ennoblement, offered another solution. This was the way in which townsmen could acquire even a magnate's status in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as in the cases of Korniaktows, Morsztyns and Szembeks. Representatives of the middle and even lower nobility did not encounter difficulties in this respect, and many of them made a great political career.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries a distinction was made in the Commonwealth between a proper, fully-deserved career, which was regarded as a prize for activity in the public forum, and a reprehensible career made in an unworthy manner and not through the service to the state and the monarch. Three models of a political career were acceptable. The preferences of the king and the nobility for some of these models are clear if one analyses the documents of the dietines and, in particular, requests for awards to persons of merit and letters of support. Demands for awards to persons who had sat in parliament for several terms or had distinguished themselves on the battlefield were the most frequent demands put forward by the nobility. This meant that parliamentary work was the best means and generally accepted model for promotion. The instructions given by the nobility of Great Poland to deputies of Sejm at a dietine in Środa in 1592 are an example of a typical request (*petitum*) put forward by a dietine: 'Come out in favour of Mr. Stanisław Czarnkowski, who has rendered great services to the Commonwealth, and lodge an earnest request with His Majesty the King to reward him'.[11] Stanisław Czarnkowski had many times been elected member of parliament by the Środa dietine, and his services to the Commonwealth

consisted in the representation of Great Poland in Sejm. Military service was another generally accepted model of political career, as is testified to by the many requests made during the reign of Sigismund III to reward the Potockis and Kazanowskis who had distinguished themselves in fighting against the Tartars, and to promote the no less distinguished Stefan Chmielecki. We have chosen as our examples representatives of the middle nobility who made a great political career; so in this case the preferences of the nobility were the same as those of the king. Clergymen, who had earlier served the state in a public capacity, represented the third group of men who were deemed worthy of promotion. There is less evidence, however, in the records of dietines for this profile than in the case of parliamentarians and military men. The models of political promotion discussed so far were undoubtedly in harmony with the nobility's system of values, which favoured rewards for services rendered to the Commonwealth. Other sources, especially letters of support sent to the king, show a different way of thinking. In his letter written in 1602, Primate Stanisław Karnkowski used the following arguments to support the appointment of Jan Trzciński to the post of chamberlain of Sochaczew, which had been vacant since the death of Jan Trzciński's father, Stanisław, *starosta* of Rawa:

> I recommend to Your Majesty especially a courtier of Your Majesty, the son of the Rawa *starosta* who, as I know well, is a fully devoted and obedient servant of Your Majesty. I have no doubt that because of the worth of the son and even more so of the services and virtues of his father, Your Majesty will condescend to confer this office on him.[12]

Jan Trzciński's service to the monarch and the services rendered by his father deserved a prize.

Other criteria were emphasised when the request for support was addressed to a royal follower. For example, the letter from the Bishop of Poznań, Andrzej Opaliński, in 1616 to the Primate, Wawrzyniec Gembicki,

[10] Orzechowski, *Wybór pism*, 415.

[11] *Akta sejmikowe województw poznańskiego i kaliskiego*, i, (*1572-1632*), pt. 1, ed. Włodzimierz Dworzaczek (Poznań, 1957), 160-1.

[12] Biblioteka Kórnicka, MS 1402 – Stanisław Karnkowski do Zygmunta III, 28 V 1602, p. 61.

recommended the *starosta* of Stawiszyn, Andrzej Pierzchliński, for the post of chamberlain of Kalisz:

> I warmly recommend Mr. Starosta Stawiszyński to Your Grace and to His Majesty, and can testify to the Primate of the Kingdom that he is a faithful servant of the Commonwealth and of His Majesty the King, and he is so worthy that he can be regarded as *unus pro mille*.[13]

Even though both clergymen were closely connected with the king, they put services to the monarch on a par with services to the Commonwealth. Allegiance to the throne itself was emphasised only in correspondence with the king. But the activity of royal supporters in dietines, parliament and the army was politically important for the king. The monarch and the nobility had therefore similar preferences, and this is why it was the persons who were close to the monarch and who at the same time were supported by the dietines that made a career, as the representatives of the Gostomskis, Mielżyńskis, Pierzchlińskis or Potockis reveal.

Public opinion was negative towards unjustified promotion. This is how an anonymous sympathiser of Zebrzydowski's rebellion assessed Sigismund III's appointments: 'There is now a greater chance of a clown, a tightrope walker or a sycophant sitting in the front row, where many worthy men used to sit before'.[14] Half a century later Krzysztof Opaliński expressed a similar opinion about the king's endowments and appointments in his *Satyry* [Satires]: 'Distribution [of posts] has got lost, not knowing where true merit is. He who is favoured at the court is treated as a man of merit'.[15] Three kinds of political career were disapproved of. The main target of criticism was directed towards those whose preferment came as a result of their support of the royal court. Critics stressed that flatterers, clowns and mean people were making a career in this way, while persons who had rendered

---

[13] Riksarkivet Stockholm, Extranea Polen IX, vol. 99 – A. Opaliński do W. Gembickiego, 7 X 1617.

[14] 'Plankt na teraźniejsze czasy', in Jan Czubek (ed.), *Pisma polityczne z czasów rokoszu Zebrzydowskiego* (Cracow, 1916), i, 73.

[15] Krzysztof Opaliński, *Satyry*, ed. Lesław Eustachiewicz (Wrocław, 1953), 136.

great service to the state were not rewarded. Military positions had been given to incompetent persons not for their conduct on the battlefield but rather at the royal court. Generally it was the monarchs who were to blame, for they cared mainly for their favourites. However, some rulers, especially those who had been dead for a long time, were set as an example of how to distribute rewards. Krzysztof Opaliński wrote that Stephen Báthory had remembered deserving persons: 'He used to put down the names of persons of merit'.[16] The opinions expressed in political literature were confirmed by the opinions expressed by some dietines. An exploitative use of the institutions of noblemen's democracy was also criticised but only in political writings. In *Prywat Polską kieruje* [Private Interests Rule Poland], Szymon Starowolski caricatured unfair promotion:

> I direct everything in land diets and the Sejm,
> I make speeches, write them, counsel all and make them tame.
> I write the laws to which all the members agree,
> But I annul the laws which are harmful to me.
> If I choose, the Sejm will either be a success
> Or pass no laws, if I get it into a mess.
> Even Salomon could not save it by his wisdom,
> I explain all this by the nobility's freedom.
> I know how to get money, this is true liberty, I say,
> I look after my own affairs in a cunning, secret way.
> The simpletons propose all kinds of honours and titles for me,
> They say there could no better *reipublicae civis* be.[17]

The aspiration to reach a compromise, in parliament and outside it, was characteristic of civic culture at that time. Compromise had to be attained at the meetings of the dietines and the Diet because the political system did not provide for a majority vote. Decisions only required a consensus.[18] It is worth

---

[16] *Ibid.*, 137.

[17] Starowolski, *Wybór z pism,* 277-8.

[18] For more details about the Sejm's work see my study *Sejm srebrnego wieku: Między głosowaniem większościowym a liberum veto* (Warsaw, 2001), esp. 162-78.

adding that 'consent' occupied a high place in the noblemen's system of values and was accompanied by a dislike not only of vengeful solutions but even of extreme proposals. This attitude was manifested most clearly with regard to political opponents. In 1576 the victorious supporters of King Stephen Báthory were against a severe punishment for those who had opposed Bátory's election. Similarly, in 1587/8 the noblemen who supported the election of Sigismund III demanded that the adherents of the Archduke Maximilian be treated leniently. In 1607 the idea of a severe punishment for those who wanted to dethrone Sigismund III was firmly rejected. If there was a chance for a peaceful settlement to a potentially armed conflict, it was always taken into consideration. The endeavours for a peaceful settlement of the question of the Cossack risings under Bohdan Khmelnytsky in 1648 and the subsequent years was one such example.

The nobility felt responsible for its state and was ready to take up arms to defend it. This is testified to by its participation in the levy in mass, a participation which from 1573 depended only on the nobility: for in this respect, the decision was taken by virtue of a Diet resolution and not by order of the king. In the years 1573-1651, the levy in mass was called out three times, in 1621, 1649 and 1651, and the defensive war against Sweden in 1655-60 was strongly supported by the nobility's levy in mass. The noblemen disliked offensive wars. In their view, they could cause large, unnecessary expenditures to the state, lead to its destruction and, in the case of victory, strengthen the monarch's power. As an example let us recall the nobility's attitude to the plans for a war against Turkey and Władysław IV's attempts to actualise them in 1646. The nobility's pacifism contrasted with its readiness to make financial contributions to a defensive war. Even though this readiness was, in a way, enforced by a neighbour's aggression, the taxes were, nevertheless, adopted voluntarily, and it was the citizens who decided the size of the burden they were willing to bear. Defence of the inviolability of the political system was a generally accepted duty, for in the opinion of the nobility, the system functioned so well that it should not be changed; it could only be improved. Noblemen rose up in arms to defend their political system in the meetings at Jędrzejów in 1567 and at Wiślica in 1587 – held in defence of a free election of kings – and organised Zebrzydowski's rebellion in 1606-7.

In an analysis of the similarities between the political culture of Poland, Bohemia and Hungary, Gottfried Schramm drew attention to the notion of 'St. Stephen's Crown', which emerged in Hungary at the end of the fourteenth century, and the concept of 'St. Vaclav's Crown' in Bohemia. In the fifteenth century the expression 'The Crown of the Polish Kingdom' began to be used in Poland to distinguish the monarch from the impersonal Crown, a symbol of the state's highest authority.[19] The state ceased to be a ruler's domain; the king was just a 'head' of the state. In the opinion of nobility, the law was sovereign, and the king was servant of the state. 'The Polish Kingdom is not for the kings, the Polish kings are for the Kingdom', stated the noblemen of Sieradz in 1647.[20] The conviction that the law had primacy and the king was a servant had functioned at least a hundred years before. In his *Fidelis subditus*, Stanisław Orzechowski stated unequivocally:

> The law is the master in a free kingdom. But it is a blind, dumb and deaf master; it has no eyes, no tongue, it does not see, does not speak and does not hear. This is why we elect a man, whom we call king, who acts as the tongue, the eyes and the ears of our law. For if the law could hear, see and speak, no nation would probably choose a master or a king; for the law itself would say what should be done.[21]

However, the king who, like all citizens, was subordinated to the law, had the authority to enforce and interpret it.

From the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Polish nobility used the term 'the Commonwealth' to denote the Polish Kingdom. The term soon became synonymous with the state. As the Diet records indicate, in the

---

[19] Gottfried Schramm, 'Polen – Böhmen – Ungarn: Übernationale Gemeinsamkeiten in der politischen Kultur des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit', *Przegląd Historyczny*, lxxvi (1985), no. 3, 420-2.

[20] Quoted from Edward Opaliński, 'Postawa szlachty polskiej wobec osoby królewskiej jako instytucji w latach 1587-1648: Próba postawienia problematyki', *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, xc (1983), no. 4, 791.

[21] Stanisław Orzechowski, '*Fidelis subditus* albo o stanie królewskim', in *Sześć broszur politycznych z XVI i początku XVII stulecia*, ed. Bolesław Ulanowski (Cracow, 1921), 20-1.

middle of the sixteenth century the term was extended to include the three estates making up the Sejm, that is, the king, the Senate and the chamber of deputies. The state was thus identified with its political system. During the second interregnum, if not earlier, the term 'Commonwealth' began to denote the whole of the nobility. In January 1576 the 20,000 noblemen participating in the meeting at Jędrzejów called themselves the Commonwealth, identifying the noble citizens with the state. This means that from the 1570s, the term 'Commonwealth' had three meanings: the state, the estates constituting the Sejm, and the whole nobility. This summed up the nobility's concept of the state. This was a state in which the citizens (that is nobility) were not only the principal element, they constituted that state – were its owners and heirs. It is worth stressing the citizens' emotional attitude to the Commonwealth, which was a *patria* of the whole of the nobility; and those two terms were often linked together: 'The Commonwealth, the country loved by all of us', 'the whole Commonwealth, the country we love most', or 'the Commonwealth, our beloved country'.[22] The citizens emphasised their emotional attitude to their state by calling the Commonwealth 'our dear mother', 'the mother of all of us' and by designating themselves as 'the sons of the Commonwealth', 'worthy sons of the Crown', or 'the sons of one mother, our motherland'.[23]

The struggle to ensure observance of state law by the king and all officials lay at the root of the nobility's execution-of-the-law movement. In 1504 at a session in Piotrków the Diet decided that without the consent of parliament the king had no right to pawn or alienate royal estates, and that nobody could hold two senatorial posts, or a senatorial post together with either a judicial post or the post of *starosta* in the same voivodship. In the famous law *nihil novi,* the Diet held at Radom in 1505 decided that new laws could be passed only with the consent of all Sejm estates, which meant that the chamber of deputies received the same rights as the Senate had. The new monarch, Sigismund I, who reigned from 1506 to 1548, based his rule on the Senate, disregarding the role of the chamber of deputies. He also ignored the

---

[22] Quoted from Opaliński, *Kultura polityczna szlachty polskiej*, 36.

[23] *Ibid.,* 35.

law which curbed his freedom to make appointments and distribute land. This gave rise to the noblemen's opposition movement, the aim of which was to induce the king and the senators to respect the law. In 1537 noblemen gathered at a levy in mass near Lwów and demanded that the king should respect the law passed in 1504. The king promised to do so, but he did not keep his word. At successive Diets the noble deputies persistently demanded respect for the law.

The nobility's opposition assumed the form of a movement, called the execution-of-the-law movement by historians. Its aim was to enforce the execution of the law binding in Poland. According to political and legal theory, it was the duty of the king to uphold the laws, a duty in which he was to be aided by senators; but since the central authorities were breaking state law, the noblemen started a movement in its defence. Such an attitude of the highest authorities frequently leads to the degeneration of the state and affects the morale of its citizens. In Poland it led to a gradual increase of political consciousness among the noblemen, who became aware of their responsibility for the state; it also led to what we would now call a constructive opposition. The execution-of-the-law movement did not achieve victory until 1562, during the reign of Sigismund I's son, Sigismund Augustus. State leaders saw to it that reforms strengthening the state were carried out. Let us stress once again that for several decades the activity of the execution-of-the-law movement was directed against the king, who was backed by the senators. Polish historians deplore that the legacy of the movement was forgotten by the next generations, but this opinion is not fully justified. In our view the movement strengthened the nobility's conviction that it was in the rulers' nature to ignore inconvenient laws; the rulers should therefore be distrusted, kept under control and forced to make all necessary changes. Being conscious of these facts became an essential element of the nobility's civic culture.

During the first two interregna (1572-74) and (1574-76), the nobility had to assume full responsibility for the state because the senators failed to work out the principles on the basis of which the state should function during an interregnum; nor did they establish the time and place for the election of

a new ruler.[24] The nobility took advantage of the absence of the monarch and the useless quarrelling by senators to strengthen its position in the state. Local confederations composed of noblemen and burghers were set up and took over power in individual voivodships and districts. They empowered the state offices to act. The tribunals, which were the most important institution for internal security, were strengthened by an additional number of noble representatives. The nobility also forced the senators to convoke a special session of the Diet – the Convocation Sejm – with the participation of noble representatives, in order to settle matters which had previously been the responsibility of the Senate. This Diet not only established the date and place of the election, but also adopted a famous act of religious tolerance known as the Confederation of Warsaw. It also decided that the king should be elected by the whole nobility (*viritim*). The system of the nobility's democracy was strengthened still further by the Election Sejm held in 1573, which adopted the article *de non praestanda oboedientia*. It allowed the noblemen to deny allegiance to the king if he failed to observe the law, forced the monarch to convoke Diet sessions regularly – at least once in every two years – and adopted the Henrician Articles, a synthesis of the state's political system, which the new ruler was to accept under oath.

The civic character of the nobility's culture was fully manifested during the second interregnum in 1574-76. The nobility not only forced the senators to proclaim the interregnum after Henry of Valois's flight from the country in June 1574, but also fought against the Senate's majority to ensure respect for the principles governing the election of monarchs. In December 1575 a group of 26 senators headed by the primate and a few hundred noblemen elected the emperor Maximilian II king of Poland. In reply, several thousand noblemen and over a dozen senators offered the throne to the sister of the late Sigismund Augustus, Princess Anna Jagiellon and her husband to be, the Transylvanian prince Stephen Báthory. A national meeting was convened at

---

[24] See the recent book by Ewa Dubas-Urwanowicz, *Koronne zjazdy szlacheckie w dwóch pierwszych bezkrólewiach po śmierci Zygmunta Augusta* (Białystok, 1998); see also Edward Opaliński, 'Die polnische Adelsgesellschaft und die Krise des Interregnums', in Wolfgang E. J. Weber (ed.), *Der frühmoderne Staat in Ostzentraleuropa II* (Documenta Augustana, iii, Augsburg, 2000).

Jędrzejów at the end of January 1576. The delegates of the nobility of Kujawy were instructed in a manner very characteristic of the attitude held by Polish nobility towards the election of the emperor: 'we are not obliged to recognise as our king and lord the man whom the archbishop of Gniezno, in collusion with a few other persons, nominated to this position contrary to the will of all, guaranteed by law'.[25] The 20,000 noblemen who took part in the Jędrzejów meeting designated themselves as the Commonwealth and came out in support of the election of Princess Anna and Stephen Báthory. The nobility was also split during the third interregnum in 1587; a minority elected the Austrian Archduke Maximilian as king of Poland, the majority elected the Swedish Prince, Sigismund Vasa. Once again the opponents of the Habsburgs convened a national meeting, this time at Wiślica, to back their own candidate.

During the reign of Sigismund Vasa (illegal) meetings were convened in 1591-92 without the king's consent. The participants tried to force passage of a measure to punish persons responsible for the destruction of Protestant churches in Vilnius and Cracow. Such action would induce the monarch to fulfil his duty of ensuring internal peace in the state and render justice to victims of pilferage. The majority of the nobility showed a truly civic responsibility at the Inquisition Diet in 1592, when Sigismund III's adversaries, taking advantage of the suspicion that the king wanted to cede the Polish throne to the Habsburgs, sought to dethrone him. But by demanding that the king declare he had no intention of resigning, the majority of deputies saved the country from a royal crisis. A similar incident happened during the Zebrzydowski's rebellion (1606-7). The rebels enjoyed the support of a considerable part of the nobility; in exchange they promised to bring to light the king's plan to introduce *absolutum dominum* and presented proposals for reforms that would weaken the king's position. They came up against resistance, however when they demanded the king's dethronement. The

---

[25] Quoted from Edward Opaliński, 'Die Versammlung von Jędrzejów 1576: Sieg der Bathorianer und der Szlachta-Interessen im zweiten Interregnum', in *Rußland, Polen und Österreich in der Frühen Neuzeit: Festschrift für Walter Leitsch zum 75. Geburtstag* (Vienna, Cologne and Weimar, 2003), 138.

dethronement act, signed by several hundred persons in 1607, was met with widespread condemnation. Between 1618-32 attempts were made to induce Sigismund III to respect the law and announce appointments at the beginning of a Diet session: in 1633-41 the deputies tried to force Władysław IV to observe the law and present reports on the Senate's debates to the chamber of deputies.

It is worth stressing that the Polish, Lithuanian and Ruthenian noblemen had their own notion of *raison d'état*, which contrasted with the royal notion. In states with a strong monarch and where the estates held little power, it was the king and his advisers who directed political policy. In the Common-wealth of the Two Nations, the king was respected, but his policy was ever controlled by the noble citizens, though the king's ideas did not have to be the same as the nobility's idea of *raison d'état*. The nobility's idea, at least from the time of the first interregnum, was to look after a specific notion of state interests which were identified with the interests of the Common-wealth's noble citizens. On the one hand, the noblemen were inspired by strong pacifism and the desire to maintain peaceful relations with the Commonwealth's neighbours and, on the other hand, they were willing to contribute material resources to a defensive war or take part in it. They were also interested in a proper functioning of the state, and this is why they kept an eye on the king and state officials, to ensure that they fulfilled their duties and observed the law. They also saw to it that nobody undermined their system of mixed monarchy which combined elements of a monarch, an aristocracy (the Senate) and a democracy (the chamber of deputies).

Translated by Janina Dorosz

Political Culture in Lithuania in the 16th and 17th Centuries

Marceli Kosman

The Lithuania of the Middle Ages, whose ruler was officially known as a Grand Duke – or (less commonly) 'king' (*kung*) – came into existence in the second half of the thirteenth century, after an unsuccessful attempt at Christianisation and the creation of a monarchy by Mindaugas.[1] His successors (primarily Traidenis, Vytenis and Gediminas), having learned a lesson from the failure of their predecessor, who, by disassociating himself from his ethnic base, proved unable to retain the crown, returned to paganism and was subsequently murdered by enemies from within, no longer sought to attain a dignified monarchy and put an early end to polytheism with the support of the Teutonic Order. Their power was effectively underpinned by the successive conquest of Rus' lands, which at the time were experiencing a political crisis connected with a regional fragmentation and the expansion of the Golden Orda. On the other hand, they were, up to a time at least, effective in defending Samogitia (Żmudź), a region bisecting the territories of the Teutonic Order in Prussia and Livonia, against the aggressive advances of the Order.

---

[1] Of fundamental significance, even in the present time, is Henryk Łowmiański's synthesis *Studia nad początkami społeczeństwa i państwa litewskiego*, 2 vols. (Vilnius, 1931-32). See also Manfred Hellmann, 'Das Grossfürstentum Litauen bis 1569', in Martin Hellmann, Klaus Zernack and Gottfried Schramm (eds.), *Handbuch der Geschichte Russlands*, i, *Bis 1613: Von der Kiever Reichsbildung bis zum Moskauer Zartum* (Stuttgart, 1981-82), 718-851; Marceli Kosman, *Litauen zwischen Vergangenheit und Gegenwart: Studien zur politischen Kultur* (Poznań, 2003), i, 32 ff.

As a consequence of the ongoing military conquest of Rus' dukedoms, Lithuania became more influenced by Ruthenian culture. As far as Lithuania's incorporation of Rus' organisational models in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is concerned, both Polish and Russian researchers are in agreement as to the facts, although the former – especially, though not solely, in context of the period of the Partitioning – place perhaps inordinate emphasis on this. Lithuanians also drew on the experience of the Teutonic Order in Prussia, especially in terms of the treasury system.[2] Due to political considerations, rulers were slow to accept Christian faith because, in doing so, they faced a dilemma – whether to stand behind the Catholic or the Orthodox Church. On account of this situation in the first half of the fourteenth century, pagan rulers stood at the helm of a huge country which did not formally belong – as we would say today – to the large family of Christian nations. However, during Giediminas' rule (1315-41) as well as that of his eldest son Algirdas (1345-77), Christianity seeped into the Grand Duchy, as well as its respective institutions.[3] Among the monarch's advisors were Franciscans and Dominicans based in Vilnius, who were also members of his Council and administered a chancellery at the castle in Vilnius.[4] A significant position within the ruling dynasty, apart from Algirdas, the ruler of Vilnius, was occupied by his two brothers – Kestutis, Duke of Troki, and Lubart, who presided over what is now western Ukraine. Several times in the second half of the thirteenth century and throughout the fourteenth, the rulers of Lithuania declared a willingness to undergo baptism according to a Roman faith, albeit discontinuing their engagement with the faith after the declaration. The best known case is Gediminas', whose declaration – still 'preserved' in his letters – was given to representatives of the Apostolic See

in the years 1322-23. There is an ongoing debate among historians as to these letters' authenticity. Gediminas himself officially denied, before papal emissaries, ever having made such a declaration. His son Kestutis, on the losing side of a war, made a similar promise in 1351 to the King of Hungary, Louis of Anjou, even reinforcing it by a pagan oath, although, in the end, he too failed to keep his pledge.[5]

In the third quarter of the fourteenth century, Lithuania found itself in a critical situation, for it was then that its heretofore effective struggle on two fronts was exacerbated by the rise of the Teutonic Order in the west, and the emergence of the Muscovy in the east. The first military alliance with Poland had already been established in 1325, and the signing of a dynastic accord in Kréva (1385) comenced the union that would last until the fall of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795. The reason for initiating this agreement in the first place had been because of their political situation. The resilience of this pact derived from common interests, although these interests pertained exclusively to the nobility, expanding to encompass a broader spectrum of society (in Poland) in the second half of the nineteenth century, along with the emergence of the modern Polish nation. As the political union between the two States evolved, beginning in 1387, it was strengthened by successive unification acts (Vilnius-Radom, Horodło, Mielnik), culminating in Lublin (1569).[6] The new dynasty rapidly took its place among the leading ruling clans of Europe. In the second half of the fifteenth and the sixteenth century, its representatives sat on four thrones – in Cracow, Vilnius, Prague and Buda. The propaganda emitted through diplomatic channels proved to be rather effective, for the negative opinions coming from Vienna and Marienburg about the pagan character of Władysław Jagiello and his former

---

[2] Jerzy Ochmański, *Dawna Litwa: Studia historyczne* (Olsztyn, 1986), 75-82.

[3] For basic data on dynasty see Zygmunt Wdowiszewski, *Genealogia Jagiellonów* (Warsaw, 1968); Jan Tęgowski, *Pierwsze pokolenia Giedyminowiczów* (Poznań and Wrocław, 1999). On the stages of Lithuania's Christianisation see my works: *Drogi zaniku pogaństwa u Bałtów* (Wrocław, 1976) and *Zmierzch Perkuna czyli ostatni poganie nad Bałtykiem* (Warsaw, 1981).

[4] Marceli Kosman, 'Kancelaria wielkiego księcia Witolda', *Studia Źródłoznawcze: 'Commentationes'*, xiv (1969), 97 ff.

[5] For a broader analysis see Marceli Kosman, 'Forma umów międzynarodowych Litwy w pierwszej ćwierci XIII wieku', *Przegląd Historyczny*, lvii (1966), no. 2, 217 f.

[6] On the evolution of systems of governance and stages of unification see Juliusz Bardach's analysis, 'Krewo i Lublin', in his *Studia z ustroju i prawa Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego XIV-XVII w.* (Warsaw, 1970); Mecislovas Jucas, *Unia polsko-litewska*, trans. Andrzej Firewicz (Toruń, 2004); Henryk Łowmiański, *Prusy – Litwa – Krzyżacy*, selection, foreword and epilogue by Marceli Kosman (Warsaw, 1989), 259-92.

subjects spread, among others places, at a Council of Constance,[7] did not convince western Europe.

Polish political elites tried – ultimately in vain – to incorporate Lithuania into the Crown. The exception to this was the level of religion and the expanded authority of the archbishopric of Gniezno and its ordinary as a primate. The Grand Duchy did, however, gradually adopt Poland's political system, with the apogee of this trend taking place during the rule of Sigismund Augustus (1548-72). When the Jagiellonian dynasty faded from existence, the two-member Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania was a considerably integrated country with a monarch, whose coronation took place exclusively in Cracow. In 1572, a separate process of 'elevation' of the monarch to the Grand Duchy was done away with despite Lithuanian attempts to preserve this ceremony.[8] All further changes to the system of governance, such as with the treasury, took place both in the Crown as well as in the Grand Duchy.[9]

In older historiography, the idea that a revolution took place from the top down in the system of governance in the Grand Duchy, after the union with Poland, had many supporters; it was, for example, still being propagated by Witold Kamieniecki (1947). Today, however, Henryk Łowmiański's

---

[7] Zdzisław Spieralski, 'Die Jagiellonische Verbundenheit bis zum Ende des 15. Jahrhundert', *Acta Poloniae Historica*, xli (1980), 51-83; Andrzej Feliks Grabski, *Polska w opiniach Europy Zachodniej XIV-XV w.* (Warsaw, 1968).

[8] More broadly, Marceli Kosman, '„Podniesienie" książąt litewskich', *Acta Baltico-Slavica*, x (1976), 15-36.

[9] During negotiations in Kréva (1385) pertaining to the conditions of Jagiello's accession to the Polish throne, Polish representatives were careful in ensuring that a proper title was accorded to Jagiello in the documents, and as ruler of Lithuania, his title was that of Grand Duke (*magnus dux*); the Lithuanians commonly called their rulers 'kings', and by such title referred to Vytautas during a meeting with the Teutonic Order on the island of Salin. This was met with a sudden and determined reaction on the part of the Poles. By referring to unification documents, they demanded that such an 'elevation' remain symbolic only. Vytautas – equally unsuccessfully – pursued a *bona fide* coronation towards the end of his life, this time encouraged on by the emperor Sigismund of Luxembourg during the Congress of Lutzk (1429).

argument that this shift took place by means of gradual evolution is widely accepted:

> There is no doubt whatsoever that, in 1386, a fundamental change in the balance of political power in Eastern Europe took place, and the course of events took a new direction, staying this course for the next few centuries.[10]

A fresh look at the pervasive absolutism prior to 1385 leads one to the conclusion that the Grand Duchy was, at that time, going through a phase of development analogous to that which Poland or Rus' experienced during the early period of regional fragmentation. The boyars had a say in who sat on the throne, and only the *hospodar*, who had their support and possessed unquestioned authority, could maintain power. This is evidenced by the case of Jaunutis, who was appointed as successor to the throne by his father in 1341, but was deposed by his older brothers – Algirdas and Kestutis – four years after Gediminas' death. The ruling monarch's supporting institution was the advisory council, whose members were not – as was the case from the end of the fourteenth century onwards – officials in permanent positions of public service, but magnates and various experts, such as monks, assembled on an *ad hoc* basis. Additionally, their advice was not binding for the monarch in making his decision. It was also quite possible for these advisors not to be called for an extended period of time to participate in council meetings. Lithuania did not experience a phase of regional fragmentation, an ever-present threat for such an ethnically and culturally diverse state,[11] although many Rus' dukedoms conquered by it had already been subjected to it, and this phase was behind them.

Union with Poland brought the Grand Duchy undeniable benefits: the *hospodar* received the Polish crown and members of the ruling dynasty retained the dukedoms they had had to date. The boyars, however, withdrew temporarily from their advisory function at the side of the monarch, and the Poles gained because of their increased influence in Lithuanian and

---

[10] Łowmiański, *Prusy – Litwa – Krzyżacy*, 259

[11] *Ibid.*, 277.

Ruthenian affairs. It is at this point worth mentioning – as a counterbalance to the Polonocentric take on the genesis of the union – Henryk Łowmiański's opinion, formulated during the Second World War, although published over half a century later:

> If, on the Lithuanian side, the dominant motivation behind the genesis of the union was defensive in nature, then it cannot be said that the boyars had no expansionist aims; after all, the help they were to receive from Poland was, among other things, to serve them in continuing expansion eastwards. Moreover, a Lithuanian was to accede to the Polish throne, *and an imminent Lithuanian king was surely associated with the hope that Lithuanians would rise to influential positions in Poland.* This is something the boyars could expect, based on their own experience. After all, *the Lithuanian contingent,* meaning members of their Duke's entourage when he took a fortified town in Rus' [*gorod*], *were incorporated into the group ruling the respective territory.* It was a common occurrence during the time of the regional fragmentation that, along with the Duke rising to power in a newly conquered region, his senior knights also rose to positions of power. In Poland, these predictions did not materialise *for the time being* because the Lithuanians were not yet ready, *but* at the moment of unification, they *might not have been aware of this*'.[12]

Such expectations can, from a historical perspective, be categorised in the realm of fantasy. The Poles treated the Union of Kréva as a basis for incorporating the Grand Duchy into the Crown, which, however, within a few months of Jagiello's taking the throne in Wawel, turned out to be unrealistic – Lithuania retained the status of a separate state and was ruled by governors. After an agreement in Ostrów in 1392, Vytautas took on such a function and continually strengthened his position. In less than ten years, he became Grand Duke for life, and after another decade established this office as a permanent institution for the benefit of his successors.[13]

The despotism of the rulers of Lithuania, who could sentence their subjects to death without a due legal process, is referred to by Jan Długosz, and in a similar artistic vein, Henryk Sienkiewicz (the advice of the young prince Jamont to Zbyszek of Bogdaniec). This excellent storyteller, who wrote about Lithuanian customs, juxtaposes personal relations in the Crown (the trial before Jasiek from Tęczyn, the castellan of Cracow).[14] In reality, regulations based on a Polish legal model were introduced in Lithuania in a formal way starting with the year 1387, when, along with the abolishment of pagan worship, Władysław Jagiello accorded neophytes many privileges and cities began to receive Magdeburg law.[15]

Not everything, however, commenced with the onset of Christianisation. An example of this may be the gradual extinction of the 'blood oath': the Balts formalised peaceful relations even with Christian contractors by speaking out verses from a prayer to their gods, uttered during a ritual slaughter of a bull, which the chronicler Henry of Livonia briefly made mention of in 1201: *sicut mos est paganorum.* The details became known half a century later, during a peace accord signed between the defeated Kestutis and Louis of Anjou. Prior to 1385, Jagiello stored sealed documents in a chest at the Upper Castle in Vilnius. Ultimately, the ceremony around which were formalised international agreements, negotiated by Grand

---

[12] Henryk Łowmiański, *Polityka Jagiellonów* (Poznań, 1999), 38 (emphasis – MK).

[13] Tęgowski, *Pierwsze pokolenia Giedyminowiczów*, 98 ff. (Skirgaila), 207 ff. (Vytautas); Irena Sułkowska-Kurasiowa, 'Moskorzowski Klemens', in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* (hereafter PSB), xxii, 52. In 1855, Karol Szajnocha suggested that after reaching the Agreement of Ostrów, the bishop of Vilnius, Andrew, 'elevated' Vytautas to the Grand Duchy in his cathedral (see his *Jadwiga i Jagiełło 1375-1413: Opowiadanie historyczne*; wstępem opatrzył S. M. Kuczyński, 4 vols. [Warsaw, 1969], iii/iv, 279). This was impossible at the time, see Marceli Kosman, *Litwa pierwotna: Mity, legendy, fakty* (Warsaw, 1989), 245.

[14] See Marceli Kosman, *Na tropach bohaterów 'Krzyżaków'* (Warsaw, 1995), 91 ff.

[15] Kosman, *Litauen*, 41 ff.

Dukes, shifted within the next several years a Polish model.[16] In the first few years of the union, there was no such thing as a separate Chancellory of the Grand Duke, not until Vytautas established it in 1392.[17]

The integration of the Jagiellonian hereditary state with the Crown proceeded systematically from the moment a Lithuanian sat on the throne in Wawel, irrespective of whether the union formally existed or was subject to temporary suspension on account of the ruler. A telling example of the dynasty's ability to competently handle various situations took place during the rule of Casimir Jagiellon, who, in response to a request by Lithuanian noblemen to send one of his sons to Vilnius (for they wished to imbue the court with an air of stateliness), did just the opposite: he appointed a regent to take his place in Cracow, and personally set off for his ancestral lands. He spent the years 1480-3 there and a considerable amount of time in the years following – all told, one third of his 45-year reign on the two thrones.[18] The reason he did this is because he realised that a longer period of absence could have a seriously detrimental effect on the status of the monarch, for the power of the magnates was increasing rapidly and with it grew their independence from the king's authority.

An important step in the process of the unification of Polish and Lithuanian noblemen was the Horodło Union (1413), which, for the latter – those, of course, who were Catholic – resulted in gaining the same rights privileges as the former, including a decision to hold common parliamentary sessions in the future. A symbolic gesture was the according of coats of arms to 47 lineages from the Grand Duchy as a gesture of brotherhood on the part of the Crown. It was of no practical consequence that, when the situation

---

[16] Kosman, *Litwa pierwotna*, 204 ff.; see also my 'Ceremoniał zawierania umów międzyarodowych przez wielkich książąt litewskich przed i po unii z Polską', in Mariusz Markiewicz and Ryszard Skowron (eds.) *Theatrum ceremoniale na dworze książąt i królów polskich: Materiały konferencji naukowej zorganizowanej przez Zamek Królewski na Wawelu i Instytut Historii Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego w dniach 23-25 marca 1998* (Cracow, 1999), 47 ff.

[17] Kosman, 'Kancelaria wielkiego księcia Witolda', 101 ff.

[18] PSB, xii, 287; Antoni Gąsiorowski, 'Podróże panującego w średniowiecznej Polsce', *Czasopismo Prawno-Historyczne*, xxv (1973), no. 2, 56 f.

---

heated up, those so honoured promptly returned the heraldic signs, especially as they had been using them until the end of the Commonwealth.

Vytautas created anew the Hospodar Chancellory, which under the auspices of this dynamic ruler became first an informal, then a key, institution in the country. Prior to the formation of the Lithuanian Diet, the significance of the Council of the Grand Duchy grew, its function being to incorporate into the Grand Duchy the highest institutions and, to a large extent, the local ones, according to a Polish model. This was to pave the way for the future creation of a senate.[19]

Vytautas' unsuccessful coronation attempt in 1430 meant that the Lithuanians gave a particularly celebratory setting to each inauguration of the government of the Grand Duchy – a rite of 'elevation' to the throne. It took place in a cathedral, although the location itself was not critical, as in the case of young Sigismund Augustus' ceremony, for whose benefit it was moved to a chamber of the royal castle, since the cathedral had burned down some time earlier. The rite was conducted by a bishop of Vilnius, who was joined by a group of secular dignitaries, led by a marshal. The first such celebration took place in 1492 and was an allusion to the ancient custom of hoisting and carrying a chieftain. This, however, was a custom the Lithuanians did not manage to retain – despite considerable efforts – when agreeing to the provisions of the Union of Lublin, which sanctioned only the coronation of a joint monarch at Wawel.[20]

The process of political integration with the Crown was intensified – if not finalised – under the rule of the last Jagiellon king, as he gained the support of the gentry, who were anxious by the impending threat of the powerful magnates and had vested interests in the postulates handed down by the Crown executives. The conflicts of interest between the lords and the gentry, visible in the middle of the sixteenth century, ultimately proved to be a factor contributing to the revitalising and broadening of the term 'political

---

[19] On the subject of the Grand Duchy Council and its evolution after union with Poland, see the study by Lidia Korczak, *Litwa – przechowana tożsamość* (Cracow, 1998).

[20] See above n. 7.

class'. The Lithuanian noblemen had a deeply rooted sense of self-worth, at the very least, equal to that of their Polish brothers, as evidenced by the fact that officially they referred to themselves as 'we, the old Roman nobility, and you, the common people'. Such sayings had their roots in the theory of a Roman lineage of Lithuanians, widely popularised in the sixteenth century.[21]

Besides the seat of the king, integration was symbolised by a joint parliamentary assembly, whereas that which constituted an expression of regional differences (not just Polish and Lithuanian!) was the land dietine. Additionally, in Lithuania, there was the so-called Vilnius Convocation. This was an informal assembly of the Grand Duchy, effective as of the Union of Lublin, which convened when the General Diet did not pass any resolutions pertinent to this region of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. It was called into session by the king, and the participants were deputies selected by land dietines, as well as senators and dignitaries formerly belonging to the Council of the Grand Duchy, but currently not serving in the Senate. This was a relic of the former system of governance, not in accordance to the parliamentary resolutions of 1569, although acts passed by it were sometimes brought before the General Diet for approval. The first Convocation assembled in 1572 during an interregnum following the death of Sigismund Augustus. Subsequent ones continued to convene until the middle of the seventeenth century.[22] In this period of time, the position of Vilnius as a capital was strong, for the highest institutions of the Grand Duchy were located there, eastern diplomacy was active, and kings from the Vasa dynasty – already residing in Warsaw – spent more time there than in Cracow.[23] An unparalleled source of documentation on the activities of the Lithuanians in this period can be found in the prolific diary of the Grand Chancellor Albrycht Stanisław Radziwiłł, encompassing the years 1632-55.[24]

The joint parliament deliberated from the time of the Union of Lublin onwards, and the Lithuanians won the concession that every third Sejm would convene on Lithuanian territory, in the border city of Grodno. The nobleman community as a whole championed a permanent union in the Grand Duchy. In the sixteenth century it pursued the same prerogatives as the Polish nobility already possessed. These noblemen, too, wished to be free from the high-handed rule of the magnates. Nevertheless, up until the end of the sixteenth century, the possibility of a (second?) state union with Muscovy was under consideration by giving the tsar the throne of the Commonwealth or just the Grand Duchy (which, clearly, would have meant the disbanding of the union). Only in the following century, as a result of increased state integration, were such plans abandoned. The emergence of the 'political class' also took place during 'conflicts over the union', the further development of which (1569-88) was faithfully and adeptly described by Henryk Lulewicz, who thoroughly dealt with the first two decades following the end of the Jagiellonian house, i.e. the period ending with the coronation of Sigismund III Vasa, who on the distaff side was of the Lithuanian dynasty.[25] The lapidary nature of the mentality of a broad segment of the 'political class' in the days of his younger son, John Casimir, based on the example of the so-called 'parochial nobility' from Samogitia, accurately presented Henryk Sienkiewicz at the beginning of the second part of his *Trilogy*. The Polish writer depicted the rungs of mutual interdependency connected with

---

[21] See Władysław Pociecha, *Królowa Bona 1494-1557: Czasy i ludzie Odrodzenia*, 4 vols. (Poznań, 1949-58); Anna Sucheni-Grabowska, *Zygmunt August król polski i wielki książę litewski 1520-1562* (Warsaw, 1996), 65 ff. A panoramic view of changes to the system of government at the end of the Jagiellonian dynasty, first and foremost Sigismund Augustus, can be found in Juliusz Bardach's, *Studia z ustroju i prawa*, 38 ff. The deliberations of this researcher are of paramount significance in the study of the political culture of those times.

[22] Juliusz Bardach, 'Sejm dawnej Rzeczypospolitej', in Juliusz Bardach et al., *Dzieje Sejmu Polskiego* (Warsaw, 1997), 57. For information on the controversy surrounding the nature of the Vilnius Convocation, see Henryk Wisner, *Rzeczpospolita Wazów: Czasy Zygmunta III i Władysława (*Warsaw, 2002), 168-76 (a comprehensive bibliography should also include Jan Seredyka's articles on the Convocation).

[23] Kosman, *Litauen,* 46 f.

[24] Albrycht Stanisław Radziwiłł, *Pamiętnik o dziejach w Polsce*, 4 vols., ed. and trans. Adam Przyboś and Roman Żelewski (Warsaw, 1980).

[25] Henryk Lulewicz, *Gniewów o unię ciąg dalszy: Stosunki polsko-litewskie w latach 1569-1588* (Warsaw, 2002).

boundaries of the mind: from minor nobleman to local dignitary, to Samogitian *starosta*, leading magnate (in this case, Radziwiłł) and to king.[26]

Integration on a political and cultural plane meant that, in the course of the sixteenth century and, conclusively, in the following century, the Polish language superseded Ruthenian as the official language of governance. Even sworn supporters of independence (separation?), resorted to its use on a daily basis. The political culture coming from the West, with all the ramifications of its Polish associations, was incorporated into public life. During the stormy period of the Reformation, it reached ever larger segments of the nobility, mainly because of the interaction of various confessions, and subsequently Jesuit education at colleges, such as, most notably, the Vilnius Academy. Rekindled public discussion between different confessions, along with the spread of the printed word, disputes contested in the public arena, and, especially, different forms of education, had an enormous influence on the revival of the intellectual movement among the aristocracy and gentry.[27] Worthy of special distinction in terms of legal culture were the three versions of the Lithuanian Statute (1529, 1566, 1588), which was also in effect in territories incorporated into the Crown in 1569. It was not until the first half of the nineteenth century that it was revoked by Nicolas I. The aforesaid Statute has been the object of active study by Lithuanian researchers. An example of enduring research in this area are the works of the Polish historian, Juliusz Bardach.[28]

The Vilnius Convocation – in regards to which the research pursued during the last several decades has brought a series of conclusions, albeit without having solved all the 'mysteries' – was but a shadow of the former Lithuanian Diet. The forum for political discussion was the Land dietine, especially in the western part of the Grand Duchy – where the result of

moving the border westwards was a transfer of dietine seats (from Smolensk to Grodno in 1659, then in 1667 to Vilnius, to Okwita in 1748; from Starobudowa to Vilnius in 1659, and from Polotsk to Kobryń).[29]

The life of the dietines was thoroughly characterised by Andrzej Zakrzewski, on the example of the resilient Troki dietine, which sent eight deputies to the General Sejm, and Andrzej Rachuba, the author of a work on the Grand Duchy of Lithuania under a Polish parliamentary system, spanning the years 1569-1763, or from the Union of Lublin to the cusp between the so-called Saxon times and the reign of the last king, Stanisław August Poniatowski. Of the two authors, the former focuses on the common features in the two parts of the Commonwealth, as well as on the *sui generis* processes of democratisation, manifesting as a consequence of the increasing significance of the gentry at the cost of the formerly omnipotent magnates. According to the latter, chronicles describing parliamentarianism provide proof of the ongoing integration of the Grand Duchy with the Crown, the rapid incorporation of Polish strategies and approaches, and the disappearance of particularism in the century preceding the Partitions.[30]

An excellent source of information about the climate surrounding the public life of the nobility in the seventeenth century and in the first half of the eighteenth century, and especially in context of the activities of the dietine of the Brest-Litovsk voivodship, is the sizeable epistolary collection and memoirs of the following individuals: Marcin Matuszewicz, Jan Antoni Chrapowicki, the previously mentioned Chancellor Albrycht Stanisław Radziwiłł and, most significantly, the lord of Nieśwież, the Grand Lithuanian Hetman and Voivode of Vilnius, Michał Casimir Radziwiłł 'Rybenko'. Matuszewicz belonged to the gentry and was a popular figure in the period spanning the end of the reign of Augustus III of Saxony and the first several

---

[26] This topic is further explored in my article 'Kultura polityczna bohaterów *Trylogii* Henryka Sienkiewicza' (forthcoming).

[27] Marceli Kosman, *Protestanci i Kontrreformacja* (Wrocław, 1978).

[28] Juliusz Bardach, 'Statuty litewskie w ich kręgu kulturowym' in his *O dawnej i niedawnej Litwie* (Poznań, 1988), 9-71; see also his work *Statuty litewskie a prawo rzymskie* (Warsaw, 1999).

---

[29] Henryk Olszewski, *Sejm w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej: Ustrój i idee*, 2 vols. (Poznań, 2002), i, *Sejm Rzeczypospolitej epoki oligarchii (1652-1763): Prawo – praktyka – teoria – programy*, 75 (table).

[30] Andrzej B. Zakrzewski, *Sejmiki Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego XVI-XVIII w.: Ustrój i funkcjonowanie – sejmik trocki* (Warsaw, 2000); Andrzej Rachuba, *Wielkie Księstwo Litewskie w systemie parlamentarnym Rzeczypospolitej w latach 1569-1763* (Warsaw, 2002).

years of the rule of Stanisław August; furthermore, in the last few years before his demise, Matuszewicz sat in the senate as the castellan of Brest-Litovsk, owing his career to Radziwiłłs who appreciated his lifetime of loyal service.[31] Chrapowicki was a representative and then a senator – voivode of Vitebsk – and was an active player on the political scene. He witnessed the stormy events at the end of the rule of John Casimir, and was counted among a group of commissioners present during negotiations with Muscovy, which culminated in a treaty at Andrusovo in 1667.[32]

Already at the beginning of the seventeenth century, during a rebellion against Sigismund III, led by Mikołaj Zebrzydowski, the Catholic voivode of Cracow, both camps marched side by side – monarchists and its opponents – including members of the Crown and Lithuanians, Catholics and believers of different confessions. Among these was a Calvinist, Janusz Radziwiłł, who was the father of a Lithuanian equerry Prince Bogusław, whose personage was recorded for all posterity by Henryk Sienkiewicz in his *Trilogy*. Political propaganda was disseminated along completely different lines than those demarcating the divisions between the two halves of the Commonwealth. Of an emotional nature, the Lithuanians were sensitive about their position in the state relative to the inhabitants of Great Poland and Little Poland. The legends of the ages – and, perhaps, even Lithuanian nationalism – coloured the Agreement of Kiejdany of 1655 in hues that gave it an appearance different from reality, forgetting that it met with effective opposition in Lithuania itself and was prominently publicised there only with the emergence of the national-cultural movement in the third quarter of the

---

[31] Marcin Matuszewicz, *Diariusz życia mego*, ed. Bohdan Królikowski (Warsaw, 1986). An exhaustive text, approx. 1800 pages, covers the years 1714 to 1764. Its author died in 1773.

[32] Jan Antoni Chrapowicki, *Diariusz*, pt. i, *Lata 1656-1664* ed. Tadeusz Wasilewski; pt. ii, *Lata 1665-1669*, ed. Andrzej Rachuba and Tadeusz Wasilewski (Warsaw, 1978-88).

nineteenth century; the reaction to which constituted the basis of the literary vision in *Deluge*.[33]

Following the invasion by Muscovy in mid-1655, the capital character of Vilnius lost its prominence, although not long thereafter the city began to rebuild, and the Baroque culture emerged. The unrebuilt ruins of the former lower royal castle complex on the Neris and Vilnele rivers, which had contained government offices (the upper castle, with connections to Gediminas, also remained unrebuilt), were symptomatic of the new period. Suffice it to say that when John III Sobieski visited the city, he had to be put up in a palace belonging to one of the magnates. After the Muscovy invasion, the significance of Grodno increased. Besides the hosting of parliamentary assemblies it rose to the status of a quasi-capital of the Grand Duchy. Of course, its role was actually quite minor. For the magnates all possessed their own residences and palaces in Warsaw, a city which had been steadily flowering since the end of Saxon times. On the other hand, the provincial residences of the most influential magnates played a significant role in the policies of decentralisation.[34]

Despite the steady progress of integration within the Noblemen's Commonwealth, Lithuania closely guarded the attributes of her uniqueness. For example, secular[35] and church positions, such as the bishopric of Vilnius,[36]

---

[33] Wiesław Majewski, 'Poddanie się Litwy Szwedom w 1655 r. (28 lipca – 8 września)', in Mirosław Nagielski, Andrzej Rachuba and Sławomir Górzyński (eds.), *Świat pogranicza* (Warsaw, 2003), 143 ff.

[34] Cf. Zbigniew Wójcik, 'Z dziejów organizacji dyplomacji polskiej w drugiej połowie XVII wieku', in Zbigniew Wójcik (ed.), *Polska służba dyplomatyczna XVI-XVII wieku: Studia* (Warsaw, 1966), 257 ff.; Józef A. Gierowski and Józef Leszczyński, 'Dyplomacja polska w dobie unii personalnej polsko-saskiej', *ibid.*

[35] The publisher DiG printed two tomes of a planned ten volume series edited by Andrzej Rachuba, *Urzędnicy Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego: Spisy*, i, *Województwo wileńskie XIV-XVIII wiek* (Warsaw, 2004) and iv, *Ziemia Smoleńska i województwo smoleńskie XIV-XVIII wiek* (Warsaw, 2003).

[36] A telling example here is a dispute over the Vilnius bishopric on the cusp of the 16th and 17th centuries, after Jerzy Radziwiłł moved to Cracow; the Poles raised no objections at the time, whereas the Lithuanians refused to allow the Ordinary Bernard

were occupied by native Lithuanians. Church divisions, however, did not always correspond to administrative/state divisions (for example, from 1608 Mazovia belonged to the Lithuanian Jesuit province).

In the last century of the existence of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the West increasingly began to identify it with Poland,[37] albeit expanded and containing a certain number of additional provinces. The regions of Vilnius and Nowogródek, which were equated with Lithuania, were considered to be such provinces, whereas certain other regions – Samogitia most prominently among them – continued to emphasize their importance and distinct quality. Shortly thereafter, Adam Mickiewicz was to fix the new and, at the same time, historical image of the Lithuanian in his national epos *Pan Tadeusz; or, The last foray in Lithuania*. The Lithuanians were still effectively defending their distinctiveness during the Great Sejm of 1788-92, when efforts were being made to eliminate the dualistic system of government in the Commonwealth. They rejected plans to 'make the union uniform'. The *Zaręczenie wzajemne Obojga Narodów* ['Bilateral Obligation'] (1791), revealed a political maturity on the part of its authors at a critical time for the State, for attempts at repairing the Commonwealth were being undertaken shortly, as it turned out, before the second Partitioning and the subsequent loss of independence. The political culture of that time was given a high assessment by today's most distinguished expert on the subject, Juliusz Bardach, who wrote:

> The political sensibilities and prudence of the Polish and Lithuanian parliamentarians ought to be judged highly, for they were able to link the struggle for external sovereignty and for reforming the organisation of the State with the traditions of the union and the goal of maintaining the subjectivity of the Grand Duchy. Once again, solutions arrived at

---

Maciejowski from taking his place. Ultimately, the position was occupied by their countryman, Benedykt Woyna.

[37] To explore the opinions held about the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth by countries of the Reich in the 17th century see Włodzimierz Zientara, *Sarmatia Europiana oder Sarmatia Asiana? Polen in den deutschsprachigen Druckwerken des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Toruń, 2001).

through compromise, as well as the valour of the parliament within which these were realised, proved their merit.[38]

Along with the catastrophe experienced by the Commonwealth in 1795, there began a new period in the history of both nations. Following 123 years of subjugation to three occupying powers, a national renaissance emerged, though now in a completely different form. Political elites played an important role in the process of altering and shaping the contemporary versions of the two nations, taking into account both historical traditions and the realities of the day. It was not always possible to reconcile the two; hence the emergence of hostile relations between the two capitals, Warsaw and Kaunas, in 1918; historical Lithuanians (supporters of the union, among them Joseph Pilsudski), took a different position from ethnic Lithuanians. A point of contention in the conflict was primarily Vilnius and the Vilnius region. In the process of change following the third Partitioning, a new archetype of a Lithuanian was formed, that being the citizen of a common Poland – along with a Pole and Ruthenian – for as long as it remained the Noblemen's Poland and retained its culture. This culture, in turn, was adopted by the peasant populace in Poland, thus averting an ideological conflict based on political culture with the former noblemen's nation. It was not so in Lithuania, however, where after 1883 the newly created nation was formed on the basis of the peasant class, who stood in opposition to the historical Lithuanians. This account is not without its simplifications; it is, nonetheless, an accurate representation of the main events surrounding the relations between the successors of 'Jagiello' and those of 'Vytautas'.

Translated by Tom Ozimek

---

[38] Juliusz Bardach, 'Konstytucja 3 Maja a Zaręczenie Wzajemne Obojga Narodów 1791 roku', *Studia Iuridica*, xxiv (1992), 25 f. See also Juliusz Bardach, 'Konstytucja 3 Maja a unia polsko-litewska', *Przegląd Historyczny*, lxxxii (1991), no. 3-4; Jerzy Malec, *Szkice z dziejów federalizmu i myśli federalistycznej w czasach nowożytnych* (Cracow, 1999).

Political Culture in the Bohemian Lands during the Dualist Monarchy

Zdeněk Vybíral

The Bohemian Lands provide for an exceptionally rich field for the study of the development of a political culture in Central Europe at the beginning of the early modern era. Taking into account the common long-term development of two separate political formations, the Kingdom of Bohemia and the Margraviate of Moravia, within a single state, there are sufficient model examples to carry out an investigation of various aspects of a political culture. The possibilities for a mutual comparison are further broadened by the fact that the early stages of the period under investigation witnessed two ruling dynasties with different styles of government and cultural traditions. This comparative research certainly ought to be complemented by an examination of the development in the remaining Crown Lands, Silesia and both Lusatias. Such a task, however, exceeds the boundaries of this present article.[1]

Putting a time scale on the topic has proved to be much more difficult than defining a geographical boundary. In political culture, short-term features (i.e. political practice) actually blend together with long-term features (thought, mentality). Studies of these reveal apparent medieval roots often going back to the pre-Hussite era. However, the process of institutionalisation of the political system was not completed until the early 16th century in conjunction

---

[1] The best comparative approach to the study of the early modern era history of Bohemia has been so far by Joachim Bahlcke, *Regionalismus und Staatsintegration im Widerstreit. Die Länder der Böhmischen Krone im ersten Jahrhundert der Habsbuger-herrschaft (1526-1619)* (Munich, 1994).

with the issue of the Vladislav Order of the Land.[2] On the other hand, the defeat of the Estates in their uprising at the end of 1620 opened up the way for radical changes in political culture so much so that one can almost call it a paradigmatic breakthrough. With regard to this, the Battle of the White Mountain principally represents a symbolic turning point, as many elements of the new political culture were not formalized (codified) until later via the Re-instated Order of the Land. In the time frame of approximately 1500-1627, four more significant stages can be distinguished. During them, there were distinct changes in the political culture of the state of Estates.

1. The formation of the political culture of the Estates

The political nation had participated in the power of the state of Bohemia beginning with the Przemyslid era. However, Hussitism brought completely new elements into this situation with the rise of the gentry and particularly the burghers into positions of power.[3] During the Hussite Revolution, these two classes of late medieval Bohemian society gained significant economic prospects, military powers and also social capital. As representatives of their Estate, their leaders penetrated the key political institutions – the Diet of the Land and the Court of the Land. Royal towns in Moravia are known to have remained Catholic. In addition, they failed to match the burghers of Bohemia in both significance and number. Hence, the aristocracy, a group of some of the wealthiest and most influential noble and knightly families who controlled access to offices of the land and influence

---

[2] This process is more closely analysed in the collection of contributions by Karel Malý, Jaroslav Pánek and Dalibor Janiš (eds.), *Vladislavské zřízení zemské a počátky ústavního zřízení v českých zemích (1500-1619)* (Prague, 2001).

[3] The social significance of the Hussite Revolution was highlighted in his interpretation by the German researcher Ferdinand Seibt, *Hussitica. Zur Struktur einer Revolution* (Cologne and Graz, 1965). The role of the nobility in Hussitism was particularly observed by John Martin Klassen, *The Nobility and the Making of the Hussite Revolution* (Boulder, 1978). Compare the summative assessment in František Šmahel, *Die hussitische Revolution I-III* (Hannover, 2002).

over the decision-making of collective institutions of the land, remained the dominant power in the community of the Moravian Land. The Catholic Church kept a fair share of political representation in the Margraviate, led by the Bishop of Olomouc along with the abbots and superiors of the large monasteries. Thanks to the remnants of the vassal system and large land ownership, the Bishop had an exceptional position in the community of the Moravian Land. However, he remained much more a member of the noble Estate rather than a superior of the Prelate Curia, as would have been expected.[4] These facts led to the differing organisational structures of Estate communities in Bohemia and Moravia, also causing differences in political practice and in the formation of a political mentality.

A key period in the emergence and formation of the political culture of the Estates of both lands seems to be the time of the reign of the Jagiellonian kings. Indeed, once and for all, three separate Estate corporations emerged (the aristocracy – the 'lords', gentry – the 'knights' and burghers) and their mutual share in political and economic power were restricted. During the reign of both Vladislav II and Louis Jagiellon, the authority of the monarch simultaneously decreased and the efforts of the king's court to concentrate as many tools of political power in his own hands as possible were weakened. Both Jagiellonian monarchs, except on rare occasions, left the initiative regarding internal political issues to the representatives of the Estates who attributed the king's court with the role of a 'neutral' judge in mutual disputes and a guarantor of the legislative order.[5] The decline in central power opened up possibilities for the emergence of power factions, which crossed individual Estates and mutually competed for their share of state power. As a result of Hussitism, denomination was a significant element in

---

[4] The special standing of the Bishop of Olomouc was formed on the grounds of customs in Moravian law and public life. The social development of Moravia at the turn of the New Age was simultaneously analysed by Josef Válka, *Dějiny Moravy II. Morava reformace, renesance a baroka* (Brno, 1995).

[5] The basic features of the Jagiellonian kings and their relationship to the Bohemian nobility are observed by Josef Macek, *Jagellonský věk v českých zemích (1471-1526) I. Hospodářská základna a královská moc* (Prague, 1992); *II. Šlechta* (Prague, 1994).

their struggle, though temporarily weakened by the Kutná Hora Religious Peace Treaty and the heavily modernised advance of the European (but mainly German Lutheran) Reformation.[6] The only principal modernisation change was a higher degree of institutionalisation of state power, which made both royal political institutions and those of the land available to tackle internal Estate conflicts. Medieval measures like notification, noble associations or even *Landfrieden* ('peace treaties of the land') were not forgotten. However, alongside them, leaders of opposing Estate groups were able to use a whole range of offices from regional to crown ones and to take their disputes into Diets and Courts of the Land. The institutionalisation of political struggles also decreased the risk of conflicts being solved by arms.

2. Estatism as an opposition platform

The accession of Ferdinand of Habsburg to the Czech throne led to the Estates being confronted with this monarch's radically different political strategy. Its external features were an active approach to problem-solving, the importance of efforts to centralise state administration, a financial system (tax system), attempts to gain and keep control of legislative initiatives (executive power) and to have control over personnel and decision-making mechanisms in the offices of both the kingdom and the lands.[7] Another specific aspect was the pressure, which the Habsburg court put on denominatory unification. Religious differences had already substantially contributed to the

struggles between the powers of the Estates in the Jagiellonian era and they had the same role as a 'catalyst' during conflicts with the monarch. The pressure to preserve religious conformity in the sense of a legalized duality of the Catholic-Utraquist faiths was particularly felt by the towns and burgher intellectuals who were the core of human resources for the Reformation. There were only isolated cases of individuals belonging to the Estates of noble rank being affected by possible persecution from the king.[8]

Once the monarch had taken political initiative into his own hands, a number of Estate representatives also became more radical. Such radicalisation did not involve excessively the programme aims, these remained more or less the same. There was rather a more thorough attempt to achieve them, through seeking support across the spectrum of the Estate community and particularly by no longer focusing on competing Estate groups but on the monarch. This move is clearly reflected in the circumstances surrounding the emergence of the election capitulations for Ferdinand of Habsburg and particularly the establishment of the *Friendship Assembly of the Czech Estates* at a meeting of the Estates' opposition in March 1547. Both documents are features of a specifically formulated political programme.[9]

Moravia was affected by the policy radicalisation of the Estates to a much lesser extent. The reasons for the differing development lie in both the objective conditions and the social and religious structure of the Moravian Estates' community. The threat to Moravia from Turkish expansion created a special bond between the interests of the dynasty and the land. Moravians offered more support for Ferdinand's policy of the great powers (particularly in relation to Hungary), while the Margrave had to take into account the indisputable material and human losses of his subjects for the sake of the

---

[6] More on the denominational side of this development in Winfried Eberhard, *Konfessionsbildung und Stände in Böhmen 1478-1530* (Munich, 1981).

[7] These issues were analysed with varying emphasis by Alfred Kohler, *Ferdinand I. 1503-1564. Fürst, König und Kaiser* (Munich, 2003), 130-206. Compare Václav Bůžek, 'Der böhmische und mährische Adel zwischen Land und Hof unter der Regierung Ferdinands I.', in Wilfried Seipel (ed.), *Kaiser Ferdinand I. 1503-1564. Das Werden der Habsburgermonarchie* (Vienna and Milan, 2003), 181-90; Anna Skýbová, 'Ferdinand I., der Habsburger, und die Anfänge seiner Regierung im böhmischen Staat', in Günter Vogler (ed.), *Europäische Herrscher. Ihre Rolle bei der Gestaltung von Politik und Gesellschaft vom 16. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert* (Weimar, 1988), 71-85.

[8] A starting point for the study of this problem is offered by Winfried Eberhard, *Monarchie und Widerstand. Zur ständischen Oppositionsbildung im Herrschaftssystem Ferdinands I. in Böhmen* (Munich, 1985).

[9] The election capitulation of Ferdinand Habsburg was analysed in detail by Antonín Rezek, *Geschichte der Regierung Ferdinands I. in Böhmen I. Ferdinands Wahl und Regierungsantritt* (Prague, 1878). According to the manuscript of Sixt of Ottersdorf, the text of the rulings was published by Karel Tieftrunk, *Odpor stavův českých proti Ferdinandovi I. léta 1547* (Prague, 1872), 364-84.

dynasty. The Moravian Estates showed great internal solidarity in this matter. In the Estates of both the knights and the nobility, it was the non-Catholics who pre-dominated. They personally had never been too dependent on the royal court or dynasty. Hence, those holding the highest offices of the land and influential positions in the Court and Diet of the Land first and foremost pursued the interests of the land, namely the priority of defence against the Ottoman threat. This was the source of a very strong passive resistance to the monarch's unification attempts in the field of religion as well as constant efforts to keep at least a part of their share of executive power.[10]

3. The increased influence of the aristocracy upon the political culture of the Estates

The defeat of the resistance movement of the Bohemian Estates in 1547 meant above all a significant restriction of the political influence of the royal towns in Bohemia. The establishment of a court of appeal and the office of a royal bailiff strengthened state control over both the town Estate and the internal life of town communities. Apart from the personal stand of certain individuals, the aristocracy became the dominant element in Estate society. In particular, the publicly active leaders of wealthy noble families, who relied on their widespread patronage relations, made for first-class partners of the royal court. The emphasis on the predominance of the aristocracy in the Kingdom of Bohemia drew the development of social structure closer to the situation in Moravia. The strengthening of the institutional foundations of the Catholic Church contributed to this process.[11] In this way, the Catholic Church re-established its position as an important cultural, economic and political feature.[12]

Fundamental changes in the social structure also contributed to the implementation of a different political programme. While previous attempts to restrict the monarch's political power for the benefit of representatives of the Estates particularly satisfied the burghers and radical non-Catholics of noble rank, the denominationally moderate Catholic and Protestant aristocracy pursued the strategy of mutual cooperation with the dynasty and a clearly defined division of power. This particularly arose from the validity of legal norms ratified by the king (Orders of the Land, coronation capitulations or personal privileges). Freedoms guaranteed by these legal documents were not to be limited by the monarch, as he wished. On the other hand, there was still plenty of room for dynastic politics within its own landlord demesne (royal chamber), which, in the eyes of some leading aristocrats, included royal towns, and for an action against religious dissent (the Unity of Brethren). The fact that the question of religion had not so far become a cause for more serious conflicts was also due to the personal attitude of Ferdinand I, and particularly of his successor, Maximilian II, famed for his tolerance towards the (particularly Lutheran) Reformation.[13]

---

[10] Some light is thrown on the differing development of estate politics in Bohemia and Moravia in contributions by Josef Válka, first of all in the 'Die „Politiques". Konfessionelle Orientierung und politische Landesinteresse in Böhmen und Mähren (bis 1630)', in Joachim Bahlcke, Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg and Norbert Kersken (eds.), *Ständefreiheit und Staatsgestaltung in Ostmitteleuropa. Ubernationale Gemeinsamkeiten in der politischen Kultur vom 16.-18. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig, 1996), 229-41; idem, 'Der Übergang von der Lehensmentalität zur Ständesmenlität am Beispiel der Markgrafschaft Mähren', in Hugo Weczerka (ed.), *Stände und Landesherrschaft in Ostmitteleuropa* (Marburg, 1995), 111-20.

[11] The arrival of the Jesuits and the foundation of their educational establishments in Prague, Olomouc and at the seats of several Catholic aristocrats, the re-establishment of the Prague Archbishopric, the acceptance of the title of Prince for the Bishop of Olomouc.

[12] This fact became apparent in Bohemia and Moravia as far as the Olomouc Bishopric is concerned. Compare Jaroslav Pánek, 'Prag und Olmütz: Die Herausbildung einer konfessionell-politischen und kulturellen Achse in der rudolfinischen Zeit', in Lubomír Konečný, Beket Bukovinská and Ivan Muchka (eds.), *Rudolf II, Prague and the World* (Prague, 1998), 70-4.

[13] Howard Louthan, *The Quest for Compromise: Peacemakers in Counter-Reformation Vienna* (Cambridge, 1997).

4. Denominational political radicalisation

In the mid 1570s, when negotiations over the legalization of the Bohemian Confession temporarily ended in an unsatisfactory compromise, new generations of the Estates' politicians began to enter the public arena. They became known for their uncompromising denominational loyalty, which had been promoted in the Catholic (mainly Jesuit) or alternatively Protestant, often Calvinist, educational establishments they attended. These people took positions in the offices of the land and the kingdom and as a result both sides re-radicalised their political aims and, in the end, even the means used to achieve them.[14]

The acceptance of the ideology of monarchomachy and denominational implacability, which had been disseminated in the Western Europe of that time, could never have initiated this development by itself. The royal court's strategy of a continuous long-term support for loyal Catholic politicians from all levels of Estates' society was highly important. This circle of adherents received a share in the dynasty's economic and symbolic capital, mostly in the form of feudal tenures, pensions (or perhaps one-off financial rewards); elevation to the Estate of the nobility or from knighthood to the peerage; being bestowed with an office, privileges and honours. As the monarch had control, sometimes even sole control, over the sources of social capital, the Protestant Estates became more and more excluded from his patronage. Indeed, this threatened their very existence as part of privileged society. Because of this, their leaders were logically forced to search for an opposition alternative and therein take an even more radical position.[15] The process of radicalisation was particularly evident after 1600, when there was a mass personnel shake-up in the governance of the land or at least as far as the key officials of the land in Bohemia and Moravia were concerned.

Political tension also increased because of the situation within the ruling dynasty. The relatives of the ruling Habsburg monarch had their own princely courts, which were the cultural centres and centres of communication and patronage relations.[16] However, in the case of the Archduke Matthias, the younger brother of Emperor Rudolph II, his efforts to gain an autonomous position were aimed at gaining supreme government power in at least some of the monarchy's lands. It was exactly this group of Protestant nobles that Matthias was able to use for his own benefit. They considered the court's present strategy a threat to their existence. In return, this group then expected its requirements for stability and even a possible rise in social standing to be met. Despite this temporary diversion, forced by the extraordinary circumstances surrounding his accession to the throne, Matthias gradually reverted to his continued support for the Catholic aristocracy, which had already shown its willingness to put the interests of the state, represented by the dynasty, before the interests of the Estates of the land.

5. Sources and results of the dynamics of the Estates' political culture

The summary above indicates relatively highly dynamic developments in the political culture of the Bohemian Estates. Such dynamic changes were partly due to the heterogeneous structure of the Estate communities of Bohemia and Moravia, which included sections and sometimes individuals with various, yet often conflicting aims. There was, indeed, the awareness of the common interest, the ambiguous category of 'the common good' of the time. Its essence was concealed in the stability of the legal and social order, which was not to be violated, by either the monarch or any member of the

---

[14] This change in generations is described in a wider context by Václav Bůžek, Pavel Král and Zdeněk Vybíral, 'Der Adel in den böhmischen Ländern 1526-1740. Stand und Tendenzen der Forschung', *Anzeiger der philosophisch-historischen Klasse (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften)*, cxxxvii (2002), 55-98.

[15] Compare Karin Jutta MacHardy, *War, Religion and Court Patronage in Habsburg Austria. The Social and Cultural Dimensions of Political Interaction, 1521-1622* (Basingstoke, 2003).

---

[16] An example of this was the court of Ferdinand II of Tyrol in Ambras. Compare Václav Bůžek, 'Erzherzog Ferdinand als Statthalter von Böhmen – Residenz, Hof, Alltagsleben und Politik', in Wilfried Seipel (ed.), *Kaiser Ferdinand I. 1503-1564. Das Werden der Habsburgermonarchie* (Vienna and Milan, 2003), 283-96.

Estate community. In appropriate situations, this common interest became specifically expressed in documents such as the election capitulation or rulings of the Diet. Within these, the Estates' political programme was articulated, the contents of which obviously changed in accordance with the social structure of the Estate community.

The first radical form of the Estates' political programme came from the election capitulation of Ferdinand I and was elaborated in '*The Friendship Ruling*'. It requested broad autonomy for the institutions of the Estates, particularly for the Court of the Land,[17] in royal powers, the eligibility to the throne based on the right to admit a new monarch only on the death of the previous one and radical decentralisation of power by strengthening the regional elements of the political system. The Estates' programme applied especially to the regional assemblies and diets and meetings of the communities of royal towns. All of these best expressed the corporate nature of Estates' political practice and political thinking, as corroborated in the 'Friendship Ruling' with: 'since people best know themselves and their dealings around the regions'.[18] Moreover, they enabled the gentry from respective regions of the kingdom as well as other classes from the royal towns to participate actively in public life of the land.

The retraction of the radical version of the Estates' political programme following the pressure based on the monarch's being victorious in the power struggle did not yet cause them to abandon individual programme aims for good. Incidentally, the radicalisation of the Estates' politics was much more of a response to the destabilisation of the present social order due to interference from the monarch than efforts stemming from their own initiative to change the balance of power. Hence, the emergence of a new generation of a religiously tolerant aristocracy of the land in the 1550s easily secured the implementation of conservative politics which most of the municipalities of the Estates preferred. The emphasis on traditional values, on the consistency of well-established forms of social organisation, on ancient roots as one of

[17] In fact, it was to be given precedence over royal authority.

[18] The National Library of the Czech Republic Prague, The Collection of manuscripts and old editions, sign. XIX B 35, fol. 97v.

the main sources of legitimacy of legal norms and privileges coincided with the thinking of the time. Religious and related political disputes were solved through a conservative approach in order to prevent friction and the need to reach a compromise. These are the reasons why this continued to appeal to the important and influential part of Estates' society more or less until the White Mountain episode. The return to denominational-political radicalism was again connected to a generational change and to the penetration of new concepts of thought into the traditional land-estates mentality. However, as far as Protestant opposition was concerned, there was no fundamental innovation in the political system. In terms of religion, it only made efforts to legalize the Bohemian Denomination, the long-term aim of both the Unity of Brethren and the radical (Neo-)Utraquists. In terms of political power, the opposition's demands represented an even more distinctive return to the traditional features of estatism: an elected monarchy, independence of the offices of the land, legalization of the right to oppose. Once again, the signs of conservatism and traditionalism are the fundamental characteristics of Estate ideology.

A similar conclusion arises from the study of various communication models and situations arising from a discourse on the power sharing between the monarch and the political nation. The above-mentioned issue of eligibility to the throne of the Kingdom of Bohemia has its roots deeply planted in the Middle Ages. Firstly, it had already been seriously discussed and included in the key state law documents in the Luxembourg era and became very topical during the Hussite Wars. From 1437 to 1526, the Bohemian Estates consistently enforced the election principle, paying little attention to possible dynastic ties. Even Ferdinand I himself had to agree to be properly elected. Later he tried hard to force the Bohemian Estates' community to acknowledge his rights to the succession. The Moravian Estates also openly declared the freedom of election. Their recognition of the hereditary nature of the throne was based on their own independent decision. The Habsburg monarchs naturally made efforts to enforce a dynastic heirship. However, in the era of dualism, they had to satisfy themselves with a forced compromise where the Estates acknowledged the closest male descendant (son) of the previous king as heir whilst retaining the right to their acclaim. The dynasty tried to protect itself from any risk associated with the acceptance of a new

monarch by the Estates'community by at least naming a successor before the death of the previous ruler. This practice often became the target of criticism from Estates' opposition groups. However, the Estates only managed to legalize the principle of eligibility during the short era of the Palatine monarchy. Following the victory of Archduke Ferdinand of Styria, there were radical legislative changes in the election issue and the Habsburg dynasty declared itself the heir to the Bohemian throne. The intellectual dispute, led in the following years by the leaders of the Bohemian exile groups, with the opponents of the Estates' election rights, could no longer change anything in the new circumstances.

Another feature of the demands expressed in the election capitulations was the apparent continuity, practically from the inauguration diplomas of John of Luxembourg. They were based on the succeeding monarch's obligation to confirm the existing freedoms and privileges of corporative and personal nature. They were, for example, land tenures, territorial integrity of the state, privileges for the nobility in terms of military and tax obligations. The Hussite era also brought the issue of religious freedom to light, be it in the form of observing pacts or in the form of other, more or less generally formulated guarantees. The climax was the election capitulation of Friedrich V of Palatine. Besides the traditional synoptic promise to respect the ancient rights and freedoms, it included specific pledges relating to key political contracts.[19] In this case, the defeat at the White Mountain also represented a fundamental turning point, as Ferdinand II refused to issue any written pledges whatsoever and his successors continued to restrict themselves to general verbal confirmations of the Estates' freedoms.

The heavily traditionalist character and the medieaval roots of the Estates' political culture are clearly witnessed in the coronation rituals and

---

[19] Friedrich V pledged to confirm the validity of the Royal Imperial Charter on religious freedom, the Parity Between Estates In One Kind and In Both Kinds and particularly the Bohemian Confederation, which significantly modified relations between the monarch and the communities of the estates. On the relations between Fridrich V and Bohemian estates see Jaroslav Pánek, 'Friedrich V. von der Pfalz als König von Böhmen', in Peter Wolf (ed.), *Der Winterkönig. Friedrich V. Der letzte Kurfürst aus der Oberen Pfalz* (Augsburg, 2003), 101-6.

accompanying celebrations. The form of the ritual itself was defined in Charles IV's Coronation Order, which continued to be considered as binding. Not taking into consideration a few insignificant details, it was maintained throughout the late Middle Ages and Early Modern Era. It is symptomatic that the holders of hereditary offices had a significant role in the coronation (particularly the Supreme Marshal). In the early modern era, these ranks no longer had any real power. Indeed, that is why the symbolic value was of such great significance in coronation celebrations, during which the holders of hereditary offices carried out irreplaceable tasks and could grasp the unique opportunity of representing themselves and their families. Hussite times also prompted the rise in the importance of representatives of the Estates' community at coronation ceremonies. Beginning with the coronation of Albrecht of Habsburg (1438), the Supreme Burgrave, a prominent representative of the Estates, played the key part in the coronation – placing the crown on the new monarch's head. Alongside this, throughout the ceremony, the Estates confirmed the legitimacy of the crowned ruler via mass acclamation and by exchanging the vows of protection and obedience.[20] The active participation of the leaders of the Estates in the coronation clearly symbolized the dualist nature of government power, which the monarch did not share with prominent individuals (royal advisors, officials) but with the whole of the Estates' corporation.

The corporative character of estatism even reflects the personal conflicts of individuals with the monarch as the most immediate kind of communication model. Unless these conflicts were merely driven by economic aims (as in the case of the punishment of the Schlicks for abusing the privileges relating to silver mining in the Joachimstal's silverfield in 1545), the motive behind them might have been the interests of Estates' corporations as a whole or at least of certain power groups. This tendency is best illustrated by the well-known affair between the Burgrave of Karlštejn and the Estate of a knight John Vchynský of Vchynice. It was brought on by Vchynský's perhaps over passionate defence of the right of the Estates' community to control the

---

[20] Acclamation itself or other forms of agreement of the political nation had, of course, been a part of the Przemyslid princes' enthronement rituals.

haven of the Crown Jewels and the Crown Archive. Vchynský considered Karlštejn Castle and the Crown Jewels kept there to be the fundamental symbols of statehood and claimed that they should be 'by right' in the hands of the Estates as representatives of the state. The privileges and freedoms of the Estates' corporations on the one hand and the prestige and authority of His Majesty on the other either entered the argument or were at least observed as political aims in other cases too. Whether it was the trial of George of Lobkovice or Charles Senior of Žerotín or the less known yet lengthy confrontation between the Moravian Estates and Ladislav Berka of Dubé and his followers. Similarly, religiously motivated disputes, in which either individuals or the representation of the Estates[21] clashed with the monarch, reflect efforts to protect common rights corporatively, in this case the freedom of religious belief.

All of the above mentioned conflicts confirm that the relationship with the monarch and the extent of the autonomy of power by the Estates' communities formed the essence of the political culture of the Estates. It had to manage without theoretical reflections, as political practice largely remained the focus of the Estates' public activity. A few well-educated elite burghers[22] were more or less the only ones who decided to tackle practical issues via intellectual discourse. Yet, particularly in the second half of the 16th century, modern educational methods and tools were opened up to the Bohemian and Moravian Estates whether of humble birth or those of high birth.

Chivalrous travels connected with university study were enjoyed by both the nobility and the low-born members of the Estates, who often formed an entourage for young nobles. Aristocrats often complemented their

---

[21] E.g. at the Silesian Coronation Diet in Wrocław (Breslau) in May 1527 or at the Moravian Diet in Brno in 1550.

[22] See Vladimír Urbánek, 'Simeon Partlicius and His Works: Rudolfine Mood in Bohemian Exile', in Lubomír Konečný, Beket Bukovinská and Ivan Muchka (eds.), *Rudolf II, Prague and the World* (Prague, 1998), 291-6; more generally Jaroslav Pánek, 'The Political Thought in Bohemia and Moravia in the 16th and 17th Centuries', *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce*, xxxix (1995), 133-9. The only known exception among the nobility is the university thesis of Jaroslav of Smiřice.

experience of a stay abroad with service at the royal court. The Estates were able to benefit from a lower level of educational establishments. Academies and grammar schools, out of which Lutheran or Brethren oriented schools in Velké Meziříčí, Ivančice and Mladá Boleslav were famous, were established with the aristocracy particularly in mind. The burghers, particularly Protestant (Utraquist) ones, could benefit from a remarkable network of particularist schools controlled by and staffed with the help of Prague University. Particularist schools which flourished at the turn of the 17th century, usually prepared youngsters for further university study. After achieving their degree, these people applied to serve in aristocratic courts or returned to their burgher environment where they joined the intellectual and power elites. It was not until the end of the 16th century that Catholic schools, mainly built by the Jesuits, began to compete in quality and number.

However, the educational institutions and the curriculum of various denominations were more likely to differ in religious dogma rather than in the contents or methods of teaching. Generally, they helped to mediate the ideological influences of the non-Catholic and Catholic reforms, which philosophically focused on Renaissance interpretation of Neo-Stoicism and Mannerist Humanism. They also built communication channels to spread political science and political teachings of the time, diminishing the reflections of their own discord over power and religion, although their spread and influence on the thinking of the leaders of the Estates remains questionable. Thus, at least from the mid-16th century, the political culture of the Bohemian Estates did not remain isolated from general European developments. Hence, it continues to be a valid and important subject for comparative investigation.

Translated by Neil Kisby

Political Culture in the Period of the Estates' Rebellion, the Post-White Mountain Confiscations and the Thirty Years' War

Tomáš Knoz

Introduction: Political culture, political agenda, political behaviour

When researching a political culture which was typical of the Bohemian and Central European society in the first half of the 17th century, several fundamental preconditions must be taken into account. Primarily, it is necessary to adopt the premise that the modern politological and historiographical term 'political culture' can at all be used in the given context.[1]

---

[1] On this issue cf. J. Julliard, 'La politique', in Jacques Le Goff and Pierre Nora (eds.), *Faire de l'histoire. II. Nouvelles approches* (Paris, 1975). In Czech historiography a return to political themes is connected with the research of the Estates Movement which was undertaken in the 1970s and 1980s primarily by Jaroslav Pánek and Josef Válka. Jaroslav Pánek, 'Úloha stavovství v předbělohorské době 1526-1620 (Vývoj názorů novodobé české historiografie)', *Československý časopis historický*, xxv (1977), 732-61; idem, *Stavovská opozice a její zápas s Habsburky 1547-1577. K politické krizi v předbělohorském českém státě* (Prague, 1982); Josef Válka, '„Politická závěť" Viléma z Pernštejna (1520-1521). Příspěvek k dějinám českého politického myšlení v době jagellonské', *Časopis Matice moravské*, xc (1971), 63-72; idem, 'Politický systém a kultura habsburské monarchie 17. století', *Studia Comeniana et Historica*, xviii, Vol. 36 (1988), 116-9; idem, 'Die „Politiques": Konfessionelle Orientierung und politische Landesinteressen in Böhmen und Mähren (bis 1630)', in Joachim Bahlcke and Norbert Kersken (eds.), *Ständefreiheit und Staatsgestaltung in Ostmitteleuropa. Übernationale Gemeinsamkeiten in der politischen Kultur vom 16.-18. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig, 1996), 229-42; political structures within the context of history of government are currently researched by Zdeněk Vybíral and Petr Maťa, with regard particularly to the context of aristocratic society. Zdeněk Vybíral, 'Stavovství a dějiny moci v českých zemích na prahu novověku (Nové cesty ke starému tématu)', *Český časopis historický*, xcix (2001),

Further, it has to be presupposed that the political culture between 1618 and 1648 was simultaneously determined by several fundamental factors. One of them was the general state of political culture which medieval society attained as a result of several preceding periods, and in particular of the long pre-White Mountain era. The second defining feature of the political culture were its changes, caused by dramatic upheavals which climaxed in the Estates' Rebellion. These transformations were linked to the requirement of strict political loyalty to a sovereign, in this case primarily the Habsburg Emperor. Its violation was considered to be political high treason, but also a legal 'crimen laesae maiestatis', and called for a political and legal response on the part of the ruler. Thus, it is little wonder that the frequency of political terms such as 'loyalty to the House of Austria', or on the other hand 'tyrant', or possibly 'rebellion' and 'rebel' increased. In addition, the Estates' Rebellion demonstrated how easy it was, under some defined cirucumstances, to cross the borderline between political struggle and armed struggle. Violent means were to become a natural part of political culture. It is necessary to include the process of the post-White Mountain confiscations within the category of 'political culture', although at first glance it might rather look like a legal and financial process. This huge upheaval in property relations which occured at that time was primarily a political process and assumed enormous proportions as to the growth of various political responses, such as the seeking of protection, adaptation to new conditions and political conversions. The last group of factors which determined political activity and behaviour in the first half of the 17th century was the long-lasting war. It produced the establishment of advantageous alliances and their subsequent revocation; the customary resolution of political disputes by military means, which became the norm rather than an exception; the disintegration of moral norms applied both in political life and human behaviour.

Thus, a key theme is the issue of loyalty to government embodied by a sovereign and the issue of war as a violent means of its resolution. In this

---

751-5; Petr Maťa, 'Aristokratisches Prestige und der böhmische Adel (1500-1700)', *Frühneuzeit-Info*, x (1999), No. 1-2, 43-52; idem, *Svět české aristokracie (1500-1700)* (Prague, 2004).

context political culture, behaviour and conduct in Central Europe can be observed, for example, through several fundamental categories which we will try to characterise in the rest of our study: politics and political camps in the first half of the 17th century; the effect of a decisive moment and access to information; faithful service to the House of Austria; political mediation; political conversion, political hierarchy and patronage; political competition, and the exchange of political elites.

Politics and Political Camps in the First Half of the 17th century

It is undoubtedly somewhat complex to speak about the political culture of the period of the Estates' Rebellion, the post-White Mountain confiscations and the Thirty Years' War. Although the terms 'politics' and 'political' did exist in contemporary terminology and were applied, they cannot be unilaterally separated from the legal or religious understanding of the world.[2] Political causes of the origins of the Estates' Rebellion were also emphasized by John George, the Elector of Saxony, who in his letters addressed to Prince Charles of Liechtenstein and Emperor Ferdinand II spoke against the religious understanding of the rebellion; against the identification of the concepts *'Confession'* and *'Rebellion'* and against automatic punishment of the Evangelic Church, its ministers and believers of all classes.[3]

The political stratification of society around 1620 continued to be based upon the fundamental (although often rather theoretical) tension between the interests of the lord of the Land and the interests of the Estates, which accompanied the preceding period as a whole. The borderline between both

---

[2] Throughout several recent decades the above mentioned trends have been referred to as confessionalism in European historiography Winfried Eberhard, 'Voraussetzungen und strukturelle Grundlagen der Konfessionalisierung in Ostmitteleuropa', in Joachim Bahlcke and Arno Strohmeyer (eds.), *Konfessionalisierung in Ostmitteleuropa. Wirkungen des religiösen Wandels im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert in Staat, Gesellschaft und Kultur* (Stuttgart, 1999), 89-103.

[3] Franz Christoph Khevenhüller, *Annales Ferdinandei*, Vol. 9 (Leipzig, 1724), 1656-61.

camps was not, however, clear cut. After all, in their various titularies even prominent representatives of the Estates' policy and members of various reform churches in individual countries of the Habsburg monarchy did not fail to add at least the office of an Imperial Counsellor and Gentleman of the Chamber, from which they derived considerable prestige in contemporary society. Although many aristocratic families competed in their claims that they belonged to a certain political group, and often secondarily to a confessionary group, for generations, it was ever more evident at the beginning of the 17th century that family traditions could cause conflict with one's aspirations to a political career at the court.

The Right to Political Resistance

The Austrian historian Arno Strohmeyer emphasised in his work on the right to political resistance in the Early Modern Age, that this right in its latent form survived for the entire period of power dualism between a sovereign and Estates. Its presence played an important role in balancing the hidden tension between these two poles of power and in no case did it have to end in a violent form.[4]

This was the justification on which radicals based their right to resistance and thus they argued to persuade other less decisive members of the Estates' community. According to their interpretation, they would not commit a *'crimen laesae maiestatis'* through their resistance to the sovereign, but merely fulfil their own 'ancient rights'. After the defeat of the Rebellion, less radical rebels argued similarly. In their eyes, the act of invoking legally and traditionally based law was to justify the legality of their behaviour

during the Rebellion. Secondarily, it was also to persuade Emperor Ferdinand II to pardon and to cancel, in individual cases, a decision to confiscate their property.[5]

In academic literature political resistance was defined as 'a culture-mediated process, which influenced power relations'.[6] Estates' representatives could base their steps on respective theoretical literature which dealt with the issue of the Estates' freedoms, generally respected not merely in the Austrian and Bohemian Lands but also in the Holy Roman Empire, and which should lead to its legitimacy.[7] In the period around the Battle of the White Mountain, aristocratic society in the Habsburg Lands studied, with regard to this aspect, for example earlier works by Marsilius of Padova, Théodore de Bèze, Philippe du Plessis Mornay, Hubert Languet or Johann Althusius.[8] For him the main theoretical principle of resistance against the sovereign was a principle branded in German as *'Schutz und Schirm'*. According to him the Estates and their foremost representatives were obliged to provide their country with *'Rat und Hilfe'*.[9] Another argument used by the Estates involved in resistance was *'Gemeinwohl und gemeine Nutzen'*, namely common good and common need. This topos already emerged in ancient times and entered Estates politics via both the medieval and Early Modern Age legal and political

---

[4] Arno Strohmeyer, 'Vom Widerstand zur Rebellion: Praxis und Theorie des ständischen Widerstands in den östlichen österreichischen Ländern im Werden der Habsburgermonarchie (ca. 1550-1650)', in Robert von Friedeburg (ed.), *Widerstandsrecht in der frühen Neuzeit* (= Zeitschrift für historische Forschung. Beiheft 26) (Berlin, 2001), 208-41, here 213; H. Fehr, 'Das Widerstandsrecht', *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, xxxviii (1920), 1-38; Arthur Kaufmann and Leonhard E. Backmann (eds.), *Widerstandsrecht* (Darmstadt, 1972).

[5] Wolfgang Reinhard, 'Zwang zur Konfessionalisierung? Prolegomena zu einer Theorie des konfessionellen Zeitalters', *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung*, x (1983), 257-77.

[6] Winfried Schulze, 'Der Widerstand der Untertanen gegen die Obrigkeit im 17. Jahrhundert', in Wolfgang Brückner, Peter Blickle and Dieter Breuer (eds.), *Literatur und Volk im 17. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden, 1985), 127-40, here 135.

[7] Winfried Schulze, 'Estates and the Problem of Resistance in Theory and Practice in the Sixteenth and Seveteenth Century', in Robert John Weston Evans and Trevor V. Thomas (eds.), *Crown, Church and Estates. Central European Politics in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (London, 1991), 158-75; idem, 'Die ständische Gesellschaft des 16./17. Jahrhunderts als Problem von Statik und Dynamik', in Winfried Schulze (ed.), *Ständische Gesellschaft und soziale Mobilität* (Munich, 1988), 1-18.

[8] František Kavka, *Bílá hora a české dějiny* (Prague, 1962), 49; Jan P. Kučera, *8. 11. 1620 Bílá hora. O potracení starobylé slávy české* (Prague, 2003), 23-7.

[9] Strohmeyer, 'Vom Widerstand zur Rebellion', 225.

tradition, and more directly from antique literature.[10] All three aforementioned categories – the duty to protect, ancient rights and common good – provided the Estates with rather a broad scope for political action, including the right to establish political alliances, unions and confederations, possibly to mobilise the land armies.[11] It follows from the above mentioned facts that resistance against the monarch was in such a case interpreted by the Estates as a procedure which was legal, politically correct and even their certain duty.[12]

As the Estates' representatives strove for the legitimacy of their resistance against the ruler, so did their political adversaries attempt the very reverse. The right to resistance, which the Estates claimed, was judged as *'Ungehorsamkeit'* by the pro-Emperor party. Simultaneously, the characteristics of being subordinate, exercising discipline and mandatory loyalty towards the ruler were emphasised. The Estates' rights and their ancient roots were replaced by the principle of the ruler's sovereignty and exclusive powers. This nature was to manifest itself through, for example, acts of homage, required ever more, which produced further fears in the Estates' ranks. As a result some members of Estates communities attempted to avoid paying homage at all. Obviously, a strict implementation of this concept had one result only, namely an increased radicalism on both sides. Political struggle – resistance – thus turned into a rebellion towards the end of the second decade of the 17th century.[13]

The Effect of a Decisive Moment and Access to Information

The effect of a decisive moment significantly manifested itself throughout the Estates' Rebellion and processes following it. It is amply documented that confiscations benefited politically and financially especially to those persons who found themselves close to the sovereign at a certain moment or in a situation in which they were able to use for their own benefit access to information of a political nature and crucial for the confiscation process, for example. Evidently, such was the case in a situation when Albrecht of Wallenstein took a decision in Olomouc that he would also flee to Vienna.[14] Similarly, during the journey of Emperor Ferdinand II to a Regensburg convention towards the end of 1622 and early 1623, quite a few noblemen found themselves in the vicinity of the ruler, as part of his retinue, when decisions on awarding confiscated estates were taken on a large scale. These noblemen then waited for a reward, as if at the head of the queue. However, also persons who were in the right place at the right time benefited many times over, even if they were not intentionally involved in politics. For example, the Emperor's personal physicians, historiographers or some traders and officials were involved in relatively large numbers. Thanks to their vicinity to the ruler and possibly his gratitude for services rendered, also, they managed to gain office and estates. While some of them rested satisfied with economic profit, for others this moment signalled the start of a political career.

Benefiting from one's absence was a seemingly absurd reverse of this principle. Many noblemen whose estates were to be confiscated, argued that during the Estates' Rebellion they were beyond the country's borders and thus could not be punished for their part in the Rebellion. It primarily involved younger noblemen who had spent longer spells abroad in the early 1620s during their study and cavalier journeys. These young gentlemen occasionally succeeded in protecting not merely their own property but also

---

[10] *Ibid.*, 233; Winfried Eberhard, '„Gemeiner Nutzen" als opositionelle Leitvorstellung im Spätmittelalter', in Manfred Gerwing and Godehard Ruppert (eds.), *Renovatio et Reformatio. Wider das Bild vom „finsteren" Mittelalter. Festschrift für Ludwig Hödl* (Münster, 1985), 195-214, here 200-12.

[11] Strohmeyer, 'Vom Widerstand zur Rebellion', 234.

[12] Jaroslav Pánek, 'Das politische System des böhmischen Staates im ersten Jahrhundert der habsburgischen Herrschaft (1526-1620)', *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, xcvii (1989), 53-72.

[13] Arno Strohmeyer calls these efforts 'Die Delegitimierung des ständischen Widerstands'; Strohmeyer, 'Vom Widerstand zur Rebellion', 239; Johannes Kunisch, *Absolutismus. Europäische Geschichte vom Westfälischen Frieden bis zur Krise des Ancien Régime* (2nd edn Goetingen, 1999), 20-31.

[14] Josef Janáček, *Valdštejn a jeho doba* (Prague, 1978), Chapter Moravský převrat a Útěk do Vídně, 168-177; idem, *Valdštejnova pomsta* (Prague, 1992), Chapter Dezerce Albrechta z Valdštejna, 186-7.

the property of their fathers or relatives, who participated in the Rebellion and therefore were to be the victims of confiscations.

Faithful Service to the House of Austria

The rewarding of the Emperor's allies during the post-White Mountain Battle was not merely a financial process, exclusively based on the principle 'has to give – has given'. Conversely, the political aspect permeated it rather intensely. When looking at people to whom the political aspect of the confiscation process applied, several fundamental groups can be identified. There were many concrete cases when preference was given to persons who belonged long-term to the Emperor's political camp instead of politically neutral or less active contenders, although they were financially solvent and more than willing to pay the sum of money demanded. Such an affiliation with those politically close to him usually showed through the Sovereign's remarks about their faithfulness, steadiness, diligence and usefulness to the House of Austria in specific formulations of his official memoranda.[15] Thus, the loyalty to the House of Austria was in the decisive moment favoured above the loyalty to the Land and community, which had been expected from members of both Estates throughout the preceding period as a whole.[16]

It was necessary, under some circumstances, to include within the members of the Emperor's political camp also those noblemen who had been until that time rather indifferent to the dispute between Ferdinand II and the Estates or had even stood on the opposite side. Ferdinand II and his principal advisers were well aware that in quite a few cases one's acceptance within

---

[15] Under the above mentioned principle Count Nostic was allocated the Sokolov (Falknov/Falkenau) estate in Western Bohemia primarily because he was sufficiently 'treu und willfähig und fleissig' and that he was 'Diener unseres Hauses'. Hofkammerarchiv Wien, Gedenkbücher, Böhmische Reihe, kn. 335, 19. 4. 1634, fol. 146v.

[16] Hofkammerarchiv Wien, Gedenkbücher, Böhmische Reihe, kn. 333, 20. 9. 1622, fol. 79v. The opposite of 'fidelity' in the political and legal thinking of the Early Modern Age was 'infidelity' – 'Untreu'.

a 'group of the loyal people' could be a motivation impulse, which would guarantee the future loyalty of he individual and as a result of his authority within a given Estates' community the loyalty of many other noblemen would also follow.[17]

Political Mediation

Political mediation was a decisive factor throughout the entire confiscatory period. It differed from another type of intercessions and interventions in the sense that the intermediator did not make an appeal with reference to his relationship to a person afflicted by confiscation or a party interested in confiscated estates; he passed information to the Emperor or his high officials on somebody's willingness to join the Emperor's camp or have his descendants brought up in this spirit. In some cases it was carried out in a rather discreet manner, yet very often it had the character of official political discussions, written in an official form. Mediation as such could just as well remain on this general level, or have a very concrete form when the inter-mediator suggested definite steps to the parties involved, and simultaneously the benefits which were to balance them. Nearly every one of the high-placed members of the pro-Habsburg wing had someone among his relatives or friends, who differed from the Emperor through his faith or political attitude or even fell out of his favour because of that person's participation in

---

[17] As one example of many, we can mention here proposals which Ferdinand II and those closest to him directed at Charles the Elder of Žerotín. Namely, they involved proposals, quoted more often in this work, to participate in the preparation of the Confiscatory and Bankruptcy Protokol, the Restored Land Order, or even how to avoid forcible emigration under some conditions once the Re-Catholicisation Decrees were issued. Tomáš Knoz, *Državy Karla staršího ze Žerotína po Bílé hoře*, (Brno, 2001), 314; Zemský archiv Opava, detached workplace Olomouc, Rodinný archiv Žerotínů, Book 34 (ŽD 14), Žerotín's Letter to Cardinal Dietrichstein of 9. 7. 1627, fol. 76. Žerotín writes about Dietrichstein and the Emperor's offer from 1629 to allow him to stay in Moravia, provided he did not openly pursue non-Catholic liturgy, in a letter addressed to the Brethren Elder Jiřík Erast, dated 12 June 1629. Noemi Rejchrtová (ed.), *Karel starší ze Žerotína. Z korespondence* (Prague, 1982), 348-52.

the Rebellion. Such a mediation usually aimed at the complete or at least partial pardon of the punishment.[18] However, there was an even more widespread mediation sought after by persons who were interested in gaining office or a confiscated estate.[19] Both principles of political mediation assumed large proportions throughout the 1620s. Although one can suppose that a large part of pleas and background discussions on this theme were executed by word of mouth and either none or merely a brief written report was made, much information has still been preserved about these dealings. Some persons who were actively involved in the confiscatory process in the individual Lands of the Habsburg Monarchy, even managed to gain significant personal benefit, both politically and in property, from being involved in mediation.

Political Conversion

In relation to the period around 1620, many recent discussions have significantly focused upon religious conversions to Catholicism, which were at least partially motivated politically.[20] Even in that period, according to published evidence, such a political conversion was considered 'treason' and persons who went over from one political camp to another were accused of betraying 'the faith of their ancestors', ancient Estates freedoms and the respective Estates community for the advantage of personal gain. Thus,

Charles of Liechtenstein was said to '*kotrlec převrhl*'[21] (have jumped through a hoop) for his own glory. If some persons felt that it was worth the effort, they could protest against such an accusation in a written apology.[22]

In some cases several relatives simultaneously or within a short period of time converted politically, so that the Emperor could count upon the support of an entire noble family. In other instances it was important to win over at least one member of a traditional aristocratic family. Naturally, Ferdinand II was most keen on the realization of such conversions during which a father and son often stood against each other, or one brother opposed his sibling. Indeed, he attempted 'to separate the wheat from the chaff' and persons such as Michael Adolph of Althann were remunerated while noblemen continuing to resist, such as Adolph's brother Volf Dětřich, were duly punished.[23] After all, what mattered most was to demonstrate clearly a difference between the guilty and the innocent.[24] Thus, even the closest

---

[18] The above statement practically applied to all important noble families, including the Dietrichsteins, Wallensteins, Starhembergs, Jörgers, Tiefenbachs, Althanns, Šliks (Schlicks), Thurns and so on.

[19] One of the most important intermediaries of this type was Cardinal Dietrichstein, who often introduced his own pretenders to confiscated estates to the Emperor. Tomáš Knoz, 'Konfiskationen nach 1620 als politischer und juristischer Prozess', *Frühneuzeit-Info*, xii (2001), No. 1, 40-52.

[20] Thomas Winkelbauer, *Fürst und Fürstendiener. Gundaker von Liechtenstein, ein österreichischer Aristokrat des konfessionellen Zeitalters* (Vienna and Munich, 1999), 66-158.

---

[21] The religious conversion of Charles of Liechtenstein and a change of his politics connected with it was last dealt with by Václav Bůžek, Josef Hrdlička, Pavel Král and Zdeněk Vybíral, *Věk urozených* (Prague, 2002), 148.

[22] For example, Charles the Elder of Žerotín did so, when he was attacked for his political opinions by Jiří of Hodice. Vincenc Brandl (ed.), *Spisy Karla staršího z Žerotína. Listové psané jazykem českým*, Vol. 3 (Brno, 1872), Apologie neb obrana ode mne Karla staršího z Žerotína ku panu Jiříkovi z Hodic. Dt. mezi 22. májem a 23. červnem 1606, 6-18. Similar apologies which were to interpret and defend their political activities, were also written down at that time by prominent personalities belonging to the Catholic camp, such as Cardinal Dietrichstein. Jan Tenora, *Apologie kardinála Ditrichštejna z roku 1619* (Brno, 1909).

[23] Moravský zemský archiv v Brně, G 145, The Family archives of the Althann-Lützows, Genealogické tabulky. Thomas Winkelbauer and Tomáš Knoz, 'Geschlecht und Geschichte. Grablegen, Grabdenkmäler und Wappenzyklen als Quellen für das historisch-genealogische Denken des österreichischen Adels im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert', in Joachim Bahlcke and Arno Strohmeyer (eds.), *Konstruktion der Vergangenheit* (= Zeitschrift für historische Forschung. Beiheft 29) (Berlin, 2002), 129-78, here 162 ff.

[24] For example Václav the Younger Vratislav of Mitrovice was addressed in letters from 1624 as 'Unser lieber getreuer Wratislaw', whereas his close relative continued to be referred to in the same documents as 'Verbrecher'. 'Resolution an Fürst von Liechtenstein de dato in Wien am 18ten Januarii Ao. 1624, wasmassen IM den – mit Wenzl Wratislau den Jüngeren um das Gut Czernowiz pro 15 309 ß 42 gr., ein jetzt

relatives of the most active participants of the Rebellion could later be embraced as the Emperor's political allies. Obviously, they had to prove their current or prospective loyalty and service to the Emperor.[25]

Political Hierarchy and Patronage

In the given circumstances the term *political patronage* can be understood as the favouring of some courtiers and military men and those close to the Emperor, for example through the previously mentioned mediation. In this case it did not merely involve bilateral links between the ruler and those close to him, but the establishment of a genuine network, resembling a modern political party in some of its aspects. Generally, it is possible to brand this principle of mutual assistance, which went far beyond a simple and usual unilateral mediation, as political patronage.[26]

---

publicierten Münz-Valor gnädigist ratificieret haben...' Hofkammerarchiv Wien, Gedenk-bücher, Böhmische Reihe, book 333, 18. 1. 1624, fol. 261v.

[25] One example of this is how Balthazar of Žerotín succeeded in the case of the Valašské Meziříčí estate: Knoz, *Državy Karla staršího ze Žerotína po Bílé hoře*, 190-205.

[26] The term *patronage* obviously expresses a wider circle of relations in Early Modern society, or court society. The adjective *political* is used to define those connections during which the establishment of personal links and their networks was primarily dominated by a motivation, which confiscatory documents termed 'politisch'. In our conditions the theme of patronage in its political and social dimension was primarily researched by Petr Maťa in a synthesis devoted to the Bohemian aristocracy. Maťa, *Svět české aristokracie (1500-1700)*, Chapter 'Páni a přátelé' a 'Patroni a klienti', 641-78. On the other hand Václav Bůžek interpreted a similar problem conversely, from the point of the history of festivities and rituals. Václav Bůžek, '„Páni a přátelé" v myšlení o každodenním životě české a moravské šlechty na prahu novověku', *Český časopis historický*, c (2002), 229-64. Recently on the patronage system at the Viennese Court see also Gernot Heiss, Beatrix Bastl, Sigrid Freisleben and Alexander Sperl, 'Der Wiener Hof und sein Klientel- und Patronagesystem. Ein Projekt am Institut für Geschichte der Universität Wien', *Mitteilungen der Residenzen-Kommission der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*, xi (2001), No. 2, 21.

The appreciation shown to those who were loyal by awarding them with office and confiscations went hand in hand with their promotion, which could consequently be considered one of the external signs of hierarchy and patronage. The promotion of worthy individuals in the social hierarchy was very important for Emperor Ferdinand II. Thus, a political clientele emerged rather rapidly around the Emperor in the 1620s. As shown in the past in the case of a group around Albrecht of Wallenstein, the retainer system of Ferdinand II was not completely unified from a political point of view, but conversely it established individual groups and circles of patronage.[27] One convenient period for promoting large groups of the Emperor's retainers as a whole was between 1623 and 1624. It was the moment when the defeat of the Estates' Rebellion was, at least apparently, secured, practically throughout the Monarchy as a whole. A large grooup of counts and other aristocrats were then raised to the noble rank of princes and earls, or had a noble title conferred upon them.

Political Competition

An ever sharper definition of political camps did not merely lead to conflict among them as such but it also raised internal tensions, inherent in any increased competition. The concrete shape of favouring a political ally when an office or confiscated estate were involved could vary significantly. The chosen pretender was often exempt by reason of the Emperor's personal

---

[27] Even at the period when these confiscations took place, various cliques formed at the Imperial Court, despite the fact that their members belonged theoretically to the same Imperial and Catholic political camp. Thus, a smaller group headed by Slavata, Strahlendorf and Helfried Leonard of Meggau stood against the group gathered around Albrecht of Wallenstein, to which also Verdenberg and Questenberg belonged. Pekka Suvanto, *Wallenstein und seine Anhänger am Wiener Hof zur Zeit des zweiten Generalats 1631-1634* (Helsinki, 1963); Johann Franzl, *Ferdinand II. Kaiser im Zwiespalt der Zeit* (Graz, 1989), 231-2.

order from one or another general duty.[28] However, there were often cases when several representatives of the same political camp mounted a claim to the same post, office or confiscated estate. Thus, many a time it was not easy for Emperor Ferdinand II himself to decide which of the candidates should be favoured.

Political competition, which time and again ended in mutual rivalry and animosity, however, also manifested itself amongst equally prominent, or even top favourites of Emperor Ferdinand II. They did not hesitate to use every possible means and intrigues against each other and it did not then matter whether the dispute involved the award of a confiscated estate or any other benefit. In such a case all parties bent over backwards to emphasise the importance of one's own merits and loyalty to 'the House of Austria' compared to their opponent. This type of competition amongst the Emperor's top favourites was nothing exceptional in the 1620s; it showed up in its most acute form in the relationship of Charles of Liechtenstein and Cardinal Franz of Dietrichstein. Both of them laid a claim to be the right hand man of the Emperor in political affairs. They jealously watched each other, in case one of them managed to overemphasise his merits and consequently benefited excessively out of it financially, also. There is little wonder that manifestations of loyalty and disloyalty; disputes amongst political groupings and even sharp competition within political camps led to an increased frequency of meteoric political careers and equally spectacular falls and ensuing exchanges of the political elites.

Conclusion: Exchange of the Political Elites

As compared to earlier views, the exchange of the political elites now seems to have been merely partial, yet it played an irreplaceable role in the consequent development of medieval society. The depth and scope of changes significantly varied in individual Lands of the Habsburg Monarchy, because Emperor Ferdinand II acted differently in this matter, also. In each of the Habsburg Lands there existed a certain section of the political elite which had already sided with the Emperor before the outbreak of the Estates' Rebellion, although their individual attitudes were motivated differently and their loyalty to the Emperor varied. Individuals who belonged to this category, unless they died in the course of the Rebellion or shortly afterwards, such as John Ulrich of Eggenberg, Charles of Liechtenstein or Ladislav of Lobkowitz, usually maintained or even significantly strengthened their political status in the Post-White Mountain period. Some groups or individuals, who are primarily exemplified in Czech historiography by Paul Michna of Vacínov, managed to exploit the upheaval to increase their political status so enormously, that this would have been unimaginable for them under normal circumstances. Conversely, another relatively large group consisted of individuals who lost their current status in a more radical manner. It was a characteristic of all the three above mentioned groups of individuals that their political rise or fall was also accompanied by a property change, which did not merely represent 'the economic base' appertaining to their political power but was also simultaneously an indivisible component of this political power.

Translated by Alena Linhartová

---

[28] For example, Adam of Herbersdorf was to participate in an auction of a confiscated estate, because he was the second contender to lay claim to it. However, Ferdinand II gave his personal assurance to Adam that he would be given preference and the auction would not take place. At the same time the Royal Chamber was asked to ensure that the other competitor let the case proceed without raising any legal counter-argument. Hofkammerarchiv Wien, Gedenkbücher, Böhmische Reihe, Book 333, fol. 202 ff.

Landhaus und Hofburg

Elemente der politischen Kultur der Habsburgermonarchie in der Frühen Neuzeit am Beispiel von Österreich unter der Enns

Thomas Winkelbauer

Der zusammengesetzte Staat der Habsburger in Mitteleuropa

Die Habsburgermonarchie ist nach der Schlacht bei Mohács als eine 'monarchische Union von Ständestaaten' (Otto Brunner) entstanden, und sie ist bis zu ihrer Auflösung 1918 ein 'zusammengesetzter Staat'[1] geblieben. Auch die drei seit 1526 durch Personalunion verbundenen Ländergruppen – die österreichischen Erbländer, die böhmischen und die ungarischen Länder – waren keineswegs nach einheitlichem Recht regierte und verwaltete Territorialstaaten, sondern seit unterschiedlich langer Zeit durch Personalunion verbundene Länderkonglomerate.[2] Das frühneuzeitliche Habsburgerreich war also eine monarchische Union monarchischer Unionen von

---

[1] Helmut G. Koenigsberger, 'Dominium regale or dominium politicum et regale? Monarchies and Parliaments in Early Modern Europe', in Karl Bosl (ed.), *Der moderne Parlamentarismus und seine Grundlagen in der ständischen Repräsentation* (Berlin, 1977), 43-86; idem, 'Zusammengesetzte Staaten, Repräsentativversammlungen und der amerikanische Unabhängigkeitskrieg', *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung*, xviii (1991), 399-423; J(ohn) H. Elliott, 'A Europe of Composite Monarchies', *Past & Present*, cxxxvii (1992), 48-71. Vgl. auch Wolfgang Reinhard, *Geschichte der Staatsgewalt. Eine vergleichende Verfassungsgeschichte Europas von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (München, 1999), 44-7.

[2] Vgl. u. a. Thomas Winkelbauer, *Ständefreiheit und Fürstenmacht. Länder und Untertanen des Hauses Habsburg im konfessionellen Zeitalter* (Österreichische Geschichte 1522-1699), 2 Teile (Wien, 2003), hier Teil 1, 25-310.

Ständestaaten und ein aus zusammengesetzten Staaten zusammengesetzter Staat. Zusätzlich kompliziert wurden das politische System der werdenden 'Monarchia Austriaca'[3] und die staatsrechtliche Stellung der ihre Länder in vielfacher Personalunion regierenden Herrscher durch den Umstand, daß von 1558 bis 1740 und neuerlich von 1765 (Beginn der Mitregentschaft Josephs II.) bzw. von 1780 bis 1806 der Monarch stets auch die römisch-deutsche Kaiserwürde innehatte und daß die österreichischen und die böhmischen Länder (im Unterschied zum Königreich Ungarn) Territorien des Heiligen Römischen Reiches waren.

Die Frage, gegen welche Widerstände und mit welchen Partnern die Habsburger eine Integration ihres Länderkonglomerats zu einem ziemlich effektiven, das heißt militärisch schlagkräftigen Staat mit relativ solider finanzieller Basis erreichten, ist eine der Schlüsselfragen der Geschichte des politischen Systems und der politischen Kultur der Habsburgermonarchie. Zur Schaffung eines aus den österreichischen und böhmischen Ländern bestehenden 'Kernstaates' (Friedrich Walter) mit einheitlicher Rechtsordnung und einheitlichem Staatsapparat kam es erst in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts, beginnend mit der von Zeitgenossen als 'Revolution' erlebten Staatsreform des Jahres 1749.[4] Die insbesondere in den 1670er, 1780er und 1850er Jahren unternommenen gewaltsamen Versuche, das Königreich Ungarn nach dem Muster der österreichischen und böhmischen Länder ('ad normam aliarum provinciarum') zu regieren, schlugen hingegen fehl und mündeten schließlich in den staatsrechtlichen 'Ausgleich' des Jahres 1867.

An die Stelle der nach ihrer militärischen Niederlage in der Schlacht am Weißen Berg 1620 zerschlagenen evangelischen Adelsoppositionen in den böhmischen Ländern und in Österreich ob und unter der Enns trat eine für beide Seiten vorteilhafte Allianz zwischen dem loyalen katholischen Hochadel

---

[3] Zur Terminologie grundlegend: Grete Klingenstein, 'Was bedeuten „Österreich" und „österreichisch" im 18. Jahrhundert? Eine begriffsgeschichtliche Studie', in Richard G(eorg) Plaschka, Gerald Stourzh und Jan Paul Niederkorn (ed.), *Was heißt Österreich? Inhalt und Umfang des Österreichbegriffs vom 10. Jahrhundert bis heute* (Wien, 1995), 149-220.

[4] Friedrich Walter, *Die Theresianische Staatsreform von 1749* (Wien, 1958).

und dem Landesfürsten. Eine unausgesprochene, aber grundlegende Voraussetzung dieses Bündnisses war die Aufrechterhaltung, ja sogar Verstärkung der Grundherrschaft des Adels über den Großteil der ländlichen und kleinstädtischen Untertanen: Den Aristokraten gelang es nicht zuletzt mit Hilfe der ihnen von den landesfürstlichen Regierungen erteilten oder stillschweigend zugestandenen Privilegien, die Herrschaft über große Teile der Landbevölkerung und wichtige Sektoren der Ökonomie zu intensivieren.[5]

Im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert besetzten die Mitglieder einer relativ kleinen Gruppe von hochadeligen Familien so gut wie alle führenden Positionen in der ständischen und in der landesfürstlichen Verwaltung der einzelnen Länder, am Kaiserhof, in den Zentralbehörden, in der katholischen Kirche, in der Armee und im diplomatischen Dienst. Robert Evans hat die informelle Allianz zwischen den Habsburgern und der seit etwa 1600 entstehenden übernationalen und länderübergreifenden Aristokratie folgendermaßen auf den Punkt gebracht (mit Bezug auf die böhmischen Länder): 'The Habsburgs compromised with an aristocracy which at court represented the country and in the country represented the court, exercising an almost complete monopoly over the senior dignities of the state.'[6] 'Beneath the constitutional surface dynastic and noble interests were hammered together in a series of workmanlike compromises and sealed with the stamp of Counter-Reformation.'[7] Das Resultat war, so Robert Evans, kein von einer Zentrale aus regierter Einheitsstaat, sondern 'a complex and subtly-balanced organism, [...] a mildly centripetal agglutination of bewilderingly heterogeneous elements'.[8]

---

[5] Robert Douglas Chesler, *Crown, Lords, and God: The Establishment of Secular Authority and the Pacification of Lower Austria, 1618-1648* (Dissertation, Princeton University, 1979), 230-80 und passim; R(obert) J. W. Evans, *Das Werden der Habsburgermonarchie 1550-1700. Gesellschaft, Kultur, Institutionen* (Wien, Köln und Graz 1986), 82-5, 132-40, 157 und passim.

[6] R(obert) J. W. Evans, *The Making of the Habsburg Monarchy 1550-1700. An Interpretation* (Oxford, 1979), 211.

[7] *Ibid.*, 169.

[8] *Ibid.*, 447.

Der Kaiserhof

Aus der Perspektive der Staatsbildung betrachtet, war der Kaiserhof das Zentrum der politischen Macht und seit dem 16. Jahrhundert der wichtigste Ort der Kommunikation und Interaktion der politischen Eliten sowohl der habsburgischen Länder als auch des Heiligen Römischen Reichs und daher das mit Abstand wichtigste Integrationszentrum der werdenden Habsburger-monarchie. Der Hof war der zentrale 'Patronagemarkt', die wichtigste 'Patronagebörse' der Habsburgermonarchie.[9] Er verband durch eine Reihe von Medien 'Regionen und Eliten mit dem Zentrum, vom tatsächlichen oder Ehrendienst über Belohnungen und Titel bis zu Festen und Zeremonien'.[10] Hof, Regierung und Verwaltung waren bis zu den Staatsreformen nach dem Österreichischen Erbfolgekrieg (1740-48) keine scharf getrennten Bereiche. Viele der hohen Hofbeamten verbanden ihren täglichen Hofdienst mit der nominellen oder tatsächlichen Ausübung eines Regierungsamtes, sei es als aktives Mitglied des Geheimen Rates bzw. der Geheimen Konferenz, also des höchsten Beratungsgremiums des Kaisers, oder in einer der Zentral-behörden (im Reichshofrat, in der Hofkammer, im Hofkriegsrat oder in einer der Hofkanzleien).[11]

Im 16. Jahrhundert gehörten die Hofkarrieren anstrebenden Mitglieder der adeligen Stände der habsburgischen Länder einerseits und die (zunächst)

---

[9] Vgl. exemplarisch Heinz Noflatscher, ',Freundschaft' im Absolutismus. Hofkanzler Johann Paul Hocher und die Standeserhebungen Kaiser Leopolds I.', in Sabine Weiß (ed.), *Historische Blickpunkte. Festschrift für Johann Rainer* (Innsbruck, 1988), 469-504, hier 480-504.

[10] Jeroen Duindam, 'Im Herzen der zusammengesetzten Habsburgermonarchie: Quellen zu einer neuen Geschichte des Hofes, der Regierung und der höfischen Repräsentation', in Josef Pauser, Martin Scheutz und Thomas Winkelbauer (ed.), *Quellenkunde der Habsburgermonarchie (16.-18. Jahrhundert). Ein exemplarisches Handbuch* (Wien und München, 2004), 21-32, hier 23.

[11] Jeroen Duindam, 'The court of the Austrian Habsburgs: locus of a composite heritage', *Mitteilungen der Residenzen-Kommission der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*, viii (1998), Nr. 2, 24-58, hier 33 f.; idem, 'Im Herzen der zusammen-gesetzten Habsburgermonarchie', 25; Rainer A. Müller, *Der Fürstenhof in der frühen Neuzeit* (München, 1995), 8 und 18 f.

---

landfremden Amtsadeligen und die gelehrten bürgerlichen Räte, die häufig während ihrer Dienstzeit nobilitiert wurden, andererseits konkurrierenden Eliten an. Die alteingesessenen Herren und Ritter von Österreich unter der Enns beispielsweise versuchten seit etwa 1570, sich durch Auflagen für die Erlangung des Inkolats und für den Erwerb landständischer Güter sowie durch die Trennung der Nobilitierung (durch den Kaiser) von der Verleihung der Landstandschaft gegen bürgerliche Aufsteiger abzuschotten.[12] Die Habsburger entnahmen im 16. Jahrhundert ihre Räte nur zum Teil den traditionellen hochadeligen Eliten ihrer Länder, sie übten vielmehr durch die Standeserhöhung von Bürgerlichen und von Angehörigen des niederen Adels auf die Restrukturierung dieser Eliten einen wesentlichen Einfluß aus.[13] Seit dem Beginn des 17. Jahrhunderts waren die Bemühungen des hohen Adels um Monopolisierung der führenden Positionen am Hof, in den Zentral-behörden und in den Länderregierungen weitgehend erfolgreich. Während ein Großteil der einflußreichsten Geheimen Räte Ferdinands I. (1521-64) Bürgerliche gewesen waren[14] und sich der kaiserliche Geheime Rat und die landesfürstlichen Regierungen in der zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts aus Adeligen und Bürgerlichen zusammengesetzt hatten, kam es im 17. Jahr-hundert zu einer markanten Aristokratisierung des Geheimen Rates und der

---

[12] Michael Haberer, *Leonhard (IV.) von Harrach. Amtsträger zwischen Hof und Land* (Dissertation, Universität Freiburg im Breisgau, 1999), 83; Karin J. MacHardy, *War, Religion and Court Patronage in Habsburg Austria. The Social and Cultural Dimensions of Political Interaction, 1521-1622* (Houndmills, 2003), 149.

[13] Haberer, *Leonhard (IV.) von Harrach*, 99.

[14] Insbesondere der aus einfacher Familie stammende, nach etwa zehn Amtsjahren nobilitierte Schatzmeister Hans Hoffmann, der Reichsvizekanzler Georg Sigmund Seld (ein Augsburger Patrizier), dessen Amtsnachfolger Dr. Johann Baptist Weber (geboren in der Reichsstadt Memmingen), der Hofvizekanzler Georg Gienger (ein Ulmer Bürger-sohn) und dessen Nachfolger Dr. Jakob Jonas (geboren als Sohn eines Bauern in Götzis in Vorarlberg). Helmut Goetz, 'Die geheimen Ratgeber Ferdinands I. (1503-1564). Ihre Persönlichkeit im Urteil der Nuntien und Gesandten', *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, xlii/xliii (1964), 453-94, hier 488 f. und passim; Maximilian Lanzinner, 'Geheime Räte und Berater Kaiser Maximilians II. (1564-1576)', *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, cii (1994), 296-315, hier 297-9.

Länderregierungen.[15] Diese Aristokratisierung der Funktionseliten am Wiener Hof war untrennbar verbunden mit einer bereits in der ersten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts einsetzenden, durch Studien an einer oder mehreren Universitäten und die Bereitschaft zu bürokratischer Arbeit charakterisierten Professionalisierung des Adels.[16]

Zwischen 1600 und 1674 waren insgesamt 130 Männer Mitglieder des Geheimen Rates.[17] Davon stammten 96, also rund drei Viertel, aus Ländern, in denen der Kaiser zugleich Landesfürst war, und zwar 51 aus den österreichischen und 33 aus den böhmischen Ländern; höchstens zwei oder drei Geheime Räte waren Ungarn. 22 Geheime Räte stammten zumindest ursprünglich aus Territorien des Heiligen Römischen Reiches, in denen die Habsburger nicht über die Landeshoheit verfügten. Weitere sieben Geheime Räte waren Italiener. Dazu kommen noch zwei Spanier und je ein Schotte, Franzose und Niederländer.[18] Die gelungene Konfessionalisierung des Kaiserhofs kommt in dem Umstand zum Ausdruck, daß im 17. Jahrhundert alle Geheimen Räte Katholiken waren oder spätestens während ihrer Amtszeit konvertierten.[19] Vor allem während des zweiten Drittels des 17. Jahrhunderts erfüllten die Geheimen Räte, von denen (abgesehen insbesondere von den seit der Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts neu aufsteigenden ungarischen Magnatenfamilien) fast alle Mitglieder der österreichischen Hocharistokratie im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert abstammten, das Ideal der Habsburgermonarchie

---

[15] Maximilian Lanzinner, 'Zur Sozialstruktur der Geheimen Ratskollegien im 17. Jahrhundert', in Winfried Becker und Werner Chrobak (ed.), *Staat, Kultur, Politik. Beiträge zur Geschichte Bayerns und des Katholizismus. Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag von Dieter Albrecht* (Kallmünz/Opf., 1992), 71-88, hier 76 f.

[16] Heinz Noflatscher, 'Funktionseliten an den Höfen der Habsburger um 1500', in Günther Schulz (ed.), *Sozialer Aufstieg. Funktionseliten im Spätmittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit* (München, 2002), 291-314.

[17] Henry F(rederick) Schwarz und John I. Coddington, 'The Social Structure of the Imperial Privy Council, 1600 to 1674', in Henry Frederick Schwarz, *The Imperial Privy Council in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., 1943), 395-410, hier 398.

[18] *Ibid.*, 402 f.

[19] Thomas Winkelbauer, *Fürst und Fürstendiener. Gundaker von Liechtenstein, ein österreichischer Aristokrat des konfessionellen Zeitalters* (Wien und München, 1999), 67 f.

wie kaum eine andere Institution oder soziale Gruppe: Sie bildeten 'a body made up of members of various national groups tightly bound together by bonds of kinship and service of the State'.[20]

Die insgesamt 38 Männer, die von etwa 1665 bis 1705 in die Geheime Konferenz, die Nachfolgeinstitution des Geheimen Rates, berufen wurden, entstammten 33 Familien, von denen etwas mehr als die Hälfte in den böhmischen Ländern und knapp die Hälfte in den österreichischen Ländern den Schwerpunkt ihrer Besitzungen hatten. Hingegen gehörte kein einziger Ungar dem engsten Beraterkreis Kaiser Leopolds I. an. Abgesehen von dem nicht repräsentierten Königreich Ungarn dürften die Teilnehmer der Geheimen Konferenz, obwohl sie mit Sicherheit nicht in erster Linie nach landsmannschaftlichen Kriterien ausgewählt wurden, auch 'eine gewisse Koordinationsfunktion [...] zwischen dem Hof und den Ländern' wahrgenommen haben.[21]

Zusammenfassend kann die Bedeutung des Kaiserhofes für die habsburgische Staatsbildung folgendermaßen charakterisiert werden: 'The Habsburg dominions were ruled neither by a *Beamtenstaat*, nor by a military establishment. Without a doubt, the most efficacious 'centralising' agency was the court. It left the regional fabric intact, while attracting the elites to a pivotal meeting place.'[22]

Die 'österreichische Aristokratie' als Kitt der Habsburgermonarchie

Bereits im Spätmittelalter waren Fürstenhöfe unter anderem Heiratsmärkte, Orte, an denen zahlreiche Konnubien zwischen im Fürstendienst engagierten bzw. diesen anstrebenden Adelsgeschlechtern angebahnt und

---

[20] Schwarz und Coddington, 'The Social Structure of the Imperial Privy Council', 405-10 und die genealogischen Tafeln 411-18, das Zitat 410.

[21] Stefan Sienell, *Die Geheime Konferenz unter Kaiser Leopold I. Personelle Strukturen und Methoden zur politischen Entscheidungsfindung am Wiener Hof* (Frankfurt am Main u. a., 2001), 219 und 404 f.

[22] Duindam, 'The court of the Austrian Habsburgs', 57; ausführlicher: idem, *Vienna and Versailles. The courts of Europe's major dynastic rivals, ca. 1550-1780* (Cambridge, 2003), 219 f. und 228-50.

geschlossen wurden, an denen also (in der Terminologie der Ethnologen) Allianzbildungen zwischen Männern durch Frauentausch besiegelt und gefördert wurden. In zusammengesetzten Monarchien wie jener der Habsburger kam den im Umkreis des Hofes geschlossenen oder sogar direkt vom Monarchen gestifteten Ehen zwischen Angehörigen der adeligen Eliten und dem daraus allmählich entstehenden 'gesamtstaatlichen' Adel eine besonders große Bedeutung für die Staatsbildung zu, und zwar gerade dadurch, daß dieser dem Hof nahestehende Adel die Bindung an ein Land oder an mehrere Länder nicht aufgab, sondern die Vermittlung zwischen den Ländern, dem Monarchen, dessen Hof und den Zentralbehörden übernahm. Die Bedeutung der in Ansätzen seit der Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts entstehenden und zwischen 1620 und 1740 im Zeichen des triumphierenden Barockkatholizismus und der Integration in den Kaiserhof ihre Blütezeit erlebenden transterritorialen 'österreichischen Aristokratie' für die Staatsbildung kann kaum überschätzt werden. Im 16. Jahrhundert dienten Eheverbindungen und Verschwägerungen zwischen protestantischen Adeligen aus den österreichischen, böhmischen und ungarischen Ländern nicht selten der Förderung der gemeinsamen Verteidigung ständischer und religiöser Freiheiten und konnten sich somit auch gegen den Monarchen und seinen Hof richten.[23] Häufiger dürften aber bereits damals Konnubien zwischen dem Hof nahestehenden adeligen Damen und Herren aus unterschiedlichen Ländern gewesen sein.

Bereits in den Jahrzehnten vor 1620 schufen die in Prag, Wien, Graz und Innsbruck residierenden Angehörigen des Hauses Österreich durch eine gezielte Rekrutierungspolitik bei der Besetzung der wichtigsten Hof- und Staatsämter eine Gruppe von hochadeligen oder durch kaiserliche Nobilitierung in den Hochadel aufsteigenden Familien, die ursprünglich aus einem der österreichischen, böhmischen oder ungarischen Länder, aus dem Reich, aus Italien, Spanien oder den Niederlanden stammten und in habsburgische Dienste getreten waren. Dadurch wurde der einheimische protestantische und als potentiell unzuverlässig angesehene Adel allmählich von allen vom Hof

---

[23] Jaroslav Pánek, 'Staatsbildung in einer überstaatlichen Monarchie: Der Fall Böhmen', in Antoni Mączak und Wolfgang E. J. Weber (ed.), *Der frühmoderne Staat in Ostzentraleuropa*, I (Augsburg, 1999), 88-102, hier 100.

zu vergebenden Ämtern ausgeschlossen, in die Defensive gedrängt und letztlich zum Ständeaufstand der Jahre 1618 bis 1620 provoziert.[24]

Spätestens seit etwa 1600, in verstärktem Ausmaß seit 1620, identifizierten sich die Angehörigen der in kaiserlichen Diensten stehenden führenden Adelsfamilien der böhmischen und österreichischen Länder nicht mehr primär mit einem der Länder, sondern mit der Dynastie.[25] Im Schmelztiegel des Wiener Hofes trat die Bedeutung der regionalen und nationalen Herkunft und Verankerung der in den Obersten Hofämtern, in den Zentralbehörden und im Geheimen Rat tätigen Aristokraten in den Hintergrund, sie behielt aber eine große Bedeutung für die 'Gewährleistung' der Herrschaft der Habsburger in den verschiedenen Ländern. 'Der Wiener *melting-pot* war eher ein effektives Medium der Integration und der „Amalgamierung' der aus den Provinzen und den verschiedenen Einflußsphären der habsburgischen Dynastie hervorgegangenen Aristokratie als eine Plattform des Kampfes zwischen den Eliten der einzelnen Regionen.'[26]

Der Prozeß der Formierung einer homogenen höfischen Elite wurde durch eine wachsende Zahl von Heiratsverbindungen zwischen Angehörigen von Adelsfamilien aus den böhmischen und österreichischen Ländern (sie verfügten nicht selten über ausgedehnten Besitz in mehreren Ländern), aus dem Reich und aus den romanischen Ländern (insbesondere Hofdamen der spanischen und italienischen Kaiserinnen) gefördert.[27] Jaroslav von Martinitz gab 1625 die zwar schließlich nicht eingetretene, aber doch bezeichnende Prognose ab, Wilhelm Slavata, der spätere Oberstkanzler des Königreichs Böhmen, werde für seine drei Söhne Gemahlinnen nach dem Landesprinzip

---

[24] Zur Konfessionalisierung der höfischen Patronage und zu deren Folgen für den katholischen und protestantischen hohen und niederen Adel am Beispiel des niederösterreichischen Herren- und Ritterstandes zwischen 1580 und 1620 siehe MacHardy, *War, Religion and Court Patronage*.

[25] Chesler, *Crown, Lords, and God*, 241 f.

[26] Petr Maťa, *Svět české aristokracie* (Prague, 2004), 429.

[27] *Ibid.*, 605-640; Beatrix Bastl und Gernot Heiß, 'Hofdamen und Höflinge zur Zeit Kaiser Leopolds I. Zur Geschichte eines vergessenen Berufsstandes', *Opera historica*, v (1996), 187-265.

aussuchen, nämlich je eine aus Böhmen, Mähren und den österreichischen Ländern.[28] Durch Heiratsallianzen entstanden im Laufe des 17. Jahrhunderts mächtige ‚Clans', wie etwa jener der Waldstein und der Harrach, deren Mitglieder sich auf gegenseitige Hilfe beim Erklimmen der Karriereleitern verlassen konnten.[29]

Petr Maťa hat das seit der Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts beobachtbare 'energische Eingreifen der österreichischen Habsburger in die Heiratspolitik der böhmischen Aristokratie' mit Recht als 'einen der wichtigsten Bausteine des habsburgischen zusammengesetzten Staates in Mitteleuropa' bezeichnet. 'Die Hofheiraten, die durch Angehörige der Dynastie initiierten Adelsehen und die vielen kleinen Herrscherinterventionen in die Heiratsstrategien einzelner Adeliger trugen wesentlich bei zur Integration der loyalen katholischen Adelsgruppe, zur Knüpfung fester Bande zwischen den bisher voneinander isolierten aristokratischen Gesellschaften den einzelnen Regionen der Monarchie und zu deren massiver Internationalisierung.'[30]

Maťa hat auch eine überzeugende Klassifikation des böhmischen und mährischen Adels in der Zeit von 1620 bis 1740 vorgelegt, die schon deshalb im großen und ganzen auch für den Adel der österreichischen Länder anwendbar ist, da die oberste Schicht des böhmischen und mährischen Hochadels, die sich bereits seit der Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts fremden Einflüssen geöffnet hatte, in den Jahrzehnten nach 1620 'völlig mit den aristokratischen Gesellschaften der österreichischen Länder (bzw. des Reichs) zu einer einzigen sozialen Schicht' verschmolz.[31] Fast jeder Angehörige – zumindest jeder in öffentlichen Ämtern aktive Angehörige – des nach 1620 in das habsburgische Regierungssystem integrierten, konfessionell unifizierten böhmischen und mährischen Adels läßt sich einer von fünf Gruppen zuordnen, die jeweils einen ähnlichen Lebensstil und eine weitgehend gemeinsame

Gedankenwelt miteinander teilten und von denen hier nur die beiden obersten angeführt werden.[32]

Die eigentliche gesellschaftliche Elite der Habsburgermonarchie bildeten die seit den 1620er Jahren von den Kaisern in den Fürstenstand erhobenen sogenannten Neuen Fürsten, die ehemaligen Herren bzw. Grafen und nunmehrigen Fürsten von Liechtenstein, Eggenberg, Lobkowitz, Dietrichstein, Auersperg, Schwarzenberg etc. Sie besaßen ausnahmslos nicht nur in einem, sondern in mehreren habsburgischen Ländern Herrschaften und Güter, insbesondere in Böhmen, Mähren und Schlesien sowie in den nieder- und innerösterreichischen Ländern. Ihr politisches Hauptziel bestand in der Erlangung von Sitz und Stimme auf der Fürstenbank des Reichstags des Heiligen Römischen Reichs und in der damit verbundenen Eingliederung in die politische Struktur und die gesellschaftliche Führungsschicht des Reichs. Von Ausnahmen abgesehen nahmen sie nicht an Landtagen, ja nicht einmal an Erbhuldigungen teil und übernahmen keine Landesämter. Sie hatten im Laufe ihres Lebens entweder oberste Funktionen am Kaiserhof (insbesondere das Obersthofmeisteramt des Kaisers, der Kaiserin, des Thronfolgers oder der Kaiserinwitwe) und in der kaiserlichen Armee inne, fungierten als kaiserliche Botschafter bei der päpstlichen Kurie in Rom und am Immerwährenden Reichstag in Regensburg, oder aber sie beschränkten sich auf das Hofleben an ihren eigenen Residenzen und auf die Demonstration ihres fürstlichen Ranges und ihrer relativen Unabhängigkeit vom Kaiserhof.

Die zweite Gruppe war die 'hoffähige Aristokratie'. Dazu gehörten jene Adelsgeschlechter, deren männlichen Angehörigen die höchsten Ämter am Kaiserhof und in den Zentralbehörden der Monarchie einschließlich der Ämter des Obersten Kanzlers des Königreichs Böhmen und des Öster-

---

[28] Petr Maťa, Zrození tradice (Slavatovské vyústění rožmberského a hradeckého odkazu), Opera historica, vi (1998), 513-52, hier 526 f.

[29] Maťa, Svět české aristokracie, 618 f.

[30] Ibid., 637.

[31] Petr Maťa, 'Aristokratisches Prestige und der böhmische Adel (1500-1700)', Frühneuzeit-Info, x (1999), 43-52, hier 44.

[32] Václav Bůžek und Petr Maťa, 'Wandlungen des Adels in Böhmen und Mähren im Zeitalter des ‚Absolutismus' (1620-1740)', in Ronald G. Asch (ed.), Der europäische Adel im Ancien Régime. Von der Krise der ständischen Monarchien bis zur Revolution (1600-1789) (Köln, Weimar und Wien, 2001), 287-321, 292-309 (= Petr Maťa, Versuch einer neuen Klassifikation des böhmischen und mährischen Adels [1620-1740]); Petr Maťa, 'Der Adel aus den böhmischen Ländern am Kaiserhof 1620-1740. Versuch, eine falsche Frage richtig zu lösen', Opera historica, x (2003), 191-233, hier 228-33. Die drei anderen Gruppen sind der Landadel, der niedere Adel und der Militäradel.

reichischen Kanzlers zugänglich waren. Die hoffähige Aristokratie bildete keine rechtlich definierte Gruppe, ihre sozialen Grenzen lassen sich jedoch auf der Grundlage der Ämterlaufbahnen und der gegenseitigen Verflechtung durch Heiratsverbindungen recht gut abstecken. Ähnlich wie die Neuen Fürsten besaßen auch die meist dem Grafenstand angehörenden hoffähigen Aristokraten Herrschaften und Güter in mehreren Ländern. Im Unterschied zu den Fürsten engagierten sie sich jedoch intensiv in der Landespolitik. Ihre im Idealfall in einer der Zentralbehörden oder in einem der obersten Hofämter endenden Laufbahnen begannen mit dem Einstieg in die Ämterlaufbahnen auf regionaler Ebene (als Kreishauptleute in Böhmen und Mähren, als Viertelskommissare bzw. ab der Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts ebenfalls als Kreishauptleute in einem der österreichischen Länder) oder auf Landesebene. Auch die Ämterlaufbahnen der höchsten kaiserlichen Würdenträger hatten für gewöhnlich in den Behörden eines Landes oder einer Ländergruppe begonnen – sei es in landesfürstlichen oder in ständischen Ämtern oder auch abwechselnd oder sogar gleichzeitig in landesfürstlichen und ständischen Ämtern.

Der wichtigste 'Kitt' der Habsburgermonarchie war seit den 1620er Jahren die hoffähige Aristokratie. Diese 'Höflinge in den Provinzen' bildeten – mit einem von Mark Hengerer geprägten Begriff – den mehrere Hundert Personen umfassenden 'virtuellen Hof' des Kaisers und vielfachen Landesfürsten. Diese mit der Würde eines Kämmerers oder sogar eines Geheimen Rates ausgezeichneten Angehörigen des hohen Adels der einzelnen Länder, deren oberster Spitze die Mitgliedschaft im habsburgischen Hausorden des Goldenen Vlieses verliehen wurde, vermittelten den Kontakt zwischen dem Herrscher und dem Hof auf der einen und den Ländern sowie jenen Adelsgruppen, die keine direkten Beziehungen zum Hof unterhielten, auf der anderen Seite.

Seit den 1630er Jahren ist in den böhmischen Ländern sowie in Österreich ob und unter der Enns eine enger werdende Verbindung zwischen ständischen und höfischen Ämtern zu beobachten, eine Entwicklung, die in Innerösterreich (Steiermark, Kärnten und Krain) bereits eine Generation früher eingesetzt hatte. Der Kaiserhof erreichte die Sicherung ('Gewährleistung') seiner Macht in den Ländern und Regionen über die Einbindung der führenden Repräsentanten der ständischen Verwaltung in den Hofstaat.

Im zweiten Drittel des 17. Jahrhunderts waren kaiserliche Kämmerer häufig zur selben Zeit auch in ihrem Herkunftsland bzw. in einem ihrer Herkunftsländer Amtsträger in der landständischen oder der landesfürstlichen Verwaltung und Justiz. Die strukturell nach wie vor bestehende adelige Gegenmacht landständischer, aber auch landesfürstlicher Ämter und Institutionen wurde nun nicht mehr für den Ausbau der kollektiven ständischen und der Landesfreiheiten genutzt, sondern für die Beförderung der eigenen Laufbahnen und Interessen sowie der Laufbahnen und Interessen von Familienmitgliedern, Verwandten, 'Freunden' und Klienten. Schließlich hatten die Kaiser auch in den Provinzen bei jeder Ämterbesetzung die Wahl zwischen verschiedenen adeligen Familien und Kandidaten.[33]

Vor 1620 wäre eine derartige Amalgamierung der ständischen und der höfischen Sphäre wohl undenkbar gewesen. So begründete der niederösterreichische Kammerrat Gundaker von Liechtenstein, der in den Jahren 1605 und 1606 Verordneter des niederösterreichischen Herrenstands – also Mitglied des aus Vertretern der drei oberen Stände (Prälaten, Herren und Ritter) bestehenden Exekutivorgans der niederösterreichischen Stände[34] – gewesen war, im Juni 1616 seine Nichtteilnahme an den Landtagssitzungen folgendermaßen: Es gebühre ihm nicht, bei der Beratung der landesfürstlichen Landtagsproposition unter den Landständen zu sitzen, 'alldieweilen ich dieselbe [sc. die Proposition; Th. W.] in dem geheim- und deputierten rahtts-collegio hab helfen beratschlagen und zusammendragen'. Er habe daher Bedenken, bei der Abstimmung über die Landtagsproposition im Landtag sein Votum

---

[33] Dazu jetzt grundlegend: Mark Hengerer, *Kaiserhof und Adel in der Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts. Eine Kommunikationsgeschichte der Macht in der Vormoderne* (Konstanz, 2004), bes. 376-411 und 541-58.

[34] Herbert Hassinger, 'Die Landstände der österreichischen Länder. Zusammensetzung, Organisation und Leistung im 16.-18. Jahrhundert', *Jahrbuch für Landeskunde von Niederösterreich*, Neue Folge, xxxvi/ii (1964), 989-1035, hier 1020 f.; Silvia Petrin, *Die Stände des Landes Niederösterreich* (St. Pölten und Wien 1982), 19 f.; eadem, 'Die niederösterreichischen Stände im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert', in *Adel im Wandel. Politik – Kultur – Konfession 1500-1700, Katalog der Niederösterreichischen Landesausstellung auf der Rosenburg 1990* (Wien, 1990), 285-300, hier 293.

abzugeben.[35] Angesichts des gespannten Verhältnisses zwischen den (mehr-heitlich evangelischen) Landständen und dem Hof war er offenbar der Überzeugung, er könne nur entweder als Repräsentant des Hofes oder als Mitglied der Landstände agieren und dürfe als vom Landesfürsten besoldeter Beamter wegen Befangenheit nicht am Landtag teilnehmen. In den 1650er Jahren riet Gundaker von Liechtenstein, der 1623 in den Fürstenstand erhoben worden war, seinen beiden Söhnen wiederholt, an den mährischen Land-tagen teilzunehmen und dabei eine zwischen den Ständen und dem Hof vermittelnde Position einzunehmen. Er war nunmehr davon überzeugt, daß sich die Interessen des Hofes, der Landstände und der einzelnen Stände-mitglieder miteinander vereinbaren ließen und daß im Interesse des Gemeinwohls der einzelnen Länder und aller ihrer Bewohner, aber auch des Wohlergehens des liechtensteinischen Hauses und seiner Untertanen eine aktive Beteiligung möglichst aller dazu berechtigten Fürsten von Liechten-stein an den Landtagen und in der Landespolitik wünschenswert war.[36]

Die Stände des Landes Österreich unter der Enns

Vom Spätmittelalter bis zum 17. Jahrhundert war für die politische Identität der Machteliten der habsburgischen Länder – das heißt in erster Linie des Adels – vor allem die Identifikation mit einem Land (Landes-bewußtsein) und zum Teil auch mit einer durch eine Krone (Wenzelskrone, Stephanskrone) repräsentierten Gruppe von Ländern (Kronbewußtsein) prägend. Die einzelnen österreichischen und böhmischen Länder sowie Ungarn besaßen im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert eigene Rechtssysteme, und die Rechtsentwicklung verlief in den einzelnen Ländern grundsätzlich getrennt. In den unterschiedlichen Gewohnheitsrechten und in der Landesgesetz-gebung profilierten sich die Länder als einheitliche, nach außen abgegrenzte

---

[35] Winkelbauer, *Fürst und Fürstendiener*, 167 f.

[36] *Ibid.*, 172-4.

Rechtsbezirke.[37] Das innerhalb der Grenzen eines Landes geltende Recht war vom 13. bis ins 18. Jahrhundert eine wichtige Basis des Landesbewußtseins und des Landespatriotismus der politischen Eliten. In den böhmischen und österreichischen Ländern vor allem bis 1620, mit Einschränkungen aber auch danach, und in Ungarn jedenfalls bis zur Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts waren, von Ausnahmezuständen wie nach der Niederschlagung des Ständeaufstands der Jahre 1618 bis 1620 und der ungarisch-kroatischen 'Magnatenver-schwörung' in der zweiten Hälfte der 1660er Jahre abgesehen, in allen wichtigeren Fragen der Gesetzgebung die zumindest beratende Mitwirkung der Landstände und deren Konsens mit dem Landesfürsten unabdingbare Elemente der Normproduktion.[38] Ganz besonders gilt das für Zusammen-stellungen des gesamten (Landesordnungen) oder von Teilen des in einem Land geltenden Rechts (Landrechte), denn über das Recht des Landes konnte nur dieses in seiner Gesamtheit, repräsentiert durch den Landesfürsten und die Landesgemeinde, das heißt die Landstände, disponieren.[39]

---

[37] Wilhelm Brauneder, 'Die Anfänge der Gesetzgebung am Beispiel der Steiermark' [1977]. Wiederabdruck in idem, *Studien I: Entwicklung des Öffentlichen Rechts* (Frankfurt am Main u. a., 1994), 413-35, hier 431.

[38] Josef Pauser, '„sein ir Majestät jetzo im werkh die polliceyordnung widerumb zu verneuern". Kaiser Maximilian II. (1564-1576) und die Landstände von Österreich unter der Enns im gemeinsamen Ringen um die „gute policey"', in Willibald Rosner (ed.), *Recht und Gericht in Niederösterreich* (St. Pölten, 2002), 17-66, hier 31. Zur landes-fürstlichen Gesetzgebung in den österreichischen Ländern in der Frühen Neuzeit siehe zuletzt Josef Pauser, 'Landesfürstliche Gesetzgebung (Policey-, Malefiz- und Landes-ordnungen)', in idem, Scheutz und Winkelbauer, *Quellenkunde der Habsburger-monarchie*, 216-256.

[39] Zum Verhältnis von Landesherrschaft und Landesgemeinde (Landständen) im Spätmittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit nach wie vor grundlegend: Otto Brunner, *Land und Herrschaft. Grundfragen der territorialen Verfassungsgeschichte Österreichs im Mittelalter*, 5. Aufl. (Wien, 1965), 357-440 und 441-463 (Anhang: Die Länder der Österreichischen Monarchie); zur historiographischen Einordnung von Otto Brunners „Land und Herrschaft" siehe Volker Reinhardt (ed.), *Hauptwerke der Geschichts-schreibung* (Stuttgart, 1997), 68-71, und Kersten Krüger, *Die landständische Verfassung* (München, 2003), 56-59. Zum „Nebeneinander der Rechtssysteme" in der frühneu-zeitlichen Habsburgermonarchie vgl. Winkelbauer, *Ständefreiheit und Fürstenmacht*, Teil 1, 202-226.

Ihren dauerhaftesten (bildlichen und dinglichen) Ausdruck fanden die auf die einzelnen Länder bezogenen Patriotismen des ständischen Adels im Bau der Landhäuser in Wien, Linz, Graz, Klagenfurt, Laibach (Ljubljana), Brünn (Brno) und Innsbruck, diesen Bastionen und Monumenten des ständischen Landesbewußtseins.[40] Die Landhäuser zeugen bis zum heutigen Tag vom Anteil der Stände an der Staatsbildung in den österreichischen Ländern und in Mähren. Die Organe der böhmischen Stände waren im Alten Königspalast auf der Prager Burg untergebracht, wo auch (im Wladislawschen Saal) die Plenarsitzungen der Landtage stattfanden und die einzelnen Stände über Beratungsräume verfügten. Die im Auftrag und auf Kosten der Stände errichteten bzw. umgebauten Landhäuser dienten den Ständen zur Unterbringung von Behörden, Archiven, Bibliotheken, Schulen und Zeughäusern sowie zur Abhaltung der Landtage und für Beratungen der einzelnen Kurien.

Ständisches Landesbewußtsein und Hochschätzung der Dynastie und ihrer staatsbildenden Kraft schlossen einander insbesondere im habsburgischen Kernland Niederösterreich (Österreich unter der Enns) auch vor 1620 nicht aus. Dingliche und bildliche Zeugnisse dafür finden sich im ehemaligen Landhaus in der Wiener Herrengasse. Die Vorhalle, das Portal und der Innenraum der Verordnetenstube wurden, ganz dem Haupt- und Residenzstadtcharakter Wiens entsprechend, in den Jahren 1570 bis 1572 im Auftrag der überwiegend protestantischen Stände des Landes Österreich unter der Enns mit einem regelrechten Gesamtstaatsprogramm der Länder Kaiser Maximilians II. ausgestattet. Über dem Gesimse des Marmorportals aus dem Jahr 1571, das ursprünglich aus der Vorhalle in die Verordnetenstube führte, befindet sich ein halbkreisförmiges Relief, in dessen Zentrum die über den wirtschaftlichen Reichtum des Landes wachende, mit dem Erzherzogshut gekrönte, fast vollplastische Personifikation der Austria thront, die in der Rechten einen immergrünen Lorbeerzweig hält. Die Füße der Thronenden

ruhen auf einem Füllhorn mit einer goldenen Getreidegarbe, neben dem ein mit Weintrauben bekränzter Stierkopf liegt. Die Attribute der Austria versinnbildlichen das Florieren von Ackerbau, Viehzucht und Weinbau des Landes, über dessen Wohlergehen die Austria Tag und Nacht Wache hält. Den Hintergrund bilden Ansichten der Stadt Wien, der Burg von Preßburg (Bratislava) und der Stadt Prag, also der Hauptstädte der drei Ländergruppen des regierenden Kaisers. Links und rechts von dem Relief sind das ungarische und das böhmische Wappen angebracht, die beide von Löwen gehalten werden. Durch das Portal betritt man den ehemaligen, 1572 fertiggestellten Sitzungssaal der Verordneten. Decke und Wände der Verordnetenstube waren einst mit einem umfangreichen Wappenprogramm ausgestattet, von dem nur der Teil an der prächtigen Holzdecke erhalten ist. Der Doppeladler mit einem gevierten, von der Collane des Ordens vom Goldenen Vlies umrahmten Wappen (zweimal Ungarn und zweimal Böhmen) auf der Brust wird von den Wappen Altösterreichs, Neuösterreichs, Ungarns und Böhmens flankiert. Zehn weitere Länderwappen (Burgund, Österreich ob der Enns, Steiermark, Kärnten, Krain, Görz, Mähren, Schlesien, Kroatien und Bosnien), die wahrscheinlich knapp unterhalb der Decke an den Wänden hingen, wurden 1857 anläßlich einer Restaurierung abgenommen und sind seither verschollen.[41]

Der aus der selben Zeit stammende Große Sitzungssaal des Wiener Landhauses wurde 1710 von Antonio Beduzzi mit einem von dem kaiserlichen Hofhistoriographen Giovanni Battista Comazzi entworfenen Freskenzyklus ausgeschmückt. In den Gemälden werden das Land Österreich unter der Enns, seine Bewohner und die Herrschaft des Hauses Österreich über die 'Monarchia Austriaca', ja (wegen des Erbes der spanischen Habsburger) über große Teile der Erde allegorisch verherrlicht. Im zentralen Hauptfresko ist die Huldigung Austrias vor der göttlichen Vorsehung dargestellt. Putten und Genien, die die Insignien der unter österreichischer Herrschaft stehenden

---

[40] Vgl. u. a. Thomas Winkelbauer und Tomáš Knoz, 'Geschlecht und Geschichte. Grablegen, Grabdenkmäler und Wappenzyklen als Quellen für das historisch-genealogische Denken des österreichischen Adels im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert', in Joachim Bahlcke und Arno Strohmeyer (ed.), *Die Konstruktion der Vergangenheit. Geschichtsdenken, Traditionsbildung und Selbstdarstellung im frühneuzeitlichen Ostmitteleuropa* (Berlin, 2002), 129-77, hier 141-5.

---

[41] Anton Mayer, 'Das niederösterreichische Landhaus in Wien 1513-1848', *Berichte und Mittheilungen des Alterthums-Vereines zu Wien*, xxxviii (1904), 1-133, hier 39-41; Rupert Feuchtmüller, *Das niederösterreichische Landhaus – ein kunsthistorisches Denkmal 1513-1850* (Wien, 1949), 18.

Länder tragen, schweben auf die zentrale Szene zu. Allegorien der Ehre und
des Ruhmes verkünden mit Posaunen aller Welt die Größe Österreichs. Die
Nutzung des Landhaussaales ist ein weiterer Beleg für die enge Verzahnung
von Hof und Ständen: 1710, kurz nach der Fertigstellung der Fresken, gaben
die Geheimen Räte und Kämmerer ein großes Maskenfest, an dem Kaiser
Joseph I. und der Hof teilnahmen. Eines der größten Feste, die der Saal im
18. Jahrhundert gesehen hat, war der aus Anlaß der Hochzeit des Thron-
folgers Joseph mit der Prinzessin Isabella von Parma im Jahr 1760 gegebene
Ball. Maria Theresia und Franz Stephan, das Brautpaar und die Hofgesell-
schaft zogen durch einen eigens für diesen Zweck errichteten hölzernen
Gang von der Hofburg in das Landhaus.[42]

Auch die feierlichen Staatsakte der niederösterreichischen Erbhuldi-
gungen demonstrieren die spezielle Rolle der Stände des habsburgischen
Kernlandes im politischen System und in der politischen Kultur der Habs-
burgermonarchie, wie William Godsey kürzlich zeigen konnte.[43] Während in
Graz und Laibach seit 1728 und in Linz seit 1743 keine Erbhuldigungen
mehr stattfanden, ließen – mit der bezeichnenden Ausnahme Josephs II., der
sich auch weder mit der Stephans- noch mit der Wenzelskrone krönen ließ –
bis 1835 alle Habsburger die untrennbar mit der Bestätigung der Landes-
freiheiten (einschließlich des Beschwerde- und des Mitspracherechts der
Stände) durch den neuen Monarchen verbundene niederösterreichische Erb-
huldigung in der Ritterstube der Wiener Hofburg durchführen. Godsey kommt
zu dem Schluß, die niederösterreichischen Erbhuldigungen und die Krönungen
in Ungarn und Böhmen hätten im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert, im Gegensatz zur

---

[42] Rupert Feuchtmüller, 'Austria Gloriosa. Der barocke Freskenzyklus Antonio
Beduzzis im niederösterreichischen Landhaus', *Alte und moderne Kunst*, ii (1957), 2-4;
idem, *Das niederösterreichische Landhaus*, 23-8 und Anhang, VI-VIII; Dagobert Frey,
'Der Landhaussaal in Wien. Eine entwicklungsgeschichtliche Studie', *Mitteilungen des
Vereines für Geschichte der Stadt Wien*, i (1919/20), 67-79.

[43] William D. Godsey, Jr., 'Herrschaft und politische Kultur im Habsburgerreich:
Die niederösterreichische Erbhuldigung (17.-19. Jahrhundert)', in Joachim Bahlcke und
Roland Gehrke (ed.), *Frühparlamentarismus zwischen altständischer Ordnung und
modernem Konstitutionalismus: Schlesien im europäischen Vergleich (1750-1850)* (im
Druck).

herkömmlichen Interpretation, sogar einen politischen 'Funktionsgewinn'
erfahren. Nicht zuletzt dank der Tatsache, daß die niederösterreichischen
Stände zu einem 'Sammelbecken der großen Geschlechter der übrigen
Territorien' wurden, habe die niederösterreichische Erbhuldigung eine
wachsende 'Bedeutung [...] für den Gesamtstaat' erlangt.[44]

Vom Widerstandsrecht der Stände zum dynastischen Patriotismus

Spätestens im letzten Drittel des 16. Jahrhunderts bekannte sich die
überwiegende Mehrheit des Adels aller Länder der österreichischen Linie
des Hauses Habsburg mit Ausnahme der Grafschaft Tirol zu einer der
nichtkatholischen Konfessionskirchen. Jedoch erst seit den 1580er Jahren
und verstärkt in den ersten Jahren des 17. Jahrhunderts wurde die Religions-
frage mehr und mehr politisiert und ideologisch aufgeladen, und die
Verteidigung der Religionsfreiheit entwickelte sich zum wichtigsten ideellen
Bindeglied der Ständeopposition in den einzelnen böhmischen und öster-
reichischen Ländern.

Bis zum Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts überwog bei allen Konflikten, die in
erster Linie wegen der Frage der Religionsfreiheit zwischen den katholischen
Landesfürsten und den großteils protestantischen Ständen der einzelnen
österreichischen und böhmischen Länder sowie Ungarns ausgetragen wurden,
meist die grundsätzliche Überzeugung aller Beteiligten, im Kampf gegen das
Osmanische Reich aufeinander angewiesen zu sein und daher zusammen-
arbeiten und Kompromisse schließen zu müssen. Der ständisch-monarchi-
sche Dualismus war durch eine 'latente Interessenspannung zwischen Herr-
scher und Landschaft gekennzeichnet',[45] so daß der sich in verschiedenen
(passiven und aktiven) Formen äußernde Widerstand der Stände gegen

---

[44] *Ibid.*

[45] Arno Strohmeyer, 'Vom Widerstand zur Rebellion: Praxis und Theorie des
ständischen Widerstands in den östlichen österreichischen Ländern im Werden der
Habsburgermonarchie (ca. 1550-1650)', in Robert von Friedeburg (ed.), *Widerstands-
recht in der frühen Neuzeit. Erträge und Perspektiven der Forschung im deutsch-
britischen Vergleich* (Berlin, 2001), 207-243, hier 213.

bestimmte Forderungen des Fürsten ein 'wesentliches Element des dualisti-
schen Ständesystems'[46] darstellte. Im Normalfall führte der Widerstand
jedoch schließlich zum Interessenausgleich und zu einem Kompromiß. Die
Berufung auf das Widerstandsrecht der Stände gegen alle Maßnahmen der
Landesfürsten, durch die die Privilegien der Länder und der Stände verletzt
wurden, und die Versuche zur Schaffung von an die Tradition der mittel-
alterlichen Einungen und Schwurvereine anknüpfenden Ständebündnissen
blieben bis etwa 1600 im Rahmen des Konsensprinzips. Gefördert durch den
zunächst vor allem die landesfürstlichen Städte und Märkte treffenden
Beginn der Gegenreformation, drang im letzten Viertel des 16. Jahrhunderts
allmählich das Modell der Adelskonföderation, das seit den polnischen
Interregna nach 1572 einen festen Bestandteil des Verfassungslebens der
polnisch-litauischen Adelsrepublik bildete, in das politische Denken der
Stände der habsburgischen Länder ein.[47]

Arno Strohmeyer hat in einer vergleichenden Untersuchung der theoreti-
schen Rechtfertigung der Widerstandspraxis der Stände der Steiermark,
Österreichs ob der Enns und Österreichs unter der Enns zwischen 1564 und
1620 vier Hauptargumente zur Legitimierung ständischen Widerstands
herausgearbeitet. Es handelt sich um die folgenden Vorwürfe an die Adresse
des Monarchen: 1. Verletzung des wechselseitigen Treueverhältnisses
zwischen den Ständen und dem Landesfürsten, 2. Verletzung des 'guten alten
Herkommens', 3. Verletzung des Gemeinwohls und 4. Beschwerung des
Gewissens der Ständemitglieder.[48] Seit dem letzten Viertel des 16. Jahr-

hunderts kam es zu einer allmählichen 'Delegitimierung des ständischen
Widerstands', die sich insbesondere an vier Teilprozessen festmachen läßt:
1. an der vor allem von den Landesfürsten betriebenen katholischen Konfes-
sionalisierung, 2. am Funktions- und Bedeutungsverlust der Erbhuldigungen,
3. an der Ausbildung und der unter Berufung auf die Staatsräson erfolgten
Durchsetzung der monarchischen Souveränität und 4. an der 'Disziplinierung
des ,alten Herkommens'' mit Hilfe von dessen Ersetzung durch schriftlich
fixierte normative Lösungen.[49] Diese Delegitimierung des ständischen
Widerstands 'bildete eine unentbehrliche Voraussetzung des Werdens der
Habsburgermonarchie, denn nur ein in diesen widerstandsrechtlichen
Möglichkeiten beschnittenes und somit gezähmtes Ständetum konnte in den
entstehenden monarchischen Staatsverband eingegliedert werden'.[50]

Nach der Schlacht am Weißen Berg wurden die Stände der böhmischen
und österreichischen Länder zu kooperationswilligen (Junior-)Partnern der
sich im Glanz des Gottesgnadentums sonnenden Herrschermacht, allerdings
'ohne daß es zu einem radikalen Umbau des Justizsystems und des
Verwaltungsapparats gekommen wäre'.[51] Die Habsburger errichteten bis zur
Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts keine landesfürstlichen Institutionen auf den
unteren Ebenen des politischen Systems und beließen die Steuerverwaltung
in den Händen des Behördenapparats der Stände der einzelnen Länder. Sie
beschränkten sich darauf, die Stärkung der politischen Macht des Herrschers,
seines Hofes und der Zentralbehörden der Monarchie 'durch die langfristige

---

[46] Winfried Eberhard, 'Herrscher und Stände', in Iring Fetscher und Herfried
Münkler (ed.), *Pipers Handbuch der politischen Ideen*, Bd. 2: Mittelalter. Von den
Anfängen des Islams bis zur Reformation (München und Zürich, 1993), 467-551, hier 469.

[47] Joachim Bahlcke, 'Durch „starke Konföderation wohl stabiliert". Ständische
Defension und politisches Denken in der habsburgischen Ländergruppe am Anfang des
17. Jahrhunderts', in Thomas Winkelbauer (ed.), *Kontakte und Konflikte. Böhmen,
Mähren und Österreich: Aspekte eines Jahrtausends gemeinsamer Geschichte* (Horn und
Waidhofen an der Thaya, 1993), 173-86, hier 174.

[48] Strohmeyer, 'Vom Widerstand zur Rebellion', 225-38. Vgl. auch Winfried
Schulze, 'Zur politischen Theorie des steirischen Ständetums der Gegenreformations-
zeit', *Zeitschrift des Historischen Vereines für Steiermark*, lxii (1971), 33-48.

[49] Strohmeyer, 'Vom Widerstand zur Rebellion', 240-3. – Die Erbhuldigungen
entwickelten sich auch in den österreichischen Erbländern im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert
tendenziell zu barocken Festen, sie blieben aber nach wie vor jedenfalls auch (vielleicht
sogar in erster Linie) Rechtsakte. Vgl. André Holenstein, *Die Huldigung der Untertanen.
Rechtskultur und Herrschaftsordnung (800-1800)* (Stuttgart und New York, 1991), 434-
78 und 514 f. Der Auffassung, die Erbhuldigungen hätten im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert
einen Bedeutungsverlust erfahren, widerspricht entschieden Godsey, 'Herrschaft und
politische Kultur im Habsburgerreich' (im Druck).

[50] Strohmeyer, 'Vom Widerstand zur Rebellion', 243.

[51] Petr Maťa, 'Český zemský sněm v pobělohorské době (1620-1740). Relikt
stavovského státu nebo nástroj absolutistické vlády?', in Marian J. Ptak (ed.), *Sejm czeski
od czasów najdawniejszych do 1913 roku* (Opole, 2000), 49-67, hier 65.

Disziplinierung der politischen Eliten und die schrittweise Umgestaltung der politischen Kultur' zu realisieren.[52] Die Obersten Landesbeamten Böhmens, Mährens und Schlesiens sowie von Österreich ob und unter der Enns waren seit 1620 nicht mehr in erster Linie Repräsentanten der Landstände, sondern zumindest auch landesfürstliche Beamte und Vertrauensleute des Hofes. Die Adeligen wetteiferten untereinander um die prestigeträchtigen und teilweise auch finanziell einträglichen Ämter am Hof, im diplomatischen Dienst, in der Armee und in der Kirche. Im hohen Adel der böhmischen Länder entstand ebenso wie in jenem der österreichischen Länder 'eine Tradition des „Dienstes', die in den Moralkodex des österreichischen Adels einging und bis zum Ende der Monarchie einen Teil seiner Mentalität bildete. Anstelle des Landespatriotismus, der den Adel in der Zeit vor der Schlacht am Weißen Berg charakterisiert hatte, entstand eine Art „dynastischer' Patriotismus, dem das adelige Landesbewußtsein immer mehr untergeordnet wurde.'[53]

Die niederösterreichischen Landtage

Die adeligen Stände der österreichischen Länder verfolgten nach den Konfiskationen und Emigrationen der 1620er Jahre keine politischen Ambitionen mehr, die auf eine grundsätzliche Änderung des politischen Systems zu Gunsten einer libertären Adelsherrschaft nach dem Modell der 'Confoederatio Bohemica' abgezielt hätten. 'Einem solchen Adel – wenn auch mit Abstrichen – seine Privilegien zu bestätigen, brauchte Ferdinand II. nicht fürchten.'[54] Die Stärke der Stände lag nun nicht mehr in den –

---

[52] *Ibid.*, 65.

[53] Josef Válka, *Česká společnost v 15.-18. století*, Bd. 2: Bělohorská doba. Společnost a kultura „manýrismu" (Prague, 1983), 105 f. Siehe auch idem, *Dějiny Moravy*, Teil 2: Morava reformace, renesance a baroka (Brno, 1996), 107-14; Werner Bein, *Schlesien in der habsburgischen Politik. Ein Beitrag zur Entstehung des Dualismus im Alten Reich* (Sigmaringen, 1994), 133-9; Evans, *Das Werden der Habsburgermonarchie*, 162 f. und 174.

[54] Winfried Schulze, 'Das Ständewesen in den Erblanden der Habsburger Monarchie bis 1740: Vom dualistischen Ständestaat zum organisch-föderativen Absolutismus', in

abgesehen von den Landtagseröffnungen (Postulatalandtage) – häufig sehr schwach besuchten Landtagen und der dort stattfindenden politischen Meinungsbildung, sondern vor allem in den besoldeten Exekutivorganen der Landschaften, die eine Entwicklung in Richtung zunehmender Bürokratisierung und Professionalisierung durchmachten.[55] Shuichi Iwasaki vertritt allerdings, und zwar mit bedenkenswerten Argumenten, die Ansicht, die Beziehung zwischen dem Landtag und den ständischen Exekutivorganen sei noch in den ersten vier Jahrzehnten des 18. Jahrhunderts 'ziemlich ähnlich gewesen [...] wie die zwischen dem Parlament und dem Kabinett im heutigen parlamentarischen Regierungssystem'.[56]

Die Landesfreiheiten mit dem Steuerbewilligungsrecht und dem Beschwerderecht an der Spitze wurden von den Landesfürsten weiterhin anerkannt, und die landesfürstlichen Regierungen rührten lange Zeit nicht an den ständischen Behördenapparaten der einzelnen Länder. Gerichtswesen, Steueraufteilung und Steuereinhebung, Straßenwesen, Sanitätsangelegenheiten und Landesdefensionswesen blieben praktisch in der Kompetenz der Stände und ihrer Behörden, das heißt in erster Linie des Adels und der Prälaten (der vierte Stand war seit etwa 1540 nicht mehr im Verordnetenkollegium der niederösterreichischen Stände vertreten). Die Organe der Stände standen allerdings den Regierungen immer weniger als gleichrangige Partner (sozusagen 'auf Augenhöhe') gegenüber, sondern wurden von diesen tendenziell als Befehlsempfänger und untergeordnete Organe behandelt, wogegen sich die Stände jedoch immer wieder entschieden verwahrten. Der Widerstand dürfte allmählich schwächer geworden sein, zumal 'so mancher Ständeherr sich bemühte, in den Kreis der landesfürstlichen obersten Beamten zu gelangen und die Stände selbst die Gunst der Regierung und deren

---

Peter Baumgart (ed.), *Ständetum und Staatsbildung in Brandenburg-Preußen* (Berlin, 1983), 263-79, hier 270.

[55] Evans, *Das Werden der Habsburgermonarchie*, 131 f.

[56] Shuichi Iwasaki, 'Konflikt, Annäherung und Kooperation. Herrscher und Stände auf den niederösterreichischen Landtagen 1683 bis 1740', *Frühneuzeit-Info* (im Druck).

einflußreichen Beamten durch Ehrengeschenke zu gewinnen suchten'.[57] Die Beteiligung der Stände an der Gesetzgebung wurde, wie es scheint, allmählich zurückgedrängt, was diese nicht ohne Widerspruch hinnahmen. Als, um ein Beispiel zu nennen, die Grazer Regierung um 1680 die Kodifikation einer neuen Landrechtsordnung in Angriff nahm, wurden die steirischen Stände nicht um Mitarbeit ersucht. Landeshauptmann und Verordnete protestierten dagegen im Januar 1684 'in namben der gesambten landstende' beim Kaiser: 'Es zeigen sowohl uralte als jüngere schriftliche acta und tractaten, daß die landsfürsten in Steyer bishero in gebrauch erhalten haben', bei derartigen Vorhaben 'die stende zu vernemen und mit ihnen die sach auf ein bestendiges verhandeln zu lassen'.[58]

In der Regierungszeit Kaiser Leopolds I. (1657-1705) unternommene Versuche, die Stände und die ständischen Behörden und Beamten zu reinen Befehlsempfängern der landesfürstlichen Zentralbehörden und der Länderregierungen zu machen, scheiterten an deren energischem Widerstand. Die Stände des Landes Österreich unter der Enns beharrten, ähnlich wie ihre steirischen Kollegen, erfolgreich auf dem für die politische Rolle der Stände zentralen, im Rahmen des Landtags ausgeübten Steuerbewilligungsrecht, auf ihrem Beschwerderecht und auf dem Anspruch der Teilhabe an der Gesetzgebung, und sei es nur in der Form, daß sie vor dem Erlaß eines Gesetzes angehört und um Rat gefragt werden wollten. Sie beriefen sich dabei auf die anläßlich der Erbhuldigung erfolgte Bestätigung der Freiheiten, Privilegien und Gewohnheiten des Landes im allgemeinen und der Stände im besonderen. Nach jeder Steuerbewilligung ließen sie sich nach alter Gewohnheit auch weiterhin (bis ins frühe 18. Jahrhundert) einen Schadlosbrief ausstellen, um zu verhindern, daß die nach mehr oder minder langem Feilschen über die Höhe der Steuern erfolgte 'freie Bewilligung' irgendwann durch die landesfürstliche Dekretierung der Steuern abgelöst würde. Auf das schärfste wiesen die niederösterreichischen Stände 1658 Versuche der landesfürstlichen

Landtagskommissare zurück, die ständischen Verordneten als Beamte des Staates, besser: des Fürsten zu behandeln und ihnen Befehle zu erteilen. Ebenso bestimmt wie gegenüber dem Kaiser und Landesfürsten und seinen Räten bestanden die Stände auch gegenüber der niederösterreichischen Regierung und den Zentralbehörden der Monarchie, insbesondere gegenüber der Hofkammer und dem Hofkriegsrat, auf ihrer Selbständigkeit, um den Gedanken an eine Unterordnung möglichst gar nicht aufkommen zu lassen. Ständische Beschwerden ('Gravamina') und ständische Gesetzgebungswünsche konnten sich in mehr oder minder institutionalisierter Form in den sogenannten Gravaminakonferenzen, die von der Regierung und von den Ständen beschickt wurden, Einfluß verschaffen.[59]

Ein Mittel, durch das der Landesfürst Entscheidungen der Landtage im Sinne der möglichst ungeschmälerten und raschen Annahme der landesfürstlichen Proposition zu lenken versuchte, war die Beeinflussung jener Ständemitglieder, die ein besoldetes landesfürstliches Amt innehatten. So forderte Ferdinand III. im Januar 1657, wenige Monate vor seinem Tod, die Ständemitglieder unter den Hofkammerräten auf, auf dem niederösterreichischen Landtag und in den Beratungen des Herren- und des Ritterstands dahingehend zu wirken, daß die Forderungen der Krone möglichst rasch und vollständig bewilligt würden.[60] Der österreichische Hofkanzler Hans Joachim Graf von Sinzendorf ersuchte 1663 den in Österreich ob der Enns einflußreichen Grafen Franz Albrecht von Harrach, er möge die bei der Steuerbewilligung Schwierigkeiten machenden Stände 'zur Raison bringen' und deutete für den Fall, daß Harrach Erfolg haben würde, die Chance auf die Verleihung des möglicherweise demnächst vakant werdenden kaiserlichen Obersthofmarschallamtes an.[61]

---

[57] Am Beispiel der Steiermark: Anton Mell, *Grundriß der Verfassungs- und Verwaltungsgeschichte des Landes Steiermark* (Graz, Wien und Leipzig, 1929), 561-73 (Zitat: 571 f.).

[58] *Ibid.*, 569.

[59] A(lfred) F(rancis) Pribram, 'Die niederösterreichischen Stände und die Krone in der Zeit Kaiser Leopold I.', *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, xiv (1893), 589-652. Vgl. auch Helmuth Stradal, 'Stände und Steuern in Österreich', in *XIIe Congrès International des Sciences Historiques, Wien 1965* (Louvain und Paris, 1966), 131-62.

[60] Pribram, 'Die niederösterreichischen Stände', 611, Anm. 2.

[61] Hengerer, *Kaiserhof und Adel*, 553.

Eine andere Methode, die Landtage der österreichischen und der böhmischen Länder zu möglichst willfährigen 'Steuerbewilligungsmaschinen' zu machen, bestand in der zeitlichen und sachlichen Synchronisierung der Landtage der einzelnen Länder. Erstmals scheint dieses Verfahren 1640 ausprobiert worden zu sein, als die Landtage der böhmischen und der österreichischen Länder gleichzeitig einberufen wurden und auf mehrere Jahre eine Getränkesteuer bewilligten. 'Die Durchsetzung einer Forderung in einem der Länder schuf einen Präzedenzfall für die übrigen Landtage, um so mehr, als sich ab den fünfziger Jahren des 17. Jahrhunderts wieder feste Proportionen zwischen den Steuerlasten der einzelnen Länder zu stabilisieren begannen.'[62]

Gundaker von Liechtenstein war 1616 vom niederösterreichischen Landmarschall (so hieß in Österreich unter der Enns der Landeshauptmann) wiederholt aufgefordert worden, seine Rechte und Pflichten als Mitglied des niederösterreichischen Herrenstands wahrzunehmen und an den Landtagssitzungen teilzunehmen, er hatte sich jedoch stets entschuldigt. Der Landmarschall war bereits damals (also vor 1620) ein Vertrauensmann und Organ sowohl der Stände als auch des Landesfürsten. Nach 1620 wurden der niederösterreichische Landmarschall und die Landeshauptleute der anderen österreichischen Länder primär zu Instrumenten des Hofes. Wenn Graf Heinrich Cajetan von Blümegen noch um die Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts den Landmarschall als 'homo principis et homo statuum'[63] charakterisieren konnte, so ist zu berücksichtigen, daß die Stände in der Regierungszeit Maria Theresias immer stärker in die einheitliche Staatsverwaltung integriert wurden. Von einem verfassungsmäßigen 'Dualismus' zwischen dem Hof und den Ständen konnte spätestens seit der Staatsreform von 1749 kaum mehr die Rede sein. 1764 hob die Monarchin in den einzelnen österreichischen Ländern die meisten Organe der Landstände (den für alle nicht vom Landtag zu entscheidenden Angelegenheiten zuständigen Großen Ausschuß, das die

---

[62] Maťa, 'Český zemský sněm', 63.

[63] Alfred Ritter von Wretschko, *Das österreichische Marschallamt im Mittelalter. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Verwaltung in den Territorien des deutschen Reiches* (Wien, 1897), 146.

Rechnungskontrolle besorgende Raitkollegium und die mit Fragen der Soldatenrekrutierung und der Militäreinquartierung befaßten Viertelskommissare) auf. Das Verordnetenkollegium, das in Hinkunft alle Geschäfte der Stände zu besorgen hatte und dessen Mitglieder der landesfürstlichen Bestätigung bedurften, erhielt vom Hof eine schriftliche Instruktion. Die Aufgaben der ständischen Viertelskommissare übernahmen die landesfürstlichen Kreishauptleute, die allerdings als Personen üblicherweise auch dem landständischen Adel angehörten. Während der Alleinregierung Josephs II. wurden zwischen 1782 und 1784 die ständischen Landesverwaltungen mit den landesfürstlichen Provinzverwaltungen zusammengelegt. Die landständische Verfassung fand ihr vorläufiges Ende. Unter Leopold II. wurde sie 1790 wiedererrichtet (auf dem Stand des Jahres 1764) und blieb, den seit etwa 1835 insbesondere im Kreis der böhmischen und der niederösterreichischen Stände intensiv diskutierten Reformvorschlägen zum Trotz, bis zu ihrem Ende im Revolutionsjahr 1848 im wesentlichen unverändert.[64]

---

[64] Arnold Luschin v. Ebengreuth, 'Landstände. I. In den altösterreichischen Landen', in Ernst Mischler und Josef Ulbrich (ed.), *Österreichisches Staatswörterbuch. Handbuch des gesamten österreichischen öffentlichen Rechtes*, 2. Aufl., Bd. 3 (Wien, 1907), 370-88, hier 377-9 und 383-6; Ignaz Beidtel, *Geschichte der österreichischen Staatsverwaltung 1740-1848*, Bd. 2 (Innsbruck, 1898), 25, 49, 60 f. und 258; Victor Bibl, *Die Restauration der niederösterreichischen Landesverfassung unter Leopold II. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der österreichischen Stände und inneren Staatsverwaltung* (Innsbruck, 1902), 7 f., 31 und passim; idem, *Die Niederösterreichischen Stände im Vormärz. Ein Beitrag zur Vorgeschichte der Revolution des Jahres 1848* (Wien, 1911); Gerhard Putschögl, *Die landständische Behördenorganisation in Österreich ob der Enns vom Anfang des 16. bis zur Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Linz, 1978), 57 f., Petrin, *Die Stände des Landes Niederösterreich*, 19 f. Vgl. auch Miriam Levy, 'Leopold II, Joseph von Aschauer, and the Role of the Estates in the Habsburg Monarchy', *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs*, xxxviii (1985), 197-222; Anna M. Drabek, 'Die Desiderien der böhmischen Stände von 1791. Überlegungen zu ihrem ideellen Gehalt', in Ferdinand Seibt (ed.), *Die böhmischen Länder zwischen Ost und West. Festschrift für Karl Bosl zum 75. Geburtstag* (München und Wien, 1983), 132-142; eadem, 'Die politische Haltung der böhmischen und mährischen Stände zum Herrscherabsolutismus des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts: Von der traditionellen ständischen Rechtsposition zu frühkonstitutionellen Forderungen', in Joachim Bahlcke, Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg und Norbert Kersken (ed.), *Ständefreiheit und Staatsgestaltung in Ostmitteleuropa. Über-*

Leider wurde der Frage nach den Teilnehmerzahlen der frühneu-
zeitlichen Landtage von der österreichischen Forschung bisher fast keine
Beachtung geschenkt. Aus einigen Anwesenheitslisten geht hervor, daß der
Besuch der niederösterreichischen Landtage bereits zwischen 1530 und 1544
starken Schwankungen unterworfen war. Meist waren ungefähr ein Dutzend
Prälaten, etwa 20 Herren, zwischen 30 und 40 Ritter und rund zehn Vertreter
der landesfürstlichen Städte und Märkte, zusammen etwa 80 Personen,
anwesend. Im November 1536 erreichte die Zahl der anwesenden Stände-
mitglieder mit 184 einen Höhepunkt (19 Prälaten, 32 Herren, 115 Ritter
sowie 18 Vertreter des vierten Standes). Bedeutend niedrigere Zahlen waren
besonders in jenen Jahren zu verzeichnen, in denen mehrere Landtage
ausgeschrieben wurden (1531 waren es fünf, 1542 vier und außerdem drei
Ausschußlandtage).[65]

In einer derzeit im Druck befindlichen Vorarbeit für seine Dissertation
hat Shuichi Iwasaki kürzlich eine ertragreiche Studie zu den niederöster-
reichischen Landtagen von 1683 bis 1740 vorgelegt.[66] In den 58 untersuchten
Jahren dauerte die Sitzungsperiode des Landtags in 33 Fällen zwischen zehn
und zwölf Monate, in acht Fällen länger als ein Jahr und nur sieben Mal
kürzer als ein halbes Jahr. Zwischen 1724 und 1739 (nur für diese Jahre
haben sich die Protokolle erhalten) fanden durchschnittlich 21 Mal im Jahr
Versammlungen der gesamten Stände oder der drei oberen Stände statt, also
im Schnitt fast alle zwei Wochen. Durchschnittlich waren bei diesen
Versammlungen etwa 34 Personen anwesend (sechs oder sieben Prälaten, 12
Herren, 14 Ritter und ein bis zwei Vertreter des vierten Standes). Bei den
Postulatalandtagen (also bei den feierlichen Eröffnungssitzungen mit der
Verlesung der landesfürstlichen Proposition) waren immerhin durchschnittlich

---

nationale Gemeinsamkeiten in der politischen Kultur vom 16.-18. Jahrhundert (Leipzig,
1996), 265-82.

[65] Angelika Hametner, *Die niederösterreichischen Landtage von 1530-1564*
(Dissertation, Universität Wien, 1970), 7-16 und die Anwesenheitslisten im Regestenteil
(175-515). Vgl. auch Thomas Winkelbauer, 'Der Adel in Ober- und Niederösterreich in
der frühen Neuzeit. Versuch eines Literaturüberblicks (seit etwa 1950)', *Opera historica*,
ii (1992), 13-33, hier 16 f.

[66] Iwasaki, 'Konflikt, Annäherung und Kooperation' (im Druck).

---

86 Ständemitglieder anwesend, auf den übrigen Versammlungen hingegen
nur etwas mehr als 30. In einigen wenigen Fällen nahmen an Landtags-
sitzungen sogar weniger als ein Dutzend Ständemitglieder teil. Bei dem am
22. April 1720 aus Anlaß der feierlichen Zustimmung zur Pragmatischen
Sanktion im Landhaus in Wien zusammentretenden Landtag waren nicht
weniger als 285 Teilnehmer anwesend: 23 (von insgesamt 27) Prälaten, 161
Herren (von insgesamt vielleicht etwa 250), 63 Ritter (von insgesamt vielleicht
etwa 110) und 38 Vertreter der (inklusive Wien) 19 landesfürstlichen Städte
und Märkte; das waren deutlich mehr als bei den Erbhuldigungen für Joseph
I. (1705) und Karl VI. (1712) (211 bzw. 217).[67]

Iwasaki ist der Nachweis gelungen, daß die niederösterreichischen
Landtage jedenfalls in den 1720er und 1730er Jahren 'von einer kleinen Zahl
von Prälaten und von den Angehörigen einiger Adelsfamilien oligarchisch
beherrscht wurden' und daß die große Mehrheit der Ständemitglieder
niemals oder höchstens bei der Eröffnungssitzung an den Landtagen teilnahm.
Regelmäßige Teilnehmer waren wahrscheinlich nur die Inhaber von Landes-
ämtern sowie die besoldeten Mitglieder des Großen Ausschusses und des
Verordnetenkollegiums.[68]

Seit 1620 wurde das Steuerbewilligungsrecht der Stände[69] tendenziell
zu einer Formsache, da die katholische Aristokratie dem habsburgischen
Kaiserhof ideell und politisch viel näher stand als der überwiegend
evangelische Adel des 16. Jahrhunderts, der des öfteren die Bewilligung von
Steuern an Konzessionen im konfessionellen Bereich geknüpft hatte.[70] Dazu

---

[67] *Ibid.* Der Text der am 25. April 1720 abgegebenen „Erklärung" des Wiener
Landtags ist ediert bei Gustav Turba (ed.), *Die Pragmatische Sanktion. Authentische
Texte samt Erläuterungen und Übersetzungen* (Wien, 1913), 97-9. Schätzung der
Gesamtzahl der Herren und Ritter nach Hassinger, Die Landstände der österreichischen
Länder, 1003 f.

[68] Iwasaki, Konflikt, 'Annäherung und Kooperation' (im Druck).

[69] Zur Entstehung und zu den Wandlungen des ständischen Steuerbewilligungs-
rechts in Nieder- und Oberösterreich, Steiermark, Kärnten, Krain, Tirol und Vorarlberg
vgl. Stradal, 'Stände und Steuern in Österreich'.

[70] Vgl. u. a. Thomas Winkelbauer, 'Krise der Aristokratie? Zum Strukturwandel
des Adels in den böhmischen und niederösterreichischen Ländern im 16. und 17.

kam, daß 1654 vom Regensburger Reichstag in Paragraph 180 des 'Jüngsten Reichsabschieds' die Pflicht der Untertanen und Landstände festgeschrieben wurde, das Militärwesen, also insbesondere die Festungen und die stehenden Heere, der über das Jus armorum verfügenden Reichsstände durch die Bewilligung der nötigen Kontributionen zu finanzieren.[71] Immerhin konnten die Stände der österreichischen und böhmischen Länder bis 1748 mit den landesfürstlichen Landtagskommissaren ernsthaft um die Höhe der zu bewilligenden Steuern 'feilschen'. 1671 beispielsweise forderte der Kaiser vom niederösterreichischen Landtag 780,000 Gulden. Die Stände antworteten mit dem Angebot von 500,000 Gulden. Die kaiserliche Forderung wurde daraufhin auf 600,000 Gulden herabgesetzt. Schließlich einigte man sich auf 550,000 Gulden.[72] Dazu ist allerdings zu bemerken, daß es nach Auskunft einer Art Handbuch oder Geheimen Instruktion für angehende Hof-kammerräte aus derselben Zeit damals üblich war, die jährlichen Postulate an die Stände um etwa ein Drittel höher anzusetzen, als man realistischer Weise erwarten konnte: '[...] weillen die lender gemeiniglich weniger verwilligen als man begehrt, als wirdet jederzeit das begehren [et]was hocher ausgeworffen, zum exempl, wan ich von einem landt verlange 100,000 fl., so wierdt zum wenigsten begehrt 150,000 fl.'[73]

Jahrhundert', *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, c (1992), 328-53, hier 340-53.

[71] Andreas Müller, *Der Regensburger Reichstag von 1653/54. Eine Studie zur Entwicklung des Alten Reiches nach dem Westfälischen Frieden* (Frankfurt am Main u. a., 1992), 404-6; Kersten Krüger, 'Kriegsfinanzen und Reichsrecht im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert', in Bernhard R. Kroener und Ralf Pröve (ed.), *Krieg und Frieden. Militär und Gesellschaft in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Paderborn u. a., 1996), 47-57, hier 57; Norbert Winnige, 'Von der Kontribution zur Akzise. Militärfinanzierung als Movens staatlicher Steuerpolitik', in *ibid.*, 59-83, hier 62 f.

[72] Jean Bérenger, *Finances et absolutisme autrichien dans la seconde moitié du XVIIᵉ siècle* (Paris, 1975), 283.

[73] Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (Wien), Abt. Hofkammerarchiv, Hs. 215 (von 1672), fol. 13ᵛ; eine leicht abweichende Version zitiert bei Pribram, 'Die nieder-österreichischen Stände', 605 f., Anm. Weitere Exemplare und Fassungen des Hand-buchs (etwa ein Dutzend) aus den Jahren 1657 bis 1676 befinden sich nicht nur im Hofkammerarchiv, sondern auch in der Handschriftensammlung der Österreichischen

Von 1694 bis 1699 und neuerlich von 1705 bis 1707 war das Verhältnis zwischen den niederösterreichischen Ständen und dem Herrscher gespannt, und die Verhandlungen über die Steuerbewilligungen zogen sich besonders lange hin. Einmal (1706) gingen der Einigung sogar nicht weniger als acht Schriftenwechsel zwischen der Hofburg und dem Landhaus voraus. Seit 1713, also etwa seit dem Regierungsantritt Karls VI., waren die Steuer-verhandlungen durch wachsendes gegenseitiges Verständnis gekennzeichnet. In den 1730er Jahren wurden die landesfürstlichen Steuerpostulate meist in voller Höhe angenommen. Iwasaki spricht von einem den Hof und die niederösterreichischen Stände (bzw. deren landespolitisch aktiven Teil) vereinenden 'Krisenbewußtsein' und von einer 'kooperativen Beziehung zwischen dem Kaiser und den niederösterreichischen Ständen'. 'Und um die Loyalität der großen erbländischen Adelsgeschlechter zu sichern, scheinen die habsburgischen Kaiser (besonders Karl VI.) auf deren Interessen und die damit verbundenen ständischen Freiheiten sowie Privilegien weitgehend Rücksicht genommen zu haben. Wie die habsburgischen Herrscher die Mit-wirkung der Stände nötig hatten, bedurften die Stände auch der Habs-burgermonarchie, um ihre Interessen zu wahren und noch zu steigern.'[74]

Kurz: Landhaus und Hofburg und die in beiden Gebäudekomplexen aus- und eingehenden politischen Akteure wurden im Laufe des 17. Jahr-hunderts, spätestens aber in der Regierungszeit Kaiser Karls VI. zu Elementen einer homogenen politischen Kultur. Im Rückblick betrachtet, erscheint die Staatsreform des Jahres 1749 daher viel weniger revolutionär als manche zeitgenössische Beobachter (mit Maria Theresia und dem Grafen Haugwitz beginnend) dachten.

Nationalbibliothek. Dazu demnächst: Hansdieter Körbl, *Die Hofkammer unter Leopold I. Aufgaben, Struktur und Arbeitsweise einer Hofbehörde der Barockzeit* (Dissertation, Universität Wien [in Vorbereitung]). Vgl. auch [Johann Paul Kaltenbaeck], 'Zur Finanz-geschichte Oesterreichs unter Kaiser Leopold I.', *Austria. Osterreichischer Universal-Kalender für das Jahr 1851*, 1-19, hier 19; Adolf Beer, 'Das Finanzwesen der Monarchie', in *Oesterreichischer Erbfolge-Krieg 1740-1748*. Bd. I/1 (Wien, 1896), 197-295, hier 230.

[74] Iwasaki, 'Konflikt, Annäherung und Kooperation' (im Druck).

'Landhaus' and 'Hofburg'. Elements of the Political Culture in the Early Modern Habsburg Monarchy (The Lower Austrian Case)

Thomas Winkelbauer

Summary

The assumptions underlying the argument are summarized in the first part of the article: (1) Robert Evans' classic characterization of the system of Habsburg government in the Austrian and Bohemian Lands in the 17th century: 'The Habsburgs compromised with an aristocracy which at court represented the country and in the country represented the court, exercising an almost complete monopoly over the senior dignities of state.' (2) Jeroen Duindam's evaluation of the crucial role of the imperial court in the process of state building: 'The Habsburg dominions were ruled neither by a *Beamtenstaat*, nor by a military establishment. Without a doubt, the most efficacious 'centralising' agency was the court. It left the regional fabric intact, while attracting the elites to a pivotal meeting place.' (3) The thesis that the emerging supranational and supraregional 'Austrian aristocracy' was the most important social glue of the early modern Habsburg Monarchy (especially in the Austrian and Bohemian Lands). (4) The idea that these courtly aristocrats were not disconnected from the noble Estates of the territories, and that the court succeeded after the second third of the 17th century in maintaining its authority over the different territories and regions via the integration of the leading representatives of the Estates into the court by the bestowal of the titles of Imperial Chamberlains and Imperial Privy Councillors.

The second half of the article deals (1) with some aspects of the role played by the three Upper Estates (Prelates, Lords, and Knights) of Lower Austria (Austria below the Enns) and their authorities in the political culture of the Habsburg Monarchy from the 16th to the 18th century and (2) with the Lower Austrian Diets between 1530 and 1740. The changes and developments in the Diets in the period under investigation are virtually the same as those ascertained by Petr Maťa in an investigation of the Bohemian and Moravian Diets. After 1620 the Estates and the Diets did not cease playing an important role in the administration, jurisdiction and legislation of the province, though the authorities of the Estates became more and more supervised by (and interconnected with) the authorities of the monarch, but the emperors did not try to abolish the Diets' right to approve taxes. As Shuichi Iwasaki has shown in a recent study, the Lower Austrian Diets between 1724 and 1739 met on average almost every two weeks. While between 1530 and 1544 the meetings of the (much shorter) Lower Austrian Diets were attended on average by about 80 men, this high number was reached two centuries later, in the 1720s and 1730s, only at the annual opening sessions (*Postulatalandtage*). The 'routine' sessions where attended only by about 30 men.

The Estates' Landhaus and the imperial Hofburg as well as the political actors in both, who were well-known both in the one and the other, became elements of a homogeneous political culture during the 17th century or at the latest during the reign of Emperor Charles VI. In retrospect, the state reform of 1749 was much less revolutionary than many contemporary observers thought.

Political Culture in Hungary: One Kingdom in Two World Empires (16th-17th Centuries)

István György Tóth

Hungary represented a very special case on the map of political culture in early modern Europe. After the battle of Mohács in 1526 and the capture of the Hungarian capital, Buda, in 1541, the medieval Hungarian Kingdom was not only divided into three parts but its territory belonged to two world empires. This fact would have made the development of political culture already a very special one. However, the really interesting feature of this development was represented by the fact that the two world empires did not live side by side but their Hungarian territories overlapped – the rulers in Vienna and in Istanbul regarded equally the Turkish parts of Hungary as well as the whole of Transylvania as their own. A curious, always changing balance of power was established. Paradoxically, the Turks presence helped the aspirations of the Hungarian nobility in Habsburg Hungary while the Habsburg state remained a force to be reckoned with even in Ottoman Hungary: the administration of the Hungarian counties levied taxes and dispensed justice also in the villages and towns that were occupied by the sultan already decades or even a century before.[1]

---

[1] For a general overview on the political culture of these two centuries cf. Ferenc Szakály, 'The early Ottoman period', in Peter F. Sugar (ed.), a *History of Hungary* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1990), 83-100; László Kósa (ed.), a *Cultural history of Hungary*, I (Budapest, 1999), 154-228; László Kontler, *Millennium in Central Europe: a history of Hungary* (Budapest, 1999), 137-95. Jean Bérenger, *Histoire de l'Empire des Habsbourg* (Paris, 1990), 271-318; Péter Hanák (ed.), *One Thousand Years. a Concise History of Hungary* (Budapest, 1988), 49-72, and the chapters written by Gábor Ágoston,

During the Ottoman occupation, Habsburg Hungary considered the Turkish domination in Hungary to be temporary and illegal. These occupied territories were considered to be inalienable parts of the Hungarian Kingdom, and therefore the rights of the king, diet, Estates and Catholic bishops were considered to be valid even here. Taxes due to the crown, to the landlord and to the Catholic church were collected even from territories that belonged to the sultan. Tax collectors from the border castles regularly exacted taxes from the serfs who had Turkish landlords, i.e. spahis or the sultan himself. During the 16th-17th century, there was scarcely an area in Ottoman Hungary which did not pay these taxes due to the Hungarian noblemen.

The gathering of taxes for the Crown and the Church proved more difficult than the landlords' dues, only two-thirds of the occupied territory paid them. In the 16th century, Turkish lords did not want to accept that the peasants in their lands pay taxes to their Hungarian *seigneurs*, but the Turkish military could not prevent the Hungarian tax collectors and border castle soldiers from collecting these taxes. To a smaller extent, this double taxation system existed on the other side of the frontier too. Habsburgs did not succeed in halting Ottoman tax collection in their border territories – Turkish spahis and tax collectors arrived to the Hungarian villages too.

The Hungarian nobles who left the Turkish occupied territories after the arrival of the Turks, dealt with their lands inside the sultan's empire as if the Turkish landlords were not even present within the country. Hungarian landlords mortgaged these estates, or sold or exchanged them according to Hungarian law, in the presence of Hungarian tribunals. Thus the market-town of Csongrád was sold, bought and inherited by Hungarian noblemen several times during the 17th century, later it was confiscated by the king from an 'unfaithful' Hungarian nobleman and donated to a more trusted subject – in spite of the fact that this market-town was situated several hundred kilometres from the border, deep in the Ottoman Empire and of course it had Turkish landlords too!

The central part of Hungary lived in this double Turkish-Christian political culture while its eastern part became semi-independent Transylvania, a special case in Central European history.

In the 16th-17th centuries, the principality of Transylvania came into being in the eastern parts of medieval Hungary. This small, new state was a Christian vassal of the Ottoman sultans, a state that never existed before, and no political force had the intention to create it. It was formed as a compromise of thwarted political ambitions and aspirations of the emperors, sultans and Hungarian nobles, and this strange state survived for almost two centuries as a frozen provisional solution. This principality had no hereditary rulers. The Transylvanian nobles elected freely among themselves the princes of Transylvania at the diet. However, in the same time these princes were appointed by the Turkish sultans who chose whomever they wanted.

This contradiction was never resolved during the 16th-17th centuries. According to my opinion, it shows clearly that if we would like to describe the political culture of Hungary in the period of the Ottoman occupation, we have to leave aside formal logic as well as categories of 19th century national historiography. What characterised the election-nomination of the Transylvanian princes in particular and the Hungarian political culture in general during these two centuries, was a search for a good compromise according to the balance of power in force at any given moment.[2]

Suleyman the Magnificent occupied only parts of Hungary during his campaigns, and abandoned even conquered territories. This misled contemporaries and later historians alike into thinking that the Ottoman Empire had not attempted to annex Hungary.[3]

In reality, the Sultan's Empire could only exist through continuous conquests, because the huge size to which its military had grown required it to be occupied and needed booty. It was, naturally, bent upon the conquest of

---

Teréz Oborni, Csaba Borsodi and myself in István György Tóth (ed.), *Mil ans d'histoire hongroise* (Budapest, 2003), 203-327.

[2] Gábor Barta, 'The emergence of the principality', in Béla Köpeczi (ed.), *History of Transylvania* (Budapest, 1994), 247-93.

[3] Géza Dávid, 'Limitations of conversion', in Eszter Andor and István György Tóth (ed.), *Frontiers of Faith. Religious Exchange and the Constitution of Religious Identities 1400-1750* (Budapest, 2001).

Hungary; its long-term goal was to secure for itself Hungary's natural resources: to distribute the lands among the *spahi*s, to enrich its treasury through the levy of tribute, and in addition, as it was duty bound, to spread the word of Islam.[4]

Nevertheless, as in the case of the Serbian and Bosnian kingdoms in the Balkans, the Sultan similarly intended to overcome Hungary in several stages, as that would require less exertion on his part. Persistent incursions and border skirmishes, followed by occupation of the most important border castles, disruption of enemy forces in a big battle, establishment of a vassal kingdom, then, after a transitory period as a vassal state, methodical division into *vilayet*s – this was the Ottoman method of conquest which had stood the test up until then. Suleyman would have been greatly pleased if, after defeating Louis II and annihilating his army, he could have obtained his agreement to becoming a tribute-paying vassal. After the Battle of Mohács in 1526, Suleyman spent a long time searching for Louis II and awaiting a delegation from the vanquished. History did not, however, give to the young king the bitter experience that was the lot of John Szapolyai; the fleeing Louis II had drowned in a river, and so the youthful Jagiello did not become a tribute-payer to the Padishah.[5]

After more than a decade of the rule of John Szapolyai, a vassal of the Padishah, Suleyman captured Buda in 1541 and with this occupation the central part of Hungary began. Hungary became until 1699 a land divided into three more or less equal parts.[6]

---

[4] Ferenc Szakály, *Lodovico Gritti in Hungary, 1529-1534: a historical insight into the beginnings of Turco-Habsburgian rivalry* (Budapest, 1995); Pál Fodor, *In quest of the golden apple: Imperial ideology, politics and military administration in the Ottoman empire* (Istanbul, 2000), passim; István György Tóth, 'A spy's report about Turkish-occupied Hungary and Bosnia', *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, li (1998), No. 1-2, 185-218.

[5] French translation of a major work by the early deceased Hungarian historian, best specialist of the Szapolyai period: Gábor Barta, *La route qui mène à Istanbul: 1526-1528* (Budapest, 1994).

[6] Klára Hegyi and Vera Zimányi, *The Ottoman Empire in Europe* (Budapest, 1986). Cf. the studies in Géza Dávid and Pál Fodor (ed.), *Ottomans, Hungarians and Habsbugs*

The central question of political culture in the 16th-17th centuries was the unification of Hungary. This principal aspiration of the Hungarian political class was attempted under the Habsburg emperors, under Transylvanian princes as well as under would-be independent kings of Hungary, but to no avail.

Transylvania was three times reoccupied by the Habsburgs but the Transylvanian political class had always to realise the bitter reality that although the Habsburgs had enough will to occupy Transylvania, after the Turkish occupation of Buda they were incapable of holding this territory, remote as it was from the Habsburg centre of power. For Transylvanian noblemen, this was a bitter pill to swallow, and one which recurred time and again throughout the temporary unification during the Turkish occupation. This was clear not only between 1551 and 1556, when Transylvania was in the hands of Ferdinand I, but also between 1597-1602, when, after the repeated abdications of Transylvanian prince Sigismund Báthory, the imperial general Giorgio Basta took over the reins in Transylvania in the name of the Habsburgs. This ineffectiveness of the Habsburg forces was no less obvious during General Raimondo Montecuccoli's Transylvanian campaign of 1661. However, the Transylvanian political class had no choice they had to accept this realty. If the Transylvanian nobility insisted on believing that they lived in the eastern part of Ferdinand's unified Hungarian kingdom, it was unlikely that the Porte would spare them from another campaign, and they would fairly rapidly come to belong to the Turkish *vilayet* of Transylvania.[7]

---

in Central Europe: the military confines in the era of Ottoman conquest (Leiden, 2000). István György Tóth, 'Old and New Faith in Hungary, Turkish Hungary and Transylvania', in Ronnie Po Chia Hsia (ed.), a *Blackwell Companion to the Reformation World* (Oxford, 2003), 205-20.

[7] Vera Zimányi, *Economy and society in sixteenth and seventeenth century Hungary*, 1526-1560 (Budapest, 1980). Ferenc Szakály, 'L'espansione turca in Europa centrale dagli inizi alla fine del secolo XVI', in Giovanna Motta (ed.), *I Turchi, il Mediterraneo, e l'Europa* (Milano, 1998), 133-5. István György Tóth, 'Between Islam and Catholicism: Bosnian Franciscan missionaries in Ottoman Hungary', *Catholic Historical Review*, lxxxix (2003), No. 3, 409-33.

The Turks would not allow unification then or later of Transylvania with the Habsburgs, and they considered the most effective obstacle to this the consolidation of their power in Hungary. Nevertheless, the sultans' forces, though seemingly infinite, were not inexhaustible. Therefore the sultans treated the rulers of tributary Transylvania just as they did the voivodes of Wallachia and Moldavia or of the vassal Republic of Ragusa. What at the mid-sixteenth century the Turks intended to be a transitional solution, lasting only until Eastern Hungary could be divided into Turkish *vilayet*s, soon turned into a durable, even if unstable state. Later known as the principality of Transylvania, a new state came into being with the unification of medieval Transylvania and the 'Partium', parts of the Kingdom of Hungary; held in fee by the Porte, however, it was given a great deal of internal autonomy. (Legally we can speak of a principality of Transylvania only after the 1570 Treaty of Speyer, until this time its ruler, John Sigismund of Jagiello had the title of elected Hungarian king).[8]

In 1570 Emperor Maximilian convened the Imperial Diet at Speyer. Here the representatives of Maximilian and John Sigismund signed an agreement. This treaty became a lasting agreement between the Szapolyai area of the country (from then on known as the principality of Transylvania) and the Habsburgs. John Sigismund recognised Maximilian as King of all Hungary, and furthermore that Transylvania was a part of that kingdom. As such he had to give up the title of King of Hungary and agreed that in the event of having no successors his principality would come under Hungarian rule. From then on John Sigismund used the title 'Prince by the Grace of God of Transylvania and the Partium' (this latter being the counties and parts of counties in Hungary belonging to the principality of Transylvania). This newly formed state was much smaller than that of the Kingdom of Eastern Hungary of 1541, but it was almost twice as large as medieval Transylvania.

Although the Speyer Accord remained unimplemented (as had the earlier Habsburg-Szapolyai agreements) it did regulate the relationship between the King of Hungary and the Prince of Transylvania until 1606. John Sigismund

---

[8] Géza Dávid, *Studies in Demographic and Administrative History of Ottoman Hungary* (Istanbul, 1997), passim.

and his successors recognised until 1606 that they were subject to the King of Hungary, while being sovereigns of a state that was tributary to the Sultan. This status, in a period of nation states, may seem legally anomalous as in the 20th century only a very few states have shown such muddled legal status, one example being West Berlin. Many such examples, however, contradictory at first sight, are to be found in early modern Europe, as its political culture was based on dynasties and vassalage. The Zips towns of Upper Hungary were mortgaged to the Polish King in 1412 for over three hundred years while still being part of the kingdom of Hungary. The voivode of Moldavia was the vassal of both the Sultan and the Polish king, and occasionally a vassal of the Prince of Transylvania too. Countless princes of the Holy Roman Empire were simultaneously sovereign rulers fighting against their own emperor and also his vassals, while many areas of the empire were under the control of the kings of France, England or Sweden.

The extent to which the newly created principality of Transylvania depended on Vienna or the Porte, or how much of its decision-making could be independent, was decided not by international agreements but by the actual balance of power.

The principality of Transylvania was the by-product of the Ottomans' odd mode of conquest in Hungary. For 120 years (between 1571-1690) it maintained its independence, to re-emerge briefly if only in name, during the War of Independence lead by Francis Rákóczi II in 1704.

In the course of these 120 years, Transylvania had eighteen princes. With the exception of two princes of short reign, the Romanian Michael the Brave, voivode of Wallachia, and the German Catherine of Brandenburg, widow of Gabriel Bethlen, all Transylvanian princes were Hungarians. Of the eighteen, only five died a natural death while in office: Stephen Báthory, Stephen Bocskai, Gabriel Bethlen, George Rákóczi I and Michael Apafi. Three of the Princes were murdered: Voivode Michael the Brave, Gabriel Báthory and Ákos Barcsay. A further four fell in battle or were killed while fleeing from a battle: Andrew Báthory, Moses Székely, George Rákóczi II and John Kemény. Emeric Thököly died in exile in Turkey. Five princes abdicated: Sigismund Rákóczi, Catherine of Brandenburg, Stephen Bethlen and Francis Rhédey, while Sigismund Báthory bade a final farewell to the

principality of Transylvania no fewer than six times: in 1549, 1595, 1598, 1599, 1601 and 1602.

These statistics highlight that such a small principality was not spared in the turbulent games played between the two world powers. Some of the princes spent less than two years on the throne (Andrew Báthory, Sigismund Rákóczi, Michael the Brave, Moses Székely and Emeric Thököly), while some lasted only a few months. Of course, these statistics do not give the whole picture: besides prolonged periods of peace, there were two prolonged civil wars, one between 1599 and 1603, during the Fifteen Years War, when four princes ruled in a five-year period. The other was during the war of the Grand Viziers Köprülü (1657-62) when five princes ruled in six years, one following the other or, as the Palatine Ferenc Wesselényi sarcastically remarked: 'Within the space of two pairs of crimson boots being worn in, a Prince of Transylvania was enthroned five times'. The throne was always assumed after election by the Transylvanian Diet. This election was by no means always free, as the Sultan's written agreement was an essential precondition. Two dynasties managed to rule in Transylvania with some element of continuity, for the most part achieved by choosing the successor before the ruling father's death. In this manner the Báthory family gave four princes to Transylvania, while the Rákóczis gave five, if we count Francis I Rákóczi among them, who, although duly elected, never ruled.

The above figures show that the political culture of the principality of Transylvania was far more troubled than those of its Western European counterparts. Nevertheless it seemed consolidated compared to the situation in which the Sultan's neighbouring vassal states found themselves: the years 1571-1690 saw 54 changes of ruler in Moldavia and 36 in Wallachia. In many cases the same voivode regained the title more than once.

As a principality, Transylvania was as much a Turkish vassal state as were the voivodates of Moldavia and Wallachia or the Crimean Tartar Khanates, but Transylvania's situation was incomparably more favourable. This was evident from the smaller tribute that they paid to the sultan, there were no Turkish garrisons in Transylvania and from the fact that they were never forced to give their children as hostages to the Sultan. This was the Sultan's method of controlling the Romanian voivodes and the Crimean Tartar Khans. It is true that the Porte usually kept a spare successor to the

throne, who could if necessary be brought forward as a rival – as in the case of the all too independent Prince of Transylvania, George Rákóczi I, against whom Stephen Bethlen was fielded.

At the end of the 16th century, the Long Turkish War also known as the Fifteen Years War raised once more the question, not so actual since the Treaty of Speyer: where did the principality of Transylvania belong? Should this fragile state remain in alliance with the Ottoman Empire or become a member of the Christian coalition? It was characteristic of a forming Transylvanian political culture that the majority of the Transylvanian nobles, guessing the outcome of the war, decided to remain with the Turkish alliance. This would seem to have been wise, with the benefit of hindsight, as they were reluctant to drag Transylvania into a hazardous war on the Christian side. The prince of Transylvania, the nephew of the late Polish king, Sigismund Báthory decided otherwise and with this decision he ruined his small state. This cultivated but weak-willed ruler was unsuited to the task of governing his small principality towards the end of the century during the great war between the two great powers.

The uprising against the Habsburgs' rule in Hungary at the end of the Fifteen Years War was led by nobody else than Transylvanian aristocrat Stephen Bocskai who ten years earlier had killed those Transylvanian nobles (among them several members of the Báthory dynasty) who did not follow Sigismund Báthory in his pro-Habsburg, anti-Turkish policy. The successful revolt of Bocskai laid the basis of new political culture in Habsburg Hungary as well as in Transylvania.

With the Bocskai insurrection, Habsburg power in Transylvania collapsed. The Diet of 1605 elected Stephen Bocskai Prince of Transylvania. However, Bocskai wanted more than to be Transylvanian Prince, and so he held court not in the capital of Transylvania at Gyulafehérvár (Alba Julia), far from the Hungarian theatre of war, but at Kassa (Kosice), the heart of the Hungarian Kingdom. His goal was no longer simply to rule Transylvania, but to be head of the future Turkish vassal kingdom of Hungary. Thus in 1605 the Estates of Hungary and Transylvania had a joint Diet at Szerencs. A new era had begun in the political culture of Hungary, and this was expressed in Bocskai's new title. He was elected neither King nor Governor or Regent but Prince of Hungary – a title which until then had never been

used. As a result, the kingdom of Hungary became an independent principality on the pattern of Transylvania, in accordance with the will of the joint Diet at Szerencs.[9]

Stephen Bocskai, the victorious military commander, could have been in no doubt as to the outcome of this 'free' election, because prior to the assembly he requested a royal crown from the Sultan even though it was customary for the Porte to invest its vassal princes only with a flag and a sceptre. There is no doubt that Bocskai looked on King John Szapolyai as his ideal. The Sultan was initially surprised by his desire to be king, but in the end, requesting the payment of tribute, he agreed. Bocskai and the Hungarian Estates, utterly disillusioned by Emperor Rudolph's rule, thought that it was in the country's best interests to break with the Habsburgs; if driving out the Turks was not a realistic option, the best prospect for the kingdom of Hungary would be to become subordinate to the Turks while retaining internal autonomy.

The details of this new political culture were never finalised, because the turbulent months of growing insurrection did not favour debate regarding fine points of law. Bocskai realised the dangers of the Turkish alliance and thus when the Grand Vizier Mohamed Lalla pronounced the Prince of Transylvania King of Hungary and Bocskai was given a crown made in Istanbul, he did not accept the king's title. Bocskai accepted this crown as a lavish gift rather than as royal insignia. In the ensuing political change the leader of the insurrection no longer wished to be king of Hungary and a Turkish vassal. Although Bocskai gained a crown he never became king.

The Peace Treaty of Vienna agreed on 23 June 1606 between the Habsburgs and Bocskai defined the political culture in Hungary for the following sixty years. For fifty years, since the death of Tamás Nádasdy in 1562, Hungary had not had a Palatine; the current treaty also stipulated that this most important post of the Hungarian state be filled. The balance of power between the king and the Estates was clearly illustrated by the choices for the important offices of Lord Chief Justice and Palatine, the emperor nominated the leaders of the Bocskai revolt to these important posts. It was also stated in the Peace Treaty of Vienna that positions in the Hungarian administration and in the border castles would only be filled by Hungarians. In the treaty, the Emperor also recognised Bocskai as Prince of Transylvania. After prolonged talks, the Viennese court abandoned its claim to the conditions laid down in the Peace Treaty of Várad (1538), which had stated that after the death of the prince Transylvania would be absorbed into the kingdom of Hungary. The emperor had finally accepted that the principality had a right to its own independent existence. Thirty-five years after 'voivode' Stephen Báthory had succeeded King-Elect John Sigismund, Transylvania had finally become recognised by the Habsburgs as a sovereign state.[10]

The Treaty of Vienna was a good compromise, and nothing illustrated this better than the objections to it raised by the extremes of both parties even before the signatories' ink had dried: neither Bocskai's side nor the Emperor's wanted to accept it. The Archduke Matthias, noting his older brother's intransigence, was forced to resort to underhand conduct: he took out a letter of Rudolph's, in which he had earlier given his consent, and crossed out the date; thus the treaty gained assent.[11]

In the new military and political climate which the Peace Treaties of Vienna and Zsitvatorok defined, the real repositories of power were the Hungarian aristocrats. Never before or since was such power vested in the Hungarian magnates as in the first half of the 17th century.

The centralist aspirations of the heterogeneous Habsburg Empire, with its various provinces, were at odds with the wishes of the Estates, and nowhere was opposition more deeply entrenched than in Hungary. An armed Hungarian nobility lived in the neighbourhood of the Turks. The aristocrats had large private armies and lesser gentry could take up arms as well. While

[9] Andrea Molnár, *Fürst Stephan Bocskay als Staatsman und Persönlichkeit* (Munich, 1983); István György Tóth, 'Between Islam and Orthodoxy: Protestants and Catholics in Southeastern Europe', in Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia (ed.), *Cambridge History of Christianity*, Vol. 6 (Cambridge, 2004) (in print).

[10] Katalin Péter, 'The golden age of the principality', in Béla Köpeczi (ed.), *History of Transylvania* (Budapest, 1994), 301-32.

[11] On these false signatures cf. István György Tóth, *Literacy and Written Culture in Early Modern Central Europe* (Budapest, 2000), 102-13.

the Transylvanian princes clamped down on the least signs of opposition within their own country – in the words of the Palatine Miklós Esterházy, 'they kept the Transylvanian nobility in bondage' – they were nevertheless willing to assist the Hungarian Estates in their armed struggle against the Habsburgs. Hungary's most gifted politician of the time, Péter Pázmány, Archbishop of Esztergom, was aware that this peculiar situation could be to Hungary's advantage. The Archbishop warned his distant relative John Kemény, later to become Prince of Transylvania, not to struggle against the Turks 'in whose jaws they lived', as they would not be able to break away from them 'until God in his mercy wished it otherwise' for the Christian people. 'Dear brother', he continued, 'in the sight of our merciful Christian Emperor we are regarded with sufficient trust. But this will only last while Transylvania has a strong Hungarian prince. If there is none Germans will spit on us and Hungarians will lose their honour, be he priest or monk.' Here Pázmány no doubt had himself in mind as a Jesuit who had become Archbishop and whose prestige at the Viennese Court he indebted to the Reformed Transylvanian Prince. To the attentive reader, it is evident from these words that Pázmány and other Hungarian commoners had not given up hope of the unification of the three divided parts of the country, of God showing his mercy to the Christians. This, however, could only be achieved with the active support of the Habsburg Empire, that was the great paradox of political culture in Hungary during he 17th century.

The next attempt to unify Hungary and Transylvania under a loose Ottoman domination was made by Gabriel Bethlen at the beginning of the Thirty Years War. As an ally of the Bohemian King Frederick of Palatine (the 'Winter King') Gabriel Bethlen began his campaign in Upper Hungary in 1619. In the following months, the Habsburg's rule in Hungary fell like a house of cards. In the course of the 17th century, Hungarian aristocrats turned almost unanimously against the ruling Habsburgs only once more, in 1683. Then, however, it was not the medium-sized army of the Transylvanian Prince, but the hundred thousand-strong forces of the Grand Vizier that were to cause the magnates to turn about. In 1619, it was fear of losing under Ferdinand II their rights which had been laid down in the Peace of Vienna that made the Hungarian Estates support Gabriel Bethlen. For a few months

it really looked as if a century of Habsburg domination in Hungary had come to an end.

Gabriel Bethlen, Prince of Transylvania was first elected Prince of Hungary by the Hungarian Estates, as earlier Stephen Bocskai had been. After this, at the end of August 1620, a Hungarian Diet was convened at Besztercebánya (Banská Bystrica) and Ferdinand II's dethronement was proclaimed in presence of diplomats of the anti-Habsburg powers, including the Turkish envoy and the ambassadors from the French and Polish courts. The Hungarian nobles elected Gabriel Bethen King of Hungary. *Vivat Rex Gabriel!* Long live King Gabriel! they all shouted. Nevertheless, Hungary never did have a king named Gabriel. Bethlen did not have himself crowned king, even though on taking Pozsony (Bratislava) he had acquired the Hungarian crown. Gabriel Bethlen did not want to be crowned; he astutely saw that his power base was not reliable, and he was also aware that as crowned king it would be more difficult for him to strike a compromise for peace with Ferdinand. Bethlen had no wish to burn his bridges.

With Bethlen elected king, Hungary had arrived at a historical moment when it seemed that the country could step beyond the partition of 1541 and unify at least two of its parts. Now, as throughout the 17th century, this hope remained an illusion until the Turks could be driven out of the land. Neither of the two world powers sharing Hungarian territory could tolerate a Kingdom of Hungary united with Transylvania.[12]

It is true that both world powers had weakened by the beginning of the 17th century. After the Habsburg brothers had ceased their bickering, the Thirty Years War preoccupied the Habsburgs. The Ottoman Empire was reeling from dynastic and economic crises, and was distracted by the theatre of war on its eastern front. This created the deceptive situation in which it seemed as if neither great power could see its intended strategies through in Hungary. However, despite the chaos reigning in the seraglio, the Porte clearly announced its decision: if Gabriel Bethlen were to become King of Hungary, he would have to renounce being Prince of Transylvania. It was evident the Ottoman Empire would not tolerate a unification of the kingdom

---

[12] István György Tóth, *Politique et religion en Hongrie du XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 2004).

of Hungary with Transylvania from west to east, in which the Habsburgs would have had control – as repeated attempts had demonstrated in 1538, 1551 and 1598; however, an unification from east to west was also against their interests. 'If God permits, let Gabriel Bethlen be crowned King of Hungary ... but we will never allow Transylvania to be joined with Hungary because Transylvania is Sultan Suleyman's conception and is the great sultan's own.' This was unequivocally expressed in the Porte's letter. Bethlen reinforced and enlarged his principality but he could not unify Hungary and Transylvania.

The next turning point in the turbulent history of Hungary and Transylvania came with the disastrous Polish campaign of Transylvanian prince George Rákóczi II and the consecutive Turkish invasion of the principality.[13] In 1660, Rákóczi was defeated (he died of his wounds after the battle) and the greatest castle of Transylvania, Nagyvárad (Oradea) was besieged and captured by the Turks. The fall of Nagyvárad in 1660 not only meant a death blow to the principality of Transylvania, but it also broke the defences of the kingdom of Hungary. Várad, the most important border castle after Győr (Raab) in Hungary, became the centre of a Turkish *vilayet* and this made sweeping changes to frontiers that had remained practically unchanged since 1606. With the death of Rákóczi and the capture of Nagyvárad, the Turks staked a claim to the whole of the region beyond the river Tisza and even to the estates of the insurgent prince, Rákóczi, in Habsburg Hungary. That was tantamount to a declaration of war. Nor could the possibility be ruled out that the Ottoman Empire would simply annex the principality, thus making Transylvania into a Turkish province as opposed to a vassal state. News came from Constantinople that the Divan's final decision was that Transylvania should have no further princes, but that a pasha should be placed at its head.[14]

The Court War Council in Vienna decided that they would thwart the Turkish aspirations to absorb Transylvania as a *vilayet* into their empire, aspirations which dated back 120 years to Sultan Suleyman. Such a shift in the balance of power would gravely have jeopardised the continued Habsburg rule in the kingdom of Hungary – something that the Viennese court would not tolerate. Emperor Leopold I sent a strong force against the Turks, led by the experienced Field Marshal Raimondo Montecuccoli. After the imperial army had been six weeks on the march, arriving in Transylvania at the beginning of September 1661, the Court War Council ordered them to withdraw. Information had been received that the Diet of the Transylvanian nobles had, on the orders of Pasha Ali, 'freely' elected Michael Apafi their prince. With this the danger of the vassal state of Transylvania becoming a Turkish province had passed; the whole campaign had become superfluous, and Montecuccoli withdrew. After the defeat of the anti-Turkish Rákóczi party, Michael Apafi consolidated his power in a much weakened Transylvanian principality, and became this small state's last real – and longest ruling – Prince.

With the election of Michael Apafi this provisional solution of a semi-independent Transylvanian principality was revived. The final turning point in Hungarian history came with the battle of Kahlenberg in 1683 and the expulsion of the Turks from Hungary. Even if the principality of Transylvania survived formally until the revolution of 1848, its role ended in shaping the political culture of Hungary. This peculiar political culture, one with a never clearly defined constitutional framework, with unending compromises and always changing balance of power, ceased to exist.

English by the Author

---

[13] Ágnes R. Várkonyi, *Europica varietas, Hungarica varietas: 1526-1762. Selected studies* (Budapest, 2000).

[14] Jean Bérenger, *Histoire de l'Empire des Habsbourg*, 310-8; István György Tóth, 'Missionaries as cultural intermediaries in religious borderlands (Habsburg Hungary and Ottoman Hungary in the seventeenth century)', in Heinz Schilling and István György

Tóth (ed.), *Religious differentiation and cultural exchange in Europe 1400-1700* (Cambridge, 2004) (in print).

'*Monarchia / Monarchey / da einer allein herrschet.*'
The Making of State Power and Reflections on the State in Bohemia and Moravia between the Estates' Rebellion and Enlightenment Reforms

Petr Maťa

In recent decades discussion about the evolution of state power in the Early Modern Age have led to the conclusion that the formulation of this problem continues to be deeply affected by a retrospective projection of the 19th century political thought (based on the normative categories of constitutionality and legal equality) into the earlier periods when the concept of society and social order rested on entirely different categories (demesne [*Herrschaft*]/subjection [*Untertänigkeit*], hierarchy, corporation, privileges, house/family and so on). This shift in viewing the genesis of modern statehood comes to the fore most markedly when the concept of 'absolutism' is deconstructed and its paradigmatic impact revealed. However, this change of perspective also requires caution when using many other key terms ('state', 'public', 'constitution', 'liberty', 'politics' and 'propaganda').[1]

---

[1] Richard Bonney, 'Absolutism: what's in a Name?', *French History*, i (1987), 93-117; Nicholas Henshall, *The Myth of Absolutism. Change and Continuity in Early Modern European Monarchy* (London and New York, 1992) (a valuable work, though it exaggerates greatly in the heat of its polemics); Reinhard Blänkner, '„Der Absolutismus war ein Glück, der doch nicht zu den Absolutisten gehört." Eduard Gans und die hegelianischen Ursprünge der Absolutismusforschung in Deutschland', *Historische Zeitschrift*, cclvi (1993), 31-66. However, some of those involved in discussion see absolutism merely as a descriptive notion and they engage in a dispute about its acceptability, as if this concept merely *described* a historical reality, and not in the least – as we assume – *co-formed* its understanding. This change of view is evident also in analytical works, see for example D. Parker, 'Sovereignty, Absolutism and the Function

This change of outlook leads researchers in two directions: firstly to contemporary discourse and perspectives of persons involved, and secondly to comparative analyses. Yet, the research devoted to the evolution of state power in a region and at a time which I will discuss (the historical lands of Bohemia and Moravia between the White Mountain and the accession of Maria Theresa), has until now dealt with either of these trends only exceptionally. The key question in this research has been the course and the nature of the system shift around 1620 (the so called White Mountain Upheaval), separating from each other two systems of government, which are most commonly referred to as the Estates state and the Absolutist state. The background of historiographical discussion about the political dimension of this upheaval has always been determined by two questions: a) what was a ratio of the elements of continuity and discontinuity in this change; b) to what degree was the political system created after the White Mountain progressive or regressive. However, another question arises as to whether the political upheaval around 1620 can in fact be interpreted without a proper comparison with the conditions and processes in other European state entities and without the proper knowledge of the categories in which the system shift (the scale of which is undisputed) was understood in contemporary political discourse.[2] In this contribution I will limit myself to several remarks on how

of the Law in Seventeenth-Century France', *Past and Present*, cxxii (1989), 36-74; Horst Dreitzel, *Absolutismus und ständische Verfassung in Deutschland. Ein Beitrag zu Kontinuität und Diskontinuität der politischen Theorie in der frühen Neuzeit* (Mainz, 1992); Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, *Vormünder des Volkes? Konzepte landständischer Repräsentation in der Spätphase des Alten Reiches* (Berlin, 1994).

[2] For the best summary of historiographical discussion on the Estates and the Estates' Rebellion 1618-1620 see Jaroslav Pánek, 'Úloha stavovství v předbělohorské době 1526-1620. (Vývoj názorů novodobé české historiografie)', *Československý časopis historický*, xxv (1977), 732-61. On the role of the White Mountain in Czech historical thought cf. Josef Petráň, 'Na téma mýtu Bílé hory', in *Traditio & Cultus. Miscellanea historica Bohemica Miloslao Vlk archiepiscopo Pragensi ab eius collegis amicisque ad annum sexagessimum dedicata* (Prague, 1993), 141-62. Current comparative studies primarily deal with the period before 1620 (Josef Válka, Jaroslav Pánek, Joachim Bahlcke). But also cf. Jeroen Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles. The Courts of Europe's Dynastic Rivals, 1550-1780* (Cambridge, 2003). A number of ideas promoting comparisons is contained in Robert John Weston Evans, *The Making of the Habsburg Monarchy*

the political establishment of the Bohemian Lands (more accurately: Bohemia and Moravia, since I will generally leave the question of Silesia aside) was viewed by contemporary participants. I will primarily focus upon the issue of Bohemia and Moravia's involvement in the discussion related to the forms of government and the consequences which might have impacted upon the relationship between the sovereign and the Estates' authorities.

As an introduction it is necessary to state that political order in the Bohemian Lands was at that time a matter of several discourses, none of which can be defined as the dominant one. Statements were formed in theoretical political science, local historical-legal tradition, the *Reichs-publizistik* or cameral discourse. Furthermore, it would be unwise to underestimate the relevance of political-administrative practice, about which, however, very little is known: for example the functioning and social composition of the Bohemian Court Chancery – in 1712 aptly referred to as the 'sovereign's mouth' ('*os principis*')[3] – and the intellectual profile of its officials continue to be insufficiently known. Yet, it was the place where opinions and rescripts were formulated daily and argumentative and legitimistic strategies continually interacted.

The focal points of some of the above mentioned discourses were found beyond the region of the Bohemian Lands. In the Habsburg Monarchy of this period – except for the well known small group of cameralists – no original political theory was produced, which does not, however, mean that Bodin,

1550-1700. An Interpretation (Oxford, 1979); Thomas Winkelbauer, *Ständefreiheit und Fürstenmacht. Länder und Untertanen des Hauses Habsburg im konfessionellen Zeitalter I-II* (Vienna, 2003). There is not much literature on the political discourse in the Habsburg Monarchy throughout the 17th and the early 18th century. Yet, cf. Hans Sturmberger, *Kaiser Ferdinand II. und das Problem des Absolutismus* (Vienna, 1957); for the earlier period Arno Strohmeyer, 'Vom Widerstand zur Rebellion: Praxis und Theorie des ständischen Widerstands in den östlichen österreichischen Ländern im Werden der Habsburgermonarchie (ca. 1550-1650)', in Robert von Friedeburg (ed.), *Widerstandsrecht in der frühen Neuzeit. Erträge und Perspektiven der Forschung im deutsch-britischen Vergleich* (Berlin, 2001), 207-43, and other studies by Strohmeyer.

[3] Thomas Fellner and Heinrich Kretschmayr, *Die Österreichische Zentral-verwaltung I/3* (Vienna, 1907), 59.

Botero, Contzen or Lipsius[4] were not received favourably. Despite the fact that the constitutional status of the Bohemian Crown and the question of the right to elect a Bohemian king were considered to be important issues of Imperial Roman law, local intellectual circles also stood on the periphery of the *Reichspublizistik*. They contributed to it, at the most, through cantakerous arguments, which put forward local historical and legal tradition, emphasized the independence of Bohemian development and questioned the claims of Imperial law commentators as to its authority on the affairs of Bohemian law: The history of Bohemia provided it with a legitimate claim to its independent interpretation and it was not to be measured against the perspective of the whole of the Holy Roman Empire, as well as *Ius provinciale Regni Bohemiae* were not to be a part of *Ius publicum Romani Imperii*. In practice, this separatist discourse strategy was, however, not able to wrest issues of the lands of St. Wenceslas from the grip of the *Reichspublizistik*, or to dominate this debate so that German jurists continued to express themselves on the status of Bohemia in the *Reich* with reference to Goldast and other '*Bohemomastices*' and they determined the course of the debate.[5]

Thirdly, contemporary pronouncements upon the political establishment of Bohemia and Moravia were formed not merely as products but also as points of intersection of various discourses. For example, a theory of the forms of government could be incorporated within a cameralist tractate, similarly political categories from discussions on sovereignty could appear in a pamphlet by an author who used historical arguments to defend the Bohemian state's extensive autonomy in relation to the Holy Roman Empire and the Bohemian king's constriction by the law of the land.[6]

It is important to keep these facts in mind when we now turn our attention to the theory of the forms of government and attempt to determine to what degree this perspective shaped the opinion on the political establishment of the Bohemia and Moravia. Despite all the upheavals in the European political thinking of the 16th and 17th centuries the Aristotelian typology of good forms of government (monarchy, aristocracy, politeia) and their corruptions (tyranny, oligarchy, democracy/anarchy) continued to be the common concept. It can be found – whether in the form of a comprehensive paradigm or as a set of political terms – in the work of humanist scholars out of touch with political reality; in the projects of political activists and in the treatises of jurists who turned away from the natural law and the Roman law to the realm of the positive law. The thinking of the political elites in Bohemia and Moravia became influenced by this figure of thought only towards the end of the 16th century and represented a conceptual import. (The earlier Bohemian terminology was aware of some of these terms but it did not work with them as parts of a common political-theoretical conceptualisation. The

---

[4] R. Evans, 'Die Universität im geistigen Milieu der habsburgischen Länder (17.-18. Jh.)', in Alexander Patschovsky and Horst Rabe (eds.), *Die Universität in Alteuropa* (Konstanz, 1994), 183-204; M. E. H. Nicolette Mout, 'Die politische Theorie in der Bildung der Eliten: Die Lipsius-Rezeption in Böhmen und in Ungarn', in Joachim Bahlcke, Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg and Norbert Kersken (eds.), *Ständefreiheit und Staatsgestaltung in Ostmitteleuropa. Übernationale Gemeinsamkeiten in der politischen Kultur vom 16.-18. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig, 1996), 243-64; Thomas Winkelbauer, *Fürst und Fürstendiener. Gundaker von Liechtenstein, ein österreichischer Aristokrat des konfessionellen Zeitalters* (Vienna and Munich, 1999), 211, 214 ff.

[5] Primarily Melchior Goldast de Heiminsfeld, *De Bohemiae Regni, Incorporatarumque Provinciarum, Iuribus ac privilegiis (...) Commentarii...* (Francofordiae, 1627), resulted in heated arguments: Paulus Stranskius (Stránský), *Respublica Bohemiae* (Lugd. Batavorum, 1634); Bohuslaus Balbinus, *Miscellanea historica Regni Bohemiae* I/1-I/8, II/1-2 (Pragae, 1679-1687), here I/3, 272-291 (*Caput XXI: De malignitate Goldasti in Bohemiam...*). W. Schamschula, 'Adam Friedrich Glafeys „Pragmatische Geschichte der Cron Böhmen" (1729)', in Ferdinand Seibt (ed.), *Die böhmischen Länder zwischen Ost und West. Festschrift für Karl Bosl zum 75. Geburtstag* (Munich and Vienna, 1983), 126-31; Valentin Urfus, 'Český státoprávní patriotismus v prvé polovině

18. století a jeho nacionální rysy: Merkantilista J. K. Bořek a strahovský opat Marian Hermann', in *Bohuslav Balbín a kultura jeho doby v Čechách* (Prague, 1992), 70-7; Matthias Weber, *Das Verhältnis Schlesiens zum Alten Reich in der frühen Neuzeit* (Cologne, Weimar and Vienna, 1992), 49-84.

[6] P. Stranskius, *Respublica bohemiae*, 154-167, afforded Bohemian sovereigns 'summam potestatem' or 'despoticam potestatem' ('dominatus despoticus'), and simultaneously spoke about its limitation ('imperium unius, temperatum tamen, et quodammodo cum optimatibus terrae divisum'). On the discussion cf. Horst Dreitzel, *Protestantischer Aristotelismus und absoluter Staat. Die „Politica" des Henning Arnisaeus (ca. 1575-1636)* (Wiesbaden, 1970), 260-97 and passim.

term 'tyranny' was used primarily in relation to the Ottoman Empire and early Christianity; 'monarchy' had connotations to the Old Testament and millenarianism). However, the defence of the Estates' rights in the first century of Habsburg rule ocurred especially in the language of land law. The political thinking of the Bohemian and Moravian Estates maintained their conservative character; it was determined by practice and did not display the need to define the relationship between the sovereign and the Estates in any elaborate theoretical system or to formulate their own theories of a state or resistance to it.[7]

It was only from the end of the 16th century that foreign and domestic political tensions became to be interpreted in the categories of forms of government. From the 1590s Aristotle's *Politica* is given more space during instruction at Prague Utraquist University and the question of the best form of government and the monarchic form of the Bohemian Kingdom appear as regular topics during the final disputations.[8] The aristocratic intellectual Christoph Harant (1564-1621), when writing a travelogue on his journey to the Holy Land (published 1608), also included an extensive *passus* on the political establishment of Venice. He simultaneously opposed the view that the Venice government was a pure aristocracy and with an explicit reference to Bodin (albeit against the spirit of his argument) he spoke about '*mixtus status proportione harmonica*'.[9] Perhaps he was not the only Bohemian

---

[7] Joachim Bahlcke, *Regionalismus und Staatsintegration im Widerstreit. Die Länder der böhmischen Krone im ersten Jahrhundert der Habsburgerherrschaft (1526-1619)* (Munich, 1994), 260-308; Jaroslav Pánek, 'Republikánské tendence ve stavovských programech doby předbělohorské', *Folia Historica Bohemica*, viii (1985), 45-55; idem, 'The Political Thought in Bohemia and Moravia of the 16th and 17th Centuries', *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce*, xxxix (1995), 133-9.

[8] Michal Svatoš (ed.), *Dějiny Univerzity Karlovy I (1347/48-1622)* (Prague, 1995), 231; Karel Beránek (ed.), *Bakaláři a mistři Filozofické fakulty Univerzity Karlovy* (Prague, 1988), 113-54, numbers 44, 135, 165, 199, 240, 404, 598, 715, 721, 942, 1001, 1088, 1101.

[9] Karel Jaromír Erben (ed.), *Kryštofa Haranta z Polžic a Bezdružic a na Pecce etc. Cesta z království Českého do Benátek... I-II* (Prague, 1854-1855), here I, 28. Harant borrows from Bodin, however, in general he argues against him because he does not accept his central argument and does not differentiate the form of government from the

aristocrat who during his travels throughout the states of southern and western Europe came to view politics through the filter of Aristotle's political categories.

We can, in general, only use guesswork about the channels through which this scheme entered Bohemian political thought. It is, however, important that it did not arrive in a neutral form but as part of varied theories, primarily discussions on sovereignty and the right to resist. And in this aspect it was imbued with a considerable subversive potential, especially if the forms of government were considered from the point of principally indivisible sovereignty, as defined by Bodin. This was the very position from which the strengthening of sovereign power was legitimized after 1620 and the monarchist discourse played a prominent role in the argument. The ideologues of this shift spoke about the implementation of a 'proper' monarchic regime through a refom of the hybrid system – in itself doomed to an internal schism. For example, in their opinion from 1621 Ferdinand II's Privy Councillors pursued '*E. Mt. Zweck (...), wie sie eine rechte hereditariam monarchiam stabiliren, und was deroselben zuwider, abschaffen mögen*'. They simultaneously stated, '*dass gleichwohl bishero viele grosse Extrema, so der Monarchi zuwider, sich E. Mt. Königreich Böhmen ereignen wollen*', primarily, '*dass man vorgegeben, die Regalia wehren nicht des Königs allein, sondern des Königs und der Stände zugleich*'. Another of their reservations was directed against the claimed competence of the Estates' conventions to define and restrict a sovereign's authority ('*potestas regis*'), even in the matter of an affront to his Majesty, '*welches in einer Monarchi ein unerhörte Sach ist*'. They proposed concrete steps which had to be taken so that the Emperor might enjoy '*einer rechtschaffenen Monarchi*'.[10] In the same year another royal Councillor – probably Otto von Nostitz (1574-1630), an official in the Bohemian Court Chancery – submitted to the Emperor

---

manner of ruling. Contrary to that Bodin asserts: 'Est ergo Venetiarum status purus & simplex in optimatum potestate gubernande vero civitatis ratio maxima sui parte harmonicis rationibus constituta', Ioannes Bodinus, *De republica libri sex* (Parisiis, 1586), 771 ff.

[10] Josef Kalousek, *České státní právo* (Prague, 1871), 587 ff.

extensive instructions on how to strengthen royal authority in Silesia. His starting point was the question '*wie Euer Maj. monarchia durch Liebe und Macht zugleich in den Ländern recht stabiliret werde*'. Since '*die Länder aus der Monarchia eine rempublicam machen und allein umbram und speciem imperii dem König lassen, vim imperii aber zu sich ziehen und entweder alle oder etzlich wenig regieren wollen*', it is necessary '*es wiederumb ad vera fundamenta monarchiae zu bringen*'.[11] Wilhelm Slavata (1572-1652), the author of another opinion from 1622, declares his support for Bodin's theory of sovereignty through his terminology because he disowns '*mixtum imperium*' and only affords the monarch himself the claim to '*potestas absoluta*'.[12] In 1627 the Bavarian ambassador Leuker notes the fears of Bohemian provincial officers that the recently introduced monarchic state might be transformed in the future into a tyranny.[13]

It is an open question what role was played by the adoption of Bodin's doctrine during the legitimization of the anti-Estates measures after 1620. In any case the project of a 'proper monarchy', formulated in the above declarations by ideologues of the legal upheaval, marginalized, in the spirit of Bodin's teaching on sovereignty (*summum imperium, summa potestas, potestas absoluta, maiestas*), any concepts about the legitimacy of mixed forms of government (*imperium mixtum*), which served to legitimize the Estates' opposition. The very identification of a form of government as a monarchy laid claim to the establishment of certain fundamental rights which might only belong to his Royal Majesty. Restitution of those rights was goal of the reform of the system of government in Bohemia and Moravia after the White Mountain, culminated in the publication of the *Obnovená zřízení zemská* (Restored Land Orders, 1627/1628).

---

[11] The proposal suggests a number of concrete measures related to „Stabilirung der Monarchie", Julius Krebs (ed.), *Acta publica. Verhandlungen und Correspondenzen der schlesischen Fürsten und Stände*, 5 (1622-1625) (Breslau, 1880), 9-27.

[12] In the earlier times the Estates pushed through, 'dass der könig nit absolutam potestatem hette', and that they could 'das regiment neben dem könig mit gesamter hand zu füehren', T. Fellner and H. Kretschmayr, *Österreichische Zentralverwaltung*, I/2, 435.

[13] Anton Gindely, *Geschichte der Gegenreformation in Böhmen* (Leipzig, 1894), 505.

After the White Mountain a 'proper monarchy' was established in the Bohemian Lands through an explicit extension of the royal prerogative (*iura majestatis, regalia*) to those rights which, according to the ideologues of this change, belonged only to the monarch in a monarchy; they were usurped by the Estates corporations and they were in their substance indivisible.[14] They especially involved *ius legis ferendae, ius belli, ius foederum et legationum, ius magistratus constituendi, ius status convocandi* and *ius appellationis*. Simultaneously heredity of the throne was enforced (*ius haereditarium*).[15] Some of these rights had been claimed by earlier Habsburgs and thus presented contentious issues for a long time.[16] The expansion of the royal prerogative began with the Estates' being partially stripped of their privileges which was legitimized (yet again in full compliance with Bodin's doctrine) by the theory of lapsed rights. For this reason Ferdinand II insisted so much on the interpretation that the Bohemian kingdom and the Moravian Margravate emerged *in forma universitatis* and the King had to retake them and was thus not bound (until the introduction of a new system of government) by the Estates' privileges.[17]

---

[14] This is cogently expressed by Nostitz in the above quoted opinion when he writes that 'in allen Königreichen das ius belli allein dem Monarchen zustehet', 'die interpretatio legum et privilegiorum allein dem Monarchen und niemandes anderm in der Monarchie zustehet', 'die creatio magistratuum als eines unter den fürnehmbsten iuribus Majestatis', 'die indictio comitiorum et convocatio statuum Niemandem als dem König in der Monarchie zustehet' etc., Krebs (ed.), *Acta publica*, 5, 13, 15 ff.

[15] Gindely, *Geschichte*, 427-507; J. Kunisch, 'Staatsräson und Konfessionalisierung als Faktoren absolutistischer Gesetzgebung. Das Beispiel Böhmen (1627)', in Barbara Dölemeyer and Diethelm Klippel (eds.), *Gesetz und Gesetzgebung im Europa der Frühen Neuzeit* (Berlin, 1998) (= Zeitschrift für historische Forschung, Beiheft 22), 131-56.

[16] Jaroslav Pánek, 'První krize habsburské monarchie', in Petr Vorel (ed.), *Stavovský odboj roku 1547. První krize habsburské monarchie* (Pardubice, 1999), 11-27.

[17] J. Kalousek, *České státní právo*, 399, 442 f., 450; Milan Šmerda, 'České země a uherská stavovská povstání (K otázce „kolektivní viny" a „kolektivní odpovědnosti" v myšlení feudální společnosti)', *Slovanský přehled*, lxxi (1985), 462-74. Bodin differentiated three forms of monarchy: Tyrannis, Regnum (monarchia regalis) and Dominatus, while he considered the last two to be legitimate. Dominatus could be established by war ('Dominatus vero dicitur, cum Princeps unus, libertatis ac fortunarum

The project of a 'proper monarchy' succeeded in legitimizing the decisive strengthening of Habsburg power in the first third of the 17th century and it also created new scope for reflection on the political establishment of the Bohemian lands. The fact is that the concept of a monarchy as one of the classical forms of government remained the main reference point of contemporary discourse on the current organization of the state. For example a reference to it was made in the pamphlet *Typus modernus bohemicus* from 1633, in which the Habsburg Counsellor for finance Wolkenstein described the critical state of royal finances in Bohemia and laid full responsibility at the door of Wallenstein's semi-autonomous *'terra felix'*, set up by an unprecedented plunder of the Sovereign's fisc. According to Wolkenstein *'einem statu monarchico vermöge aller politicorum decisiones nichts Schädlichers widerfahren kann'* and *'alle Gouvernament, sie seind Monarchien, Aristokratien, Demokratien gewidmet wie sie wollen, concurriren e diametro obbemeldten Proceduren zuwider'*.[18] The Moravian Chamber Procurator George Friedrich Schierl von Schierndorf (1644-1714) talks about *'forma regiminis ad regulas pure monarchicas übergossen'* (1681)[19] after the events of the White Mountain. Bernard Ignaz Count Martinitz (1615-85), the Supreme Burgrave of Prague and keen proponent of the Sovereign's interests in Bohemia, complained in 1683, that Land diets drew out and the Estates acquired their own executive body there, parallel to the royal governorship, which potentially undermined *'stato monarchico'*.[20] In

---

omnium dominus, iure belli factus, aut foedere, subditos, quasi pater familias, servos moderatur.') and a monarch ruled it as 'pater familias.' It, however, had to involve 'justum ac legitimum bellum'. Contrary to that, in a 'monarchia regalis' a sovereign guaranteed the freedoms and private property ('libertatem ac rerum dominia') of his subjects. 'Dominatus' could be transformed in a 'Regnum', 'si subditos iusta libertate ac rerum suarum dominio utifrui patiatur'. Bodinus, *De republica*, 189 ff., 193 ff.

[18] Edmund Schebek, *Die Lösung der Wallensteinfrage* (Berlin, 1881), 559-62.

[19] He refers to this change in another place as 'mutatio status', A. Fischel, 'Zur Finanzgeschichte Mährens. Reformvorschläge unter Kaiser Leopold I.', *Zeitschrift des deutschen Vereins für die Geschichte Mährens und Schlesiens*, xxv (1923), 44-77, here 66.

[20] '...et veramente stante che poch'anni in quà le diete si tirano quasi ad un'anno (accioché trattanto i stati habbino il quasi concorrente governo colla Regia Luogotenenza,

addition, Franz Anton Count Sporck (1662-1738), who engaged in Don Quixote-like battles with Bohemian justice and bureaurcracy in the early 18th century, admitted wryly in 1728:

> *Ich musste mit der alles lehrenden Zeit erfahren, dass in diesem statu monarchico das Regiment auch in Sachen die Beförderung der Justiz betreffend, nicht penes unam personam sey, sondern es durch die Oberhändigkeit derer Capi dahin gebracht worden, dass wan der Landesfürst ja sagt, das Parlament durch nein nicht widerspreche, wiedrigenfahls des Ersten Befelch ausser acht gesetzt wird, und als ein blosser Wind eines gutten Willens vorbey streichet ...*[21]

Around 1700 a new meaning for the term *monarchy* is constituted, namely as a comprehensive expression of all the sovereign rights and claims sought by the Austrian Habsburgs (*Monarchia Austriaca*). However, it is not derived so much from the doctrine of the forms of government, but rather based on the old notion of monarchy as a claim to universal hegemony; it also involves a form of inheritance from the Spanish branch of the dynasty, which in the early 18th century helped to give the Habsburg monarchy its first name (albeit not yet in a territorial sense of the word but merely as the patrimony of 'the House of Austria').[22] Conversely, the notion of monarchy in the above mentioned definitions was an abstract political category which did not refer to any concrete claim of a sovereign. In the 17[th] century the expression monarchy was not even used to denote territory: the old terms

---

cosa di somma consequenza nello stato monarchico), chi ci vuole rimanere qui tanto tempo, a prop[r]ia spesa et a farne grossi conviti?', Martinitz to Ferdinand Bonaventura Count Harrach, 3 February 1683 (Prague), Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv Wien, Familienarchiv Harrach, carton 283.

[21] Heinrich Benedikt, *Franz Anton Graf von Sporck (1662-1738). Zur Kultur der Barockzeit in Böhmen* (Vienna, 1923), 353.

[22] Grete Klingenstein, 'The meanings of 'Austria' and 'Austrian' in the eighteenth century', in Robert Oresko, Graham C. Gibbs and Hamish M. Scott (eds.), *Royal and Republican Sovereignty in Early Modern Europe. Essays in memory of Ragnhild Hatton* (Cambridge, 1997), 423-78, here 452-8.

land, kingdom and crown, possibly embellished by the adjective 'hereditary,' reigned supreme.

The domestication of the concept of forms of government in the thinking of the Bohemian and Moravian political elites did not lead to its theoretical elaboration. Though Comenius (1592-1670) briefly characterizes monarchy, aristocracy and democracy in several places in his work, mostly written in exile, he, however, considers the question of the best possible form of government to be subsidiary within a context of the general remedy of all things. He advocates in a rather enigmatic formulation a symbiosis of all three.[23] Johann Joachim Becher (1635-82), a German cameralist at the Imperial Court in Vienna, also considers it important in his *Politische Discurs* (1673) to refer to Aristotle's scheme. However his interpretation, conceived with regard rather to discussion about the nature of the Holy Roman Empire than the hereditary Habsburg Lands, is also conventional and does not play a major role in his cameralist argument.[24] Among political theorists who elaborated the typology of forms of government, the Jesuit Adam Contzen (1573-1635), the confessor to Maximilian of Bavaria, stood closest to the world of the Habsburg monarchy. He published his *Politicorum libri decem* (1620) in the period when the struggle between Ferdinand II and the Estates climaxed; he dedicated it to the Emperor and in addition he was in constant touch with the Bohemian nobleman Wilhelm Slavata, one of a select group of people who were allowed to comment on consequent legal changes. It is still unclear how much Contzen's treatise might have influenced the political thinking in the Habsburg monarchy.

---

[23] 'Omnes jam regiminis formae florere debent in omni trino statu.' Joannes Amos Comenius, *De rerum humanarum emendatione Consultatio catholica. Editio princeps*, I-II (Prague, 1966), here II, 288. Cf. Jaroslav Pánek, 'Jan Amos Comenius: Zum politischen Denken und politischen Handeln', in: Karlheinz Mack (ed.), *Jan Amos Comenius und die Politik seiner Zeit* (Vienna and Munich, 1992), 55-74; Josef Válka, 'Komenského pojetí politiky a pokus o překonání machiavelismu', *Studia Comeniana et historica*, xvii (1977), No. 7, 105-14.

[24] Becher prefers 'gemischtes Regiment', in which 'das Caput Monarchale den Vorzug hat', Hebert Hassinger, *Johann Joachim Becher 1635-1682. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Merkantilismus* (Vienna, 1951), 77 ff.

Paradoxically enough, it was not Slavata, agitating against '*imperium mixtum*' in 1622 that referred to Contzen, who held the view that '*[o]ptimam Reipublicae formam esse Monarchiam ex Aristocratia, et Politia temperatam*'[25] but Bohuslav Balbín (1621-88), another Jesuit, who, in fact, never reconciled himself with the authorised amendments of Bohemian law after 1620 and became one of the most vocal domestic critics of the post-war regime.[26]

Despite the fact that there did not appear any original contribution towards political theory in either the Bohemian or Moravian environment, the concept of monarchy retained its contentious potential in political practice and could be utilized for the legitimization of various types of political discussions. During the Bohemian Diet of 1667 the above mentioned Count Martinitz clashed with Franz Ulrich Count Kinsky, who was taken aback by the low attendance of parliamentarians. There were also personal reasons behind this dispute (Kinsky, as his subsequent career shows, identified with proponents of strong monarchic government, no less than Martinitz himself), yet Martinitz skillfully used this category of forms of government to blacken his rival's reputation at the Court and to accuse him of subverting the monarchic establishment.[27] Soon afterwards Martinitz complained that

---

[25] Adamus Contzen, *Politicorum libri decem...* (Moguntiae, 1620), 41; Kurt Malisch, *Katholischer Absolutismus als Staatsräson. Ein Beitrag zur politischen Theorie Kurfürst Maximilians I. von Bayern* (Munich, 1981), 261. Slavata's letters to Contzen from 1630 see Státní oblastní archiv v Třeboni, pracoviště Jindřichův Hradec, book 18.

[26] Balbín quotes Contzen just next to Juan Mariana, a defender of the right to resist a tyrant, *Bohuslai Balbini Dissertatio apologetica pro lingva slavonica precipue bohemica* (Pragae, 1775), 38, 88; Josef Válka, 'Politický smysl Balbínovy historiografie', *Česká literatura*, xxxvi (1988), 385-99.

[27] If perhaps a minimum number of parliamentarians were stipulated, there would be a threat, 'daß dergestalt nicht allein zur Poln. Aristocratia, sondern auch zur einer Oligarchia durch eines iedwedern eigenwilligen Bruch des Landtags der weeg unfehlbarlich gebahnet wurde, dan in Pohlen wirdt zum wenigsten die Ursach der ruptur außdrucklich benennet, dahier aber hette bloß und allein durch verringerung der standsglieder anzahl ohne einziehung eintzig andern motivi vor dißmahl und per consequenz ins künfftige der landtag zerrißen werden können...', Státní oblastní archiv

three officials from the Lieutenancy Council (*Statthalterei*) did not give way to his carriage on the streets of Prague, which the Supreme Burgrave again presented as a serious challenge to the monarchy.[28]

The concept of monarchy thus facilitated contemporary defence of the sovereign's power, or respectively the power of his representatives and could in this aspect act as an argument similar to the reference to *ratio status*, *necessitas* or *corpus politicum*. However, in its substance this notion continued to be rather unspecific. A Latin-German-Czech dictionary published in Prague, 1706, states the German '*Monarchey*' as a synonym of the Latin '*monarchia*' and also presents an additional explanation: '*da einer allein herrschet*'.[29] A single figure's rule indeed expressed the fundamental meaning of the concept of monarchy, however its concrete form was not deductible from the concept itself.[30] Linked with the theory of sovereignty the concept of monarchy became highly charged, but not unambiguous. With reference to Bodin, monarchy could be pitched against aristocracy and the argument which put forward mixed forms of government seemingly lost ground. However, in practice it was not possible to adapt varied state formations of

---

v Litoměřicích, pracoviště Žitenice, Lobkovicové roudničtí – rodinný archiv, sign. Q 16/28, fol. 12a.

[28] The superiority of office holders is said to be 'anima et ratio essentialis monarchicae gubernationis regiae, a qua non potest salvo statu monarchico, proprie sumpto, haec subordinatio praescindi, adeoque repraesentanti regem in capite, seu primario, non potest aequari collum, pectus, et reliqua membra, quae secundaria et infra sunt. (...) [E]st subordinatio monarchica, non potest sub Rege tolerare aristocratizantium machinamenta (...); quod maius Regi, qua Regi damnum, quam si aristocratica molimina (!) et principia sensim, sine sensu introducantur (...) et omnimoda aequalitas in essentialiter inaequalibus ac surrogatis muneribus sinatur stabiliri, adeoque Polonicis principiis republicantibus vicinam Bohemiam corripi, et ab status monarchici tanto impendio et sanguinis et auri, iureque belli latis fundamentalibus legibus, iam non quasi aliud agendo, sed publico attentato audacissime deturbari?', idem fol. 164b, 168a.

[29] Caspar Zacharias Vusín, *Dictionarium von dreyen Sprachen Teutsch, Lateinisch und Boehmisch...* (Prag, 1706).

[30] Horst Dreitzel, *Monarchiebegriffe in der Fürstengesellschaft. Semantik und Theorie der Einherrschaft in Deutschland von der Reformation bis zum Vormärz I-II* (Cologne, Weimar and Vienna, 1991), here I, 25, 345 ff.

Early Modern Europe to such a simple scheme. Bodin himself was well aware of this pitfall and hoped that he would be able to resolve it by differentiating between the forms of government (*reipublicae status*) and ways of ruling (*rationes imperandi*). Yet, through this his intellectual achievement acquired an enigmatic, over-sophisticated and generally utopian character.[31] Discussion which was caused by Bodin's theory of sovereignty in the Holy Roman Empire, where the implementation of the concept of indivisible sovereignty collided with insurmountable obstacles, continuously kept returning to the concept of mixed forms and divisible sovereignty.[32]

The lack of clarity as a product of these discussions is clearly evident in the concept of *monarchia absoluta*, which was indeed used in different contexts but it also lacked a clear definition as to its contents, as to its relation to the concept of sovereignty (*potestas absoluta*), and possibly to other notions accompanied by a similar adjective (*absolutum imperium*). As Bodin understood it, monarchy was by definition absolute and the adjective thus lost its specifying character. Practical usage also documents uncertainty in its meaning: in his relation from 1628 Nuncius Caraffa reproached Ferdinand II, that he did not introduce '*assoluta monarchia*' in the Bohemian Lands after his victory and did not assign to oblivion all the rights and privileges of Bohemia, Moravia and Austrian Lands. This statement sounds awkward if we recall that the project of a 'proper monarchy' was at the time to which Caraffa relates his statement (1622) already being implemented and Caraffa must have known its result at the time when he compiled his report.[33]

---

[31] D. Parker, 'Law, Society and the State in the Thought of Jean Bodin', *History of Political Thought*, ii (1981), 253-85, warns about overestimating of the modernity of Bodin's treatise, if read selectively.

[32] R. Hoke, 'Bodins Einfluß auf die Anfänge der Dogmatik des deutschen Reichsstaatsrechts', in Horst Denzer (ed.), *Jean Bodin. Verhandlungen der internationalen Bodin Tagung in München* (Munich, 1973), 315-31; Michael Stolleis (ed.), *Staatsdenker im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert. Reichspublizistik – Politik – Naturrecht* (Frankfurt am Main, 1977); Michael Stolleis, *Staat und Staatsräson in der frühen Neuzeit. Studien zur Geschichte des öffentlichen Rechts* (Frankfurt am Main, 1990).

[33] J. G. Müller (ed.), 'Carlo Caraffa, vescovo d'Aversa. Relatione dello stato dell'Imperio e della Germania fatta dopo il ritorno della sua nuntiatura appresso

The Austrian Court Chancellor Johann Paul Hocher is characterized in the 1670s as a minister who plants '*consilia ad absolutam Monarchiam*' in the king, which also shifts this concept to the position of an ideal rather than describing the real state of affairs.[34] Towards the end of Charles IV's reign a clamour was heard in the Austrian Lands that the Sovereign's 'absolute power' was in decline, although one can suppose that one hundred years of Habsburg *Staatsbildung* meant the very opposite for the Austrian Lands.[35]

Thus the situational argument based on the muddled concept of monarchy makes it impossible to draw conclusions on the factual system of government and the distribution of power in society – analyses of political and administrative practice must be deployed there. This surely is a banal conclusion, yet well worth mentioning, if we are to understand the very shaky grounds on which a short-cut linkage of Early Modern Age political discourse with the concept of the 'absolutist' state is based. The latter emerged out of 19th century political thinking, which meditated in categories of constitutionalism and viewed the development of early Modern Age state entities through the simplified dualistic model. As an ideal concept the 'absolutist state' is defined through the abrogation of the Estates' rights and programmed effort to remove the Estates element as such. The project of a 'proper monarchy', as enforced in Bohemia and Moravia in the 1620s, significantly strengthened the Sovereign's authority and deprived the Estates of the fundamental part of their political freedoms. However it did not exclude them from the administrative system of the monarchy. Their

authority primarily in the issues of taxation (decision-making on the tax rate and collection of taxes; revenue administration)[36] remained guaranteed.

The way in which this right of the Estates was exercised in the following decades remains an unanswered question which cannot be tackled here, the more so since necessary analyses are not yet available, which would make it possible to come up with a more reliable solution. However, we can discuss the reason for the explicit recognition of the Estates' rights in tax issues. This seeming paradox (rather difficult to explain in terms of 19th century constitutional political thinking), that the enforcement of a sovereign's 'absolute power' (sovereignty), and thus a unitary government (monarchy) was understood to be compatible with maintaining a partial participation of the Estates in the state, can be obviously explained in line with the teleological comprehension of absolutism. It is possible to claim that a sovereign could not do anything else and that he was forced to accept a short-term participation of the Estates in the running of the state. However, if we admit that political discourse was not merely an arsenal of pragmatically applied solutions but that it also produced cognitive categories; set up the norms of behavious and defined legitimization strategies, we can turn to another interpretation and presume that the preservation of the Estates' rights could ensue from contemporary notions on the limits of a legitimate monarchic government. If the ideologues of this political shift had at least elementary knowledge of Bodin's doctrine of the state, they would know that a 'proper monarchy' was not associated merely with the concept of a ruler as the legislative authority, the supreme judge, the lord of war and peace and superior to officialdom but also with respect for private property, the

---

l'Imperatore 1628', *Archiv für Kunde österreichischer Geschichts-Quellen*, xxiii (1860), 101-449, here 161. In opinions of those who advocated a transformation of the Bohemian Lands into a 'proper monarchy' the term 'monarchia absoluta' is not documented.

[34] J. G. Müller (ed.), *Esaias Pufendorf's kngl. schwedischen Gesandten in Wien, Bericht über Kaiser Leopold, seinen Hof und die österreichische Politik 1671-1674* (Leipzig, 1862), 71.

[35] Josef Pekař, *České katastry 1654-1789* (Prague, 2nd edn 1932), 161 ff.

---

[36] It first involved a verbal promise from the end of 1624 (Gindely, *Geschichte*, 467), finally this right of the Estates in the matters of taxation was explicitly anchored in *Obnovená zřízení zemská*: 'Betreffend aber die Contributiones, haben Wir für Uns und die Nachkommene Könige und Erben zum Königreich, Uns dahin auß Gnaden resolvirt, daß Wir dieselbigen auff denen Land-Tägen, und anders nicht, dann gegen gewöhnlichen Reversen, von denen Ständen begehren lassen wollen...', Hermenegild Jireček (ed.), *Obnovené právo a zřízení zemské dědičného království Českého 1627* (Prague, 1888), 15. This paragraph again refers to the confirmation of Bohemian privileges from May 1627, Kalousek, *České státní právo*, 451.

legitimate exercise of power and for privileged corporations. Bodin, refusing to recognize mixed forms of government, expressly acknowledged that the existence of the Estates' diets in the monarchy did not diminsh the monarch's sovereignty. He considered the participation of the Estates, corporations and advisory organs in the running of the state (especially in the matters of taxation) to be an important factor promoting the stability of a monarchic government.[37] This principle was as self evident to Bodin as the axioms that the Estates in a monarchy did not participate in sovereignty and his Majesty and remained the ruler's subjects. The new provincial orders of Bohemia and Moravia which focused upon a clear-cut definition of the Monarch's sovereignty, yet expressly vested the Estates corporations with the right to approve taxes, seemed to be a product of this monarchist discourse. They were definitely not the product of cameralist discourse, younger in years but already clamouring to be heard, which placed in the foreground practical interests of the Sovereign's fisc[38] instead of the theoretical-legal definition of legitimacy.

If we assume that the position of the Habsburg dynasty in the Bohemian Lands after the power upheaval of 1620 was guaranteed not (merely) by repressive measures directed against the Estates' opposition and by changes in the systems of institutions and legal norms, but (also) through discourse, then it was the very notion of a hereditary monarchy and the categories of subjection (*Untertänigkeit*) and sovereignty connected with it that were the basis upon which the arrangement of political relations within the state and the Sovereign's co-existence with the privileged elites stood. In addition they were a framework which defined space for discussion about concrete forms of this co-existence (for example the distribution of tax burden). Thus, the characteristic feature of making of state power in the Habsburg monarchy

---

[37] 'Regia tamen potestas optimis legibus ac institutis moderata, nihil corporibus & collegiis firmius aut stabilius habere potest. Nam si opibus, si pecuniis, si exercitu regi opus est: id omnium optime a collegiis & et corporibus fieri solet', Bodinus, *De republica*, 346.

[38] The cameralist Schierndorf, who in 1681 criticised tax privileges of the Moravian Estates, quoted the above mentioned paragraph of the Land Order with evident embarrassment., Fischel, *Finanzgeschichte*, 66 ff.

---

might be finally interpreted, namely that the implementation of a 'proper monarchy' in the Bohemian Lands after the White Mountain – a monarchy, in which according to its definition a sovereign ruler rules, restrained merely by Divine law and the law of nature – did not in any way bring about the complete liquidation of contemporary Estates structures, nor did it undermine the Estates' status as lords of the manor. Even though the interference of royal organs into patrimonial competences increased throughout the 17th century and the first half of the 18th century, simultaneously with the militarization of the Habsburg monarchy, the status of Bohemian and Moravian aristocracy remained incredibly strong in European comparison. After all, locally and partly at a regional level, also, the patrimonial apparatus provided administrative functions for which there were no institutional options in either the royal or Estates apparatus. The transformation of a political system in Bohemia and Moravia into a 'proper monarchy' made it possible to embed these structures step by step in the emerging state system. Embedded simultaneously with them were also the Estates' participation (no matter how restricted) and extensive rights of the manorial nobility to its subjects. These were eroded gradually; with the pace increased only around the middle of the 18th century and continued well into the 19th century. Thus, a special political-social system emerged, which was founded upon the long-term symbiosis of the king and the Estates' elites (primarily the high aristocracy) and dependent upon religious unity, dynastic stability, the idea of hereditary bondage and demesne and the economic system of large patrimonial estates.

Translated by Alena Linhartová

Space for Freedom. Rationalization of the Political System of the Noblemen's Commonwealth in the 18th Century

Wojciech Kriegseisen

The task I set myself when I started working on the subject discussed below was to recapitulate some opinions on the endeavours made in the eighteenth century, especially its first half, in order to improve the political system of the Noblemen's Commonwealth.[1] This is not an easy task for a historian who throughout his school and university days was tormented first by information and then by studies on 'plans for progressive reforms in Poland during the Age of Enlightenment'. To make things worse, research on Polish early eighteenth-century political literature is not very advanced and, apart from some monographs, all we have at our disposal is Władysław Konopczyński's study, which is far from perfect.[2] I can only hope that I shall manage to depart from the pattern which has been established in the evaluation of changes in the political and social life of the eighteenth-century Commonwealth, a pattern exemplified by the otherwise valuable studies on

---

[1] See also Jerzy Michalski, 'Z problematyki republikańskiego nurtu w polskiej reformatorskiej myśli politycznej w XVIII wieku', *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, xc (1983), no. 2, 327-38; Wojciech Kriegseisen, 'Zmierzch staropolskiej polityki, czyli o niektórych cechach szczególnych polskiej kultury politycznej przełomu XVII i XVIII wieku', in Urszula Augustyniak and Adam Karpiński (eds.), *Zmierzch kultury staropolskiej: Ciągłość i kryzysy (wieki XVII - XIX)* (Warsaw, 1997), 15-39.

[2] Władysław Konopczyński, *Polscy pisarze polityczni XVIII wieku (do Sejmu Czteroletniego)*, ed. Emanuel Rostworowski (Warsaw, 1966).

legal and political doctrines in Saxon times or magnates' plans for reforms in the middle of the eighteenth century.[3]

There is no need to demonstrate that the Marxist categories of political formations and historical qualifications have turned out to be of little use in explaining the processes of changes which took place in the Polish noblemen's society at the end of the modern era. Nevertheless, some of those patterns, e.g. the thoughtlessly repeated theory about the rule by a magnatial oligarchy in Poland in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, still linger in studies and textbooks.[4] Attempts to modify this were made, among others, by Jacek Staszewski, who has pointed out that one cannot speak of a rule by a magnatial oligarchy in the second half of the seventeenth century in any part of the Commonwealth, with the exception of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and that at that time the Commonwealth was already in a state of anarchy.[5] Staszewski has also stated that the Potockis' attempts to introduce an oligarchic government during the reign of Augustus III led to 'complete anarchy in the internal life of the Commonwealth'.[6] According to Staszewski's opinion, the state was not ruled by an oligarchy in the second half of the seventeenth century but was in a state of anarchy in the first half of the next century. This assessment seems to be much closer to the reality of the epoch.

---

[3] Henryk Olszewski, *Doktryny prawno-ustrojowe czasów saskich (1697-1740)* (Warsaw, 1961); Janina Bieniarzówna, 'Projekty reform magnackich w połowie XVIII wieku: Nowe dążenia ekonomiczne', *Przegląd Historyczny*, xlii (1951), 304-30.

[4] Stanisław Śreniowski, 'Państwo polskie w połowie XVII wieku: Zagadnienia ekonomicznej i politycznej władzy oligarchów', in Kazimierz Lepszy et al. (eds.), *Polska w okresie drugiej wojny północnej 1655-1660*, 4 vols. (Warsaw, 1957), i, 13-39; Zdzisław Kaczmarczyk, 'Oligarchia magnacka w Polsce jako forma państwa', in *Pamiętnik VIII Powszechnego Zjazdu Historyków Polskich w Krakowie, 14-17 września 1958 r. Referaty* (Warsaw, 1958), 223-31; Władysław Czapliński, 'Rządy oligarchii w Polsce', in his *O Polsce siedemnastowiecznej: Problemy i sprawy* (Warsaw, 1966), 130-63; Janusz Maciejewski, *Dylematy wolności: Zmierzch sarmatyzmu i początki Oświecenia w Polsce* (Warsaw, 1994), 14 ff.

[5] Jacek Staszewski, 'Elekcja 1697 roku', in his '*Jak Polskę przemienić w kraj kwitnący*'... : *Szkice i studia z czasów saskich* (Rozprawy i Materiały Ośrodka Badań Naukowych im. Wojciecha Kętrzyńskiego w Olsztynie, no. 168, Olsztyn, 1997), 7-22.

[6] Jacek Staszewski, *August III Sas* (Wrocław, 1989), 207-8.

Let us put our reflections in order and stress once again that magnatial oligarchy did not exist as a 'form of government' in the Noblemen's Commonwealth in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The attempts made by groups of magnates to take over full power ended in failure because of the opposition of the royal court, rival groups of magnates, and sometimes an armed resistance of the nobility. In 1700 the nobility put an end to Sapiehas' oligarchy in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in a bloody encounter at Olkienniki. In 1716 the confederated nobility of Lithuania overthrew the Lithuanian Grand Hetman, Ludwik Konstanty Pociej, and a little earlier Polish confederates arrested the Polish Grand Hetman, Adam Mikołaj Sieniawski, the despot of Little Poland. So perhaps one should not speak of oligarchy but of anarchy or recall the expressive but rather forgotten term 'decentralization of sovereignty'?[7]

A similar confusion as the one over the 'rule by oligarchy' can be seen in the case of what was once a much more important qualifying category, namely the concept of progressiveness. In the last few years there has been a tendency in descriptions of social processes to replace the term 'progress' with the expression 'modernization'; this change is usually only of a formal character and does not necessarily mean a switch – to recall Peter Burke's deliberate simplification – from 'Marx's model' to 'Spencer's model', or a conscious attempt to refer to their synthesis.[8] In my reflections on Polish political culture, the term 'modernization' will not be used as a synonym of 'progress', for we will not refer to the opposition between revolutionary progress and evolutionary modernization. In my view, what took place in the Commonwealth at the end of the seventeenth and in the eighteenth centuries were endeavours at modernization in the sense of a rationalization of the system of decision-making – to use an eighteenth-century terminology – in

---

[7] The last term was proposed by Bogusław Leśnodorski in his 'Ustrój Trzeciego Maja w Polsce', *Państwo i Prawo*, i (1946), no. 4, 60; compare the remarks by Henryk Olszewski, 'Ustrój i doktryna w Rzeczypospolitej czasów Jana III', *Studia Historyczne*, xxviii (1995), no. 1, 17-23.

[8] Peter Burke, *History and Social Theory* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1993) (Polish edn *Historia i teoria społeczna*, 179-82).

a 'free state', through its adaptation to the growing political challenges and dangers at that time. This could be seen particularly clearly in the reform plans and endeavours after the shock caused by the events during the last but one interregnum, which laid bare the weakness of the noblemen's state.[9]

In my reflections on political plans and concepts, I will not assess them as enlightened or unenlightened ideas. We will refer to the concept of rationalization, not as a derivative of Enlightenment rationalism, but only as a symptom of a modernization undertaken in reaction to the political challenges of the epoch. In my view the theoretical plans aimed at improving the political system and the actual reform-backing activities were not necessarily a result of 'internal circumstances' or a consequence of progress conceived as an 'objective historical process'. In my opinion the trend to rationalize political life and the political system, a steady and consistent, though fluctuating, trend in Poland's history since the end of the seventeenth century, resulted mainly from the deteriorating situation of the state, from the ever more evident danger, and, later, from the crisis of the Commonwealth's sovereignty, and not from social transformations. This was a trend which in a way was analogous to the processes which took place in Germany at the turn of the nineteenth century as a result of the threat posed by France, processes called 'defensive *Modernisierung*' by Hans-Ulrich Wehler.[10]

It would be difficult to say that the plans and activities undertaken by Polish politicians from the end of the seventeenth century must have been a 'defensive modernization', that is a modernization enforced by external circumstances, just because Polish society, like all traditional societies, disliked innovation. This is why from the seventeenth century on, reforms aimed at rationalizing the political system were consciously or unconsciously presented to public opinion not as modernization proposals but as proposals

---

[9] Michael G. Müller, *Polen zwischen Preussen und Russland: Souveränitätskrise und Reformpolitik 1736-1752* (Berlin, 1983); Zofia Zielińska, *Walka 'Famili' o reformę Rzeczypospolitej 1743-1752* (Warsaw, 1983).

[10] Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, 4 vols. (Munich, 1989-2003), i, *Vom Feudalismus des Alten Reiches bis zur Defensiven Modernisierung der Reformära 1700-1815*, 2nd edn (Munich, 1989), 531-46.

'to do away with exorbitance', and to renew the political system which had been distorted in some undefined past. This 'improvement theory', placed in opposition to the harmful reformatory novelties, was manifest in the eighteenth century in the content of modernization proposals, especially in their form: the rhetoric aimed at assuring the addressees that the proposed change was in fact a return to the lost, ideal political system.[11]

The proposals for a reform of the Commonwealth's political system formulated by Michał Wielhorski, representative of the Confederacy of Bar at the Versailles court, are probably the best known, but rather late example, of this practice. In his elaborations, drawn up for, among others, Gabriel Bonnot de Mably and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Wielhorski consistently presented himself as *laudator temporis acti*, but he realized that many of his rationalization ideas would have undoubtedly been rejected by the Polish nobility, who upheld the principle that *omnia novitas nociva est Reipublicae*. Consequently, his proposals were only known to the initiated, that is members of the General Council of the Confederacy of Bar, who, while officially declaring their intention to return to *the status quo* from the time of Augustus III, realized that the political system had to be changed.[12]

The ideal reached in the 'golden age of the Noblemen's Republic', an ideal dreamed about in the late seventeenth and in the eighteenth century when it already belonged to a distant, increasingly mystified past, was an efficient functioning of the system of mixed monarchy *(monarchia mixta)*. Within this framework, freedom (the nobility) and the authority (the king) were in a state of constant tension and delicate balance.[13] This tension

---

[11] Dariusz Makiłła, *Władza wykonawcza w Rzeczypospolitej, od połowy XVII wieku do 1763 roku: Studium historyczno prawne* (Toruń, 2003), 86-93.

[12] Jerzy Michalski, *Rousseau i sarmacki republikanizm* (Warsaw, 1977), 5-26; see also his *Sarmacki republikanizm w oczach Francuza: Mably i konfederaci barscy* (Wrocław, 1995), 13-24, 101-23.

[13] Stefania Ochmann, 'Rzeczpospolita jako *monarchia mixta*: dylematy władzy i wolności, in Andrzej Bartnicki et al. (eds.), *Kultura – polityka – dyplomacja: Studia ofiarowane Profesorowi Jaremie Maciszewskiemu w sześćdziesiątą rocznicę Jego urodzin* (Warsaw, 1990), 264-78; Jerzy Lukowski, 'The Szlachta and the Monarchy: Reflections

between the majesty of royal power and the freedom of the nobility, defined as rivalry *inter maiestatem ac libertatem*, is not only the most important principle, indispensable for a proper understanding of old Polish political culture, it was also a key term in old Polish political discourse.[14] The ideal balance *inter maiestatem ac libertatem* was clearly broken at the turn of the seventeenth century (the direct causes are of no consequence here). It was then that the third element, the class of magnates, appeared, or rather returned, to play the decisive role in the political game. Their domain was the senatorial estate, *ordo intermedius,* which in theory was to be an intermediary between the noble estate and the monarchy.[15] Dominated by magnates, the senatorial estate played the decisive role in the Commonwealth's political life in the second half of the seventeenth century,[16] and this evoked mounting opposition from the nobility during the reign of Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki[17] and the years of the Confederacy of Tarnogród.[18]

The deregulation of the system of the nobility's democracy, which started during the reign of Sigismund III Vasa[19] and was clearly evident in the times

---

on the Struggle inter *maiestatem ac libertatem*', in Richard Butterwick (ed.), *The Polish-Lithuanian Monarchy in European Context, c. 1500-1795* (Houndmills, 2001), 132-49.

[14] See Anna Sucheni-Grabowska and Małgorzta Żaryn (eds.), *Między monarchą a demokracją: Studia z dziejów Polski XV-XVIII wieku* (Warsaw, 1994); Urszula Augustyniak, *Wazowie i 'królowie rodacy': Studium władzy królewskiej w Rzeczypospolitej XVII wieku* (Warsaw, 1999), 20-44.

[15] Maria O. Pryshlak, *'Forma mixta* as a Political Ideal of a Polish Magnate: Łukasz Opaliński's *Rozmowa Plebana z Ziemianinem'*, *The Polish Review*, xxvi (1981), no. 3, 26-42.

[16] Janusz S. Dąbrowski, *Senat Koronny: Stan sejmujący w czasach Jana Kazimierza* (Cracow, 2000).

[17] See Jarosław Stolicki, 'Wystąpienia antysenatorskie za panowania Michała Korybuta Wiśniowieckiego', in Krystyn Matwijowski et al. (eds.), *Senat w Polsce: Dzieje i teraźniejszość* (Warsaw, 1993), 204-11.

[18] Wojciech Stanek, *'Opisanie* urzędu hetmańskiego z 1717 roku i jego polityczne następstwa', *Studia i Materiały z Historii Wojskowości*, xxxvii (1995), 31-41.

[19] Jarema Maciszewski, 'Sejm 1607 r. a załamanie się planów reformy państwa', in Józef A. Gierowski (ed.), *O naprawę Rzeczypospolitej XVII-XVIII w.: Prace ofiarowane*

---

of his immediate successors, evoked a reaction and resulted in plans demanding a reform of the political system.[20] These problems have, for a long time, been the subject of research, to recall Władysław Konopczyński's classic work.[21] The political crisis in the middle of the seventeenth century brought a new wave of reformatory ideas, which have been researched by Konopczyński's disciple, Władysław Czapliński.[22]

However, it must be stated that the traditional research on plans to modernize the Commonwealth's political system, conducted from the end of the nineteenth to the end of the twentieth century, focused on political changes linked to the 'all-European' norm, that is changes aimed at strengthening central authority. In Polish-Lithuanian conditions, this would have meant an absolutist modernization based on the west-European model. This trend in

---

Władysławowi Czaplińskiemu w 60. rocznicę urodzin (Warsaw, 1965), 37-48; see also Wojciech Szczygielski, 'Republikańska idea reformy Rzeczypospolitej w XVII i pierwszej połowie XVIII wieku', *Rocznik Łódzki*, xxxiii (1985), 17.

[20] Stefania Ochmann, 'Plans for Parliamentary Reform in the Commonwealth in the Middle of the 17th Century', in Władysław Czapliński (ed.), *The Polish Parliament at the Summit of Its Development (16th-17th Centuries)* (Wrocław, 1985), 163-87; Józef Leszczyński, 'Projekty reformy państwa polskiego na sejmie koronacyjnym Jana Kazimierza w 1649 r.', in Józef A. Gierowski (ed.), *O naprawę Rzeczypospolitej XVII-XVIII w.: Prace ofiarowane Władysławowi Czaplińskiemu w 60. rocznicę urodzin* (Warsaw, 1965), 89-96; Maciej Matwijów, 'Szlachecka ideologia polityczna w okresie prób przeprowadzenia elekcji *vivente rege* w latach sześćdziesiątych XVII w.', *Czasopismo Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich*, ix (1998), 11-26; Stanisław Grodziski, 'Projekt reform prawno-ustrojowych z r. 1673', *Czasopismo Prawno-Historyczne*, viii (1956), no. 1, 168-82; Kazimierz Piwarski, 'Projekty reform państwa za Jana III Sobieskiego, in *Studia historyczne ku czci Stanisława Kutrzeby*, i (Cracow, 1938), 345-70; Kazimierz Przyboś, *Projekty reform państwa za Jana III Sobieskiego* (Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis, no. 726, Historia, no. 47, Wrocław, 1984); Adam Kaźmierczyk, 'Dworski projekt reform na sejmie grodzieńskim 1692-1693', in Krystyn Matwijowski (ed.), *Studia i materiały z czasów Jana III Sobieskiego* (Wrocław, 1992), 63-73.

[21] Władysław Konopczyński, *Liberum veto: Studium porównawczo-historyczne* (Cracow, 2002), 231-46, 329-43.

[22] Władysław Czapliński, 'Główne nurty myśli politycznej w Polsce w latach 1587-1655', in his, *O Polsce siedemnastowiecznej*, 63-100; see, too, his 'Próby reform państwa w czasie najazdu szwedzkiego', in Kazimierz Lepszy et al. (eds.), *Polska w okresie drugiej wojny północnej 1655-1660*, (Warsaw, 1957), 303-29.

research was a result of the historical philosophies which promoted general 'rules of historical development' and also of source texts. One of the most characteristic elements of which was fear of the *libido dominandi* of kings, who were believed to be striving to impose *absolutum dominium* on the nobility. This way of qualifying, analysing and assessing political writings was rather uncritically used in research on the end of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, and the political plans launched at that time were divided into 'progressive', that is proposing to strengthen royal power, and 'conservative', which tried to improve the system of noblemen's democracy within the frame of *monarchia mixta*.[23]

It seems however that not enough attention has been paid to the change which took place in Polish political culture in the second half of the seventeenth century as a result of John Casimir's reign marked by Lubomirski's rebellion and the abdication of the last Vasa king. These facts discredited for a long time reformatory plans aimed at strengthening royal power at the cost of noblemen's rights, in particular at the cost of magnates' liberties.[24] Moreover, the xenophobia which grew in strength during the armed conflicts with Russia, Sweden, Brandenburg-Prussia, Transylvania, Ukraine and Turkey, was reflected in the dislike of dissidents and foreigners, and increased the fear of the king's *absolutum dominium,* which was regarded as an alien idea based on the way in which the Habsburgs and

---

Bourbons wielded power. It was believed, that in the free Commonwealth such ideas were supported mainly by foreigners at the royal court.[25]

A fresh wave of political texts appeared in connection with the interregnum after John III Sobieski's death. Among the many, mostly handwritten, political writings, there is a group of texts whose authors questioned the *status quo* and proposed remedial measures, even timidly formulating modifications of the political system.[26] But we are still unable to portray fully the picture of these complex trends: for instance, we do not know in what way the equality reform in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was connected with the general modernization trends. Did it liquidate only those traditional political distinctions which were no longer accepted by the Lithuanian nobility or was it meant to be part of a republican programme for a reform of the political system?[27]

The research carried out in the last few years has enriched our knowledge of the reformatory plans which were influenced by the political crisis during the last few years of John Sobieski's reign and by the conflict that arose during the subsequent election between supporters of the elector of Saxony, Frederick Augustus Wettin (who finally ascended the throne as Augustus II) and the French candidate, duke François Louis de Bourbon-Conti. Historians have shown that two well-known works, namely Stanisław

---

[23] Szczygielski, 'Republikańska idea reformy Rzeczypospolitej', 9-38.

[24] Mirosław Nagielski, *Rokosz Jerzego Lubomirskiego w 1665 roku* (Warsaw, 1994); Witold Kłaczewski, *Abdykacja Jana Kazimierza: Społeczeństwo szlacheckie wobec kryzysu politycznego lat 1667-1668* (Lublin, 1993); Maciej Matwijów, *Ostatnie sejmy przed abdykacją Jana Kazimierza 1667 i 1668* (Wrocław, 1992); Stefania Ochmann, *Sejmy lat 1661-1662: Przegrana batalia o reformę ustroju Rzeczypospolitej* (Wrocław, 1977); Robert I. Frost, 'Obsequious Disrespect: the Problem of Royal Power in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth under the Vasas, 1587-1668', in Richard Butterwick (ed.), *The Polish-Lithuanian Monarchy in European Context, c. 1500-1795* (Houndmills, 2001), 150-71.

[25] Janusz Tazbir, 'Ksenofobia w Polsce XVI i XVII wieku', in his *Arianie i katolicy* (Warsaw, 1971), 238-78; see also his 'Stosunek do obcych w dobie baroku', in Zofia Stefanowska (ed.), *Swojskość i cudzoziemszczyzna w dziejach kultury polskiej* (Warsaw, 1973), 80-112.

[26] According to S. Orszulik, there was an unprecedented growth of political writings during the interregnum after the death of John III Sobieski; Orszulik has registered c. 800 titles of unprinted political writings during that period, see Staszewski, 'Elekcja 1697 r.', 11.

[27] Janusz Woliński, 'Koekwacja praw na Litwie', in Józef A. Gierowski (ed.), *O naprawę Rzeczypospolitej XVII-XVIII w.: Prace ofiarowane Władysławowi Czaplińskiemu w 60. rocznicę urodzin* (Warsaw, 1965), 189-92; Jerzy Malec, '*Coequatio iurium* stanów W. Ks. Litewskiego z Koroną Polską w 1697', *Acta Baltico-Slavica*, xii (1979), 203-15.

Herakliusz Lubomirski's *De vanitate consiliorum...*[28] and Franciszek Radzewski's *Kwestye polityczne, obojętne...* [Indifferent political Questions] (previously believed to have been written in the 1740s[29]), were written at this time. Jacek Staszewski thinks that the first version of Stanisław Dunin Karwicki's *De ordinanda Reipublicae ...*, one of the most important reformatory plans created in the first half of the eighteenth century, may have been written as early as 1701. He points out that the author was inspired by the experiences of the interregnum and the civil war of 1696-99.[30]

However, in the case of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the accepted categories of progressiveness and conservatism, with absolute rule as their point of reference, are of little use in an analysis of the political thought of that epoch; they even obscure the picture.[31] Emanuel Rostworowski has formulated the opinion that in view of the change in the balance of forces in Europe and the growth of Russia's power at the end of the seventeenth century,[32] the Polish-Lithuanian state was faced with three possibilities

for development. The first one was 'to strengthen the loose organism into a coherent great-power entity', that is, to modernize the political system by introducing absolute rule, similar to what had already taken place in neighbouring countries. Another was 'to adopt the elastic amphibian nature', that is, to turn towards republicanism. The worst possibility, which unfortunately became a reality, was that Poland's neighbours 'will tear to pieces the resisting weak tissue' of the unreformed, unmodernized state of the noblemen's mixed monarchy.[33]

An analysis of Polish political writings from the turn of the eighteenth century shows that none of the most important texts proposed modernization in the absolutist spirit. Józef Gierowski and later Jacek Staszewski have, therefore, proposed that the simplified dichotomy – absolutist *versus* republican reform – should be modified.[34] Finally, Staszewski suggested that three currents should be distinguished in Polish political thought: the absolutist direction of the court, the republican thinking of the noblemen, and the conservative strand held by the magnates.[35]

In my view Staszewski's classification should be simplified still further. Let us start with the conservative thinking whose representatives took pleasure in describing the deplorable state of the Commonwealth; they suggested changes which, in practice, would have meant a return to the old

[28] Wanda Roszkowska (ed.), *Stanisław Herakliusz Lubomirski: Pisarz polityk-mecenas* (Wrocław, 1982); Grzegorz Raubo, *Barokowy świat człowieka: Myśl antropologiczna w twórczości Stanisława Herakliusza Lubomirskiego* (Poznań, 1997); Adam Karpiński, 'Stanisław Herakliusz Lubomirski i neostoicyzm', in Piotr Urbański (ed.), *Wątki neostoickie w literaturze polskiego renesansu i baroku; Materiały z sesji 'Neostoicyzm w literaturze i kulturze staropolskiej', Szczecin 20-22 października 1997 roku* (Szczecin, 1999), 221-37.

[29] Urszula Kosińska, '*Kwestyje polityczne, obojętne* (Franciszka Radzewskiego): Traktat polityczny z roku 1699', *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, cii (1995), nos. 3-4, 91-112. The criticism of these conclusions made by Przemysław Glabiszewski (*Franciszek Radzewski: Wielkopolski działacz szlachecki i pisarz polityczny czasów saskich* [Poznań, 1999], 98-9), is, in my opinion, totally unconvincing. See the review of Glabiszewski's book (Wojciech Kriegseisen, *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, cviii [2001], no.1, 107-10) and the ensuing polemics (*Kwartalnik Historyczny*, cix [2002], no. 3, 161-9).

[30] Jacek Staszewski, 'Pomysły reformatorskie Augusta II', in his, '*Jak Polskę przemienić w kraj kwitnący...* ', 73-6.

[31] Krystyn Matwijowski, 'Czy Sobieski zamierzał dokonać absolutystycznego zamachu stanu?' in Krystyn Matwijowski (ed.), *Studia z dziejów epoki Jana III Sobieskiego* (Wrocław, 1981), 75-87.

[32] Zbigniew Wójcik, 'Zmiana w układzie sił politycznych w Europie Środkowo-wschodniej w drugiej połowie XVII wieku', *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, lxvii (1960), no. 1,

33; Jacek Staszewski, 'Między Wiedniem i Petersburgiem: Uwagi na temat międzynarodowego położenia Rzeczypospolitej w XVII i XVIII w.', in his, *'Jak Polskę przemienić w kraj kwitnący...'*, 96-105; Andrzej Sulima-Kamiński, *Republic versus Autocracy: Poland-Lithuania and Russia 1686-1697* (Cambridge, Mass., 1993), chs. 1 and 8.

[33] Emanuel Rostworowski, 'Polska w układzie sił politycznych Europy XVIII wieku', in Bogusław Leśnodorski (ed.), *Polska w epoce Oświecenia: Państwo, społeczeństwo, kultura* (Warsaw, 1971), 17.

[34] Józef A. Gierowski, *Między saskim absolutyzmem a złotą wolnością: Z dziejów wewnętrznych Rzeczypospolitej w latach 1712-1715* (Wrocław, 1953), 99; See, too, his 'U źródeł polskiego Oświecenia', in Andrzej Zahorski (ed.), *Wiek XVIII: Polska i świat. Księga poświęcona Bogusławowi Leśnodorskiemu* (Warsaw, 1974), 45.

[35] Jacek Staszewski, 'Groźba saskiego absolutyzmu (polityka Augusta II w Polsce w latach 1697-1706', *Sprawozdania Toruńskiego Towarzystwa Naukowego*, no. 22 (1970), 43-4; Staszewski, 'Pomysły reformatorskie', 69-95.

principles; this is why they were called conservatives by later generations. The dominant feature of their writings is not so much conservatism as phraseology. The main representative of this thinking was Lubomirski,[36] whose texts *Rozmowy Artaxesa z Ewandrem...* [Artaxes' Talks with Ewander], *Genii veridici* and in particular *De vanitate consiliorum* are now regarded rather as political treatises, not as literary works.[37] A similar trend is seen in by Jan Stanisław Jabłonowski's *Skrupuł bez skrupułu w Polszcze...* [Scruple without a Scruple in Poland]. These texts are not so much conservative concepts as political programmes which, while paying lip service to republican public opinion in their phraseology, in fact propagated a reform aimed at transferring power to the magnates; for during the reign of Augustus II and his son, the Senate Councils were the only relatively efficiently functioning organ of the state.[38] A full implementation of this plan might have led to magnates' rule in the Commonwealth.

A rival political current, symbolized by Stanisław Dunin Karwicki's *Eclipsis Poloniae...*[39] (traditionally, though without convincing evidence,

---

[36] See above n. 28.

[37] Staszewski, 'Pomysły reformatorskie', 70-3; Józef A. Gierowski, 'Stanisław Herakliusz Lubomirski jako polityk', in Wanda Roszkowska (ed.), *Stanisław Herakliusz Lubomirski: Pisarz polityk-mecenas* (Wrocław, 1982), 22; Paulina Buchwald-Pelcowa, 'Świat odwrócony Stanisława Herakliusza Lubomirskiego', *ibid.*, 137-55; Bogusław Dybaś, '*De vanitate consiliorum* a postawy i poglądy polityczne S. H. Lubomirskiego w pierwszych latach panowania Augusta II', in Kazimierz Maliszewski and Krzysztof Obremski (eds.), *Barok – Sarmatyzm – Psalmodia* (Toruń, 1995), 73-86.

[38] Mariusz Markiewicz, 'Rzeczpospolita bez sejmu: Funkcjonowanie państwa', in Krystyna Stasiewicz and Stanisław Achremczyk (eds.), *Między barokiem a oświeceniem: Nowe spojrzenie na czasy saskie* (Olsztyn, 1996), 175-9; Mariusz Markiewicz, 'The Functioning of the Monarchy during the Reigns of the Electors of Saxony, 1697-1763', in Richard Butterwick (ed.), *The Polish-Lithuanian Monarchy in European Context, c. 1500-1795* (Houndmills, 2001), 172-92; Bogusław Dybaś, 'W poszukiwaniu modelu rządów w początkach panowania Augusta II w Polsce, 1697-1700', *Clio* (2002), 101-18; Jarosław Poraziński, 'Funkcje polityczne i ustrojowe rad senatu w latach 1697-1717', *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, xci (1984), no. 1, 25-44.

[39] Władysław Konopczyński, 'Stanisław Dunin-Karwicki', *Przegląd Historyczny*, xxxvii (1948), 262-75.

---

attributed to Stanisław Szczuka[40]) represented the noblemen's concept of a republican modernization of the political system. The authors of plans of this type in fact sought to weaken royal power and liquidate the harmful tension *inter maiestatem ac libertatem*. The chamberlain of Sandomierz, Stanisław Dunin Karwicki, author of *De ordinanda republica*,[41] seems to have been the first advocate of republican concepts in the eighteenth century (and their most prominent representative for a long time). He was the first to state clearly that the reason for the Commonwealth's weakness was the mixed form of monarchic-republican governance, which led to a constant, destructive conflict *inter maiestatem ac libertatem*. He believed that, in order to strengthen the state, a choice should be made between a monarchical and a republican government, and since

> the best government in every state is a government which takes the nation's minds into consideration ... and, since the Polish nation has an inborn inclination to freedom and is accustomed to it, it would be difficult to persuade it to submit to one man's rule; the state would perish before the nation agreed to accept this.[42]

Thus only a republican reform was possible in Poland.

In choosing this kind of modernization, Karwicki proposed, first and foremost, 'to circumscribe the king's powers' by depriving him of the prerogative of distributing estates and posts. The most important officials, the ministers, should be elected by Sejm; the senators; by the dietines; and the income from leased royal estates should be used to maintain officials and the army. *Liberum veto* was to be greatly curtailed, and members of Sejm were to have a fixed term of office and become an organ not only of legislative but also of executive power. Karwicki wanted to achieve this by dividing

---

[40] Staszewski, 'Pomysły reformatorskie', 77-80.

[41] Stanisław Dunin-Karwicki, *De ordinanda Republica*, ed. Stanisław Krzyżanowski (Cracow, 1871); see Stanisław Dunin-Karwicki, *Dzieła polityczne z początku XVIII wieku*, ed. Adam Przyboś and Kazimierz Przyboś (Wrocław, Warsaw and Cracow, 1992).

[42] *Ibid.*, 29-31.

parliament into three separate assemblies of senators and deputies; one of which would deal with foreign policy and war, another with fiscal matters, and the third with internal affairs.[43]

The oligarchic and nobility-supported versions of the republican, freedom-inspired current dominated in Polish political culture nearly until the collapse of the state.[44] Thus, at the very beginning of the eighteenth century, reflections on various models of the republican modernization reform – found in the works of the most prominent writers, Stanisław Leszczyński and Stanisław Konarski – focused on relations *inter maiestatem ac libertatem*; the king's role would be reduced to that of the guardian of the laws of the lawful and free Commonwealth of the nobility.[45] The reason for these plans was obvious and increasingly clear: the danger facing the sovereignty of the Commonwealth. The realization of this danger gave rise to the idea of independence in Konarski's writings.[46] The same danger induced other writers to devise fantastic plans for an agreement between Polish and Russian supporters of political freedom and for setting up an international security system based on an understanding of 'free states'.[47]

Republican ideology and phraseology was preponderant in Polish political writings in the next few decades. During the reign of Stanisław August Poniatowski the model of absolute power also attracted less interest than the 'republican' British model, all the more so as support for the latter model

---

[43] Michalski, 'Z problematyki republikańskiego nurtu', 330; see also Julian Barto-szewicz, 'Systemat Karwickiego reformy Rzeczypospolitej w roku 1706', in his, *Szkice z czasów saskich* (*Dzieła*, vii, Cracow, 1880), 315-95; Stanisław Grodziski, 'Stanisława Dunin-Karwickiego poglądy na formę rządów w Polsce', in *Księga pamiątkowa ku czci Konstantego Grzybowskiego* (Cracow, 1971), 89-98.

[44] Józef A. Gierowski, *The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 18th Century: From Anarchy to Well-Organised State*, trans. Henry Leeming (Cracow, 1996), 166-80.

[45] Lukowski, 'The Szlachta and the Monarchy', 139-40.

[46] Gierowski, *The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth*, 180-90. Cf. Konopczyński, *Polscy pisarze polityczni*, 86-8; Szczygielski, 'Republikańska idea reformy Rzeczy-pospolitej', 32.

[47] Wojciech Kriegseisen, 'Trzy pisma propagandowe z okresu przedostatniego bezkrólewia', *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, xc (1983), no. 4, 809-22.

---

was strengthened by the growing western-European criticism of absolute monarchy, an attitude which was in harmony with the view of Polish elites.[48] This freedom-inspired tone can also be found in magnates' programmes for improving the Commonwealth,[49] and it was not until the era of the Great Sejm, in 1789-92, that Polish republicanism split into two distinct currents. One can agree with Anna Grześkowiak-Krwawicz that the dividing line ran between the 'passive' and the 'active' supporters of republican freedoms.[50] On the one side were the consistent supporters of the traditional noblemen's state, which in practice was dominated by magnates, and on the other side there were those who, under the influence of the modernization ideology propagated during the Age of Enlightenment, were ready to accept the model of the nobility's constitutional monarchy. This was probably the crowning point in the long process of changes in attitudes to the question of authority and freedom, a process thus depicted by Jerzy Lukowski: 'The antagonistic paradigm of king against nation, *maiestas contra libertatem*, was gradually, if painfully, replaced by a collaborative, cooperative model'.[51]

The most difficult problem for scholars has been the absolutist current, which has traditionally aroused the greatest interest. Researchers are faced with serious difficulties; for the only author who proposed to modernize the Polish-Lithuanian state in the monarchic spirit was Józef Pawlikowski, better known as a Jacobin activist during the French Revolution, though in his youth he wrote *Political Thoughts* ... in which he proposed that Stanisław August Poniatowski should choose the monarchic way of modernizing the Commonwealth.[52]

---

[48] Anna Grześkowiak-Krwawicz, *Publicystyka stanisławowska o modelu rządów monarchii francuskiej* (Wrocław, 1990), 150-5.

[49] Jerzy Michalski, 'Plan Czartoryskich naprawy Rzeczypospolitej', *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, lxiii (1956), nos. 4-5, 29-43.

[50] Anna Grześkowiak-Krwawicz, *O formę rządu czy o rząd dusz?: Publicystyka polityczna Sejmu Czteroletniego* (Warsaw, 2000), 377-82.

[51] Lukowski, 'The Szlachta and the Monarchy', 144.

[52] Emanuel Rostworowski, 'Myśli polityczne Józefa Pawlikowskiego', in his *Legendy i fakty XVIII w.* (Warsaw, 1963), 195-264.

Works and memorials written by foreigners, in particular, by collaborators of Augustus II Wettin,[53] are frequently and willingly recalled in order to save the hackneyed paradigm: absolutism *versus* republicanism with its oligarchic variant. It should, however, be clearly stated that the proposals worked out at the Saxon court cannot be regarded as an achievement by Polish writers of political theory, irrespective of whether these individuals proposed only a slow modernization of the state and a rationalization of its political system in the spirit of German cameralism or set an absolutistic *coup d'état* as a condition for turning the Commonwealth into 'a well-governed state'.

Thus, if we exclude works attributed to Augustus II, Jacob Heinrich Flemming, Ernst Manteuffel, Johann Beniamin Steinhauser and other writers from the *corpus* of Polish political texts, we are left with only two currents in Polish eighteenth-century political thought. Both positions referred to republican ideas: the magnates' concepts which promoted an oligarchic reform of the political system of the Polish-Lithuanian state and which later degenerated into Seweryn Rzewuski's apology of a rule by magnatial oligarchs headed by hetmans,[54] and proposals which gravitated towards acceptance of the Enlightenment idea for the modernization of the noblemen's state in the spirit of constitutionalism. The latter was finally adopted by the Government Law of 3 May, 1791.

The reasons for this development of Polish political thought seem to be easy to grasp, at least in a general outline. For the overwhelming majority of authors representing one of these variants of republican concepts the weakness of the state that was not the basic problem. In the eighteenth century they were ready to reconcile themselves to the growing dysfunction of the Commonwealth's most important organs, including its parliament. They were even willing to sacrifice the vision of an efficient and effective state by curbing citizens' freedom in political life – the glorified *aurea libertas*.

The main incentive which induced Poles to look for a way of strengthening their noblemen's state was the threat posed by Russia, Prussia and finally Austria. These states were ruled by absolute rulers and were consistently being modernized and strengthened at their neighbours' cost and also their own subjects' who were never granted civil rights rooted in the system of estate representation, as was the case with Russia, or lost these rights in the seventeenth century.

It seems that the basic dilemma in Polish eighteenth-century political thought was not modernization of the state but a rationalization of the political system that would guarantee two values which were of fundamental importance for the specific Polish political culture of that epoch; the internal political freedom of the citizens, that is, the nobility, and security from the annexationist intentions of the absolute states neighbouring on the Commonwealth.

The decision to solve this dilemma was not taken until 1791, at the time of the gravest danger, but the model introduced by the Constitution of 3 May, 1791, which did away with the old tension *inter maiestatem ac libertatem*, was never carried into effect; it is therefore difficult to say whether it would have been effective. The attempt to create and preserve an area of governable freedom in Central Europe ended with the liquidation of the state of the Polish-Lithuanian nobility.

Translated by Janina Dorosz

---

[53] Staszewski, 'Pomysły reformatorskie', 82-8.

[54] Zofia Zielińska, *Republikanizm spod znaku buławy: Publicystyka Seweryna Rzewuskiego z lat 1788-1790* (Warsaw, 1988); Michalski, 'Z problematyki republikańskiego nurtu', 333.

List of Contributors

Professor Joachim **Bahlcke**, Ph.D., Historisches Institut, Universität Stuttgart (Institute of History, University of Stuttgart), Keplerstrasse 17, 70 174 Stuttgart, Germany; e-mail: joachim.bahlcke@po.hi.uni-stuttgart.de

Professor Zdeněk **Beneš**, Ph.D., Ústav českých dějin, Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy (Institute of Czech History, Faculty of Arts, Charles University), Náměstí Jana Palacha 2, 116 38 Praha 1, Czech Republic; e-mail: zdenek.benes@ff.cuni.cz

Professor Stanisław **Bylina**, Instytut Historii Polskiej Akademii Nauk (Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences), Rynek Starego Miasta 29/31, 00-272 Warszawa, Poland; e-mail: ihpan@ihpan.edu.pl

Doctor Zbigniew **Dalewski**, Instytut Historii Polskiej Akademii Nauk (Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences), Rynek Starego Miasta 29/31, 00-272 Warszawa, Poland; e-mail: zdalew@astercity.net

Doctor Martin **Holý**, Historický ústav AV ČR (Institute of History, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic), Prosecká 76, 190 00 Praha 9, Czech Republic; e-mail: marhol@centrum.cz

Professor Wojciech **Iwańczak**, Okopowa 7/13, 01-063 Warszawa, Poland; Akademia Świętokrzyska (Holy Cross Academy), Żeromskiego 5, 25-369 Kielce, Poland; e-mail: iwanczak@gazeta.pl

Associate Professor Tomáš **Knoz**, Ph.D., Historický ústav, Filozofická fakulta Masarykovy univerzity (Institute of History, Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University), Arne Nováka 1, 602 00 Brno, Czech Republic; e-mail: knoz@phil.muni.cz

Professor Marceli **Kosman**, ul. Sierotki Marysi 25, 60-193 Poznań, Poland; Instytut Nauk Politycznych i Dziennikarstwa, Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu (Institute of Political Sciences and Journalism, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan), ul. Szamarzewskiego 89, 60-569 Poznań, Poland; e-mail: marceli40@o2.pl

Associate Professor Wojciech **Kriegseisen**, Instytut Historii Polskiej Akademii Nauk (Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences), Rynek Starego Miasta 29/31, 00-272 Warszawa, Poland; e-mail: wkriegseisen@inetia.pl

Associate Professor Ján **Lukačka**, Ph.D., Katedra slovenských dejín, Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Komenského (Institute of Slovak History, Faculty of Arts, Comenius University), Gondova ul. 2, 818 01 Bratislava 16, Slovakia; e-mail: janlukacka@creas.sk

Associate Professor Halina **Manikowska**, Instytut Historii Polskiej Akademii Nauk (Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences), Rynek Starego Miasta 29/31, 00-272 Warszawa, Poland; e-mail: hmanik@supermedia.pl

Petr **Maťa**, M.A., Ph.D., Podolské nábřeží 32, 147 00 Praha 4, Czech Republic; e-mail: petr.mata@gmx.at

Professor Roman **Michałowski**, Instytut Historyczny Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego (Institute of History, University of Warsaw), Krakowskie Przedmieście 26/28, 00-927 Warszawa, Poland; e-mail: Michalowski. Roman@acn.waw.pl

Associate Professor Edward **Opaliński**, Instytut Historii Polskiej Akademii Nauk (Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences), Rynek Starego Miasta 29/31, 00-272 Warszawa, Poland; e-mail: opal7@wp.pl

Professor Jaroslav **Pánek**, D.Sc., Historický ústav AV ČR (Institute of History, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic), Prosecká 76, 190 00 Praha 9, Czech Republic; e-mail: panek@hiu.cas.cz

Professor Jiří **Pešek**, Ph.D., Institut mezinárodních studií, Fakulta sociálních věd Univerzity Karlovy (Institute of International Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University), U Kříže 8, 158 00 Praha 5, Czech Republic; e-mail: jiri.pesek203@seznam.cz

Doctor Miloslav **Polívka**, Ph.D., Historický ústav AV ČR (Institute of History, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic), Prosecká 76, 190 00 Praha 9, Czech Republic; e-mail: polivka@hiu.cas.cz

Professor István György **Tóth**, Ph.D., Institute of History of Hungarian Academy of Sciences, P.O.Box 9, Úri u. 53, 1250 Budapest I, Hungary; e-mail: tothist@ceu.hu

Professor Petr **Vorel**, Ph.D., Katedra historických věd, Fakulta humanitních studií Univerzity Pardubice (Department of Historical Sciences, Faculty of Humanities, University of Pardubice), Studentská 84, 532 10 Pardubice, Czech Republic; e-mail: vorel@vcm.cz

Doctor Zdeněk **Vybíral**, Ph.D., Husitské muzeum v Táboře (Hussite Museum in Tábor), Náměstí Mikuláše z Husi 44, 390 01 Tábor, Czech Republic; e-mail: vybiral@husmuzeum.cz

Professor Thomas **Winkelbauer**, Ph.D, Institut für Geschichte, Universität Wien (Institute of History, University of Vienna), Dr. Karl Lueger-Ring 1, 1010 Wien, Austria; e-mail: thomas.winkelbauer@univie.ac.at

Professor Josef **Žemlička**, D.Sc., Historický ústav AV ČR (Institute of History, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic), Prosecká 76, 190 00 Praha 9, Czech Republic; e-mail: zemlicka@hiu.cas.cz