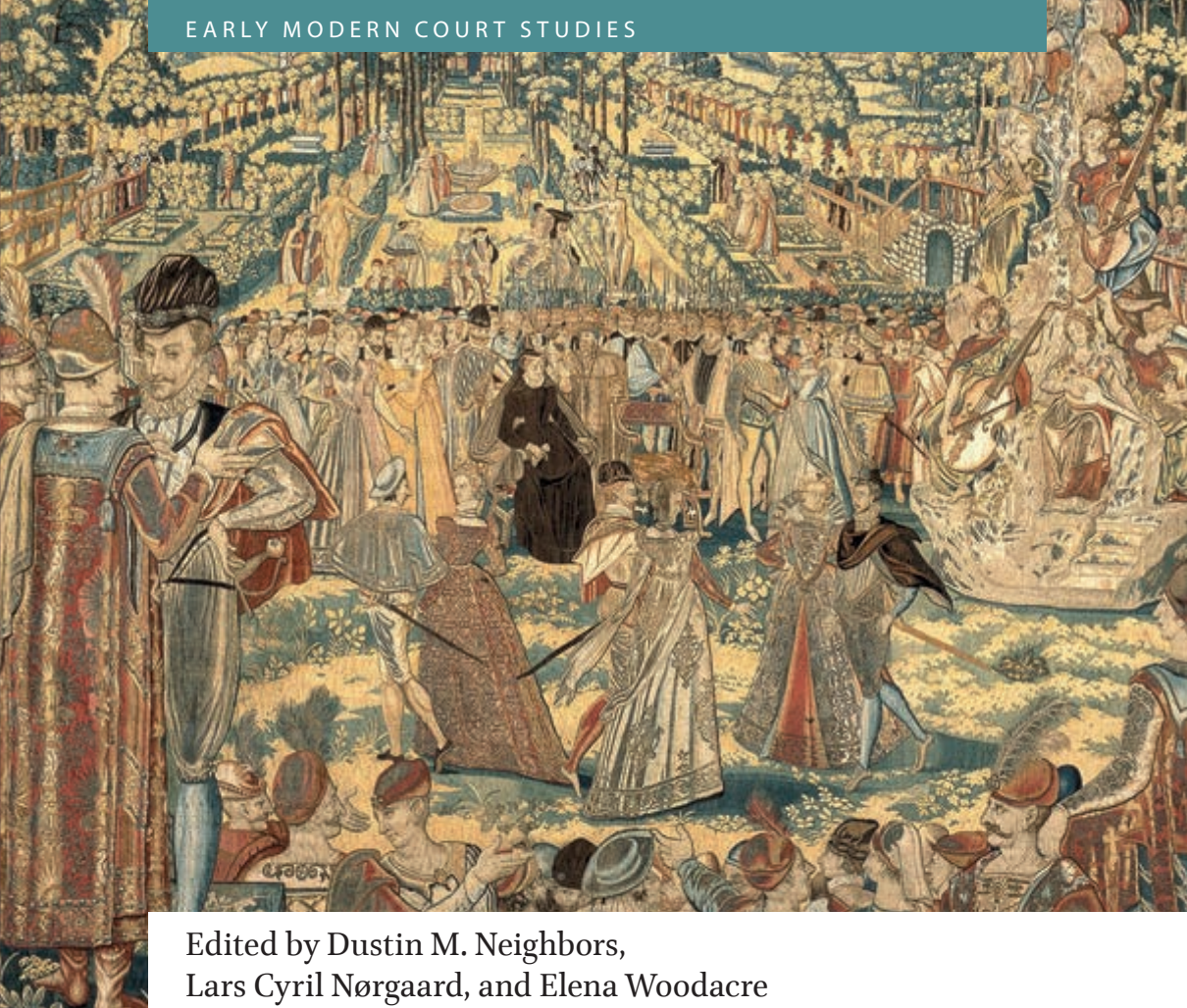


EARLY MODERN COURT STUDIES



Edited by Dustin M. Neighbors,  
Lars Cyril Nørgaard, and Elena Woodacre

# Notions of Privacy at Early Modern European Courts

Reassessing the Public and  
Private Divide, 1400-1800

Amsterdam  
University  
Press

## Notions of Privacy at Early Modern European Courts

# Early Modern Court Studies

The early modern court in Europe was a political and cultural powerhouse and a hotbed of confessional intrigue, factional rivalry and international diplomacy. With a potent confluence of power, prestige and capital, the court set the tone for cultural innovation and fashions, provided for large numbers of people in food, board, wages and/or perquisites, while also being responsible for safeguarding the nation's security. Yet no court operated in isolation. The maintenance of international relations through kinship ties, treaties and alliances were crucial to dynastic success as the courts vied with one another on the highly politicized stage of European monarchy.

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Dustin M. Neighbors,  
Lars Cyril Nørgaard,  
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Dustin, Lars, and Ellie



# Reassessing the Public/Private Nature of European Court Cultures: An Introduction

*Dustin M. Neighbors*

## Abstract

This introduction explores the historical nuances and multi-layered nature of premodern courts in order to highlight the different elements that both defined and shifted the public and private facets of court systems and court life. The chapter stresses how the demarcations of the private aspects and the language of privacy must be examined within the specific historical contexts of early modern courts and court cultures. Accordingly, the chapter discusses the conceptual challenges and terminological uses of 'privacy' in historical research, the interdisciplinary methodology of privacy studies, and how and why more precise and rigorous attention should be paid to the degrees of privacy that emerged at court. The chapter also highlights ways to examine historical privacy that can advance the field of court studies. This introduction concludes with an overview of the volume that situates each chapter within the various areas of court studies and that explains each essay's contribution to the central argument of the book.

**Keywords:** court studies, historiography, interdisciplinarity, privacy studies

Grand, extravagant, magnificent, scandalous, corrupt, political, personal, fractious: these are terms often associated with early modern royal and princely courts from 1400–1800. Moreover, the court constituted a vital nexus in the transformation of premodern societies. These highly visible

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spaces were central to the negotiation of rulership and its legitimacy. Consequently, early modern courts had an impact on wider cultural practices, political decision-making and social constructions within Europe. This impact was rooted in the very public and visual nature of court cultures, whereby courts both shaped and defined European culture. Architecture, art, fashion, literature, and cultural exchanges were products of the spectacle, vitality, and impetus of European rulers and their courts. Researchers have convincingly emphasised the public nature of courtly events, procedures, and ceremonies as representations and extensions of monarchical power.<sup>1</sup> However, the court was an amalgamation of spaces, people, institutions, and activities, consisting of not only varying forms of the ‘public’ that existed within court cultures (i.e., the Roman idea of the public sphere of political activity as the *polis*, or “public politics”, “public space”, “public life”, and “public community”),<sup>2</sup> but also the non-public, or private, aspects. In fact, the terms listed at the beginning of this introduction also point to a tension between public and private elements, which are two categories of analysis used to characterise European court cultures. Historically, the distinction between public and private emerged from the “ideas of a distinctly public realm [that] began to crystallize” as a result of sixteenth-century conflicts surrounding state formation, sovereignty, and the “encroaching power of the state”;<sup>3</sup> the court was at the centre of the power of state. Later, the public/private dichotomy, or divide emerged as a way to “dichotomize the social universe” and to explain and distinguish the “public sphere” in the past.<sup>4</sup>

Yet, the public/private distinction has proven to be a problematic framework, rather than categories of analysis. In fact, many theoretical models, along with the conceptual development of the public/private distinction, that have been employed to study the past, have “helped to obscure early modern notions of public and private”.<sup>5</sup> There are a number of other reasons

1 A few examples are: Mara R. Wade, *Triumphus Nuptialis Danicus: German Court Culture and Denmark* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1996); Sebastian Olden-Jørgensen, “State Ceremonial, Court Culture and Political Power in Early Modern Denmark, 1536–1746”, *Scandinavian Journal of History* 27:2 (2002): 65–76; Maria Hayward, “Gift-Giving at the Court of Henry VIII: The 1539 New Year’s Gift Roll in Context”, *The Antiquaries Journal* 85 (2005), 125–75.

2 Jeff Weintraub, “The Theory and Politics of the Public/Private Distinction”, in *Public and Private in Thought and Practices: Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy*, eds. Jeff Weintraub and Krishan Kumar (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 10–13.

3 Morton J. Horowitz, “The History of the Public/Private Distinction”, *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 130:6 (June 1982): 1423.

4 Weintraub, “The Theory and Politics of the Public/Private Distinction”, 1.

5 Conal Condren, “Public, Private and the Idea of the ‘Public Sphere’ in Early Modern England”, *Intellectual History Review* 19:1 (2009): 15.

why the public/private dichotomy is an ineffective analytical tool, including the fact that the words ‘public’ and ‘private’ are “empty signifiers” requiring further explication when they are deployed.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, the public/private distinction “generates [...] much confusion [...] because the different sets of people who employ these concepts mean very different things.”<sup>7</sup> This lack of clarity regarding the public/private distinction is evident within court studies. However, the ease with which the ‘public’ is used and generally understood is due to the fact that, historically, the concept of the ‘public’ has existed longer. Moreover, a scholarly consensus “agrees – as did early modern people – that that which is public [...] has national or community relevance”.<sup>8</sup> This conceptual development and historical foundation of the ‘public’ distinction has not only influenced its use in the broader social discourse over time, but also has reinforced the “sense of the public as [being] more influential”, which accounts for why the ‘public’ has garnered more scholarly analysis.<sup>9</sup>

Alternatively, privacy and the private have not been—and are still not—clearly defined concepts.<sup>10</sup> There are a few reasons for this, in particular the wide range of definitions of ‘private’. For instance, it has been viewed as a complicated and “contested” phenomenon and as a notion “so elusive” that anything “may be private: persons, places, things, actions, words, emotions”.<sup>11</sup> However, there are two key factors that explain why the ‘private’ has been less extensively considered than the ‘public’. First, while the word ‘private’ has existed in the English language since the fourteenth century, the word ‘privacy’, as scholars in this volume will point out, did not exist in the early modern period.<sup>12</sup> Second, because the concept of privacy is a more modern invention that has its own meanings and history, its use as a lens for examining the past runs the risk of anachronism.

6 Ernesto Laclau, *Emancipations* (London: Verso, 1996), 36. Cf. Erica Longfellow, “Public, Private and the Household in Early Seventeenth-Century England”, *Journal of British Studies* 45:2 (2006): 314.

7 Weintraub, “The Theory and Politics of the Public/Private Distinction”, 1.

8 Longfellow, “Public, Private and the Household in Early Seventeenth-Century England”, 314–15.

9 Longfellow, “Public, Private and the Household in Early Seventeenth-Century England”, 317.

10 Sjoerd Keulen and Ronald Kroeze, “Privacy from a Historical Perspective”, in *The Handbook of Privacy Studies*, eds. Bart van der Sloot and Aviva de Groot (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018), 22.

11 Lloyd L. Weinreb, “The Right to Privacy”, in *The Right to Privacy*, eds. E. F. Paul, F. D. Miller, and J. Paul (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 27–28.

12 Ronald Huebert, “Privacy: The Early Social History of a Word”, *The Sewanee Review* 105 (1997): 28.



Despite such issues, the concepts of ‘public’ and ‘private’ have been employed either “descriptively and/or normatively, to distinguish different kinds of human action [...], the different realms of social life, or different physical social spaces”,<sup>13</sup> of which all uses are helpful in the study of early modern courts. Across this edited volume, the concepts of ‘public’ and ‘private’ exist in relation to one another and are not separate; historical privacy must be studied not in contrast to the public, but in relation to it. Finally, the ‘public’ and ‘private’ are intrinsically bound together and “bi-conditional”, existing in “mutual conscription” on a continuum where they “inevitably meet” to form a boundary.<sup>14</sup> This important, fluid, and porous boundary not only distinguishes the relationship between the public and private and demarcates the degrees in which the ‘public’ and ‘private’ emerge in their historical contexts, but also defines the spaces, interactions, and power dynamics within the courts and court cultures of early modern Europe. More importantly, the use of ‘public’ or ‘private’ concepts within the context of courts and court cultures requires they be rooted and identified through historical usage, especially in contemporaneous sources. It is this contextual understanding of the distinction between ‘public’ and ‘private’ that serves as the point of departure for the central focus of this edited collection: notions of privacy and the private within the historical context of early modern courts and court cultures.

Unlike the public nature of early modern European courts, their private aspects have been underexplored. Nevertheless, in myriad ways, court life consisted of ‘pockets’ of privacy, especially degrees of the private or occurrences of a more private nature. For example, in 1577, Robert Beale (1541–1601) was sent to the Dresden court in Saxony to discuss “private matters” with the Protestant Elector August of Saxony (1526–86) and his wife, Electress Anna of Saxony (1532–85); these “private matters” revolved around persuading the Elector to join the Protestant League.<sup>15</sup> Empress Maria of Austria (1528–1603) relied heavily on “personal agents” at court and on Spanish ambassadors to represent her in Rome, while also frequently sending “discreet correspondence” and ordering “her correspondents to destroy her own letters”, indicating that they were private and not for public

13 Weintraub, “The Theory and Politics of the Public/Private Distinction”, 7.

14 Condren, “Public, Private and the Idea of the ‘Public Sphere’ in Early Modern England”, 21. Nicole Castan, “The Public and the Private”, in *History of Private Life*, Volume 3, eds. Philippe Ariès, George Duby, and Roger Chartier (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987–91), 403.

15 The National Archives UK (TNA), State Papers Elizabeth I (SP) 104/163, f. 33r. Cf. Dustin M. Neighbors and Natacha Klein Käfer, “Zones of Privacy in Letters Between Women of Power: Elizabeth I of England and Anna of Saxony”, *Royal Studies Journal* 9:1 (2022): 70.

consumption.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, in 1567, King Erik XIV of Sweden (1533–77) secretly married Karin Månsdotter, who was his mistress and a lady-in-waiting to Princess Elisabet at the Swedish court.<sup>17</sup> From these examples, it is evident that privacy and the private manifested in various forms and occurred in different contexts. Furthermore, these examples illustrate how instances of privacy at court had variable meanings, associations, and characteristics at the European courts; like the ‘public’, historical notions of the ‘private’ within court cultures were bound up with sociability via social interactions and social spaces, even constituting a “realm of sociability”.<sup>18</sup> It is because of these different meanings and varied forms of privacy that this volume has come to fruition.

Public and private aspects of royal and princely power were not only performed at court, but also overlapped in intricate ways that shaped social interactions at court. Notions of privacy and the private can be seen emerging from activities or individuals operating outside the formal protocols and spaces of court, particularly in the intimate affairs and private encounters of the royal household. There were often occasions where public issues, especially politics and religion, were deliberated in private—for instance, Queen Christina of Sweden’s (1626–89) secret meetings with Italian clergymen to discuss facets of and conversion to Catholicism.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, private matters and activities often had public consequences, like the Overbury court scandal in eighteenth-century England.<sup>20</sup> Such pockets of privacy illustrate where the public and private intersected, sparking conflicts, tensions, irreconcilable spheres of everyday life (i.e., individual, family, society, and state),<sup>21</sup> and points of discourse. In various ways, this collection of essays engages with these pockets of privacy—from multiple elements of access that signalled privacy to the different courtly spaces and activities

16 Rubén González Cuerva, *Maria of Austria, Holy Roman Empress (1528-1603): Dynastic Networker* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022), 7, 105.

17 Katarina Harrison Lindbergh, “Karin Månsdotter, drottning”, in *Svenskt kvinnobiografiskt lexicon* (Gothenburg: University of Gothenburg, 2018).

18 Weintraub, “The Theory and Politics of the Public/Private Distinction”, 19.

19 Dustin Neighbors, “Privacy and the Private within European Court Culture”, *The Court Historian* 28:1 (2023): 10.

20 Neighbors, “Privacy and the Private”, 12.

21 Here, I follow Beate Rössler’s model of distinguishing the “layers of privacy”, Cf. Beate Rössler, *The Value of Privacy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), 13. This also echoes other models, particularly the Venn diagram of monarchy, that pertains to the social and public spheres. Cf. Elena Woodacre, “Understanding the Mechanism of Monarchy”, in *The Routledge History of Monarchy*, eds. Elena Woodacre, Lucinda H. S. Dean, Chris Jones, Russell E. Martin, and Zita Eva Rohr (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), 3.

that facilitated private interactions. At the same time, the royal palaces and the court attempted to create the illusion of a clear distinction between the public and private spaces, particularly in the arrangement of the monarch's various rooms, which contributed to the regulation of personnel practices, spaces, and courtly behaviour in early modern Europe. Yet, in actuality, the private and intimate spaces at court were not always removed from public eyes, emphasising gradations of publicity within spaces that were separate and intimate. The private aspects of court were not entirely remote to, devoid of, or removed from the public; rather, there were ephemeral moments of the private that emerged in opposition to the "official, professional, communal, or evident" public.<sup>22</sup> This blurring of 'public' and 'private' occurred because the boundaries between them at court were porous, overlapping, situational, and ephemeral, which often characterised the nature and various forms of privacy and degrees of the private that existed (i.e., private activities, secret exchanges, intimate interactions, withdrawal, or unseen meetings).

This edited collection explores how the private was expressed, identified, understood, and located within distinct courts and court cultures throughout early modern Europe in order to address the following key questions: How did privacy and the private exist within early modern court cultures? What meaning did the private have for early modern courtiers? What does historical privacy tell us about early modern court cultures? By examining these questions, the volume argues that various degrees of the private existed and played an important role in both court operations and the development of court cultures. Degrees of the private manifested through a scaled and gradual process of establishing boundaries and negotiating the thresholds between the court and the household, people and institutions, and sociability and politics. Within this framework, there are a few guiding points regarding how notions of privacy and the private are understood and examined within the collection. The most important point is that due to the various meanings, expressions, and instances in which the private at court emerged, there is no single definition of privacy. Rather than limit the study of historical privacy or force scholars to impose stipulations or conditions "until the definition is so cumbersome and circumscribed that it neither stimulates or provokes",<sup>23</sup> this volume argues that notions of privacy

22 Mette Birkedal Bruun, "Towards an Approach to Early Modern Privacy: The Retirement of the Great Condé", in *Early Modern Privacy: Sources and Approaches*, eds. Michaël Green, Lars Cyril Nørgaard, and Mette Birkedal Bruun (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 22.

23 Sari Nauman and Helle Vogt, eds., *Public/Private in 18th-Century Scandinavia* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021), 1.

and instances of the private must be examined within the specific context of the surrounding court and court culture.

The essays in this collection employ interdisciplinary source materials to consider the relative degrees of historical privacy based on the cognates, terms, and descriptions of the private that are identified, such as intimacy, secrecy, seclusion, privy, solitude, and exclusion. Additionally, historical privacy is identified through the spaces and activities that were used for hidden, discrete, and personal purposes.<sup>24</sup> This approach helps scholars to better “encapsulate the complex experience or understanding of early modern privacy” within European court cultures,<sup>25</sup> while stressing the fluid definition and evolving nature of historical privacy in different periods, places, and circumstances. By employing this perspective, historical privacy can include intimate discussions between two courtiers, a diplomat’s secluded audience with a queen, or secret sexual relations between a prince and his mistress. Consequently, this edited volume seeks to start a scholarly conversation about the forms and language of historical privacy in connection with early modern European courts. By so doing, the book facilitates a dialogue that furthers the development of theoretical and methodological approaches within court studies in order to identify and interpret public and private elements at court and also to uncover what privacy tells us about courts and court cultures of the past.

In the following text of this chapter, four subsections outline the contextual background of the volume as a whole and illustrate the research into and historical nuances of European courts and court cultures with an eye to how privacy and the private were understood by early modern contemporaries. The final section discusses how the collection is arranged and structured and provides an overview of the individual chapters.

## The Complexity of Courts and Court Cultures

At its core, the court consisted of the ruler’s household, or the “environments of sovereign rulers” and their entourages.<sup>26</sup> Of course, the court was more than such environments. As is well recognised in court studies scholarship, the court was complex, multifunctional, transitional, and permutational

<sup>24</sup> Neighbors, “Privacy and the Private”, 5.

<sup>25</sup> Neighbors and Käfer, “Zones of Privacy”, 63.

<sup>26</sup> Erin Griffey, “Introduction”, in *Early Modern Court Culture*, ed. Erin Griffey (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022), 2.

throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. The nature of a court derived from the personal rule of its sovereign, resulting in different types of courts across Europe, each with its own distinct structure, cultural rituals, and practices. Although European courts shared features, they were more often microcosms of the societies in which they existed. As such, courts were shaped by political events, cultural traditions, social hierarchies, confessional differences, and economic circumstances. On the one hand, the court consisted of the location, or “princely residence”, and domestic household, namely the personal spaces of the ruler and its organisation, as well as various operations, personnel, intimate rituals, and the maintenance of a “system of secular worship”.<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, the court functioned as “a far larger matrix of relations, political and economic, religious and artistic, that converged in the ruler’s household”.<sup>28</sup> Within this matrix, courts were not just “elite environments”, but also socio-political environments comprised of all classes and a diverse array of professions.<sup>29</sup> Despite the restrictions of preceding definitions of what constituted the court,<sup>30</sup> these environments were made up of rulers and their families, alongside consorts, mistresses, ex-wives, the nobility, “courtiers, councillors, and clerics,”<sup>31</sup> ambassadors and diplomats, and a vast assembly of service personnel—from artisans, doctors, barbers, and tailors to the cooks and laundresses. Everyone within these environments played a range of important roles and so contributed to the development of distinct court cultures.<sup>32</sup> In addition, the broader court matrix included

27 John Adamson, “Introduction: The Making of the Ancien-Régime Court, 1500–1700”, in *The Princely Courts of Europe, 1500–1750*, ed. John Adamson (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1999), 7; Malcolm Smuts, “Courtiers, Ministers and Favourites”, in *Early Modern Court Culture*, ed. Erin Griffey (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022), 68. Cf. Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, *Court Culture in Dresden: From Renaissance to Baroque* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

28 Adamson, “Introduction”, 7. Cf. Jill Bepler, “Practical Perspectives on the Court and Role of Princes: Georg Engelhard von Loehneys’s *Aulico Politico* 1622–24 and Christian IV of Denmark’s *Königlicher Wecker* 1620”, *Daphnis* 32:1–2 (2003): 137–63.

29 Jeroen Duindam, “Royal Courts”, in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern European History, 1350–1750. Volume 2: Cultures and Power*, ed. Hamish Scott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 19.

30 The works of Norbert Elias, G. R. Elton, and David Starkey are important benchmarks, but, as Natalie Mears and others have pointed out, the narrow definitions of the courts by Elias, Elton, and Starkey do not account for the numerous actors, factors, or activities of European courts. See Natalie Mears, *Queenship and Political Discourse in Elizabethan Realms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 20.

31 Nadine Akkerman and Birgit Houben, eds., *The Politics of Female Households: Ladies-in-Waiting across Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 12.

32 Griffey, “Introduction”, 2. Cf. Philip Mansel, *The Court of France, 1789–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

rival courts, or sub-courts. This matrix also engaged with and was shaped by the political factions, policies, laws, and public discourse connected to institutions and offices that were “out of court”, and were considered “satellite environments”—for instance, Parliament, or Estates, and the legal courts.<sup>33</sup> The entangled structures of courts were situated in a vast “network of buildings”, gardens and parks, and an array of physical spaces that became “chief site[s] of expression” of the power and personal rule of sovereigns and princes.<sup>34</sup>

As the principal site of authority and power, the court was the epicentre of activity and key sites of “resort and meeting, of supplication and negotiation, and exchange between sovereign and subject”;<sup>35</sup> these sites offered opportunities for decision-making and social control by regulating behaviours and access. Courts were also hubs of consumerism, fashion, and cultural production; arenas of competition, factionalism, and clientele and personnel systems; and a “point of contact” between the central government and the localities. Each of these components relied on the hallmarks of courts: favour, patronage, and personal relations.<sup>36</sup> The key point to emphasise here is that the complexity and interconnectedness of court life make it difficult to separate the personal from the communal, the household from the government. Given the multifaceted court cultures of the early modern period, the traditional scholarly binary distinction between the public and the private seems difficult to maintain. The ambiguity of what was public and private at court has resulted in historical notions of privacy and the private, especially in relation to court studies, being a “phenomenon” needing further attention; many have wondered whether the public/private distinction is a useful perspective within court studies.<sup>37</sup>

33 For discussion on the “out of court” distinction, see David Loades, *The Tudor Court* (Bangor: Headstart History, 1992), 38–39; Glenn Richardson, “The Royal Court”, in *The Routledge Handbook of Material Culture in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Catherine Richardson, Tara Hamling, and David Gaimster (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 72. For an explanation of “satellite environments”, see Smuts, “Courtiers”, 67–68.

34 Griffey, “Introduction”, 2–3. Richardson, “Royal Courts”, 72.

35 Richardson, “Royal Courts”, 71.

36 Janet Dickinson, “Redefining Factions at the Tudor Court”, in *A Europe of Courts, a Europe of Factions*, eds. Ruben Gonzalez Cuerva and Alexander Koller (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 20–22; J. P. D. Cooper, “Centres and Localities”, in *The Elizabethan World*, eds. Susan Doran and Normal Jones (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 132. Cf. A. G. Dickens, *The Courts of Europe: Politics, Patronage and Royalty, 1400–1800* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997).

37 The reference to privacy and the private as a “phenomenon” is from Lars Cyril Nørgaard, “Past Privacy”, in *Early Modern Privacy: Sources and Approaches*, eds. Michaël Green, Lars Cyril Nørgaard, and Mette Birkedal Bruun (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 3.

## The Challenges of Privacy: Present versus Past

Like early modern courts, historical privacy is also complex and somewhat elusive.<sup>38</sup> However, the most problematic issue surrounding the examination of historical privacy is the use of the word ‘privacy’, which is a modern invention with its own history.<sup>39</sup> Modern privacy can be understood as “concern[ing] many different aspects of personal life”,<sup>40</sup> including the home, family, and the self, of which “the public took a growing interest in [...] what took place in private”.<sup>41</sup> Primarily, discourses about modern privacy focus on “protecting a personal right to privacy and a right to protect personal data”.<sup>42</sup> Yet modern conceptions of privacy are problematic because the concept is full of complex meanings and nuances. ‘Privacy’ means different things to different people, and it is understood differently in various social contexts and cultures around the world. Consequently, modern privacy issues are discussed and examined within specific contexts, situations and societies. Historically speaking, privacy is not as simple and straightforward a concept as many would like to believe, especially since the word ‘privacy’ did not exist prior to the eighteenth century. Therefore, like modern privacy, the contexts surrounding historical privacy—that is, the attitudes, customs, beliefs, and cultural mechanisms that shaped premodern societies—are vastly different. A blanket concept or definition of privacy thus raises more issues and problems than it resolves.

Building on the discussion of the public/private distinction, the divisions between public and private has traditionally been used as a conceptual and methodological tool to explore “key issues of social and political analysis, of moral and political debate, and of ordering of everyday life”.<sup>43</sup> The public/private distinction stems from the outdated, disputed, yet nevertheless

38 Discussion of the elusive nature of privacy can be found in Weintraub, “The Theory and Politics of the Public/Private Distinction”; Nauman and Vogt, *Public/Private in 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Scandinavia*.

39 Cf. Nørgaard, “Past Privacy”, 3–4; Bruun, “Towards an Approach”, 12–13.

40 Peter Blume, “Data Protection and Privacy—Basic Concepts in a Changing World”, *Scandinavian Studies in Law* (2010): 152. Cf. Weinreb, “The Right to Privacy”; Jill Lepore, “Privacy in an Age of Publicity”, *The New Yorker* (24 June 2013).

41 Nørgaard, “Past Privacy”, 1–2.

42 Chris Frost, *Privacy and News Media* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), 20.

43 Weintraub, “Public/Private Distinction”, 1. This brief overview of the scholarship pertaining to the public/private divide is not detailed or exhaustive because of the profusion of studies. The analyses noted here offer a sampling of what has been published. Cf. Horowitz, “The History of the Public/Private Distinction”, 1423; Don Herzog, *Household Politics: Conflict in Early Modern England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

usefully complex theoretical framework of the ‘public sphere’ established by Jürgen Habermas.<sup>44</sup> The analytical work of Habermas and Hannah Arendt have helped to identify historical shifts towards modernity. In this context, the public/private distinction has been about locating the continuities and changes that have stimulated social, cultural, and political transformations and has steadily driven research on early modern societies and courts to focus on evolution towards modernity.<sup>45</sup> Courts and court cultures have served as case studies for Habermas and others to investigate the historical development of the public sphere and to test theories of the public/private spheres, their processes, and the boundaries of modernity.<sup>46</sup> However, this collection of essays utilises case studies of different courts and court cultures, some previously considered by Habermas and others, to investigate how public and private boundaries were delineated and to highlight the nuances and forms of privacy at court.

The scholarly debates surrounding the idea of a public/private divide have been active for decades, reinforcing traditional assumptions and notions about the supremacy of the public and political sphere and the public nature of monarchy, court, politics, and society. Scholars of court history have often highlighted the distinctions between the more public aspects of court life and the intimate, secluded spaces and activities of the ruler, even though they rarely or only vaguely use the words ‘privacy’ or ‘private’, as will be explored later in this introduction. The essays in this edited collection demonstrate that the public sphere, or the nature of early modern courts and society, was not as fixed and dominant as it may seem. In

44 Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. T. Burger and F. Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989). Many scholars have disputed and expanded upon Habermas’s work on the public/private dichotomy, most notably Hannah Arendt. Arendt’s work is relevant to court studies, especially the public/private distinction because she discusses the boundaries connected to elite households and the public domain. See Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Christian J. Emden and David Midgley, eds., *Changing Perceptions of the Public Sphere* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2012).

45 Philippe Ariès, George Duby, and Roger Chartier (eds.), *History of Private Life*, 4 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987–91); Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005); Paula R. Backscheider and Timothy Dykstal, *The Intersections of the Public and Private Spheres in Early Modern England* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1996).

46 Cf. Lars Cyril Nørgaard, “Copie ou création? Les petits livres secrets de Madame de Maintenon”, in *Toute la cour était étonnée: Madame de Maintenon ou l’ambition politique au féminin: actes du colloque*, eds. Mathieu da Vinha and Nathalie Grande (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2022), 137–148; Erica Longfellow, “Public, Private, and the Household in Early Seventeenth-Century England”, *Journal of British Studies* 45:2 (2006): 313–34.



fact, ongoing research that reassesses the public/private divide within early modern European courts has shown that the boundaries and thresholds between the public and the private became increasingly malleable and historical privacy appears to be far more fluid and contextual than was previously thought. When the boundaries and thresholds of the public and private intersect, the degrees of privacy that existed within European courts can be identified. This identification reveals new insights that allow for a better understanding of a whole host of forces at play—for instance, the intertwining of gender, politics, and diplomacy with the conditions of social and cultural interactions and of access at court, the fabrication and use of architectural spaces signifying separation, and material objects signalling distance. To illustrate the impact of these various forces when the public and private intersect, the essays in this volume incorporate interdisciplinary research to bring together different disciplinary perspectives and source materials, while incorporating perspectives from privacy studies, itself an inherently interdisciplinary field. Therefore, this collection provides scholars with valuable lenses for navigating early modern courts and their structures, whether spatial, material, social, or political. The framework and language of privacy studies is based on the use of a “work method” and “pragmatic apparatus” to examine historical privacy.<sup>47</sup> The combination of interdisciplinary research and privacy studies in this collection aims to encourage scholarly discussions and to stimulate research that allows us to confront the complexities and nuances of court culture and the concept of privacy.

### **Privacy Studies—An Interdisciplinary Approach**

The truly heterogenous nature of premodern European courts has resulted in a rich and varied collection of source materials. Consequently, court studies have rightly adopted an interdisciplinary approach and have incorporated and contributed to different disciplinary fields—from archaeology, literary studies, architecture, environmental history, and gender studies to social, cultural, political, religious, legal, economic, and material history. The interdisciplinary nature of court studies enables us not only to navigate the complexities and interpret the multidimensional significance of courts and court cultures, but also to integrate

47 Mette Birkedal Bruun, *The Centre for Privacy Studies Work Method* (Copenhagen: Centre for Privacy Studies, 2019); Bruun, “Towards an Approach”, 12-13.

methodologies and frameworks from other disciplines, such as privacy studies.<sup>48</sup>

Although researchers might be concerned about applying the lens of privacy to studies of early modern court culture and falling into the trap of anachronism, the elusiveness or ephemerality of historical privacy should be seen as offering new opportunities for examining notions of privacy within their specific contexts.<sup>49</sup> Luckily, the increased research on historical privacy has provided an analytical framework and a few models for studying the role of the private within court cultures. Initiated during the 1970s and 1980s, the field of privacy studies was described in 2010 as being a common “playground” for different disciplines.<sup>50</sup> The pioneering work of the Centre for Privacy Studies (PRIVACY) at the University of Copenhagen has further developed the interdisciplinary nature of privacy studies, emphasising how in an early modern context, the private is always a relational, situational, and context-dependent phenomenon; it can even be an ephemeral construction of the mind.<sup>51</sup>

The PRIVACY methodology and framework concentrates on “the scope and scale of such privacies” as they existed in the past with a “precise view to the sources and their respective contexts”.<sup>52</sup> PRIVACY has established three distinct approaches: “terminological mediation”, “heuristic” modelling, and “semantic mapping”.<sup>53</sup> Because of these approaches, notions of privacy and

48 Privacy studies are primarily articulated in two dominant publications: for contemporary perspectives, see Bart van der Sloot and Aviva de Groot (eds.), *The Handbook of Privacy Studies* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018), and for historical privacy studies, see Michaël Green, Lars Cyril Nørgaard, and Mette Birkedal Bruun, *Early Modern Privacy: Sources and Approaches* (Leiden: Brill, 2021). Other notable contributions to the field include the sources listed in footnotes 19 and 20, as well as: Lena Cowen Orlin, *Locating Privacy in Tudor London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Martine van Elk, *Early Modern Women’s Writing: Domesticity, Privacy, and the Public Sphere in England and the Dutch Republic* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

49 Nauman and Vogt, *Public/Private*, 1–2.

50 Bart van der Sloot and Aviva de Groot, “Introduction”, in *The Handbook of Privacy Studies*, eds. Bart van Der Sloot and Aviva de Groot (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018), 10–11.

51 A centre of excellence funded by the Danish National Research Foundation, PRIVACY is headed by Professor Mette Birkedal Bruun and operates through interdisciplinary collaboration centred around eleven specific case studies situated in the early modern period (1500–1800). It brings together the fields of church history, architectural history, history of ideas, legal history, and social history. PRIVACY’s research team examines how notions of privacy shaped relations between individuals and society across diverse historical contexts in which critical changes in individuals’ relationship to society took place.

52 Nørgaard, “Past Privacy”, 11.

53 Bruun, *Work Method*.

the private are examined through a terminological lens and/or as historical phenomena. The term 'private' and its cognates have also been used as indicators of privacy and of the ways in which the private was conveyed, expressed, or communicated in the period and the contexts in which 'private' and its cognates occurred. The terminological approach examines the "words that derive from *privatus*" and similar words in other languages, i.e., German, where notions of privacy are rooted in the idea of negating something public.<sup>54</sup> This linguistic focus is achieved through rigorous analysis and interrogation of historical sources. Using a heuristic outline of early modern societies, the phenomenon of the private, particularly at court, can be studied through "artifacts, spatial markers, and vestiges of social practices." This allows us to trace privacy across the wide array of historical signs within "human lives, actions, and experiences."<sup>55</sup> Heuristically, the emergence of various privacies can then be visualised as a model of intersecting zones, ranging from the particular mind of an individual to the shared world views of societal groups.<sup>56</sup> The terminological and heuristic approaches "offer a common analytical lens that is fit to bring out and analyse historical insight from various disciplinary angles."<sup>57</sup> From the perspective of court studies, these approaches raise many questions about the delineations of privacy. Did the court, for all its public performativity, offer degrees or spaces of privacy? How was privacy obtained or constructed? Was privacy visible, displayed, or performed within European courts?

This edited volume has been accomplished by engaging with the research activities undertaken at PRIVACY. The selected essays represent a broad, yet diverse, geographic and temporal scope, including the courts of France, Germany, Spain, Sweden, Poland-Lithuania, and England from the late fifteenth century to the eighteenth century. Additionally, the essays are rooted in a rich array of contemporaneous source materials and highlight how historical records and manuscripts can be used to examine notions of privacy in court cultures. Not all of the essays directly engage with the methodological framework of PRIVACY. Some of the essays underscore vital insights that inform the PRIVACY methodology and expand upon the language and scope of privacy studies. However, each contribution is fundamentally dedicated to the examination of the private and notions of privacy within the context of the early modern court.

54 Bruun, "Towards an Approach", 21–22.

55 Bruun, "Towards an Approach", 14.

56 Bruun, "Towards an Approach", 23.

57 Bruun, "Towards an Approach", 24.

## The Public and Private Nature of the Early Modern Court

During the early modern period, European courts were transformed by the explosion of Renaissance ideals based on humanism, individualism, and honour, as well as by the rise of courtly practices, including patronage, diplomacy, and ceremonial power.<sup>58</sup> These Renaissance ideals underpinned the development and centralisation of government administrations, state building, the culture of diplomacy, nobility and status, and the rise of ruling powers. The various courts played a central role—for example, the Tudor and Stuart courts in London, the Viennese court under the Austrian Habsburgs, the court in Madrid under the Spanish Habsburgs, Versailles under the Bourbons, Copenhagen under the Oldenburgs, and Stockholm under both the House of Palatine-Zweibrücken and the Vasas. European courts were often defined by shifting boundaries between the household, regional and national governance, state and foreign relations, and the wider public and community. Consequently, the structures and “overlapping functions as well as zones” of early modern courts became increasingly personal and intimate.<sup>59</sup> This trend has been highlighted by the extensive scholarly discussions surrounding the character and environs of courts; such discussions have considered interpersonal relations, points of contact, familial networks, gender roles, court factions and scandals, and spectacles and rituals. The core element of these courtly features is the personal nature with which they operated and their close ties to notions of privacy—intimacy, secrecy, seclusion, withdrawal, solitude, the ability to be hidden and unseen, to name a few.

The blurring of the lines between the public and private in the early modern period was first noted by the historian G. R. Elton, who found the Tudor court “baffl[ing]” because “[a]t times it has all the appearance of a fully-fledged institution; at others it seems to be no more than a [...] conceptual piece [...] covering people, certain behaviour, certain attitudes.”<sup>60</sup>

58 Malcolm Vale, *The Princely Court: Medieval Courts and Culture in North-West Europe, 1270–1380* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 287.

59 Jeroen Duindam, “Introduction”, in *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires: A Global Perspective*, eds. Jeroen Duindam, Tülay Artan, and Metin Kunt (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 20.

60 G. R. Elton, “Tudor Government: Points of Contact”, in *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government. Volume 3: Papers and Reviews, 1973–1981*, ed. G. R. Elton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 38. Controversially, Elton’s dismissal of particular administrative offices from the royal court has led to restricting the full investigation of the reach of courtly influence. David Starkey, Natalie Mears, and Patrick Collinson have all criticised Elton’s dismissal. David Starkey, “A Reply: Tudor Government: The Facts?”, *The Historical Journal*, 31:4 (December 1988): 921–31; Natalie Mears, “Courts, Courtiers, and Culture in Tudor England”, *The Historical Journal*, 46:3 (September 2003): 703–22; Patrick Collinson, “*De Republica Anglorum*: Or, History with the

Interestingly, Elton's observation articulates the main components of political court culture: the interactions between political bodies and the worlds in which they governed, controlled, and presided—specifically, where the dynastic family, household, Church, Parliament, diplomats and foreign relations, and subjects intersected—that defined the court. However, David Starkey's examination of the English court, in response to Elton's work on the limited functions of the Tudor royal court, placed great emphasis on how the privy chamber—the most exclusive and intimate space connected to the monarch within the royal household—was both a personal and a political space through the “politics of intimacy”.<sup>61</sup> At the “centre of political power”, the privy chamber (as part of the court) fostered intimate politics that became a central element in the negotiation of early modern power. Thus emphasising the primary role and significance of courts,<sup>62</sup> Starkey's work became the benchmark for researchers of court history who sought to examine the politics, personal relations, and forms of access in other court cultures across early modern Europe. Because of this legacy, Starkey's work must be approached through the lens of privacy. In the following brief case study, Starkey's research will be examined to illustrate how it can be advanced through analysis of historical privacy, which focuses on two issues that relate to notions of privacy and the private.

First, Starkey's scholarly work stresses the institutional administration of the privy chamber and its interplay with the privy council.<sup>63</sup> He does not deal with the impact of wider social interactions and how courtly influence shaped the dialogues and decision-making processes that took place outside the privy chamber, nor does he discuss the role of the privy chamber in developing politics of intimacy. For instance, Starkey simply points out how Henry VIII of England (1491–1547) and the court went through “long periods of separation” from the privy council and the business of state being conducted in London.<sup>64</sup> Consequently, subsequent scholars do not

Politics Put Back”, in *Elizabethan Essays*, ed. Patrick Collinson (London: The Hambledon Press, 1994), 1–29.

61 G. R. Elton, “Tudor Revolution in Government”, *Historical Journal* 31 (1988): 425–34; David Starkey, “Court, Council, and Nobility in Tudor England”, in *Princes, Patronage, and the Nobility: The Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age*, eds. Ronald Asch and Adolf M. Birke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 175–204; David Starkey, “Innovation and Intimacy: The Rise of the Privy Chamber, 1485–1547”, in *The English Court: From the War of the Roses to the Civil War*, eds. David Starkey, D. A. L. Morgan, John Murphy, Pam Wright, Neil Cuddy, and Kevin Sharpe (Harlow: Longman Group UK Limited, 1987), 100.

62 Starkey, “Innovation and Intimacy”, 71.

63 David Starkey, “Privy Secrets”, *History Today* 37:8 (1987): 25.

64 Starkey, “Privy Secrets”, 25.

get a full sense of the impact of this situation; Henry and his court, most likely reduced, were withdrawn or removed from the central operations and communication channels of government, signalling a degree of privacy. Furthermore, while Starkey briefly mentions the privileges of access to Henry those courtiers had as members of the privy chamber during the King's progresses, there is no discussion of how courtiers, particularly the members of the privy chambers, used or exploited the King's ephemeral accessibility. Furthermore, there is no examination of how these unseen (or private) interactions, which occurred outside the public and formal bounds of the privy council and government in London, contributed to the politics of intimacy, or of how this degree of privacy had an impact on policies or relations between the privy chamber, council, and court.

Second, describing how the privy chamber was part of the court, Starkey stressed that the privy chamber "marked the frontier between the public and private lives of the monarch" and its role in ensuring that "the public and private persons of the monarch were kept separate".<sup>65</sup> Although Starkey highlighted several interesting details connected to privacy, there is a repetitious pattern where he often uses the words 'private' and 'privacy' casually; as a result, the terms are devoid of explanation and clarity, making them passing references rather than points of significance. Starkey mentioned 'private' and 'privacy' only vaguely and briefly. For instance, he noted a small group of elite men who "displaced the chamber as the centre of the king's private life", the "private staff that [Henry] wanted", the king's "private apartments" and "private treasures", and the "privy secrets" of Henry VIII and his council.<sup>66</sup> Starkey's analysis is problematic not only because it downplays the significance of and interplay with other physical and ephemeral spaces within the Tudor court, but also because it does not make several distinctions clear: what the "private apartments" denoted or how "court intrigues played out among the nooks and crannies of the king's private apartment";<sup>67</sup> what the "private treasures" consisted of; how the "new" privacy of the privy chamber differed from the older privy chamber; and what constituted "the king's private life".<sup>68</sup> Overall, Starkey seems to have assumed that privacy was generally understood as that which was in opposition to the public,

65 David Starkey, "Introduction: Court History in Perspective", in *The English Court: From the War of the Roses to the Civil War*, eds. David Starkey, D. A. L. Morgan, John Murphy, Pam Wright, Neil Cuddy, and Kevin Sharpe (Harlow: Longman Group UK Limited, 1987), 8–9.

66 Starkey, "Intimacy and Innovation", 96; Starkey, "Privy Secrets", 23–31; Starkey, "Court, Council and Nobility", 185.

67 Starkey, "Privy Secrets", 23.

68 Starkey, "Intimacy and Innovation", 96.

but he never delineated the boundaries or characteristics of privacy. To enhance and build on several of Starkey's points, scholars could shed light on the degrees of privacy that emerged at court and how these gradations of privacy characterised Tudor court culture.

One of Starkey's most useful and crucial points is his emphasis on "distance" and "participation".<sup>69</sup> He defined 'distance' for Henry VII's (1457–1509) rule and association with the court by using Francis Bacon's consideration of "keeping of distance" as not allowing anyone to approach either the King's person or his "secrets".<sup>70</sup> However, except for "private conversations" and "confidential papers", it remains unclear whether this "keeping of distance" meant that the King was alone and how someone could be near "his secrets".<sup>71</sup> These degrees of privacy are important to distinguish and understand in the context of the court culture that pervaded Tudor society and politics. For his emphasis on 'participation', Starkey characterised Henry VIII's rule as based on interactions with "boon companions, friends or favourites", that is, those personally connected to or intimately close with the king.<sup>72</sup> Starkey's employment of 'distance' and 'participation' are key for the study of early modern privacy at court. In order to comprehend the significance of Starkey's argument about the centrality of the privy chamber and the implications of 'distance' and 'participation', it is essential to identify where the privy chamber fit within the court's architectural structures, which were often regulated according to rank and status, and its physical accessibility for courtiers. Despite Starkey's brief outline of the spatial parameters of Henry VII's privy chamber within the royal household, recent research has established that for most of the Tudors, royal palaces consisted of "secret chambers" that were "reached by passing through the successive intimacies of the 'great chamber' and the 'second chamber', in an architectural progression which emphasized the intimacy [and privacy] of kingship", or monarchy.<sup>73</sup> These spatial distinctions reinforced the responsibilities of privy chamber personnel to safeguard the monarch's intimate spaces and solitude, or privacy and thus to be gatekeepers for the monarch. This responsibility becomes evident from comments by contemporaries at the Tudor court. In 1557, John Bale (1495–1563), a bishop and historian at the

69 Starkey, "Intimacy and Innovation", 73.

70 Starkey, "Intimacy and Innovation", 74.

71 Starkey, "Intimacy and Innovation", 74–75.

72 Starkey, "Intimacy and Innovation", 77.

73 Cole Burrow, "The Experience of Exclusion: Literature and Politics in the Reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII", in *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 795.

court of Elizabeth I of England (1533–1603), wrote in *Scriptorium Catalogus* about the status and influence of Stephen Hawes (d. before 1529), a Tudor courtier. Bale proclaimed that the advancement of courtiers, such as Hawes, occurred through a series of stages and spaces in which advancement “to the court, to the inner chamber, to the very secret chamber [...] [occurred] solely by the recommendation of his virtue”.<sup>74</sup> Bale’s account illustrates the spatial order of the royal household and the importance of a courtier’s public and personal reputation for access to the sovereign; this reputation could only be confirmed through being in close proximity to the sovereign and their intimates.

By expanding on the research of other early court historians, scholars can gain a better understanding of the sociability and culture of premodern European courts. For instance, considering how courts were conceived as social environments, they can provide a more coherent understanding of what privacy reveals about the spatial extent and boundaries of the court. Similarly, teasing out the nuances of the private and how it was viewed at the Henrician court, scholars may uncover more information about the extent to which notions of privacy played a role in the political sociability and court culture of a sovereign’s reign. This approach will allow scholars to shed light on the actors and social conditions that provoked some of the pivotal moments of the Tudor period and defined its very nature.

Take, for example, a recent study of the royal progresses of Henry VIII. This study argued that Henry’s progresses highlighted “how withdrawal, avoidance, and the activities of Henry’s private life were key sources of his public criticism”.<sup>75</sup> As a result, it is possible to note how the connection between degrees of privacy and the progresses of Henry VIII shaped his rule, contemporaneous politics, and court culture. There are three key ways in which this study adds a fresh, privacy-oriented perspective to Tudor court studies and expands on the politics of intimacy. First, the distinction of “Henry’s private life” highlights instances in which Henry was not entirely visible or accessible by his court or subjects, including his withdrawal to his bedchamber or withdrawal from the formal spaces and affairs of state via royal progresses and personal recreation. As such, the labelling of such moments of withdrawal helps to refine the use of

74 John Bale, “Stephen Hawes. LVIII”, in *Scriptorium illustriū maioris Brytannie quam nunc Angliam & Scotiam vocant* (1557), f. 632. The original Latin quotation is: “ad aulam, ad interiorem cameram, & ad secretum cubiculum tandem, sola virtutis commendatione vocabat.”

75 Dustin M. Neighbors, “Beyond the Public/Private Divide: New Perspectives on Sexuality, Hospitality, and Diplomacy within Royal Spaces”, *Royal Studies Journal* 9:1 (2022): 10.



descriptors like “private life”. Second, by thus examining Henry VIII’s court and political culture through the lens of privacy, scholars get a sense of how the politics of intimacy, secrecy, and unseen interactions that occurred in the privy chamber and within the court contributed to broader social and political discourse. This is evident in the public’s criticism of Henry’s divorce with Catherine of Aragon during his progresses, as well as complaints about how the King was influenced by “evil council” in the petition brought by subjects who rebelled against Henry’s act to dissolve the Catholic monasteries.<sup>76</sup> The rebellion was known as the Pilgrimage of Grace. The petition underscored the grievances behind the Pilgrimage of Grace, especially Article 8 of the petition, which was aimed at the Henry’s councillors as “subverters of the good laws of the realme”.<sup>77</sup> The rebels thought that Henry had received ill counsel regarding the dissolution from “a smaller ‘kitchen cabinet’ of intimates” that was “secret, informal and committed to a single policy; and for all these reasons it broke the tenets of good counsel”.<sup>78</sup> This episode demonstrates how the unseen, secret interactions taking place in the privy chamber created pockets of privacy that were perceived negatively by the King’s subjects and that contributed to the public discourse.

Finally, the third important contribution of this study is adding “social depth” to the politics of intimacy.<sup>79</sup> The sociability of the privy chamber highlights the interactions between the primary personnel appointed to this chamber and those of Henry VIII’s court. These interactions show how the court was a theatre in which the King’s appointees to the privy chamber were those who performed and “attracted” Henry’s attention and favour.<sup>80</sup> Yet the various forms of interaction were not just limited to the personnel and duties of the privy chamber; these points of contact extended to physical and epistolary exchanges. The argument can be made that the exclusivity and intimate nature of the privy chamber enabled individuals to manufacture intimacy or engage in secret activities. For example, in 1541, Thomas Culpeper’s (1514–41) affair with the King’s wife, Katherine Howard (1518/24–42), was facilitated primarily by Culpeper’s and Katherine’s interactions within

76 Susan Loughlin, “The Pilgrimage of Grace: Rhetoric, Reward and Retribution” (PhD diss., National University of Ireland, 2013), 60.

77 TNA, SP 1/112, f. 119.

78 R.W. Hoyle, *Pilgrimage of Grace and the Politics of the 1530s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 60.

79 Collinson, “*De Republica Anglorum*”, 11.

80 Starkey, “Intimacy and Innovation”, 81.

the intimate areas of the royal household.<sup>81</sup> Additionally, during the King's progresses to York in 1541, Culpeper confessed that he and Katherine had sexual relations numerous times, either at the "back doores" on the "back steppes" or through exclusive access to the Queen's apartments.<sup>82</sup> Both Culpeper, as Gentleman of the Privy Chamber, and Katherine, as Henry's wife, had access to each other and were able to be alone, albeit for only brief intervals. Away from the formal spaces of the court and palaces in London, the chaos of progresses and the varied layout of courtly spaces provided further opportunities for Katherine and Culpeper to interact.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, the affair between Katherine and Culpeper illuminates how secret actions could be conducted at court; such actions involved other courtiers, who helped to facilitate and maintain the private affair as a secret—for instance, Jane Boleyn, or Lady Rochford (d. 1542).<sup>84</sup> Thus, the ephemerality and seclusion of the privy chamber and other courtly spaces, combined with Henry's absence, provided moments of privacy whereby Culpeper and Katherine not only socially interacted, but also engaged in intimate relations.

Another way to better understand how privacy was perceived and understood by early modern contemporaries is through the accounts of foreign visitors and ambassadors at various European courts. Foreign diplomats played a significant role in the dynamics of court culture and influenced politics between nations. Official ambassadors lived at the courts to which they were appointed and were able to obtain information and see how a sovereign lived and ruled their dominions for their critical duty of "information gathering."<sup>85</sup> They witnessed public and private moments at a ruler's court and interacted with sovereigns in private. This is evident from many of the letters they wrote to their masters. For example, in 1559, the French ambassador Gilles de Noailles (1524–1600) wrote to the King of France, Francis II (1544–60), that the English queen, Elizabeth I, had "spoke with [him] in private" regarding the issues of troops being dispatched from France to Scotland.<sup>86</sup> As this letter illustrates, foreign ambassadors engaged

81 Nicola Clark, *Gender, Family and Politics: The Howard Women 1485–1558* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 133–39; Nicola Clark, "Queen Katherine Howard: Space, Place, and Promiscuity Pre- and Post- Marriage, 1536–1541", *Royal Studies Journal* 6:2 (2019): 97–99.

82 TNA, SP 1/167, f. 141.

83 Clark, "Queen Katherine Howard", 100–01.

84 On Lady Jane Rochford's role in this regard, see David Loades, *Catherine Howard: The Adulterous Wife of Henry VIII* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2012), 149–51.

85 Jeremy Black, *History of Diplomacy* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2010), 12.

86 Alexandre Teulet (ed.), *Relations politiques de la France et de l'Espagne avec l'Ecosse au XVIe siècle: correspondances françaises 1515–1603. Volume 5* (Paris: Librairie de la Société de l'Histoire de France, 1862), 367. See the English translation: "Noailles to the King of France", 9 November 1559,

and initiated moments of privacy with monarchs and their courtiers to discuss politics.

Through these brief examples, it becomes clear that the culture and interplay of the royal and princely courts and politics straddled the line between public and private and that the complex nature of courts and contexts of privacy affected early modern monarchy, power, politics, diplomacy, and social hierarchies. Our understanding of the interplay and culture of European courts stems from the rich scholarship of court studies and the employment of interdisciplinary perspectives that have revealed so much about the various types and mechanisms of courts, the specific cultural character of courts, and the interconnections of the court within the broader context of European state formation and societal transformations. However, the concentrated focus on specific court cultures and the limited scope of topics within court studies underline the need for more extensive analysis to fill research gaps and address topics that require more attention, especially studies connected to privacy.<sup>87</sup> For example, more research is needed into the courts and court cultures within northern and eastern Europe, as well as into courts beyond Europe, in order to comparatively understand how privacy was understood at courts around the world.<sup>88</sup> Despite all we know about the mechanics, administration, and operations of premodern courts, the monetary, commercial, and economic components at the various courts of Europe is understudied. By incorporating the lens of privacy into court studies, scholars have the potential to delve more deeply and shed new light on different aspects of courts and court cultures. For instance, scholars could explore how private interests were forged through financial exchanges between key individuals/agents at court or how secret financial strategies and investments were pursued by courtiers

in *Calendar of State Papers Foreign: Elizabeth. Volume 2: 1559–1560*, ed. Joseph Stevenson (London, 1865), 96.

87 The aim of the list that follows is to highlight potential research avenues that could be developed through privacy studies. This list is based on conversations about the state of the field and research being conducted by colleagues in court studies. I would like to thank all of the incredibly generous colleagues for their thoughts, ideas, and challenging discourse related to court studies research. In particular, I would like to express my immense gratitude to Ellie Woodacre, Cathleen Sarti, Charlotte Backerra, Jessica O'Leary, Susan Broomhall, Esther Griffin von Orsouw, and Sarah Bendall for their insightful comments and perspectives that helped to identify the gaps and areas that warrant further scholarly attention.

88 Jeroen Duindam has led the way in examining global courts through a research group and project entitled "Eurasian Empires: Integration Processes and Identity Formations" at the Leiden University. This resulted in the edited collection *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires: A Global Perspective*, eds. Jeroen Duindam, Tülay Artan, and Metin Kunt (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

or impacted the court. Additionally, to expand our understanding of status and reputation at European courts, scholars could examine how court employment and the repercussions of changes in the personal economic status of court personnel shaped court culture. Finally, scholars could analyse how consumerism emerged through private meetings between mercantile elites and courtiers. A few studies have started to explore these aspects of the court.<sup>89</sup>

In light of the issues at the forefront of modern society, there is also a need to expand on existing research and fill research gaps pertaining to the role and effects of personal and public health and the ramifications of lifecycles at court. For instance, topics such as mental health, illnesses, disabilities, old age, medical knowledge, emotions, and lived experiences at court need to be considered.<sup>90</sup> Similarly, although the subject of court environments has been explored, particularly the use of alternative residences, gardens, and parks,<sup>91</sup> it is surprising that very little is known about the secluded or private nature of the natural environments and landscapes in which courts were situated. Another aspect of court studies that is underexplored and that can be expanded through the lens of privacy is the relationship between sovereign courts and media, especially the issues surrounding publicity, news, censorship, and the history and circulation of knowledge at court.<sup>92</sup> There are also other little-studied areas. Nevertheless, common characteristics across the themes and topics listed above could be used to examine such underexplored areas; repeatedly, the personal, intimate, secret, and unseen are involved. While this volume does not deal directly with many of these topics, the chapters do showcase the ways in which these potential avenues of research can be investigated through the lens of privacy and the methodological framework of privacy studies.

89 Cf. Gerhard Fouquet, Jan Hirschbiegel, and Werner Paravicini, eds., *Hofwirtschaft: ein ökonomischer Blick auf Hof und Residenz in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit* (Ostfildern: Thorbecke, 2008).

90 Emrys D. Jones, "Royal Raptures: Caroline of Ansbach and the Politics of Illness in the 1730s", *Medical Humanities* 37 (2011): 13–17.

91 To name a few: Susannah Lyon-Whaley, *Floral Culture and the Tudor and Stuart Courts* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press (forthcoming 2023–24)); Jane Whitaker, *Gardens for Gloriana: Wealth, Splendour and Design in the Elizabethan Garden* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019); Jill Francis, "Order and Disorder in the Early Modern Garden, 1558–1630", *Garden History* 36:1 (2008): 22–35.

92 Andreas Gestrich, *Absolutismus und Öffentlichkeit: politische Kommunikation in Deutschland zu Beginn des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994).

## Integrating Court Studies and Notions of Privacy: The Contributions

This edited collection urges scholars to reassess, and perhaps challenge, the prevailing public/private distinction that has long shaped the study of European courts. Contesting the idea that the public functions of court were key conditions of the repetitive process in the “revision and renegotiation” of ruling power, the chapters here reassess the relationship between the public and private aspects within court cultures and demonstrate how notions of privacy also fostered the “revision and renegotiation” of power and status in early modern Europe.<sup>93</sup> The collection focuses on five key categories that correlate to central themes in the field of court studies. The chapters are arranged according to these themes: theories and conceptions of the court (chapters 1–3); architecture, spaces, and access (chapters 4 and 5); patronage, art, and literature (chapters 6 and 7); religion (chapter 8); and politics (chapters 9 and 10). Although the chapters are not organised chronologically, the resulting structure of this volume covers a broad range of topics, time periods, and geographical areas. The following overview of the book begins with a short historiographical survey of court studies that emphasises the categories that are used here. The purpose of this survey is to situate each essay within its scholarly context and to highlight the chapter’s contribution to the field of court studies.

Scholars within court studies have explored and debated the conceptions of courts and the symbiotic relationship between rulers and their courts by examining the interplay of public and personal influences. Such examinations have identified the specific cultural, social, and political conditions of premodern European courts. For instance, in examining the French court, Norbert Elias asserted that the blending or merging of the public and private “gives social life at court and within court society a characteristic double face”, which was reflected in the physical spaces of the court and in the functions and structures of the household.<sup>94</sup> Yet Elias observed that the “function of [...] private life [was] to provide relaxation, amusement, conversation”.<sup>95</sup> Elias’s observation, like Starkey’s argument, proffers a set of descriptors and characteristics that suggest degrees of privacy. Likewise, the research and debates that have evolved from the

93 Adamson, “Introduction”, 7–8.

94 Norbert Elias, *The Court Society*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 53. Cf. Norbert Elias, *The Civilising Process*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).

95 Elias, *The Court Society*, 53.

work of Elias, Starkey, and others have enabled us to expand the scope and boundaries of what constituted the court and its relationships with other early modern institutions and actors. There have been studies of informal spaces that served as extensions of the court (i.e., hunting grounds and residences) and of the role of women as political agents operating through informal channels at court (i.e., hospitality or correspondence).<sup>96</sup>

Although there has been some consideration of the scope, terms, and characteristics that demarcate instances of privacy, scholars have neither fully analysed the meanings, nuances and significance of boundaries and categories of privacy nor engaged with a methodological approach for studying notions of privacy within court culture. This collection attempts to address these gaps through the first three chapters. In their opening chapter, “Considering Privacy at Court”, Mette Birkedal Bruun and Lars Cyril Nørgaard explore the terminological and historical meanings of privacy, including its epistemological roots. As a result, Bruun and Nørgaard achieve two goals. First, they provide the contextual and theoretical framework of historical privacy studies and also explain how to avoid anachronism. This explanation stresses that in order to employ a concept of historical privacy, it must be grounded in the source material by contextually situating different instances of privacy. Second, Bruun and Nørgaard acknowledge the limitations of exploring privacy within court studies, while offering possible ways of overcoming such limitations by drawing on interdisciplinary perspectives. For this, they refer to Jeroen Duindam’s work on courts in a global perspective, emphasising Duindam’s model of sociability as a comparative example of PRIVACY’s heuristic model.<sup>97</sup> This comparison provides a way of distinguishing the boundaries of the court in relation to zones of privacy. Building on this approach, Bruun and Nørgaard incorporate Helen Nissenbaum’s modern conceptions of privacy to illustrate the usefulness of context-relative practices related to information for expanding on the concepts of access and accessibility and identifying degrees of privacy at court.<sup>98</sup> Providing this analytical foundation and explaining a collection of approaches in the study of privacy,

96 Cf. Neighbors and Käfer, “Zones of Privacy”; Kristine Dyrmann, “The Court in the Countryside: Privacy and Political Sociability in the Suburban Villas of Copenhagen’s Late Eighteenth-Century Court Elite”, *The Court Historian* 28:1 (2023): 32–48; Steve Griffin, “Between Public and Private Spaces: Jacobite Diplomacy in Vienna, 1725–1742”, *Royal Studies Journal* 9:1 (2022): 46–59.

97 Jeroen Duindam, *Dynasties: A Global History of Power, 1300–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 7–8.

98 Helen Nissenbaum, *Privacy in Context: Technology, Policy, and the Integrity of Social Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

Bruun and Nørgaard establish a contextual landscape in which the essays of this collection are situated.

While personal spaces helped to demarcate degrees of privacy, the binary distinction of public and private spheres does not take into account the diverse activities, interactions, relationships, and decision-making processes that occurred at court. In fact, public and private boundaries often intersected. One might even question whether any aspect of royal and courtly spectacles was ever truly public or private. Several scholarly studies that emerged in the late 1990s focused on the public spectacles of early modern European courts, including rituals of ceremony, iconography, and representation.<sup>99</sup> Often, these studies argued that public spectacles were important forms of communication and were staged productions that involved the court in myriad ways—from the construction and organisation of coronations, processions, weddings, and celebrations to the individual actors taking part in the performative elements of spectacles and ceremonies. However, assuming that public spectacles were sharply divided from privacy, and thus maintaining the strict binary public/private distinction, is problematic because the meanings of these courtly spectacles are lost, the nuances of privacy are obscured, and the interpersonal connections and links between different groups of people at court (e.g., diplomats, servants, and artists) are not fully explored.

With notions of privacy and the private in mind, Elias's "double face" assertion, which we noted above, can be further developed. Is it possible to suggest that for every public aspect of early modern households, courts, and activities, there is a reciprocal private, or unseen/less public, or perhaps intimate aspect? Were there personal aspects that existed and functioned in

99 J. R. Mulryne and Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, *Europa Triumphans: Court and Civic Festivals in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004); Eloy Hortal Muñoz, "Organización de una Casa: El Libro de Veeduría de la reina Ana de Austria", in *Las relaciones discretas entre las Monarquías Hispánica y Portuguesa: las casas de las Reinas (siglos XV–XIX)*, eds. J. Martínez Millán and M. P. Marçal Lourenço (Madrid: Polifemo, 2008), 275–311; Jeroen Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles: The Courts of Europe's Major Dynastic Rivals, 1550–1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Katrin Keller, *Hofdamen: Amtsträgerinnen im Wiener Hofstaat des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2005); Marcello Fantoni, George Gorse, and Malcolm Smuts, *Politics of Space: European Courts, ca. 1500–1750* (Rome: Bulzoni Editore, 2009). For more research on court festivals, see also J. R. Mulryne, Maria Ines Aliverti, and Anna Maria Testaverde, *Ceremonial Entries in Early Modern Europe: The Iconography of Power* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2017); J. R. Mulryne and Elizabeth Goldring, *Court Festivals of the European Renaissance: Art, Politics and Performance* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017); J. R. Mulryne, Krista De Jonge, R. L. M. Morris, and Pieter Martens, *Occasions of State: Early Modern European Festivals and the Negotiation of Power* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019).

response to the public “face”? By thinking about Elias’s “double face” in this way, there is greater opportunity for locating and exploring the dual impact of personas of rulership, court cultures, performance and communication, and interpersonal relations. This postulation is supported and developed by Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger in her chapter entitled “Privacy at Court? Reconsidering the Public/Private Dichotomy”.

Deploying her expertise on symbolic communication in court rituals and ceremonies, Stollberg-Rilinger disputes the use of the public/private dichotomy as an analytical tool for examining notions of privacy within early modern courts and court culture. To demonstrate the limitations of this dichotomy, Stollberg-Rilinger uses various eighteenth-century examples, which include the Prussian court of Frederick William (1688–1740) and the Viennese court of Empress Maria Theresa (1717–80). Echoing Bruun’s and Nørgaard’s approach, Stollberg-Rilinger analyses the Germanic linguistic expressions used in the ceremonies and communications at the Prussian and Viennese courts alongside the semantics of privacy. Through this process, she outlines a potential language that denotes notions of privacy. She contends that the use of specific court language demonstrates how instances of historical privacy often emerged at court in connection with the ceremonial and theatrical staging of early modern power, politics, diplomacy, and courtly rituals. As a result of this staging, Stollberg-Rilinger strongly argues that the public/private dichotomy does not sufficiently address the interpersonal relationships and interactions connecting politics, ceremony, and communication with notions of privacy. Instead, she offers an alternative dichotomy to more fully consider notions of privacy and contextualise the degrees of privacy at court: front stage/back stage distinctions. Although she questions the analytical value of privacy as a research lens, Stollberg-Rilinger nevertheless exposes the versatility of the front stage/back stage conception for enhancing research into the performative, ritual, and theatrical nuances of both court culture and privacy in early modern Europe. Stollberg-Rilinger concludes that while the public/private dichotomy is no longer suitable in the wake of “profound transformations of the public and private spheres”, any study of historical privacy and court culture must rely on interdisciplinary frameworks.

The front stage/back stage distinction certainly mirrors our understanding of personal relations, the cultural developments of the court, and the management of and navigating between these public/private stages at court. In fact, this distinction could be a way to clarify Starkey’s work on the privy chamber and intimacy by expanding our thinking to also consider the role that notions of privacy had in shaping the spaces, proximity, and physicality



that bound rulers and their courts together. There is a rich collection of scholarly research, particularly from the 1990s, that continues to grow and that showcases how architectural and courtly spaces were critical to facilitating interactions and interpersonal relationships between rulers and their subjects.<sup>100</sup> Elias, Starkey, and others have all emphasised the central function of institutional and architectural structures not only in establishing the court, but also in accommodating interpersonal relationships and stimulating the negotiation of power between rulers and their courts. However, the details and contexts of these elements of courts and their far-reaching significance were brought to light more clearly when scholars of court studies began to examine the intersections and points of contact at court with concepts that encompassed both the public and private. John Adamson, Jeroen Duindam, Dries Raeymaekers, and Sebastiaan Derks have transformed our understanding of the interconnections of spaces, relations, intimacy, politics, and power through focusing on the concept of access.<sup>101</sup>

Adamson has illustrated the importance ascribed to behaviours, manners, and etiquette at court, all of which were essential to establishing boundaries, managing access, and maintaining social control. He has convincingly maintained that the court “accommodated a series of rival foci of authority and influence, where power was traded, and where the decisions taken touched the lives of every subject”.<sup>102</sup> From the hospitality, material culture, and social diplomacy at the court of Charles I of England (1600–49) to the political court of the absent, withdrawn, and distant James I of England/VI of Scotland (1566–1625), Adamson has offered us contextual cases of points of access to analyse the correlation between shifting degrees of privacy and courtly perceptions of power.<sup>103</sup> More importantly, the publicising of intimate

100 Simon Thurley, *The Royal Palaces of Tudor England: Architecture and Court Life, 1460–1547* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 83. Cf. Barbara Arciszewska, “The Royal Residence in Wilanów and Gender Constructions in Early Modern Poland”, in *Homme bâtisseur, femme bâtisseuse: traditions et stratégies dans le monde occidental et oriental* ed. S. Frommel (Paris: Picard, 2013), 137–150; Krista de Jonge, “The Principal Residences in Mechelen: The Court of Cambrai and the Court of Savoy”, in *Women of Distinction: Margaret of York and Margaret of Austria*, ed. Dagmar Eichberger (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 57–66; Manolo Guerci, *London’s ‘Golden Mile’: Great Houses of the Strand, 1550–1650* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2021).

101 Adamson, *Princely Courts*; Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles*; Dries Raeymaekers and Sebastian Derks, eds., *Keys to Power? The Culture of Access in Princely Courts, 1400–1750* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

102 Adamson, “Introduction”, 41.

103 John Adamson, “Policy and Pomegranates: Art, Iconography, and Counsel in Rubens’s Anglo-Spanish Diplomacy of 1629–30”, in *The Age of Rubens: Diplomacy, Dynastic Politics, and the Visual Arts in Early Seventeenth-Century Europe*, eds. Luc Duerloo and Malcolm Smuts (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), 145; John Adamson, “The Tudor and Stuart Courts, 1509–1714”, in *The*

affairs and private relations, as well as the politics and social discourses stemming from the public and private intersecting at court, substantiates Adamson's assertion that "[a]ccess and intimacy did not always equate with political power".<sup>104</sup> Thus, he challenges the traditional idea that the privy chamber and its personnel were the main forces of influence at court.

Coincidentally, Duindam has transformed how court scholars approach the ruler's household and court, which are no longer considered to be a singular, administrative structure separate from government, but are now analysed as a social assembly of institutions, people, and conventions.<sup>105</sup> This assembly did not operate solely according to divisions between rulers and nobles, sovereigns and assemblies, or friends and foes. Instead, as Duindam has argued, this assembly was based on shifting political, cultural, and personal impetuses that ensured social order was maintained as a "continuing movement between poles that defines the court".<sup>106</sup> The court consequently became a social powerhouse "setting the standards for art, language, dress and comportment".<sup>107</sup> Because of these conclusions, Duindam's research has shed light on the significance of considering the language and terminology related to access, spatial boundaries, and the organisation of personnel. In particular, his study of the courts of Versailles and Vienna includes examples that point to degrees of privacy through his use of the French terms "*connétable, marechaux, and écuyer*"<sup>108</sup> and his identification of Viennese court positions like "*Oberstkammerer*".<sup>109</sup> Since this seminal study, Duindam has turned to domains of sociability that shaped the court.<sup>110</sup> These domains reveal four primary dimensions of the "social setting of dynastic rulers", among which "parameters of access" to the public and inner, perhaps private, areas of the court are crucial for the "study of decision-making and power" at court.<sup>111</sup>

Derks and Raeymaekers, in particular, have emphasised that the regulation and practices of access were responses to increased interactions

*Princely Courts of Europe, 1500–1750*, ed. John Adamson (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1999), 112.

104 Adamson, "Tudor and Stuart Courts", 109.

105 Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles*, 224. Cf. José Eloy Hortal Muñoz, "The Regulation of Private Spaces: The Codification of the Royal Chamber of the Spanish Monarchy in the Seventeenth Century", *The Court Historian* 28:1 (2023): 18–31.

106 Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles*, 11.

107 Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles*, 287.

108 Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles*, 38.

109 Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles*, 40.

110 Duindam, *Dynasties*, 7–8.

111 Duindam, *Dynasties*, 8, 171.

between rulers and their subjects at early modern courts across Europe. Examining these interactions and the regulation of access, Raeymaekers and Derks underscore that “formality [or regulation] in access was nearly always supplemented with informal structures”.<sup>112</sup> These informal structures can be seen in the development of interpersonal relationships, including rulers’ interactions with court favourites, elite recreational activities, travelling and progresses, as well as the development of courtly practices and the organisation of personal activities. Building on his earlier work, Raeymaekers’s chapter in this volume, “The Monarch Exposed: The Negotiation of Privacy at the Early Modern Court”, explores further the significance of courtly access by discussing how notions of privacy within royal courts paradoxically exposed the monarch’s personal life. Considering various early modern courts, from the courts of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I to that of the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles VI (1685–1740), and others, Raeymaekers contends that the ideal of privacy at court must be examined as a process of negotiation. This process, he argues, is achieved through the regulation of access, whereby negotiation relied on three core elements: spatial organisation, material culture, and the bodily presence of early modern rulers. Consequently, Raeymaekers concludes that the court should not be divided into spheres, but rather it should be examined through multiple spheres consisting of degrees of privacy and publicity.

Similar to Duindam’s model, which Bruun and Nørgaard echo in their chapter, the core elements of courtly access that Raeymaekers highlights help to determine the boundaries of privacy, who had access, and the impact of privacy on the interactions and power dynamics at court. Although Raeymaekers’s analysis of courtly access and degrees of privacy primarily deals with political processes and political access, his contribution to this volume provides an approach useful for further exploring how courtly access was achieved in other ways, such as economic agency and commercial exchanges, fashion production and textile consumption, the cultivation of scientific knowledge, and the development of early modern industries and technology. Through these various activities, the public and private merged, thereby facilitating gradations or pockets of privacy at early modern European courts. The subsequent chapters in this volume examine notions of privacy in specific historical contexts through interdisciplinary perspectives and various topics, including gender, architecture, art, literature, religion, politics, and diplomacy.

112 Raeymaekers and Derks, *Keys to Power?*, 7.

The rise of women's studies in the late 1980s, along with the growing emphasis on interdisciplinary research in court studies during the mid-1990s, triggered a push for more research on women at court.<sup>113</sup> This push, coinciding with the rise of royal studies, led to a surge in scholarly research that placed women at the centre of courts.<sup>114</sup> These studies examined the structural and cultural differences of the court through both comparative and specific analyses of European courts, court politics and culture, and connections and relationships with territories and localities.<sup>115</sup> A substantial focus was on the presence of women at courts, gender roles, particularly on women as consorts, and female agency. Scholars have highlighted the ways in which women navigated both the private and the public, especially informal and formal spaces, to exercise agency and influence, while also forging their own identities.<sup>116</sup> Furthermore, research on the public and personal boundaries of the court has been notably enhanced by considerations of the meaning and practices of access<sup>117</sup> that have generated more and broader studies of gender and women at, connected to, and impacted by early modern courts. Certainly, studies on the role of women and their connections to access within the royal household and at court have challenged traditional views that women were restricted to the private and domestic sphere.

113 Sharon Kettering, "Gift-Giving and Patronage in Early Modern France", *French History* 2 (1988): 131–51; Pam Wright, "A Change in Direction: The Ramifications of a Female Household, 1558–1603", in *The English Court: From the War of the Roses to the Civil War*, eds. David Starkey, D. A. L. Morgan, John Murphy, Pam Wright, and Kevin Sharpe (London: Longman Group, 1987), 147–72; Unknown, "Editorial", *The Court Historian* 1:1 (1996): 2.

114 There are close connections, as well as overlaps, between court and royal studies. Evolving from the biographical studies of monarchies, kings, and queens, royal studies, including the study of non-royal forms of rulership, focuses on "the exercise, extent, and limitations of royal power and authority as it changes over time and between different geographical, religious, and cultural settings." Elena Woodacre and Cathleen Sarti, "What is Royal Studies?", *Royal Studies Journal*, 2:2 (2015): 18. See also Neighbors, "Beyond the Public/Private Divide", 1–17.

115 J. P. D. Cooper, "Centre and Localities", in *The Elizabethan World*, eds. Susan Doran and Norman Jones (London: Routledge, 2011), 130–46; Janet Dickinson, *Court Politics and the Earl of Essex, 1589–1601* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012).

116 Cf. Merry Wiesner-Hanks, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Clarissa Campbell Orr, *Queenship in Britain, 1660–1837: Royal Patronage, Court Culture and Dynastic Politics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010); Clarissa Campbell Orr, *Queenship in Europe, 1660–1815: The Role of the Consort* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Michelle L. Beer, *Queenship at the Renaissance Courts of Britain: Catherine of Aragon and Margaret Tudor, 1503–1533* (Woodbridge: The Royal Historical Society/The Boydell Press, 2018).

117 Raeymaekers and Derks, *Keys to Power?*; Mears, *Queenship and Political Discourse*, 15. See also Dustin M. Neighbors, "'With my rulinge': Agency, Queenship, and Political Culture through Royal Progresses in the Reign of Elizabeth I" (PhD diss., University of York, 2018).

It is this particular challenge that Britta Kägler confronts in her chapter, “Institutionalised Privacy? The Need to Achieve and Defend Privacy in the *Frauenzimmer*”. Kägler demonstrates how degrees of privacy at early modern courts often hinged on or stemmed from gender and social roles. Focusing on the individual and collective privacy of women at the German-speaking courts, in particularly the Wittelsbach court, Kägler analyses the connections between privacy and gender surrounding the *Frauenzimmer*; she particularly emphasises the language and practices of privacy within informal spaces and through gendered activities. She argues that the characterisation and configuration of physical spaces, like the *Frauenzimmer*, offered women degrees of privacy through which they exercised agency. Like Stollberg-Rilinger, Kägler offers a way of understanding how notions of privacy were visible within the public hierarchy, spaces, and rituals of courts. By incorporating the gendered paradigm into the examination of the public/private divide, Kägler illustrates how to extrapolate the various ways in which women navigated their position between the public and private spheres, including gendered concepts of modesty, seclusion, and intimacy. Furthermore, Kägler’s chapter and the issue of gender also shed light on various aspects of domesticity and connections between privacy and health, especially treatments of sickness, the sickbed, and personal relationships with medical personnel at court.

Around the mid-2000s, a shift in court studies turned the focus of scholars towards the inner workings and cultural production of courts. This cultural shift has illuminated the visual, material, and spatial aspects, as well as the specific activities, that characterised European courts. This shift has also resulted in further delineation of the formality and informality of spaces at court (e.g., the *Kunstammer* and tents) through the exploration of materiality, intimacy, and personal preferences.<sup>118</sup> The chapters by Fabian Persson and Oskar J. Rojewski expand not only on Raeymaekers’s chapter, but also on previous scholarship pertaining to cultural fabrication and

118 For research on the objects and materiality of the *Kunstammer*, see Thomas DaCosta Kaufman, “Remarks on the Collections of Rudolf II: The *Kunstammer* as a Form of *Representatio*”, in *Grasping the World: The Idea of the Museum*, eds. Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago (London: Routledge, 2004); National Gallery of Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, *The Splendor of Dresden: Five Centuries of Art Collecting—An Exhibition from the State Art Collections of Dresden* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1978). For portable tents, see the Historic Royal Palaces’ project “Portable Palaces: Royal Tents and Timber Lodgings 1509–1603” (<https://gtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=AH%2FP006485%2F1>). See also Alden Gregory, “The Timber Lodgings of King Henry VIII: Ephemeral Architecture at War in the Early Sixteenth Century”, *The Antiquaries Journal* 100 (2020): 304–23.

production at court. Persson and Rojewski illustrate how regulating access, intimate relations, and notions of privacy shaped the appearance and visual narratives at court. While both Persson and Rojewski engage with themes of access and proximity, they approach these themes in connection with notions of privacy from different perspectives.

Persson's chapter, "Public Displays of Affection: Creating Spheres of Apparent Royal Intimacy in Public", examines the degrees of privacy created through control over the spatial and proximal access at the Swedish court in the late eighteenth century. Analysing royal decrees, court regulations, and the architectural layout of Stockholm Palace, Persson focuses on the intentional act of cultivating a perceived sense of negotiated access and creating an impression of intimacy at court. This carefully crafted perception of access and the accompanying impression of intimacy fostered pockets of privacy through regulating the placement of material objects, spaces, and bodies that governed the proximity, interactions, and closeness of monarchs with their courtiers. Thus, Persson argues that the degrees of privacy at the Swedish court were at times fabricated to manage courtly behaviour, control public display, and protect royal life from the public eye. Persson's contribution facilitates a close consideration of the ways in which privacy, especially fabricated privacy, shaped public presentation and perception. This conclusion has the potential to stimulate further research into the illusion of private relations and interactions as these were fabricated and strategically represented at court.

In contrast, Rojewski explores the regulation of access and notions of privacy through patronage and cultural production at court. In his chapter, "The Translation of Court Culture from the Burgundian Court to the Kingdom of Castile: The Sovereign's Privacy and Relationship with Court Artists", Rojewski demonstrates how court painters were granted access to the private spaces of the Burgundian and Castilian courts during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Through extensive analysis of court ordinances and paintings, Rojewski argues that the negotiation of privacy was enshrined in protocols governing both access and the physical organisation at the courts of Philippe the Good (1419–67), Charles the Bold (1433–77), and Isabella I of Castile (1451–1504). As such, the cultural dissemination of artwork and modes of reception at these courts were shaped by private relations, interactions, and activities.

The everyday functions and activities at court were performed in specific ways, which, as Rojewski points out, are described and perceived through artwork, handbooks, *mémoires*, and epistolary exchanges. Such visual and written depictions about the court, its functions, and its daily

activities ultimately came to define early modern European courts. The performances and details about life at court also reveal personal bonds, intimate interactions, and unseen influences that shaped the public personas, reputations, and reception of people and courts in premodern Europe. Connections between performativity, narrative, and notions of privacy are central to chapters 7 and 8. In chapter 7, “On Privacy—or Rather the Lack Thereof—at Court in the Polish Literature of the Sixteenth Century”, Marta Wojtkowska-Maksymik examines notions of privacy and the private within sixteenth-century literature. Her study illustrates how literary discourses and narrative texts distinguished and described what was public and private in everyday activities at the Polish-Lithuanian court of the Jagiellonian dynasty. Wojtkowska-Maksymik analyses the details contained within literary texts and accounts concerning a variety of topics related to common household activities and courtly activities. She argues that these writings reveal not only how the Jagiellonian court communicated and understood privacy, but also how they used expressions of privacy to cultivate a reputation centred around being a civilised and refined European court. Wojtkowska-Maksymik contributes a research approach to further analyse notions of courtly privacy that are evident in other accounts and literary sources beyond the Polish materials she considers in the chapter.

The culture and politics of religion at court have been a dominant theme in court studies. Religious life was central to early modern societies, especially at European courts. Through confessional conflicts and religious worship, premodern European courts were instrumental in the development of religious policies and reforms that shaped the wider European religious landscape. Adamson and Duindam have emphasised how the court’s activities followed the liturgical year and reflected the confessional identities of their sovereigns.<sup>119</sup> Andrew Thomas has investigated the roles of confessional identity and court patronage in the development of the Wittelsbach princely court.<sup>120</sup> The impact of preaching and the role of religious clerics at court has been depicted as politically important by Peter McCullough.<sup>121</sup> More recently, Paolo Cozzo has reaffirmed the significance of religious rituals, which were crucial for the “symbolic representation of power in courts”.<sup>122</sup> Yet

119 Adamson, “Tudor and Stuart Courts”; Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles*.

120 Andrew L. Thomas, *A House Divided: Wittelsbach Confessional Court Cultures in the Holy Roman Empire, c. 1550–1650* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 1.

121 Peter McCullough, *Sermons at Court: Politics and Religion in Elizabethan and Jacobean Preaching* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 5.

122 Paolo Cozzo, “Religious Rituals and the Liturgical Calendar”, in *Early Modern Court Culture*, ed. Erin Griffey (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022), 176.

there is so much more to explore and understand concerning the personal devotional practices of individuals across the court hierarchy, the navigation of confessional differences and the arrangement of devotional spaces at court, and the extent to which rulers prayed alone or in private. For example, the crucifix controversy during the reign of Elizabeth I has underscored the degree of privacy that the Queen had in her chapel royal.<sup>123</sup> Contemporaries commented that Elizabeth was “so well affectioned to the cross [...] that [she] [...] always kept it reuerently in [her] chapel”<sup>124</sup> and often criticised “the crucifix being honoured [...] in [Elizabeth’s] chapel”.<sup>125</sup> Based on this controversy, scholars have demonstrated that the Queen was secluded from the court during her daily prayers and devotional practices. However, the degree to which Elizabeth’s private chapel was accessible and visible is unclear since her courtiers knew of the crucifixes. How secluded or alone were rulers in devotional spaces?

Given the importance attached to the ruler’s religious identity and practices, it is crucial to understand how the daily rituals and liturgical practices at court were organised and performed in public and private. The privacy of religious practices is the focus of Bruun’s and Nørgaard’s chapter, “Au Milieu d’une Cour Superbe & Tumultueuse: Devotional Privacy at the Court of Versailles”. Expanding on the examination of privacy in their opening chapter and contributing to the scope of regulating access, Bruun and Nørgaard address a common corollary stemming from privacy and access—withdrawal. Through analysis of the devotional literature and the sources recounting the religiosity and reputation of the d’Orléans sisters (the Duchess of Montpensier and Madame de Guise) at the court of Versailles, Bruun and Nørgaard evaluate the interconnections of religious privacy at court and the practices of devotional withdrawal. They argue that by employing a terminological analysis of the primary sources surrounding religious practices at court, not only can these sources highlight notions of privacy, but they can also reveal the ways in which the practice of withdrawal had degrees of privacy, each with its own nuances, dimensions, and boundaries related to gender, forms of worship, and purposes (e.g., meditation or reflection). The chapter emphasises that, like most notions of privacy, court privacy was situational, as well as ephemeral and measured.

123 Neighbors, “With my rulinge”, 228.

124 John Martial, *A Treatyse of the Crosse Gathered Out of the Scriptures, Councelles, and Auncient Fathers of the Primiti[v]e Church* (Antwerp: John Latius, 1564), 1–2.

125 British Library, Harleian MS 6992, f. 4. See also John Strype, *Annals of the Reformation and Establishment of Religion in the Church of England* (London: Printed for Edward Symon, 1738).



Finally, the concluding chapters consider the connection between privacy and politics. The political nature of early modern courts has traditionally been tied to the public sphere. However, politics and diplomacy operated through practices that were tied to notions and tactics of privacy in a number of ways.<sup>126</sup> Firstly, although the court was very much an extension of the royal or princely household, it was a socially and politically complex “permanent meeting place; one could go there for entertainment, company, conversation—simultaneously, seeking opportunit[ies]”.<sup>127</sup> Additionally, the dynamics of politics, diplomacy, and power relied heavily on early modern “personal relations” and personal communication, especially with regard to political influence. This importance of personal relations and communication is not only linked to and emphasised by the theories of early court historians, but also touches on, as Ronald Asch has observed, the fact that “[t]he court was a public space, which gained its prestige and special function from the fact that it was also the ruler’s private space.”<sup>128</sup> The complexity of the court being both public and private contributed to the merging of politics and privacy, whereby close personal relationships and influences reveal the political privacy that was forged at court. Thus political privacy can be analysed by determining how the court as a household institution socially engaged with the localities, communities, and civic authorities, and as noted in previous scholarship, how royal and princely households “shape[d] [...] socialization” and politics across court cultures in early modern Europe.<sup>129</sup>

Simultaneously, the personal appointments of courtiers to high positions of government or as diplomats needed to be individuals whom the monarch could trust because these political agents acted on the monarch’s behalf. Diplomats played a substantial role in the dynamics of domestic and international court cultures and influenced politics between nations, especially because they moved fluidly between the public and private spheres of the courts, often functioning as ad hoc “political advisors”.<sup>130</sup>

126 Weintraub identifies the connection between the public sphere and political sphere in Clifford Geertz’s work. Interestingly, Geertz’s work is important for the study of early modern performativity of power and monarchy, which includes the role of royal courts. Weintraub, “Public/Private Distinction”, 6–7. See Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 2000). See also Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 2008).

127 Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles*, 165.

128 Ronald Asch, “The Princely Court and Political Space in Early Modern Europe”, in *Political Space in Pre-Industrial Europe*, ed. Beat Kümin (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 59.

129 Duindam, *Royal Courts*, 1.

130 Elizabeth R. Williamson, *Elizabethan Diplomacy and Epistolary Culture* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021), 21.

Official ambassadors lived at the courts to which they were appointed, collecting and sharing information for political ends; thus, diplomacy was bound up with the “general systems of information-gathering, of representation, and of negotiation”.<sup>131</sup> However, this “information-gathering” was achieved through tactics of privacy, specifically surveillance or spying, establishing bonds and familiarity with courtiers, and secrecy.<sup>132</sup> In turn, such “information-gathering” also reinforced the interconnectedness of politics and privacy.

Political privacy, a relatively new approach that is discussed further in the final chapter, broadly evaluates categories of politics based on notions of privacy, such as privacies rooted in political systems (i.e., *arcana imperii*), the politicisation of institutions or individuals, and private interactions with political consequences.<sup>133</sup> At court, political privacy most often stemmed from private interactions with political consequences, or private politics, through which the informal objectives of individuals operating outside the formal and traditional boundaries of political spaces, policies, counsel, and rules were articulated. The conditions and practices of private politics are analysed in Jonathan Spangler’s chapter, “Private Justice or Ducal Power? Testing the Strength of Public Authority and Dynastic Loyalty by Transnational Nobles at the Court of the Duke of Lorraine”. Concentrating on the courts of the Duchy of Lorraine, Spangler considers legal records and eyewitness accounts to examine the ways in which ducal power relied not only on loyal noblemen, but also on exacting punishments and retribution carried out through the informal process of private justice. Thus, Spangler argues that private justice, and therefore private politics, emerged as a method of law and order based on the operation of informal regional politics, dynastic connections, and personal loyalties. This form of private politics at court highlights how notions of privacy developed in response or opposition to the practical situations and circumstances surrounding early modern power, politics, and state building.

In the closing chapter, “The Politics of Privacy: Examining Influence and Personal Relationships at the English and Holy Roman Imperial Courts”, Dustin M. Neighbors and Elena Woodacre explore the extent to which notions of privacy and politics, or political privacy, were forged by individual

<sup>131</sup> Black, *History of Diplomacy*, 12.

<sup>132</sup> Neighbors and Käfer, “Zones of Privacy”, 76.

<sup>133</sup> For an outline and discussion of the idea of political privacy, see Neighbors, “Privacy and the Private”, 10–11. To see how political privacy is employed as a lens of analysis, see Dustin M. Neighbors, “Elizabeth I, Huntress of England: Private Politics, Diplomacy and Courtly Relations Cultivated through Hunting”, *The Court Historian* 28:1 (2023): 49–79.

actors or a group of individuals at court. The household procedures and courtly activities involving the ruler, their dynastic and kinship networks, their courtiers, and foreign politics and diplomacy all relied on personal relations. This reliance on personal relations highlights how degrees of privacy emerged out of necessity for, in response to, or as a publicity stunt of politics. By examining such personal relations, particularly between two powerful figures, scholars can uncover how the “experience of authority has [...] emerged as a crucial context in which medieval and early modern individuals exercised agency”.<sup>134</sup> The chapter demonstrates that privacy at court was by no means a static reality; rather, privacy occurred out of necessity or as an instrument in the public operation, function, and performance of court culture and ruling power. These conclusions raise questions about privacy and its impact on the ways in which personal connections or moments enabled individuals to exercise agency in order to influence situations and relationships or to negotiate power relationships. Perhaps the most crucial question is: does agency exist within or cultivate privacy? It is this very question that Neighbors and Woodacre tackle through their case studies.

Neighbors examines the private politics within court culture via a case study focused on the 1564 visit of the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II (1527–76) to the Dresden court of Elector August of Saxony (1526–86). Stressing the interconnections of privacy, agency, sociability, and politics, Neighbors argues that August of Saxony arranged the courtly activity of hunting to function as an informal setting that involved a small number of courtiers and guests and facilitated private politics. The hunt was more than a pastime, personal recreation, or spectacle; it was a vehicle for combining personal relations and political sociability. This vehicle shaped the conditions surrounding the interface of August’s princely rule and Maximilian’s imperial power that affected the regional, national, and international courts, governments, localities, and foreign powers connecting them. Similarly, the household also combined both personal relations and political sociability to shape power dynamics, as the second case study in this chapter reveals. Woodacre investigates private politics within the household of Joan of Navarre (1368–1437), consort of Henry IV of England (1367–1413). The Queen’s household included courtiers from Joan’s Iberian homeland as well as Bretons who had previously served her in her first marriage as duchess of Brittany. Woodacre demonstrates how these foreign members of the Queen’s household were viewed as a threat to the economic and political stability of the

<sup>134</sup> Bronach Kane and Fiona Williamson (eds.), *Women, Agency, and the Law* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2013), 1.

royal household and court. What was particularly perceived as threatening about the domination of the Queen's private sphere by these foreign courtiers was the intimate access they had to Joan, which in turn enhanced their ability to influence her and, by extension, potentially the king as well. The concern about the constitution of Joan's household demonstrates not just xenophobia, but the agency that courtiers had through privacy and private access to the queen. Overall, the case studies presented by Neighbors and Woodacre highlight that by examining the relationship between privacy and politics at court, scholars gain both an analytical framework and a better understanding of how degrees of privacy were often informal and ephemeral moments at court that allowed individuals to exercise agency as a means of control, influence, and negotiation.

## Conclusion

The essays in this volume demonstrate that early modern courts were not solely driven by representations of power or the institutional functions of court life, but rather were shaped by informal aspects of power that were often enacted in private spaces or in a private context. Using privacy as an analytical lens, this edited collection both directly deals with the use and wider constructions of historical privacy and reconsiders whether the public/private distinction remains a valuable and useful methodological approach in court studies.

An article on seventeenth-century households posed the question: "why is privacy deserving of attention?"<sup>135</sup> As a latent response, this volume illustrates that the examination of privacy at court has resulted in identifying new approaches for court studies and presents different perspectives on well-known early modern European courts, including the negotiation of privacy through access, the gendering of privacy, cultural production and dissemination through the private modes of reception, the materiality of privacy in architecture, art, and literature, degrees of withdrawal, and the layers of political privacy. Taken together, the various perspectives shared in *Notions of Privacy at Early Modern European Courts* underscore how interdisciplinarity truly is the cornerstone of court studies and is crucial to driving research. The contributions in this collection draw on several disciplines, for instance gender studies, cultural history, religious studies,

135 Longfellow, "Public, Private and the Household in Early Seventeenth-Century England", 318.

and art history. More importantly, despite the conceptual challenges and the risk of anachronism, the idea of ‘privacy’ is applicable and evident across the courts of early modern Europe, as evidenced by the research shared in this volume.

As a result, the reframed concepts and perspectives within this book provide a foundation and framework that can encourage the next wave of court studies scholars to reassess and comparatively examine early modern European courts and to tackle previously inaccessible aspects of these courts. This edited collection does not produce conclusive definitions of notions of privacy and the private in early modern European courts. Instead, each contribution demonstrates how the fluid, situational, and relational degrees of privacy were delineated and understood by premodern Europeans in order to stimulate new studies on courts and court culture in a national, transnational, and global context.

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# 1. Considering Privacy at Court

*Mette Birkedal Bruun and Lars Cyril Nørgaard*

## Abstract

Privacy at court is no technical term but rather involves incremental processes of boundary drawing. As an analytical lens, privacy invites us to focus on minute exchanges that could otherwise escape our attention. Moving beyond the public/private dichotomy, we engage with the obvious dangers of anachronism and opt for a model of thresholds that is inspired by Jeroen Duindam and further developed by reference to Helen Nissenbaum and the concept of contextual integrity. We propose that the study of early modern privacy at court cannot be based on a stable opposition between the private and the public. Instead, it is necessary to investigate the meaning of terms and experiences at thresholds, where patterns of sociability and, potentially, conflicting norms interacted at court.

**Keywords:** *privatus*, courtly sociability, thresholds

What is privacy at court? Where and when is privacy at court? If, when looking for historical instances of privacy, we search for stable manifestations of serene solitude and secluded spaces, we risk missing the point. In many cases, we are probably influenced by modern definitions, such as the legal demarcation of privacy as the right to be let alone.<sup>1</sup> This demarcation, however, does not render the search for early modern privacy futile. Early modern courtiers sometimes segregated themselves from the manifestly public and ceremonial hustle and bustle of courtly life. If we use privacy as an analytical lens rather than a technical term, we may begin to detect the

<sup>1</sup> S. D. Warren and L. D. Brandeis, “The Right to Privacy”, *Harvard Law Review* 4:5 (1890): 193–220. Their definition is often referred to as the right to be left alone, but the wording that appears in the opening of their article is “the right to be let alone.” This chapter rests on research conducted at the Danish National Research Foundation Centre for Privacy Studies (DNRF138).

variegated ways in which courtiers withdrew from court, and the motivations that prompted this withdrawal. Such segregations could be in harmony with the diplomatic, religious, or social norms of courtly decorum. It could also be less codified and evoke suspicion of illegitimate amours, heretical leanings, or, still worse, a political cabal. This volume engages with the multifarious ways—be they harmonious or potentially disruptive—in which courtiers segregated themselves from and within life at court. The contributions here examine the host of different reasons that motivated and prompted courtly segregations as well as the different means by which it was conducted. The authors invite us to think about privacy not as a stable concept, but rather as situational instances of separation from the communal order.

### Braving the Risk of Anachronism

If we consider privacy at court as a strategic pause rather than a technical term, we may identify incremental processes of boundary drawing that would otherwise have escaped our attention. Here, words are of consequence. The term 'privacy' existed in early modern English,<sup>2</sup> but it certainly did not signify what was codified in the late nineteenth century. How could it? However, words related to the adjective 'private' share an etymological root with privacy. If we include these words in our study, we are left with a broader but also fuzzier semantic field: this opens our focus on privacy to potential cognates, such as 'secret', 'intimate', and 'domestic', in whichever language our sources deploy; we must also consider a wide array of specific historical meanings, not to mention theoreticisations. Privacy derives from the Latin *privatus* (freed, liberated, etc.) and maintains the quality of negation. This makes it necessary to remind ourselves that the historical semantics of *publicus* and the *res publica* can also not be equated with their modern counterparts. Neither the public nor the private signified what Warren and Brandeis were trying to articulate, and in this trivial observation, as the bard would tell us, lies the rub. What did words deriving from *privatus* mean before the nineteenth century and the new era of communication? Here, contexts come with consequences. It amounts to a truism that in premodern constellations, privacy and the private, broadly speaking, signify something different from the private sphere that modernity idealised. How could it be different? We might instead gather our analytical forces and direct them to specific terms and the ways they have come to matter in specific situations.

2 R. Huebert, "Privacy: The Early Social history of a Word", *The Sewanee Review* 105 (1997): 21–38.

This pursuit benefits greatly from existing scholarship that does not simply presuppose modern ideals but engages with past meanings at the level of the word, the phrase, the sentence, the text, and the concept.<sup>3</sup> Each of these levels must be contextualised to avoid the risk of anachronism, which is particularly acute when a word has as much contemporary baggage as privacy does. Such contextualisation constrains the meaning of words to, for example, a courtly context and to specific courts, locations within these courts, temporal intervals in their ceremonies, and historical figures at court.

In the following observations, we focus, in a somewhat purist manner, on 'privacy' rather than the broader implications of the term 'private'. This lifts us out of the context of much historical research on, say, private and public spheres, on the activities that go on in each of these, and on the grey zones between them.<sup>4</sup> Instead, 'privacy' takes us into the field of contemporary privacy studies, which, for a historian, is perhaps a somewhat uneasy position. We suggest that efforts at generating definitions in scholarship on contemporary privacy can assist us in our rigorously contextual historical studies. Indeed, the persistent challenge of defining present-day privacy is a productive driving force for studies that grapple with historical privacy. Westin's four categories—solitude, intimacy, anonymity, and reserve—offer helpful points of orientation,<sup>5</sup> while Roessler's organisation of privacy in the categories of decisional, informational, and local privacy may help us to distinguish different registers.<sup>6</sup> Solitude

3 L. Hölscher, *Öffentlichkeit und Geheimnis: eine begriffsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zur Entstehung der Öffentlichkeit in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1979); P. von Moos, "Das Öffentliche und das Private im Mittelalter: für einen kontrollierten Anachronismus", in *Das Öffentliche und Private in der Vormoderne*, ed. P. Melville and P. von Moos (Vienna: Böhlau, 1998), 3–83; P. von Moos, "Die Begriffe 'öffentlich' und 'privat' in der Geschichte und bei den Historikern", *Saeculum* 49:1 (1998): 161–92; P. von Moos, "Public et privé à la fin du Moyen Âge: le bien commun et la loi de la conscience", *Studi medievali* 41:2 (2000): 505–48; Hélène Merlin-Kajman, *Public et littérature en France au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1994); Hélène Merlin-Kajman, "Le public et ses envers, ou l'archaïsme de Furetière", *Littératures classiques* 47 (2003): 345–80; Hélène Merlin-Kajman, "'Privé' and 'Particulier' (and Other Words) in Seventeenth-Century France", in *Early Modern Privacy: Sources and Approaches*, eds. M. Green, L.C. Nørgaard, and M. B. Bruun (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 79–104. See also H. Wunder, "Considering 'Privacy' and Gender in Early Modern German-Speaking Countries", in *Early Modern Privacy: Sources and Approaches*, eds. M. Green, L. C. Nørgaard, and M. B. Bruun (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 63–78.

4 For references, see M. B. Bruun, "Towards an Approach to Early Modern Privacy: The Retirement of the Great Condé", in *Early Modern Privacy: Sources and Approaches*, eds. M. Green, L. C. Nørgaard, and M. B. Bruun (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 12–60, esp. 18–20.

5 A. F. Westin, *Privacy and Freedom* (New York: Atheneum, 1967).

6 B. Roessler, *The Value of Privacy* (Cambridge: John Wiley and Sons, 2005 [German 2001]), paraphrased in B. Roessler, "Three Dimensions of Privacy", in *The Handbook of Privacy Studies: An Interdisciplinary Introduction*, eds. B. van der Sloot and A. de Groot (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018), 138–41.



and location, to mention two of the above-listed categories, are central to the historical study of privacy, and they can serve heuristically as a scaffolding of historical questions. It is also true, however, that theoretical positions are themselves historical constructs. To mention but one well-known example: the influential definition by Warren and Brandeis was provoked by new technology, that is, their support for “the right to be let alone” was formulated in response to a press equipped with new lightweight cameras and an audience keen to read about the private lives of public people.<sup>7</sup>

### Privacy as Social Commodity

The present-day commodification of personal data, used to target ads and ultimately create behaviours,<sup>8</sup> seems a novel challenge, and, technologically speaking, it is. However, surveillance capitalism is part of the history of capitalism, and this history began somewhere in the late medieval period, when different social systems started competing over the same individual and tried to win him or her over. Here, we might follow Božovič and his suggestion that previous surveillance strategies created a space to which the surveilled could withdraw: this act of stepping out of the light and going dark was not perceived as upsetting the microcosm of order.<sup>9</sup> No, it was part of governing the social order. Put differently, the invisibility of the private could be (and can be) given a fixed value. Within the domain of surveillance, what cannot be seen can nevertheless be represented, and today’s algorithmic powers seem in this perspective to be uprooting the very notion of privacy.<sup>10</sup> We might ask: if a life in private has been (and is being) commodified, and if the EU’s General Data Protection Regulation is the best way to restore what has been (and is being) commodified, then what need is there to evoke the concept of privacy?<sup>11</sup> This question comes with an added concern. Privacy was conceptualised in the late nineteenth

7 D. J. Glancy, “The Invention of the Right to Privacy”, *Arizona Law Review* 21:1 (1979): 1–39; W. Prosser, “Privacy”, *California Law Review* 48:3 (1960): 383–423.

8 S. Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power* (London: Profile Books, 2019).

9 M. Božovič, “Introduction: An Utterly Dark Spot”, in J. Bentham, *The Panopticon Writings*, (London: Verso, 1995), 1–27.

10 See, for instance, J. Gilliom, “A Response to Bennett’s ‘In Defence of Privacy’”, *Surveillance & Society* 8:4 (2011): 500–4; A. Rallet and F. Rochelandet, “La régulation des données personnelles face au web relationnel: une voie sans issue?” *Réseaux*, 167:3 (2011): 17–47.

11 V. Steeves, “Data Protection Versus Privacy: Lessons from Facebook’s Beacon”, in *The Contours of Privacy*, ed. D. Matheson (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 183–96.

century as a universal right, but who could and can afford the social luxury of living such a life?<sup>12</sup> This further question can be extended to issues of gender, class, and post-colonial relations: the right to be let alone was never implemented equally, and the varying reasons why individuals in the past found that they could enjoy a life in private, while the Other could not, is illuminating for societal norms and historic construction. Who could enjoy a life in privacy at court, and why could other individuals not have access to such a life?

### A Model of Thresholds

The courtly organisation of space was not stable. To mention an obvious example, spatial arrangements at royal courts were highly dependent upon the presence or absence of the monarch and his closest relatives. Indeed, many courts encompassed several sites between which the court travelled. This called for various kinds of boundary control. The enclosed physical space as well as the circle of stratified sociability that surrounded the person of the ruler were under constant construction and negotiation. Accordingly, we cannot blindly deploy words derived from the Latin *cohors* or from the Germanic *Hof* as stable terms.

Following Jeroen Duindam's model,<sup>13</sup> the court contained four basic patterns of sociability. The first pattern relates to the qualities of the individuals, who, at a given court, held a position of rulership. Young age and old age seem constant concerns for the ability to rule, but other qualities might also be evoked: intellectual capacities or the lack thereof could profile specific rulers. In fact, where did ideals about rulership come from,<sup>14</sup> and how did they translate into the lives of actual rulers? Duindam's second pattern

12 A. F. Westin, "Social and Political Dimensions of Privacy", *Journal of Social Issues* 59:2 (2003): 431–53. Cf. J. Holvast, "History of Privacy", in *The History of Information Security: A Comprehensive Handbook*, eds. K. M. M. de Leeuw and J. Bergstra (Amsterdam: Elsevier Science, 2007), 737–70.

13 J. Duindam, *Dynasties: A Global History of Power, 1300–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

14 In western European thought, the distinction between the mortal body of the physical person and the immortal body of his kingship has its roots in medieval theology and jurisprudence. Ernst Kantorowicz famously outlined the structures of this distinction, which amounts to more than simply ascribing sacred nature to the king's person. Indeed, the medieval theory of the two bodies should be viewed as a reaction to such a straightforward definition; it opens a theoretical space where the immortality of the ruler can be analysed in abstract terms and so sets in motion an unintended process of secularisation. See Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 197, 201.

of sociability concerns issues of reproduction, succession, and dynastic commemoration, that is, the ways of legitimising the power that a dynasty has obtained. Such issues were central to royal courts but also to aristocratic courts.<sup>15</sup> The nucleus of the ruler and the close relatives and spouses or consorts constitutes this second pattern of sociability that was manifest in various spaces and with the support of various social groups: this system of support constituted a third pattern of sociability, which we might view as an idealised household or label, heuristically, as court culture. Finally, Duindam proposes a fourth type of sociability, in which the members of the three previous domains—the ruler, his immediate family, and the surrounding household—interact with its wider social environment. These interactions were multifarious, and, at this level of analysis, we can rightfully speak of *the court*: how did the court interact with other courts, with territories that it controlled, or with official visitors and more mixed audiences who attended the spectacles at court as outsiders? Indeed, how were rulers, their families, and their households perceived by such outsiders?

The four types of sociability are fashioned by Duindam as concentric circles that move from the micro-physics of personhood to the court as a collective and political body. The comparative strength of such a model is obvious, and Duindam's results are impressive. Instead of specific practices and the role of certain experiences, this model makes good on its promise: it entails an almost unrestricted universalism that is not limited to cultural settings and transformations. In the study of privacy, such universality seems difficult to maintain, at least without entertaining universal ideas about human experiences. Studying experiences at early modern courts, we might instead fan out the four concentric circles, achieving a more intricate grid that is more capable of shedding light on details. The resulting zones offer not only distinct domains—the ruler, the dynasty, court culture, and the court—but also thresholds and overlaps.<sup>16</sup> Within the domain of the ruler, then, we would need a distinction between body and soul, that is, a vocabulary more attuned to early modern ideas about personhood. Rather than providing answers, this distinction would help us ask questions: what is private about the ruler's person, and what can be scrutinised in public settings because it pertains, for instance, to issues of reproduction and thereby to issues of succession? Indeed, what happens at the threshold between the

15 L. Geever and M. Marini, eds., *Dynastic Identity in Early Modern Europe: Rulers, Aristocrats, and the Formation of Identities* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015).

16 See the presentation of the Centre for Privacy work method in Bruun, "Towards an Approach to Early Modern Privacy", 23–24.

ruler's person and dynastic concerns, or between the dynastic family and the surrounding household? Who is allowed to cross thresholds, and when are such crossings denied? Who controls access and by which strategies or technologies? Doors, locks, keys, and curtains but also invitations diversify the rights of access hierarchically. A chamber might facilitate a withdrawal from court, but is it always an escalation of privacy when someone enters her chamber? Is the chamber restricted, for example in terms of access, activities, and knowledge? Again, the aim is less to formulate robust answers than to hone in on questions that help us, within a courtly setting, to understand when, why, and how phenomena of withdrawal and boundary control were negotiated, reinforced, or abolished.

### Fluid Privacy in Past and Present

With such questions in mind, we might turn to Helen Nissenbaum, one of the key theorists of contemporary technological privacy, and to her notion of context-relative informational norms. At first glance, Nissenbaum's technological emphasis may seem incompatible with the early modern court. Yet, it may be argued that exactly the fluidity that characterises negotiations of privacy in a technological context captures some of the salient features of the kinds of privacy that could be secured at the early modern court. According to Nissenbaum, information flows within systems that adhere to entrenched norms, and, depending upon shifting contexts, social actors will allow information about themselves to be shared with others. Violations of these entrenched norms will prompt protest and complaints. Thus, privacy can take on a positive meaning when the flow of information adheres to the entrenched norms. Information technologies and their interpenetration of our everyday lives have become (and will continue to be) a threat to privacy, when such technologies disrupt flows of information.<sup>17</sup> Nissenbaum's focus on information renders her words undeniably contemporary: privacy, in her rendering, is not a substantial concept, but rather a claim to normativity within a vast and ever-expanding socio-technical context. However, if we replace "informational norms" with norms concerning access, this understanding of privacy become relevant for our analysis of early modern

17 H. Nissenbaum, *Privacy in Context: Technology, Policy, and the Integrity of Social Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 2. We are grateful to Johannes Ljungberg, our colleague at the Danish National Research Foundation Centre for Privacy Studies, for a fruitful discussion of the usefulness of Nissenbaum's vocabulary in a historical context.

courts, where activities, relationships, and interests were highly codified, and behaviours followed entrenched norms. Considering the early modern court through the lens of Nissenbaum's research reminds us that the organisation of courtly structures was less about absolute control of access and more about the appropriate degrees of accessibility. A list of the forms and the patterns that regulated accessibility at early modern courts would extend *ad infinitum*. Rather than listing forms and patterns, this volume presents studies of regulations and their normative claims. Put differently, privacy at court cannot be established without attention to cultural codes and social strategies: these reveal entrenched norms that regulated access according to conditions inherent to different locations, periods, and cultural contexts.

Nissenbaum's framework allows for the co-existence of norms that can collide and compete in specific contexts. In court studies, we readily recognise such collision and competition. Courts are places where different patterns of sociability intersect. Following Schlögl's analysis of ceremonial literature as a vehicle for reflection on human interactions, courtly interactions were clearly distinguished from interactions outside of court and in society at large.<sup>18</sup> The fundamental distinction between inside and outside, which was sustained on the printed page and in practice, gave rise to a finely chiselled set of norms and behaviours that became increasingly important as the political system began to follow its own norms during the sixteenth century.<sup>19</sup> Courtly norms and political norms remained closely related during the early modern era, but the latter increasingly started to lay claim to its own normativity. These claims were attacked by, for instance, court preachers who worried about negative influence on the person of the ruler. Voiced at Lent, on official feast days, or at special ceremonies, such worries are a far cry from present-day concerns about privacy; nevertheless, they clearly reveal how conflicting norms are no novel challenge.

A study of early modern privacy cannot make do with simple binaries. When we consider privacy at court, we need to deconstruct any deceptively instinctive presumption of a stable opposition between the private, and by etymological consequence privacy, and the public.<sup>20</sup> Instead, we need

18 R. Schlögl, "Der früneuzeitliche Hof als Kommunikationsraum: interaktionstheoretische Perspektiven der Forschung", in *Geschichte und Systemtheorie: exemplarische Fallstudien*, ed. F. Becker (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2004), 185–226; R. Schlögl, *Anwesende und Abwesende: Grundriss für eine Gesellschaftsgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit* (Konstanz: Konstanz University Press, 2014), 247–82.

19 On this issue, see H. von Thiessen, *Das Zeitalter der Ambiguität: vom Umgang mit Werten und Normen in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2021), 163–215.

20 The alleged existence of a stable opposition of private and public gives rise to research that departs from stark dichotomies of, for example, public and private space in preference for finer

to reconstruct the meaning of terms and experiences at thresholds, where patterns of sociability and, potentially, conflicting norms interact. In our attempts to reconstruct these meanings, we must do away with, for example, ahistorical assumptions regarding monofunctional rooms.<sup>21</sup> Lena Cowen Orlin has taught us to look for early modern privacy not in the small room, but in the long and open gallery that enabled interlocutors to spot potential eavesdroppers.<sup>22</sup> This seemingly simple yet highly suggestive observation reminds us that early modern privacy—and, in particular, privacy at court—was less a matter of firm and lasting delineations than of porous boundaries that existed only at specific moments and for the people involved in a given situation. Such historical moments are hard to grasp, especially within a context as complex, dense, and stratified as the early modern court. This difficulty, we suggest, raises the analytical stakes for the studies presented in this volume.

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distinctions attuned to differences related to gender, practices, and events, among other topics. See, for instance, D. van den Heuvel, B. Pierik, B. Vieira Amaro, and I. Kisjes, "Capturing Gendered Mobility and Street Use in the Historical City: A New Methodological Approach", *Cultural and Social History* 17:4 (2020): 515–36. Perhaps the problem, however, rests not with the terms, but with the idea of absolute distinctions.

<sup>21</sup> Such an understanding seems to underpin Elias's analysis of the processes by which the bedroom became one of the "privatesten" and "intimsten" areas of human life. N. Elias, *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation: soziogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1981 [1969]), vol. 1, 222. This is only one aspect of the voluminous work, but it reminds us of the historical embeddedness of terms such as 'privat' and 'intim' when used in a scholarly context.

<sup>22</sup> L. Cowen Orlin, *Locating Privacy in Tudor London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 226–61.

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## 2. Privacy at Court? Reconsidering the Public/Private Dichotomy

*Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger*

### Abstract

The modern public/private dichotomy (*res publica* versus *res privata*) does not apply to early modern patrimonial monarchies, as early modern dynastic courts, privy councils, and secret cabinets were the very sites of political rule. The bodies of kings and queens were public bodies, and dynastic rituals of birth, marriage, and death were public rituals with strong political dimensions. Therefore, this chapter examines how eighteenth-century changes to the traditional public/private dichotomy render the term 'privacy' unsuitable as a category for historical analysis. I suggest replacing the public/private dichotomy with the dichotomies of front stage/back stage or formal/informal. As Erving Goffman's vocabulary suggests, front stage and back stage were two sides of the same coin. Relying on examples from the eighteenth-century imperial court in Vienna, this chapter reveals that court members were accustomed to moving back and forth between these two stages and to switching between two different modes of behaviour.

**Keywords:** dynastic courts, early modern, Europe, political culture, front stage/back stage

Privacy is a puzzling concept, especially during the early modern period. In their introduction, the editors of this volume speak of "private zones" and ask "how were privacies obtained or constructed at court?" as well as "how was privacy put on public display?". The latter question is paradoxical and, as such, reveals a problem: in a public display of privacy, what is public, and what is private? Talking about privacy at court, we come across several other paradoxes. Obviously, the problem lies in the way we use the term 'privacy': do we use it in the early modern sense or rather in today's sense?

We might even ask what the term signifies in our present era. While this remains unclear, the present-day meaning of privacy is considerably different from that of the early modern period: privacy underwent a profound transformation around 1800, and the meaning of the public/private dichotomy was consequently almost reversed. Here, I briefly outline the conceptual history and ambiguity of both 'private' and 'public' in the early modern period and then suggest that we replace the public/private dichotomy with Erving Goffman's front stage/back stage distinction. I describe the social logic behind this distinction, before sketching the structural changes that delegitimised the traditional logic of staging and gave rise to the modern understanding of public and private.

### Public/Private

An example illustrates the use of the term 'private' in the eighteenth century: Frederick William I (1688–1740), king of Prussia and known as the "Seargent King", was criticised for living "more like a private person than like a monarch."<sup>1</sup> The lives of the monarch and *l'homme privé* were considered to be opposites, and the Prussian king behaved like *un homme privé* or *particulier* because he did not represent his status as king. He did not stage himself in majestic splendor, he was not accessible for petitioners, and he had an extremely austere habitus—that is, he economised with his public display. In German, people said "Er macht keinen Staat",<sup>2</sup> which is difficult to translate because the idiomatic expression plays on not making an impression—for instance, not living in luxury—and, by extension, not exercising what is befitting for a certain station of power. By contrast, historians of the nineteenth century called Frederick William I "Staatsbaumeister", that is, the head architect of the Prussian state.<sup>3</sup> The characteristics that historians would subsequently praise as his political

1 Carl Ludwig Freyherr von Poellnitz, *Memoiren zur Lebens- und Regentengeschichte der vier letzten Regenten des Preußischen Staats mit einem berechtigten Anhang* (Berlin: Vossische Buchhandlung, 1791), vol. 2, 9: "mehr als Privatmann, denn als Monarch."

2 Ernst Friedländer (ed.), *Berliner geschriebene Zeitungen aus den Jahren 1713 bis 1717 und 1735: ein Beitrag zur preußischen Geschichte unter König Friedrich Wilhelm I* (Berlin: Verein für die Geschichte Berlins, 1902), 25: "Zu Potsdam ist auch nicht einmahl eine Wache auf dem Schlosse aufgestellt gewesen, so daß nicht die geringste Figur einiges Staats gemacht."

3 The term "Staatsbaumeister" has been coined by Oppeln-Bronikowski. Friedrich von Oppeln-Bronikowski, *Der Baumeister des preußischen Staates: Leben und Werk des Soldatenkönigs Friedrich Wilhelms I* (Jena: Verlag Eugen Diederichs, 1934).

qualities were dismissed as apolitical, private behaviour by his contemporaries. Obviously, the meaning of ‘the private’ had changed. In early modern Europe, the ruler was considered a *persona publica*,<sup>4</sup> although privy councils in dynastic courts were sites of political rule. Princes like Frederick William ruled their territories from their cabinet—from the most secluded room in the palace. How does this fit together? Was the political private, or was it public? The meaning of the public/private dichotomy was twofold, and the two meanings were partly contradictory.

First, ‘public’ had (and still has) the meaning of common and universal, referring to the political whole in the sense of the *res publica*. ‘Private’, accordingly, meant ‘particular’, referring to the household, as, for instance, in ‘private property’. This is more or less in line with the classic Aristotelian distinction between *polis* and *oikos* or *demos* and *idios* and with the Roman republic’s opposition of *res publica* to *domus*.<sup>5</sup> Magistrates—those who exercised *potestas publica*—were public persons. In this traditional sense, a king was never a private person. According to the traditional rhetoric of monarchy, a ruler was a *persona publica* because he represented the body politic as a whole; he had to be beyond all partisanship, beyond particular interests, and only committed to the commonwealth. By contrast, the tyrant was called *privatus* because he treated the body politic like his private property, just as the head of a household, *oikodespotes*, would treat his domestic staff or his slaves. Similarly, the queen was considered a *persona publica*, whereas a king’s mistress could be called *la privée*.<sup>6</sup>

4 Studies of the public/private dichotomy before the modern age are abundant. See Lucian Hölscher, “Öffentlichkeit,” in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: historisches Lexikon der politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, eds. Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, and Reinhart Koselleck (Stuttgart: Klett, 1978), vol. 4; Gert Melville and Peter von Moos (eds.), *Das Öffentliche und Private in der Vormoderne* (Wien: Böhlau, 1998); Peter von Moos, “‘Öffentlich’ und ‘privat’ im Mittelalter: zu einem Problem historischer Begriffsbildung” (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2004); Caroline Emmelius, et al. (eds.), *Offen und Verborgen: Vorstellungen und Praktiken des Öffentlichen und Privaten in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2004); Mette Birkedal Bruun, “Privacy in Early Modern Christianity and Beyond. Traces and Approaches”, *Annali dell’Istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento* 44:2 (2018): 33–54. I am grateful to Nadir Weber (Nadir Weber, “Republican Secrets: Silence, Memory, and Collective Rule in the Early Modern Period”, unpublished manuscript, 2021) and Heide Wunder (Heide Wunder, “Considering ‘Privacy’ and Gender in Early Modern German-Speaking Countries”, in *Early Modern Privacy: Sources and Approaches*, eds. Michaël Green, Lars Cyril Nørgaard, and Mette Birkedal Bruun (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 63–78) for making their unpublished articles available to me.

5 Aloys Winterling, “‘Öffentlich’ und ‘privat’ im kaiserzeitlichen Rom”, in *Gegenwärtige Antike—antike Gegenwart*, eds. Tassilo Schmitt et al. (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2005), 223–44; Anna Becker, *Gendering the Renaissance Commonwealth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

6 Moos, “‘Öffentlich’ und ‘privat’”, 39.

Second, 'public' had the meaning of visible and/or accessible for everyone. 'Private', then, meant invisible, secret, arcane, and hidden, and political councils of the early modern period were private in this sense: they administered the *arcana imperii*, that is, matters of common (public) concern, which were treated secretly and could therefore be called public secrets. This practice seems to be a paradox from the modern point of view.<sup>7</sup> We might here think of terms like privy council, secretary, *Geheimer Rat*, or secret archives. Indeed, the state archive in Berlin is still called "Geheimes Staatsarchiv", although it is of course publicly accessible today; likewise, ministers in the United States are still called Secretaries of State.

Paradoxically, early modern courts were public and private at the same time. The terminological confusion was due to the fact that the political concepts shaped by the Greek and Roman republican traditions (*polis/oikos*, *res publica/res privata*) did not fit late antique, medieval, and early modern political structures, especially dynastic monarchies.<sup>8</sup> Dynastic rule is, by definition, hereditary rule. The right of succession is restricted to the descendants of monogamous marriage; property, status, power, and prerogatives are passed on through biological reproduction. The European process of state building was a competition between the great noble families over the concentration of power. During this process, some noble family households developed into sovereign courts that were the nuclei of what would later become public or state administration, but they did not lose their household character.<sup>9</sup> As a consequence, the sphere of the body—which appears to be the most private sphere today—was then at the core of the political sphere. Under the conditions of hereditary succession, the bodies of the king and queen were public bodies; dynastic rituals of birth, marriage, and death were public rituals. Dynastic rule was thus private in one sense and public in the other.

In the revolutionary era around 1800, the private/public dichotomy acquired a wholly new meaning. Indeed, the conceptual coordinates were completely rearranged. Dynastic rule, hereditary succession, patrimonial

7 Weber, "Republican Secrets."

8 Winterling, "'Öffentlich' und 'privat'".

9 Julia Adams, *The Familial State* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2005); Jeroen Duindam, *Dynasties: A Global History of Power, 1300–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016). Cf. Max Weber's concept of "patrimonial rule" in Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft: Grundriß der verstehenden Soziologie*, ed. Johannes Winkelmann (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1972), 136–40: "Die patrimoniale und insbesondere die ständisch-patrimoniale Herrschaft behandelt, im Fall des reinen Typus, alle Herrengewalten und ökonomischen Herrenrechte nach Art privater appropriierter ökonomischer Chancen." Cf. also Weber, 388: "Die Möglichkeit der Scheidung [von öffentlichem und privatem Recht in der Vergangenheit] kann geradezu fehlen."

power, and government secrecy were delegitimised. ‘State’ and ‘family’ became opposed, mutually exclusive terms. Natural law theory had paved the way by distinguishing the monarch as a ruler from the monarch as a private person, and public property of the state from private property of the ruling dynasty. Now, the sphere of the state was supposed to be public in two senses: it was to deal with the commonwealth and be accessible to everyone. By contrast, the sphere of the family, the body, and natural reproduction became associated with intimacy, secrecy, privacy, and, notably, femininity.<sup>10</sup> In republics, women were excluded from the political sphere on principle—and much more effectively than before.<sup>11</sup> Private rule became an invective with strong misogynistic undertones.

Because the entire system of political categories changed around 1800 and fundamentally recast the meaning of the public/private dichotomy, the risk of anachronistic misunderstanding is obviously large. This does not mean that we should not try to reconstruct early modern uses of the terms ‘public’ and ‘private’, i.e., write *Begriffsgeschichte* according to Reinhart Koselleck or a history of ideas according to the Cambridge School.<sup>12</sup> But I would like to argue that the considerable differences between modern and early modern meanings of the public/private dichotomy hardly make the term ‘privacy’ suitable as a category for historical analysis.

### Front Stage—Back Stage

These considerations do not mean that there were not different spheres of visibility or accessibility at early modern courts—quite the contrary. The question is how we can conceptualise these phenomena appropriately. A drawing and a painting from the Viennese court during the reign of Empress Maria Theresa (1717–80) illustrate two ends of a broad spectrum, from strictly formal and readily visible to extremely informal and intimate; this opposition emerges in both the content and the form of the images (Figures 2.1 and 2.2).

10 Jane B. Elshtain, *Public Man, Private Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); more recently, Wunder, “Considering ‘Privacy’”.

11 Joan B. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988).

12 Cf., for example: James Tully (ed.), *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988); Reinhart Koselleck, *Begriffsgeschichten: Studien zu Semantik und Pragmatik der politischen und sozialen Sprache* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006).

2.1 Anonymous, *Maria Theresia Playing Cards with Four of Her Closest Confidants*, c. 1751, drawing. Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest/ Bridgeman Images.



2.2 Martin van Meytens, *The Wedding Banquet of Crown Prince Joseph (II) and Isabella of Parma*, in *Desserttafel bei der Vermählung von Joseph II. mit Isabella von Parma am 06 October 1760 im Redoutensaal der Wiener Hofburg*, c. 1760–63, oil on canvas painting.  
© Schloß Schönbrunn Kultur- und Betriebsgesellschaft, Sammlung: Bundesmobilienvverwaltung, Objektstandort: Schloss Schönbrunn, Vienna. Photo: Edgar Knaack.





2.3 Martin van Meytens, *Maria Theresa with Joseph II as a Child*, 1744, oil on canvas painting. Wien Museum, Vienna. Photo: Birgit and Peter Kainz. CC BY 4.0.

The small, anonymous drawing shows Maria Theresa playing cards with four of her closest confidants, while the large, ceremonial painting depicts the wedding banquet of the crown prince Joseph (1741–90), articulating the scene as a stage performance in almost documentary detail. Both pictures obviously represent different types of court life and pictorial strategies.

The same is true for two portraits of the Empress (Figures 2.3 and 2.4). The official state portrait displays her in all her majesty, dressed in *grande parure*





2.4 Jean-Etienne Liotard, *Trompe l'Oeil Portrait of Maria Theresa as an Elderly Woman*, c. 1762–63, oil on panel. Private property of Sylvie Lhermite-King, printed with permission.

with her crowns<sup>13</sup> and positioned in front of a velvet curtain that is pulled back to allow the spectator a glimpse of the stage of majesty. Contrastingly, Jean-Etienne Liotard's (1702–89) intimate, largely unknown portrait of the empress as an elderly woman seems to be partly covered by a wooden board (in fact, a *trompe l'oeil*)—a refined way of representing intimacy and seclusion. Between the two extremes—ceremonial performances on the one hand and marked concealment on the other—there could be various gradations.

In almost every area of court life, there were such formal and informal versions of the same social function. Courtiers were used to switching between these different spheres. I could enumerate countless similar examples. Let us take meals, as one instance. On the one hand, there was the gala banquet, during which the noble officials served the ruling family under the eyes of a huge public audience, and on the other, there was the exclusive meal

13 In this portrait, Maria Theresa is shown with three of her four crowns. The portrait displaying Maria Theresa with her four crowns can be found here: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Martin\\_van\\_Meytens\\_001.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Martin_van_Meytens_001.jpg).

at the *table de conspiration*, where high-ranking nobles and their closest allies dined even without servants. Another example is writing style: the ceremonial letter was beautifully written by a professional scribe according to the rules of *stylus curiae* and with full titles and honours, but the brief and informal *billet* was personally written by the ruler himself. The latter type of missive could be an intimate, familiar letter or a particularly harsh assertion of autocratic will. We could also consider practices of offering government advice, to which the solemn assembly of estates belonged, staging the body politic in its hierarchical order and enacting the rights and privileges of the estates. On the other hand, there was the highly exclusive, informal council in the ruler's cabinet. Similarly, the field of diplomacy included the solemn, inaugural audience of the ambassador, who represented his sovereign's majesty and honour and had to be treated accordingly; this event had to be negotiated down to the finest details in advance. However, there was also the confidential meeting of monarch and envoy behind closed doors. Corresponding to these dualities, there were also formal and informal diplomatic ranks, from ambassador at one end of the spectrum to resident at the other. Or, to give a final example, there were formal and informal modes of announcing the outcome of a battle. Usually, a low-ranking messenger on horseback conveyed the news discreetly to the ruler. If the battle had resulted in a victory, a second announcement would be staged: a senior officer would ride into town, accompanied by up to a dozen trumpet-blowing postilions, and would solemnly hand over the captured flags to the monarch, while bells were rung and cannons were fired.

To conceptualise these different kinds of events, I would like to argue that the public/private dichotomy should be replaced by one of front stage and back stage.<sup>14</sup> The front stage/back stage dichotomy is more in line with early modern terminology because contemporaries also often compared court with a theatre. In addition, it allows us to make use of theoretical concepts of performance and performativity. The theatre metaphor implies a number of features. First, an event is staged and so is emphasised as significant. What is going on in certain spaces, at certain times, and with certain persons is defined and framed as performance. Second, what is performed on the stage needs to be arranged backstage, usually according to a script and in advance of the performance: nothing that happens on the stage is left to

14 Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York City: Doubleday, 1959). For performance studies as an influential paradigm of cultural studies, see, for example, Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*, trans. Saskya Iris Jain (London: Routledge Chapman & Hall, 2008).

chance. Third, the theatre metaphor suggests that there are spectators and actors who play roles. It also suggests that there is some stage direction. What spectators see on the stage is controlled by a director, who acts unseen and from backstage. This hidden direction is why access to backstage is strictly limited. Obviously, stage and backstage are two sides of the same coin; one demands the other. The more complex the conditions on the stage, the more effort is required backstage. One cannot understand the functioning of the front stage if one does not know what is happening on the back stage.

What do we learn about early modern court culture in the light of this conceptual apparatus? Monarchical power had to be visible. ‘Majesty’ was not abstract, but rather a perceptible, almost palpable quality of a person.<sup>15</sup> In order for a ruler to appear a resplendent monarch, he or she needed to be carefully staged as such. The forms that surrounded the ruler produced his majesty by protecting him from symbolic degradation. The court thus performed a spectacle of majesty and hierarchy; its basic principles were gradation and escalation, and its script was the ceremonial. The court was a theatre, however, where most actors were also spectators of each other’s performances. A complicated system of arrangements was necessary to organise these intricate spectacles. An impeccable performance called for a perfectly functioning, inconspicuous backstage. However, not only solemn rituals of power were such performances; everyday life at court also took place onstage and backstage simultaneously. This is why the stage had to be constantly marked and framed in spatial, temporal, and social terms.<sup>16</sup>

Architects designed baroque residences as theatres of majesty and hierarchy that contained both front and back stage. Behind the ceremonial apartments lay a labyrinth of chambers and connecting corridors; the imposing ornamental portals through which visitors passed between armed guards had their counterparts in small, concealed doorways; sweeping *escaliers d’honneur* were complemented by hidden spiral staircases; above and below the *piano nobile* were the attics and basements frequented by the servants. However, staging did not depend on the architectural setting alone. According to the logic of this performative system, almost any site could become a stage—parks, streets, churches, and more. For this purpose,

15 André Krischer, “Souveränität als sozialer Status: zur Funktion des diplomatische Zeremoniells in der Frühen Neuzeit”, in *Diplomatisches Zeremoniell in Europa und dem Mittleren Osten in der Frühen Neuzeit*, eds. Jan Paul Niederkorn, Ralf Kauz, and Giorgio Rota (Vienna: VÖAW, 2009), 1–32.

16 Here and in the following passages, I refer to my book on Maria Theresa and the Viennese court: Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, *Maria Theresa: The Habsburg Empress in Her Time*, trans. Robert Savage (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2022), 320–398.

the site would be furnished with appropriately ornate props, marked by thresholds, highlighted by coats of arms, set aside by barriers, choreographed by signals, flanked by guards and heralds, and so forth.

The differentiation between formal and informal spaces was highly flexible. Since the court was simultaneously the extended household of the ruling dynasty and the centre of political rule, governing, eating and gambling, childbearing, marrying, and dying could happen in the same rooms—albeit not at the same time. Actually, apartments were used with a remarkable degree of flexibility. Furnishings—dining tables, for example—were moved here and there as needed. The same rooms could host solemn audiences or secret conferences, but they could equally be used for dining or card games.

The function of a room also varied as an additional element came into play: time. Gala days, holidays, and other ceremonies, as well as the times for divine service, audience, apartment, public meal (“*offene Tafel*”), and so on, were communicated to the court by ordinances and to the public by court calendars. In addition, they could be conveyed acoustically by drums and trumpets, tolling bells, and other sonic devices. On certain occasions, even the innermost apartments of a ruler’s residence could become stages of dynastic majesty for a limited time. For example, when the long-awaited Habsburg heir was born in 1741, ordinary people were permitted to file past the empty State Bed as the site of dynastic fecundity.<sup>17</sup> What we would consider the most private sphere was thus made accessible to the public.

Performances were not only defined by ordering space and time. People, too, were marked as playing roles—or not playing roles. The ruling family had to play their roles almost always and almost everywhere. They were supposed to display their exceptional, sovereign status as soon as they were visible to spectators. “Everywhere, you must represent”, Maria Theresa told her children.<sup>18</sup> However, even the members of the ruling dynasty were able to escape the constraints of their roles—not only by making themselves literally invisible, but also by going incognito, that is, travelling under a title of lower rank and hence being treated without any ceremonial ado. Notably, going incognito was pure fiction because members of the ruling family never actually went unrecognised; they were just treated as if they were invisible.

17 “Paradebett”. Cf. Stollberg-Rilinger, *Maria Theresia: die Kaiserin in ihrer Zeit: eine Biographie* (Munich: Beck, 2017), 343.

18 “Il faut représenter par tout”, letter from Maria Theresa to Archduke Ferdinand, Vienna, 9 April 1772. Also quoted in Stollberg-Rilinger, *Maria Theresa*, 814).

At the opposite end of the court hierarchy, people operated behind the scenes to ensure that the performance functioned smoothly. They were treated as invisible, too. The lower chamber personnel formed a special group, because they were closest to the ruling family in terms of space but most distant in terms of rank. They were invisible in the literal sense—or treated as if they were: either they were denied all access to the stage, or they had to remain imperceptible even when physically present.

The performance of majesty had different kinds of spectators. While the ruling family mainly appeared as actors, the noble members of court society, the “people of rank”, were actors and spectators at the same time, watching each other performing the spectacle of hierarchy. On ceremonial occasions, including royal entries, coronations, homages, dynastic marriages, baptisms, and funerals, performances included commoners and required them to participate—not only as bystanders but also as co-actors. The ruling elites and the common people came together for rituals of transition, which were jointly celebrated. These rituals were meant to unite the ruling family, nobility, and people in a symbolic community—especially when the dynastic family was the only tie across the different territories. These performances represented the political whole by displaying shared emotions, such as mourning or joy, in ritual form. The lower social orders expected the ruling family to let them participate in these dynastic rituals, for example by receiving symbolic gestures of munificence. The ruling family might scatter coins, let public fountains flow with wine, or roast oxen for the masses. Such rituals created a symbolic commensality of ruler and ruled. They symbolised the ruling couple as parents of the people and the political body as a common household.

The theatre of majesty and hierarchy needed a script—the ceremonial. Court society was anything but stable; on the contrary, it was a dynamic system of competition. All members of the court were competing for the ruler’s favour, the most scarce and precious resource. Everyone was out to defend or improve his or her position in the court hierarchy. To avoid chaos, all communications had to be coordinated with the utmost precision. Above all, access to the ruler had to be carefully channelled. Everyone needed to know when they had to be where and how they would need to behave. What made communication so challenging was that, on the stage, every gesture could be read as an index of a person’s rank and degree of favour with the ruler. Almost everything took ceremonial form and was fraught with symbolic meaning. The complex cosmos of signs only worked because punctilious written regulations delineated the rules, such as instructions to court personnel, court calendars, and access

orders.<sup>19</sup> From the seventeenth century onwards, ceremonial occasions were documented in writing so that precedent cases could be cited in case of conflict. Larger courts could no longer do without a master of ceremonies. Despite all efforts to ensure precise regulation, ceremonies were rife with conflict, and disputes over rank were ubiquitous. Upholding one's status was arduous, expensive, time-consuming, and potentially contentious for all involved and at all times. It is hardly surprising that rulers and courtiers were groaning under the increasing burden of subtle signals and were looking for temporary relief. Obtaining this relief was possible only if certain times and places were marked as informal, that is, as not belonging to the performance.

Informality at court, however, was highly ambiguous. The back stage was the space of closeness and familiarity, but closeness was socially ambivalent: it encompassed persons of highest and lowest rank simultaneously. On the one hand, areas of informality were privileged enclaves of social exclusivity. Proximity to the centre, that is, the ruler's most intimate spaces, was the yardstick of favour and influence. It was this very exclusiveness that made it possible for the ruling family to adopt a more relaxed, informal demeanor. On the other hand, though, informality was how rulers communicated with their servants and could therefore be used to stage public humiliation. This was the case, for example, with Frederick William of Prussia, whom I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. He abandoned the ceremonial stage almost completely and used informality to mortify nobles, officials, and foreign envoys. By treating these individuals like common people, he humiliated them on the public stage.

The ambiguities surrounding informality at court lead me back to the question of what function the back stage had in the larger framework of court society. Since front stage and back stage were mutually dependent spheres, one cannot answer this question without considering the front stage. First, as already mentioned, the back stage was necessary as a space for relief from

19 The standard work on court and court ceremonial, despite all the necessary modifications, is still Norbert Elias, *The Court Society*, trans. Edmund Jephcott, in *The Collected Works of Norbert Elias*, vol. 2, ed. Stephen Mennel (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2005). On the imperial court in Vienna, see Andreas Pečar, *Die Ökonomie der Ehre: der höfische Adel am Kaiserhof Karls VI. (1711–1740)* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2003); Jeroen Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles: The Courts of Europe's Dynastic Rivals, 1550–1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Mark Hengerer, *Kaiserhof und Adel in der Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts: eine Kommunikationsgeschichte der Macht in der Vormoderne* (Konstanz: Universitätsverlag, 2004); Irmgard Pangerl, Martin Scheutz, and Thomas Winkelbauer (eds.), *Der Wiener Hof im Spiegel der Zeremonialprotokolle (1652–1800): eine Annäherung* (Vienna: StudienVerlag, 2007).

the growing burden of ceremonial signs; it was a space where words and gestures did not immediately signify rank and status, as they did on the front stage. The more formality appeared on this stage, the more demand there was for informality on the back stage. Second, as also mentioned above, the back stage was necessary for preparing, arranging, and directing the complex events on the front stage—not only to guarantee a smooth flow of the performance, but also to make the social-political order (as enacted on the front stage) appear stable and harmonious. Any surprise had to be prevented. On the front stage, there was no room for contingency and open conflict. The performance of majesty and hierarchy required a solid façade of consent.

Why was this façade so important? It was essential because honour was the most important social good, while, at the same time, being extremely vulnerable—especially on the open stage. Honour was a matter of visibility, of recognition in the literal sense of the word; honour was manifested in honourable treatment by significant others. The larger the audience, the more the honour of the persons onstage might be exposed to threats. Saving face was key, since the danger of losing face lurked everywhere. The more complex the hierarchy, the more opportunities there were for degradation, and the greater the need for protection against offence. Conflicts of honour tended to escalate because they were usually not limited to individuals, but challenged family and friends to take sides. These dangers had to be avoided on the open stage at all cost. Consequently, the back stage was the place where compromises were negotiated and conflicts could be settled before they affected the performances of honour on the front stage. The individuals of the highest rank were the most vulnerable ones. The ruler and his family therefore needed the greatest protection. The more they were exposed on the stage, the more their majestic aura needed to be secured against disenchantment. The aura of majesty could be threatened not only from the outside, but also from within. The scripts of the back stage had to be concealed, e.g., the ruler's physical and mental weaknesses.

Finally, the back stage was essential to monopolising and controlling decision-making. Secrecy was a necessary precondition for monarchical rule. A secret generally does not prevent communication, but organises it.<sup>20</sup> For monarchic courts, the secrecy of the privy council or cabinet channelled

20 Alois Hahn, "Geheim", in *Das Geheimnis am Beginn der europäischen Moderne: Zeitsprünge*, vol. 6, eds. Gisela Engel et al. (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2002), 21–42; Georg Rilinger, "Corporate Conspiracies and Complex Secrets", *American Journal of Sociology* 124:4 (2019): 1043–89.

political influence and pushed back against the participation of the estates. In his cabinet, the ruler could decide for himself whom he consulted and did not have to take traditional participation rights into account. Furthermore, the secret back stage allowed for open processes of consultation, discussion, and even controversy without threatening the monarch's authority of decision-making. According to Max Weber, "every rule designed for continuity is secret rule at some decisive point."<sup>21</sup> This is even true for modern democracies to a certain extent. But in early modern monarchies, a ruler's secrecy was considered as legitimate as social and political inequality. In sum, the back stage at court was not only a space of preparation and relief, exclusive favour and confidentiality, but also a space of negotiation, conflict, and dissent. How exactly the back stage was organised and what exactly took place on it differed from court to court; this volume provides us with many examples of various back stages. During the second half of the eighteenth century, however, there was a general tendency to expand the zones of informality at court, to shift more and more to the back stage, and to reduce ceremonial performances on the front stage.

### **Towards the Modern Public/Private Dichotomy**

In the eighteenth century, zones of informality at court did not just expand; the very distinction between front stage and back stage increasingly came under scrutiny. This distinction collided with Enlightenment ideals of authenticity, clarity, and veracity. Staging was criticised as "mere semblance", and a ruler's secrecy was discredited as despotism. The entire system of cultural coordinates thus underwent a fundamental transformation. There were various reasons why ceremonial performances fell into disfavour. Economically, European monarchies were close to bankruptcy and could no longer afford expensive spectacles. Aesthetically, a new style of modesty and simplicity gained cultural hegemony. Morally, staging came to appear disingenuous, unauthentic, and hypocritical. Socially, performances of hierarchy collided with new claims to natural equality. And, finally, in the political sphere, enlightened rulers preferred to have close contact with their subjects, instead of staging themselves as earthly gods. These economic, aesthetic, moral, social, and political reasons caused the boundaries between front and back stage to blur.

21 Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, 548 ("Jede auf Kontinuirlichkeit eingerichtete Herrschaft ist an irgendetem entscheidenden Punkt *Geheimherrschaft*").



Allow me to offer just one example that shows how these boundaries began to blur. Traditionally, rulers sought to avoid direct contact with ordinary people because such contact was hard to control. If ordinary people were allowed access to the ruler, it was staggered hierarchically within the framework of formal audiences. Emperor Joseph II (1741–90), who was (and still is) regarded as the “enlightened despot” par excellence, overturned these rules. An eyewitness described the emperor’s novel approach in the following way:

Whenever he was in Vienna, solicitations or grievances could be submitted to him in writing each day in the comptroller’s passage [*Kontrollorgang*, a backstage corridor in the Hofburg]. Here ladies, priests, nobles, merchants, craftsmen, and peasants, all mixed together, formed a line from the imperial staircase to the chancellery. As soon as the Emperor descended the staircase, whoever saw him first went down on bended knee [...], held his petition between both hands so that it stuck out a little and the emperor could take it immediately.<sup>22</sup>

Joseph’s family members severely criticised this new style of cultivating close contact with commoners regardless of rank. His brother and successor, Leopold II (1747–1792), remarked contemptuously: “He gives no audiences and receives nobody except in the corridor, where his servants, in the eyes of everyone, bring the lowest, most disreputable, and most infamous individuals.”<sup>23</sup> In the eyes of his critics, this kind of behaviour damaged the emperor’s reputation and therefore threatened the order of the realm. Joseph abandoned social hierarchy as well as the aura of majesty, but what particularly discredited him in the eyes of most court nobles would earn him the highest praise from enlightened contemporaries.

While staging was discredited on principle, secrecy was delegitimised as well. Criticising front stage and back stage were two sides of the same coin. What concerned all should now be open to all. The two competing meanings of ‘private’ I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, that is, invisibility and particularity, were now aligned with each other. Secrecy no longer fitted the common good, *salus publica*, but was associated with illegitimate, particular interests. ‘Secret’ became synonymous with the unacceptable exclusion of goods that were to be given to all people and

22 Johann Caspar Steube, as quoted in Stollberg-Rilinger, *Maria Theresa* (2022), 343.

23 Archduke Leopold, as quoted in Stollberg-Rilinger, *Maria Theresa*, 344.

that were to benefit all people. Knowledge had to become accessible to everyone; this was the basic principle of the Enlightenment. Even forging this principle depended on various structural preconditions, such as the expanding book market and increasing literacy. Once the preconditions were in place, a new meaning of the term ‘public’ developed: the reading public, or the critical public sphere described by Habermas and Kant. Despite the justified criticism of details of Habermas’s analysis, I agree with him that this kind of public was a new phenomenon. It claimed for critical authority to discourse. The reading and writing public was regarded as a “judicial court of reason” (*“Richterstuhl der Vernunft”*) and a counterweight to the government. In his famous essay *Was ist Aufklärung*, Kant defined the public use of reason as “the use which someone makes of it *as a scholar* before the entire public of *the world of readers*”, whereas “private use of reason is that which one may make of it in a certain *civil* post or office with which he is entrusted.”<sup>24</sup> Kant thus reversed the traditional meanings of ‘public’ and ‘private’, calling the role of state officials ‘private’ and that of writers and readers ‘public’. Private use of reason had to be constrained, but the public use of reason had to be unconstrained.

This new meaning of ‘public’ was closely connected to written media rather than ceremonial spectacles; staging was no longer necessary. Nothing illustrates this profound change better than this image of Voltaire (1694–1778), who was portrayed in dressing gown and nightcap (Figure 2.5). One of his friends and greatest admirers, the Geneva painter Jean Huber (1721–86), depicted him during his morning toilet, half-naked, standing on one leg with his trousers lowered, but dictating something to his secretary. The message of the painting is clear: as king of the republic of letters, Voltaire ruled from the intimacy of his bedroom, demonstrating the utmost contempt for external signs of greatness. The nightshirt does not allow for any social distinctions. Nakedness symbolised man in the state of nature, beyond all cultural differences. Reason does not need any ceremonial staging and pretentious dressing-up. On the contrary, the truth is naked, the picture proclaims.

However, secrecy did not disappear entirely. Delegitimised in politics and science, secrecy withdrew into the sphere of the family and household—which in turn also changed. The family became an intimate, secluded,

24 Immanuel Kant [1784]. “An answer to the question: What is enlightenment?”, in Mary J. Gregor (ed.), *Practical Philosophy. The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 11–22 (quote: 18).



2.5 Jean Huber (1721–86), *Voltaire's Morning*, c. 1750–75, oil on canvas painting, Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg. Published in Colin Eisler, *Paintings in the Hermitage* (New York: Stewart, Tabori and Change, 1990), 21.

protected institution endowed with defensive rights against the state and the public. The private sphere thus became the feminine sphere, the sphere of the body and of natural reproduction, as well as the sphere of religion to some extent. Consequently, women now disappeared from the public realm. A repeated criticism of the Ancien Régime was that it had allowed women to participate in political power. The new, sharply defined public/private opposition went hand in hand with a much stronger definition of now contrasting gender roles.

For a long time, historians have taken this understanding of public and private for granted. The stiff baroque ceremonial seems utterly alien, if not ridiculous, to us, and transparency of politics is the very core of modern democracy. I have tried to argue that this perspective blocks our ability to understand the mechanisms of early modern courts. To recover the early modern understanding of public and private, we would do better to speak of front stage and back stage. Indeed, the pairing of private and public may not even suit our contemporary analyses much longer. At present, we are experiencing another profound transformation of the public and private spheres. Boundaries between public and private are blurring once again. Perhaps these new shifts will soon prompt another revision of our perspective on early modern courts.

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### 3. The Monarch Exposed: The Negotiation of Privacy at the Early Modern Court

*Dries Raeymaekers*

#### Abstract

To what extent did early modern rulers harbour expectations concerning privacy, as we understand the concept today, and if they did, what did these expectations consist of? To answer these questions, I focus on the processes of negotiation through which various spheres of privacy were shaped at the early modern court. My essay considers three distinct areas of court culture that, taken together, represent a significant stretch of the bandwidth on which these processes of negotiation unfolded: (1) the organisation of space, (2) the use of material culture, and (3) the royal body. Discussing examples from a wide variety of sources, this chapter offers some insights into the meaning of privacy in a courtly context.

**Keywords:** courtly spaces, monarch, ruler, access, material culture

During March 1769, Emperor Joseph II of Austria (1741–90) travelled to the royal court of Naples in order to visit his sister, Archduchess Maria Carolina (1752–1814), and her husband, Ferdinand of Bourbon (1751–1825), King of Naples and Sicily. In a revealing letter to his mother, Empress Maria Theresa (1717–80), the emperor gave the following account of his meeting with his brother-in-law:

[King Ferdinand] begged us to keep him company while he was sitting on the closet-stool. I found him on his throne with lowered breeches, surrounded by five or six valets, chamberlains, and others. We made



conversation for more than half an hour and I believe we would be there still if a terrible stench had not convinced us that all was over. [The king] did not fail to describe the details and even show them to us; and without more ado, his breeches down, he ran with the smelly pot in one hand after two of his gentlemen, who took to their heels.<sup>1</sup>

To modern ears, the emperor's account sounds baffling. Whereas Ferdinand of Bourbon liked and even encouraged important visitors to attend the ceremony of his daily bowel movements, most heads of state today would rather be caught dead than be exposed to strangers whilst sitting on the toilet. If anything, the anecdote suggests that standards concerning privacy at early modern courts differed immensely from what people in the twenty-first century have become used to. What, then, did these standards consist of?

This question is difficult to answer, for—much like the early modern court itself—privacy is an elusive subject.<sup>2</sup> It is a tricky enough concept to grasp even today, let alone in an early modern context. Part of the problem is terminological. The word 'privacy' did not exist in early modern Europe, and numerous scholars have pointed out that terms such as 'public' and 'private' often did not carry the same connotations in times past as they do today.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, we may wonder whether upholding the contrast between the two terms is at all useful in the context of early modern monarchy, where the personal was political by definition and vice versa. How, then, might we approach the notion of privacy at the early modern court? To what extent did early modern rulers harbour expectations concerning privacy, as we understand the concept today, and if they did, what did these expectations consist of?

While I agree with the general contention that the public and the private spheres largely overlapped in the princely courts of Europe, I do not want to do away with the public/private distinction altogether. That, in my view,

1 Quoted in Jordan Lancaster, *In the Shadow of Vesuvius: A Cultural History of Naples* (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2009, 1<sup>st</sup> edition 2005), 143.

2 The phrase is borrowed from the title of Robert J. W. Evans's seminal chapter "The Court: A Protean Institution and an Elusive Subject", in *Princes, Patronage, and the Nobility: The Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age, c. 1450–1650*, eds. Ronald G. Asch and Adolf M. Birke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 481–91.

3 To give but a few examples: Dena Goodman, "Public Sphere and Private Life: Toward a Synthesis of Current Historiographical Approaches to the Old Regime", *History and Theory* 31 (1992): 1–20; Paul Fritz, "From 'Public' to 'Private': The Royal Funerals in England, 1500–1830", in *Mirrors of Morality: Studies in the Social History of Death*, ed. J. Whaley (London: Europa, 1981), 61–79; Conal Condren, "Public, Private and the Idea of the 'Public Sphere' in Early Modern England", *Intellectual History Review* 19 (2009): 15–28.

would be a case of throwing away the baby with the bathwater, whereas I believe we need to examine the baby more closely before deciding whether to flush it. The fact that words such as 'privy' and 'secret' were in use at early modern courts, suggests an awareness among contemporaries that some aspects of courtly life belonged to different physical and/or mental categories than others, as well as a desire to maintain clear boundaries between these categories. Whether these categories should be termed 'public' or 'private' is a different matter. I would argue that it is not so much the terms we use as the dichotomy itself that is problematic. Thinking about privacy in black-and-white terms does not help us to better understand the concept. On the contrary, it stops us from gaining a more nuanced comprehension of early modern courts as environments encapsulating multiple spheres that represented varying levels of privacy, which themselves were fluid and susceptible to change.

These spheres, I argue, were constantly being shaped and reshaped by an ongoing process of negotiation, the careful examination of which is key if we want to make sense of the various factors involved in the emergence of the idea of privacy in the princely courts of Europe. By looking closely at the practices, objects, and discourses through which norms regarding privacy were established and by asking how, when, and why these norms evolved over time, we may gain a clearer understanding of what privacy meant in a courtly context. In this chapter, I intend to do so by focusing on three distinct areas that, in my view, represent a significant stretch of the bandwidth along which this process of negotiation unfolded: (1) the organisation of space, (2) the use of material culture, and (3) the royal body. Discussing examples taken from a wide range of sources, the chapter offers insights into the negotiation of privacy at early modern courts.

### **The Organisation of Space**

In a very practical sense, the notion of privacy is at least partially dependent on the availability and organisation of the space around us. Therefore, an obvious way to begin our analysis of early modern privacy is by examining the spatial infrastructure of the princely residence and asking how it may have contributed to or hampered the possibility of privacy at early modern courts. As straightforward as this may sound, it is important to keep in mind that the orbit of early modern rulers did not remain limited to the walls of their palaces. Monarchs moved around, and in their wake followed the

court.<sup>4</sup> In other words, physical zones of privacy would have manifested themselves at different locations and under various circumstances. Think, for example, of pleasure palaces, summer residences, tent camps, and hunting lodges, but also of garden pavilions, follies, and even hermitages—a term that, in and of itself, would seem to suggest a desire for solitude. In general, however, the princely residence was where most rulers spent the majority of their time. For this reason, these residences are a logical place to start.

When considering the spatial aspect of privacy, we tend to think of spaces that provide a certain level of seclusion or isolation, or, at the very least, we might think of spaces that are inaccessible to the public at large. This is where the idea of privacy gets conflated with the politics of access, a concept that is often discussed in studies of the early modern court.<sup>5</sup> Historians have a tendency to describe specific spaces within the princely residence as being either difficult or easy to access. In practice, however, the situation was rarely clear-cut. Consider, for example, the public character of a palace courtyard. When studying contemporaneous images of courtyards bordering on or connecting the various buildings that comprise the palace complex, one gets the impression that these must have been extremely crowded spaces. This is because they were often depicted as microcosms of activity, in which courtiers as well as visitors and incidental passers-by took part. A seventeenth-century image of the inner courtyard of the Coudenberg palace in Brussels provides an example (Figure 3.1).

Here, we see a large open space in which noblemen, councillors, foreign envoys, and servants are assembled, while coaches depart and arrive with visitors. From this image, the palace courtyard in Brussels seems to have been undeniably a public space. However, we should be careful not to simply accept this public character because there existed both written and unwritten rules as to who was allowed to enter the courtyard and who was not. In this case, guards would have been stationed at the gates to stop scruffy-looking and otherwise undesirable individuals from entering. Moreover, we should be aware that the courtyard was not accessible at all

4 See the discussion in Jeroen Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles: The Courts of Europe's Dynastic Rivals, 1550–1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 3.

5 For a historiographical overview of the concept of access, see Dries Raeymaekers and Sebastiaan Derks, "Introduction: Repertoires of Access in Princely Courts", in *The Key to Power? The Culture of Access in Princely Courts, 1400–1750*, eds. Dries Raeymaekers and Sebastiaan Derks (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 1–15. See also Ronald G. Asch, "The Princely Court and Political Space in Early Modern Europe", in *Political Space in Pre-Industrial Europe*, ed. Beat Kümin (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), 43–60.



3.1 Inner courtyard of Coudenberg Palace on the Coudenberg Hill in Brussels, in Erycius Puteanus, *Erycii Puteani Bamelrodii Bruxella, incomparabili exemplo septenaria, gripho palladio descripta: luminibus historicis, politicis, miscellaneis distincta & explicata. Plenum item urbis elogium, velut loquens imago*, c. 1646, KBR – Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels. Printed with permission from the Royal Library of Belgium.

times. In the evenings, for example, the palace gates were closed for the night, and the keys handed over to the Lord Steward of the Household.<sup>6</sup>

The point is that the notion of physical access is often interpreted in absolute terms, whereas most spaces within the palace complex can be considered ‘fluid’ rather than ‘fixed’ in this regard. The same principle applies to other royal and princely residences in Europe. Even at Versailles, renowned for its openness, the idea of unfettered access was never undisputed. Theoretically, the public was allowed to roam the château and its grounds “without distinction of sex, age and condition.” However, as Philip Mansel has pointed out, the dirty and the diseased were the first to be stopped at the entrances.<sup>7</sup> We also know that Louis XIV (1638–1715) sometimes felt overwhelmed by the multitude of people wandering through the gardens, at which times he ordered them to be closed so that he could

6 Dries Raeymaekers, *One Foot in the Palace: The Habsburg Court of Brussels and the Politics of Access in the Reign of Albert and Isabella, 1598–1621* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2013), 67.

7 Philip Mansel, *King of the World: The Life of Louis XIV* (London: Allen Lane, 2019), 223.

walk there in peace.<sup>8</sup> These examples make it clear that levels of accessibility were dependent on the circumstances, and they encourage us to rethink what we mean by the term ‘public space’. We must, then, do the same for those spaces that we tend to see as ‘private’. This observation leads us into the heart of the palace.

As several historians have shown, the enfilade of rooms in many princely residences served as a funnel through which visitors were filtered according to their rank and status.<sup>9</sup> Only a handful were allowed to enter the rooms at the very end of the enfilade, which were intended for the monarch’s personal use. The enfilade, then, is where the notion of privacy becomes more closely intertwined with the notion of access. The official rules of access that applied here were laid down in household ordinances and have often led historians to conclude that the outer rooms of the enfilade were public in character, whereas the innermost rooms would have been private.<sup>10</sup> However, in trying to determine who had access to a room and who did not, we should not forget that ordinances were normative documents, describing rules and expectations rather than actual practices.<sup>11</sup> The mere fact that they were frequently re-issued and adapted suggests that methods for controlling the influx of unwanted visitors inside the princely residence were hardly self-evident. Indeed, other sources suggest that it was not uncommon for the rules governing access to be disregarded, circumvented, or even deliberately broken. There were, for example, numerous complaints about guards and doorkeepers who were bribed or persuaded to look the other way, causing court officials to lay down even stricter rules and leading monarchs to withdraw even further into their palaces.<sup>12</sup> Clearly, then, the innermost rooms of the enfilade were not the self-contained, impenetrable units historians have often considered them to be.

But even if a room were inaccessible to the public at large, we may wonder whether it can therefore be considered a ‘private’ space and, by extension, whether the creation of a zone of privacy was actually the goal. The fact

8 Mansel, *King of the World*, 224.

9 The seminal study in this regard is Hugh M. Baillie, “Etiquette and the Planning of the State Apartments in Baroque Palaces”, *Archaeologia*, 101 (1967): 169–99.

10 See the discussion in John Adamson, “The Making of the Ancien-Régime Court, 1500–1700”, in *The Princely Courts of Europe: Ritual, Politics and Culture under the Ancien Régime 1500–1750*, ed. John Adamson (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999), 7–41, esp. 14.

11 On court ordinances as sources for historical research, see Werner Paravicini, “Europäische Hofordnungen als Gattung und Quelle”, in *Höfe und Hofordnungen 1200–1600*, eds. Holger Kruse and Werner Paravicini (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1999), 13–20.

12 See, for example, David Loades, *The Tudor Court* (London: Pearson Education Limited, 1986), 86.

that there were strict rules limiting access to a room does not mean that a ruler automatically enjoyed privacy there—at least not in the modern sense of being able to spend time by himself. Nor should we assume that a ruler desired such privacy—at least not in the modern sense of requiring some peace and quiet away from everybody else. As an example, let us look at the situation at the English court in the sixteenth century. According to Simon Thurley, the typical layout of a Tudor monarch's personal lodgings consisted of the Privy Chamber, which contained the privy chamber proper and a withdrawing chamber, and the Secret Lodgings, which housed a bedchamber, a closet, and a privy gallery.<sup>13</sup> Several authors have already pointed out that despite its name, the Privy Chamber quickly became a semi-public space. Already in 1540, it had been opened to admit others than those who were strictly speaking its members, and across the following years, ever more courtiers were allowed inside it.<sup>14</sup> By contrast, the Secret Lodgings were intended only for the monarch's personal use, shutting out anyone who did not have permission to enter them. In *Houses of Power*, Thurley gives an example of what these most secluded rooms looked like in practice. When King Henry VIII (1491–1547) acquired Hampton Court from Cardinal Wolsey in 1529, he immediately began to expand the palace, ordering the construction of a tower that was to contain his Secret Lodgings. This tower, three storeys high, was accessed from the Privy Chamber and contained an office and wardrobe at the ground-floor level, a lavishly decorated bedroom, bathroom, and study on the first floor, and a library and Jewel House on the second floor. A private oratory and a privy gallery were located nearby.<sup>15</sup>

These, then, were the spaces in which the intimate daily lives of the Tudor monarchs unfolded. Are we to assume that Henry VIII and his successors were able to be on their own in here, and that these rooms were intended to facilitate privacy? Given their surprisingly tiny size (compared to other rooms in the palace), we can at the very least conclude that they were not designed to accommodate large crowds. Still, if the intention was to establish a zone of privacy, then it should also be pointed out that 'having privacy' did not necessarily equate 'being alone'. If the household ordinances are to be believed, no one but the Groom of the Stool—the head of the Chamber service—was allowed entrance to the Secret Lodgings. At the same time,

13 Simon Thurley, *The Royal Palaces of Tudor England: Architecture and Court Life 1460–1547* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 135–43.

14 Thurley, *The Royal Palaces*, 139.

15 Simon Thurley, *Houses of Power: The Places That Shaped the Tudor World* (London: Bantam Press, 2017), 168–74.

the ordinances stipulated that the monarch should never be unattended; that is, the Groom had to be always present, even during the night, when he slept on a separate folding bed in the king's bedchamber. But here again, the normative character of household ordinances distorts our view. It would undoubtedly have been difficult, if not impossible, for ordinary people to enter the Secret Lodgings, but numerous sources also suggest that—at given times and for varying reasons—other people were admitted to these rooms. Examples include servants and cleaning staff (although, presumably, only when the monarch was not present), as well as family members, privy councillors, advisors, physicians, companions, and lovers. Thurley himself notes how two courtiers—Philip van Wilder, a member of the Privy Chamber, and Nicholas Bristowe, the King's Clerk—received goods in the Jewel Room of Whitehall Palace in 1543, even though this room, as part of the Secret Lodgings, was technically off limits to anyone but the king and the Groom of the Stool.<sup>16</sup> This anecdote makes it clear that the rules regarding access do not necessarily reflect historical reality. It is also significant that many Tudor residences included a private staircase that opened directly onto the monarch's personal rooms, allowing the ruler to receive visitors without having to go through the usual formalities an official right of entry would have brought. During the reign of Elizabeth I (1533–1603), for example, a secret staircase was installed in Windsor Castle so that the queen could invite her ministers to come and speak with her privately in the privy gallery.<sup>17</sup>

In part, it is difficult to talk in general terms about the possibility of privacy in a princely residence because the arrangement of spaces varied at every court. I would, however, argue that the situation at the English court is largely representative of what would have been the case in most royal and princely residences elsewhere in Europe. Even in the ruler's personal lodgings, the rules of access seem to have been more flexible than household ordinances would have us believe. If we want to examine how the organisation of space contributed to or hampered the possibility of privacy at early modern courts, then, we need to let go of the idea that the rooms inside the princely residence were either public or private in nature—and, therefore, of the idea that a space to which access was limited automatically provided (and was intended to provide) privacy. As we have seen, the rules in this regard tend to be deceptive and do not necessarily reflect what happened in practice. Instead, we ought to rely on other sources that allow us to examine the actual flow of movement in and between rooms, and on the activities

16 Thurley, *The Royal Palaces*, 137.

17 Thurley, *Houses of Power*, 389.

taking place inside these rooms. Such an approach would undoubtedly reveal that the walls inside the princely residence were by no means impenetrable. Indeed, one might refer to them as membranes, the permeability of which was subject to a constant process of negotiation between the ruler and those who desired to gain access to him.<sup>18</sup> Privacy was thus not about creating a personal space in which the ruler could spend time in blissful isolation, away from the buzzing crowds and the court. Rather, privacy was about providing security, about facilitating secrecy, and about keeping out anyone who had no business being inside, or who could not be trusted. It was also, as we shall see, about regulating the monarch's visibility.

## Material Culture

In order to understand how the possibility of privacy was negotiated in early modern European courts, it is helpful to examine the vast array of furnishings, objects, and cultural artefacts that could assist such negotiation. Doors and gates constituted obvious thresholds in this regard, but there are plenty of other relevant examples that could be mentioned here. We might think of the bed rails that were erected around the princely bed so as to prevent courtiers from standing too close to it; of the cabinets, chests, and secret drawers that rulers used to hide their most prized possessions; or of the tiny *prie-dieus*—often hidden in richly decorated alcoves behind secret doors—that facilitated private prayer.<sup>19</sup> These and similar examples of material culture functioned as symbolic markers because they externalised the process of negotiation by which various spheres of privacy were shaped at the early modern court.

To clarify this point, let us look at the ways in which tapestries and curtains contributed to the negotiation of privacy. These were versatile textiles; they not only were decorative, but also kept the cold from penetrating into rooms. However, it is often overlooked that they were also used to divide rooms. A strategically hung tapestry could change the way a room was used and, hence, alter its private character. An example from the court of Brussels may serve to illustrate this. In 1618, the Archdukes Albert (1559–1621) and

18 I have borrowed the term “membrane” from Dr. Britta Kägler (Universität Passau), who uses it in her chapter on p. 104.

19 By way of an example, see Sebastian Edwards, “‘To Keep off the Company’: A Study of a Seventeenth-Century Royal Bed Rail from Hampton Court Palace”, *In Situ* 40 (2019), DOI:10.4000/insitu.23720.



Isabella (1566–1633), joint rulers of the Habsburg Netherlands, announced the investiture of a local courtier into the Order of the Golden Fleece. We know about this occasion from a letter by the French ambassador, who reported that the knighting ceremony took place in Albert's bedchamber. Strikingly, the ambassador wrote that he had been forced to witness the event from behind a tapestry, as the room where Albert slept was off limits to anyone but his Gentlemen of the Bedchamber. Obviously displeased, the ambassador noted that the papal nuncio, too, had been ordered to hide behind the tapestry, and that Albert's wife and co-ruler, the Infanta Isabella, had been obliged to watch the ceremony from a doorway.<sup>20</sup> This example illustrates how tapestries could grant important visitors an alternative form of access to the ruler's rooms—an access that did not require formal acknowledgment of their presence. But the inverse was also true: wall hangings could also be used to allow rulers to attend public events without making their presence known. In 1640, for instance, the Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand (1609–41), the successor to Albert and Isabella as governor of the Spanish Netherlands, was invited to a ball that was being organised by one of his courtiers. Ferdinand agreed to participate, but insisted on watching the event from behind a curtain so as to remain incognito (although we may wonder whether all of the guests were really unaware of his presence).<sup>21</sup>

These examples suggest that the use of curtains and tapestries facilitated the creation of temporary spaces and so allowed both rulers and their courtiers to circumvent existing boundaries. These spaces were ambiguous zones of privacy; as soon as they had served their purpose, they could be altered or dismantled entirely. It is also clear that notions of privacy at the early modern court were closely entangled with contemporaneous ideas about the visibility of the monarch. Evidently, being seen by one's subjects was of primary importance to any ruler. However, in order for visibility to be effective, there needed to be moments during which the ruler could *not* be seen. It speaks volumes that the court of the Spanish Habsburgs employed a *Sumiller de Cortina*—which might be translated as the Keeper of the Curtain—to draw aside the curtain behind which the Spanish monarch sat when attending mass in the palace chapel. Like the Eucharistic tabernacle that shielded the body of Christ from view, this curtain would be opened

20 Raeymaekers, *One Foot in the Palace*, 207.

21 The event is reported in a letter by Richard Pauli-Stravius, the papal nuncio in Brussels, to Cardinal-Secretary of State Francesco Barberini in Rome, 11 February 1640. See Wilfrid Brulez, ed., *Correspondance de Richard Pauli-Stravius (1634–1642)* (Brussels, Paris, and Rome: Institut Historique Belge, 1955), letter no. 887.

during communion, allowing churchgoers to gaze at the king's face for a brief moment. Glyn Redworth and Fernando Checa have pointed out the paradox that ensued from this curious custom: even during supposedly "public" events, the Spanish monarch remained screened and invisible.<sup>22</sup>

The Spanish *cortina* demonstrates that the visibility of the monarch was deemed a crucial feature of early modern monarchy, but that in order for this visibility to produce the desired effect, it needed to be *staged*. Rulers were wise not to show themselves to the public unannounced: the moments during which they submitted themselves to public scrutiny had to be prepared in advance and performed in an expected manner. This is exactly the reason why the bedroom of King Christian IV of Denmark (1577–1648) at Rosenborg Castle was equipped with a peephole—a small and carefully hidden aperture through which the king could observe the people waiting for him next door, before he went out to greet and converse with them (Figure 3.2).<sup>23</sup> By literally puncturing the palace walls, the peephole can be considered a contraption that was specifically designed to facilitate the negotiation of privacy at court.

The fact that visibility had to be staged is also why, in 1599, Queen Elizabeth I was furious when the Earl of Essex had the audacity to barge into her bedchamber unannounced, at a moment when she was not yet dressed and did not have her makeup and wig on.<sup>24</sup> Once again, this anecdote proves that the rules of access were not always as effective as court ordinances would have us believe. To be exposed in this way would have been horrifying to the queen, whose carefully created persona, as we know, rested on the idea of eternal beauty. Twenty years earlier, a similar situation had arisen at Greenwich Palace, when a courtier happened to glance up while walking in the tiltyard and spotted the queen through a window, wearing her nightgown. "And she was greatly ashamed thereof", the man remembered later, "for that she was unready, and in her nightstuff; so when she saw me after dinner, as she went to walk, she gave me a great phylypp on the forehead."<sup>25</sup> As Simon Thurley points out, rails were erected around certain parts of the palace for this reason—to create a perimeter that kept the public away from the windows.<sup>26</sup> Like tapestries and curtains, rails were useful

22 Glyn Redworth and Fernando Checa, "The Courts of the Spanish Habsburgs 1500–1700", in *The Princely Courts of Europe: Ritual, Politics and Culture under the Ancien Régime 1500–1750*, ed. John Adamson (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999), 43–65, here 60.

23 See <https://www.kongernessamling.dk/en/rosenborg/peephole/>.

24 Thurley, *Houses of Power*, 386.

25 Quoted in Thurley, *Houses of Power*, 387.

26 Thurley, *Houses of Power*, 387.



3.2 Peephole, c. 17<sup>th</sup> century. © The Royal Danish Collection, Rosenborg Castle, Copenhagen.

tools in the negotiation of privacy at the early modern court. Similarly to the peephole, the rails suggest that besides the need for security, privacy was about remaining unseen when one was not supposed to be seen.

Perhaps the most obvious objects linked to the negotiation of privacy are, quite simply, door keys. In many European courts, it was customary for the chamberlains serving in the personal lodgings to be given a key to the door of the princely bedchamber. They would always carry this key with them. In many cases, they would even pin it to their clothing to remind everyone that they belonged to the circle of trusted companions who enjoyed unfettered access to the monarch. The key thus came to symbolise not only the dignity and importance of its bearer, but also the fact that he or she was permitted to cross the physical boundaries that separated outsiders from insiders.<sup>27</sup> However, it would be a mistake to assume that these keys were mere shiny accessories without real value. In the sixteenth century at least, they tended to be functioning keys that fitted the locks of the doors in the state apartments; whoever had one could use it to gain access to the ruler whenever they pleased. Interestingly, this custom changed in later centuries. During the seventeenth century, for example,

27 Raeymaekers and Derks, "Introduction", 14.

the many *Ehrenkämmerer* (honourific Gentlemen of the Bedchamber) at the imperial court of Vienna were no longer given real keys. Instead, they received fake ones that were simply decorative—but certainly no less powerful in symbolic terms.<sup>28</sup>

Because keys served to protect the monarch from possible intruders, they were considered highly important at the early modern court. During the reign of Henry VIII, for example, the door of the king's bedroom at Hampton Court had no handle on the outside and could only be opened by a master key that was held by the Groom of the Stool. By the reign of Elizabeth I, the Groom had picked up the habit of wearing this key on a silk ribbon around his neck, indicating that its symbolic meaning was widely understood by everyone at court.<sup>29</sup> The importance of keys can also be seen in the intricate design of locks. A particularly fine example from the Tudor era has survived and can now be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (Figure 3.3). This lock was once on a door at Beddington Place, a country house that was a royal manor. It is equipped with a sliding plate depicting the Tudor arms, which covers the keyhole, and it has two separate bolts, which can be operated at the same time by inserting a pin. It is decorated with a small, smiling face, as if to laugh at the person trying to open it.<sup>30</sup>

However, at the early modern court, locks were no laughing matter. Significantly, whenever the king was travelling and staying in different houses, he was accompanied by his own master locksmith, who would install portable locks on the doors of the king's lodgings. For these locks, there were two master keys that opened every door and that were held by the king and the Groom of the Stool. Keys that opened only a single door were handed out to trusted courtiers. This remained the standard practice at the English court at least through the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>31</sup> Interestingly, by the mid-eighteenth century, new techniques were being developed to lock the doors. During the reign of George II (1683–1760), for example, the door to the private bedchamber of Queen Caroline (1683–1737) at Hampton Court could be closed automatically by pulling a brass lever located near the bed; this lever set in motion a system of pulleys, allowing the queen to lock herself in. Clearly, the balance in the process of negotiating

28 Mark Hengerer, *Kaiserhof und Adel in der Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts: eine Kommunikations-geschichte in der Macht der Vormoderne* (Konstanz: UVK, 2004), 84.

29 Thurley, *Houses of Power*, 195.

30 See <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O78576/the-beddington-lock-lock-romaynes-henry/>.

31 Thurley, *Houses of Power*, 194–95.



3.3 Henry Romaynes, "The Beddington Lock", c. 1539–47. © Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

privacy had started to tilt towards the rulers themselves, who increasingly took matters into their own hands when it came to controlling the access to their personal rooms.

The important role of keys in this negotiation can also be seen in the fact that their distribution was usually carefully noted in court ordinances. However, as with the rules of access, these rules were anything but prescriptive. Keys could easily be copied or stolen, and those who carried them could be bribed. In 1608, a Spanish nobleman at the court of Brussels who was madly in love with a lady-in-waiting managed to persuade a household servant to "give him the printe of the maister keye of the doores of the ladies quarter in waxe, wherewithall he caused a key to be made, and used such meanes as he gott within the pallace and had accesse to his mistrisse, and did accomodate her."<sup>32</sup> In 1624, also in Brussels, the alarm was raised when it was discovered that some of the Infanta Isabella's finest jewelry had been stolen. The perpetrator turned out to be a former page of the Groom of the

32 Quoted in Raeymaekers, *One Foot in the Palace*, 82.

Stool, who had secretly taken the keys from his master and had used them to gain access to the Jewel Room inside the Infanta's apartment.<sup>33</sup>

The examples above make it clear that textiles, objects, and artefacts such as curtains, peepholes, or keys contributed in both practical and symbolic ways to the process of negotiating the notion of privacy at the early modern court. A careful examination of the material culture of the court may therefore yield new insights into the nature of privacy in a courtly context. One insight is that notions of privacy were closely linked to contemporaneous norms and expectations regarding the security and visibility of the monarch. Rulers could make use of objects and artefacts to control when, where, and under what conditions their subjects were able to reach, see and/or talk to them. An important aspect of structuring this access was to create carefully chosen opportunities during which rulers showed themselves to the public and others during which they retreated from the gaze of their subjects to prepare for their next performance. This strategy will become even more apparent in our discussion of the role of the royal body below.

## The Royal Body

In the third and final section of this chapter, my aim is to examine the extent to which the physical body of the monarch was subjected to public scrutiny, and to explain how this relates to contemporaneous notions about privacy. To do so, we may start with a simple observation that has already been hinted at above: early modern rulers were never unaccompanied. Being attended at all times, even during the night, was customary for them. Anything else would have been considered disrespectful, not to mention possibly dangerous. This is why an important household official—like the Groom of the Stool in England or the Premier Valet du Chambre in France—was required to sleep in the monarch's bedchamber during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>34</sup> In his recent biography of Emperor Charles V (1500–58), Geoffrey Parker observes that as a child, the emperor used to sleep in the same bedroom as his guardian, the Lord of Chièvres. Apparently, Charles liked the company and decreed that the same arrangement should

33 The event is reported by Giovanni-Francesco Guidi di Bagno, papal nuncio in Brussels, in a letter to Domenico Marini, Archbishop of Genoa and Governor of Rome, 4 May 1624. The letter is cited in B. de Meester de Ravestein (ed.), *Correspondance du Nonce Giovanni-Francesco Guidi di Bagno (1621–1627)* (Brussels, Paris, and Rome: Institut Historique Belge, 1938), letter no. 974.

34 Asch, "The Princely Court and Political Space", 46.

be made for his younger brother Ferdinand (1503–64), “so that when [my brother] wakes up he might have someone to talk with, if he wishes.”<sup>35</sup> As an adult, Parker adds, the emperor was never alone; there was always someone around to serve him, and courtiers and diplomats accompanied him on even his loneliest journeys.<sup>36</sup> The same goes for other monarchs. For instance, when Elizabeth I was confronted with rumours about her illicit relationship with the Earl of Leicester, she pointed out that she “could never understand why any single person would be displeased, seeing that she was always surrounded by her ladies of the bedchamber and maids of honour, who at all time could see whether there was anything dishonourable between her and [Leicester].”<sup>37</sup>

It is tempting to conclude from these examples that because rulers were never alone, they never enjoyed a sense of privacy. As has been explained above, however, we should be careful not to consider the absence of other people as a necessary precondition for privacy. In his book on the palaces of the Tudor dynasty, Simon Thurley points out that King Henry VII (1457–1509) was always attended by his Gentlemen of the Bedchamber, but that the latter were expected to keep a respectful distance and were not allowed to talk to him. Thurley then concludes that, in practical terms, Henry lived a far more private and exclusive existence than any of his predecessors.<sup>38</sup> Seen from this point of view, privacy had very little to do with a ruler’s ability to spend time alone. Instead, what mattered was who was with him during quieter moments, in what capacity, and how much and what type of attention these people required.

The fact that rulers were always accompanied also meant that there were ample opportunities for their bodies to be observed by others. From the moment they were born until the day they died, monarchs were watched closely by courtiers, visitors, and diplomats alike. Their

35 Geoffrey Parker, *Emperor: A New Life of Charles V* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press 2019), 24. Parker is quoting from a letter written by the emperor to Cardinals Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros and Adrian Boeyens of Utrecht (later Pope Adrian VI), who served as co-regents of Castile during his absence, on 7 September 1517. This letter has been published and may be found in: Charles Weiss, *Papiers d’État du Cardinal de Granvelle d’après les manuscrits de la Bibliothèque de Besançon*, 9 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1841–52), vol. 1, 92.

36 Parker, *Emperor*, xiii.

37 Thurley, *Houses of Power*, 381. Thurley is quoting from a letter by the Holy Roman Emperor’s ambassador at the English court, Baron Breuner, to the Emperor Ferdinand (6 August 1559). This letter has been published and may be found in: Victor von Klarwill, *Queen Elizabeth and Some Foreigners, Being a Series of Hitherto Unpublished Letters from the Archives of the Hapsburg Family* (London: John Lane, 1928), 114–15.

38 Thurley, *Houses of Power*, 79.

physical appearance was discussed in detail, as were any bodily defects, ailments, and bouts of sickness. Their sexual activities, in particular, formed a topic of great interest. Reports of everything that went on in the princely bedroom—down to the finest details—were bound to be shared sooner rather than later. This is how, 480 years after the fact, we know with near certainty that in June 1543, the Duke of Parma, Ottavio Farnese (1524–86), took his wife to bed and ejaculated no less than four times following his return home after a long period of absence.<sup>39</sup> At early modern courts, very little was left undiscussed when it came to the more intimate aspects of a ruler's life—and this goes for their masturbatory habits as well. How else should we interpret the fact that in the eighteenth century, a former member of the Viennese court was able to recount how, as a young boy, the Emperor Charles VI (1685–1740) had to have bracelets carrying little bells tied to his wrists so that his guardian would hear his hands move at night?<sup>40</sup>

To twenty-first-century ears, this all sounds incredibly invasive, but contemporaries thought very little of it. During the early modern period, any concerns about the monarch's privacy—if such concerns existed—were subordinate to concerns about his health. Allowing witnesses to verify that a monarch's bodily functions were in working order provided evidence of good health. The anecdote about Joseph II and Ferdinand of Bourbon, which opened this chapter, illustrates that it was not unusual for monarchs to receive important guests whilst in the process of relieving themselves. Louis XIV, for example, made a habit of this: every day during his so-called *petit coucher*, the king would invite one or two courtiers to come and speak with him when he was sitting on the close-stool. This was considered an exceptional privilege because it allowed visitors to talk freely and ask for favours. There was even a name for it: the courtiers were proud recipients of the so-called *brevet d'affaires*, named after the king's commode or *chaise d'affaires*.<sup>41</sup>

39 Parker, *Emperor*, 397–98.

40 See Luc Duerloo, "Cassant en Cassandra: Dweepen met Habsburgers", *De Achttiende Eeuw*, 38 (2006): 67–76, here 73. Duerloo is quoting from the memoirs of Jean Philippe Eugène de Merode, Marquis of Westerloo, who was a field marshal in the Austrian army. These memoirs were heavily edited by the Marquis's great-grandson in the nineteenth century. See Henri de Merode (ed.), *Mémoires du feld-maréchal comte de Mérode-Westerloo*, 2 vols. (Brussels, 1840). However, parts of the original text can be found in Freeke De Meyer, "Enfant terrible: Jan Filip Eugeen de Merode-Westerloo (1674–1732) aan de hand van zijn ongekuste memoires" (Unpublished MA thesis, University of Leuven, 2000).

41 Mansel, *King of the World*, 232.



The above examples demonstrate that scrutiny of the royal body constituted yet another important domain in which the negotiation of privacy at court unfolded. An early modern ruler's body was, for want of a better term, considered public property. Rulers were expected to be accompanied at all times, to live their lives in public, and to be subjected to the gaze of crowds. In that sense, they enjoyed very little privacy—at least not in the modern understanding of the term. Again, this should not surprise us. Contemporaries realised all too well that the health and physical integrity of the monarch were of the utmost importance to the stability of the monarchy, and that any worrisome news in this regard might put the realm in serious jeopardy. This is part of the reason why visibility was so important. Nevertheless, we should not forget that rulers were not always keen on being observed—especially when they found themselves in a state unfit to be seen. As I have mentioned earlier, Elizabeth I was furious when that poor courtier had the misfortune to glance up and see her standing in a state of undress, looking anything but regal. After all, the purpose of visibility was to maintain the illusion of majesty, and for that, one needed to be prepared.

## Conclusion

The argument I have tried to make in this chapter is that research on privacy at the early modern court, or in any other early modern context for that matter, is not helped by approaching the problem via the simple dichotomy of 'public vs. private'. To do so is to deny the multi-layered complexity of early modern privacy, and the need for a more nuanced consideration of it. I am not suggesting that we discard the terms 'public' and 'private'; I am merely proposing that we not restrict them to a black-and-white discussion in which they are considered each other's fundamental opposites. Instead, we should be aware of the constant interplay between them.

Rather than a public and a private sphere, the court encapsulated a multitude of spheres where different degrees of privacy and publicity sometimes flowed into each other and sometimes remained firmly separate. These spheres were subject to continuous change and adaptation, and, indeed, to a process of negotiation through which they were delineated. Studying the different practices, objects, and discourses by which different spheres of privacy were shaped, we may discover what the idea of privacy came to signify at the early modern court. In this chapter, I have tried to make sense of the early modern negotiation of privacy with

an analytical framework that incorporates three strands of research in which the main bandwidth of the negotiation of privacy was played out: the organisation of space, the use of material culture, and the scrutiny of the royal body.

The examination of these domains reveals a number of important aspects. First, contrary to how the concept is often understood today, privacy at court was not about being alone. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, solitude was not something early modern rulers desired. Rather, privacy signalled the regulation of access, and, consequently, its purposes were purely political: it was about protecting rulers from unwanted intrusions and allowing them to conduct the business of state away out of sight of prying eyes. Thus, the process of negotiation I have described in this chapter reflects a constant tension that characterised all European courts: on the one hand, there was the ever-increasing desire of outsiders to gain access, and, on the other hand, there was the need to limit the number of people who were allowed to do so. Second, the three domains discussed in this chapter reveal that courtly notions of privacy were at odds with the need for visibility. Early modern rulers were expected to live their lives in public; this was an essential feature of early modern monarchy that was rarely called into question. Nevertheless, for a public life to exist, it had to have a meaningful counterpart—moments when rulers could prepare for their next staged appearance. Privacy, then, was about creating opportunities for rulers to withdraw from the gaze of the crowds, be it ever so briefly.

In the end, there is still the unanswered question of how, when, and why the norms and expectations pertaining to privacy at court began to change. A few examples above indicate that sensibilities regarding privacy started to shift during the eighteenth century—perhaps not surprisingly, given the changing role of monarchy in this period and the evolving nature of the public sphere in society. But the anecdote of Joseph II's meeting with Ferdinand of Bourbon at the beginning of my chapter reveals that this change did not happen overnight. The fact that the emperor, much like the modern reader, seems to have been surprised—perhaps even repulsed—by the actions of his royal brother-in-law suggests that the norms concerning privacy evolved at varying paces that depended on context. Clearly, there were regional differences, and what was customary at one court did not necessarily occur at another. A logical next step in historical research on privacy at court would be to examine these differences and to attempt to uncover their underlying causes.

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## 4. Institutionalised Privacy? The Need to Achieve and Defend Privacy in the *Frauenzimmer*

*Britta Kägler*

### Abstract

Young aristocratic women coming to the Wittelsbach Court in Munich as ladies-in-waiting were expected to live in the *Frauenzimmer*. This area within the royal residence included several rooms that were connected to each other. The apartments of the noblewomen were located here. The *Frauenzimmer* created a gender-segregated area within the court. During the day, visits by male courtiers were possible, and male servants or chamber boys under the age of twelve could also enter this area. At night, however, the *Frauenzimmer* was reserved exclusively for women; it was not only closed but also locked. This chapter asks how the *Frauenzimmer* at the Munich court was organised in spatial terms and what different levels of privacy can be discerned.

**Keywords:** noblewomen, retreat, court instructions, female spaces

### Introduction

Early modern courts were the social centres where careers were decided, celebrations were held, fashions were created, and alliances were forged. Regardless of whether the residences were located outside cities, such as Versailles outside Paris or the Escorial outside Madrid, the life of the early modern elite took place at these courts. Against this background, the term ‘early modern court’ has many dimensions, but all of them involve certain forms of publicity: festivals, theatre, and receptions. The

ceremonies of Versailles, for instance public dressing (*lever*) and undressing (*coucher*), offer perhaps the most extreme example of the absence of “private seclusion”.<sup>1</sup>

Even religious life, which has increasingly been defined in terms of private devotion since the nineteenth century, was public and appears in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries more as a demonstration of status and rank than as an indication of personal piety. This was especially the case when princely families attended mass publicly, accompanied by their courtly household. Such ostentatious Catholic religious expressions had their starting point in the Confessional Age the public dimension of religious confession was a political and dynastic display in the face of newly Protestant courts. Subsequently, however, the public display of religious devotion became a component of ceremonial life at the early modern court, not only in Munich but throughout Europe, and it continued to be a large part of public life until the eighteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Under these conditions, where was there room for privacy at court? How did contemporaries understand “privacy”?<sup>3</sup> Did particular activities or certain groups of people constitute privacy? Were private retreats linked to courtly hierarchies? To approach these questions, this chapter will consider the so-called *Frauenzimmer*, with the Wittelsbach Court in Munich as a case study.

First, one must define the ambiguous concept of the *Frauenzimmer*. On the one hand, *Frauenzimmer* comprises the rooms set aside for an electress and her entourage, or household (*Hofstaat*). These rooms were an area within the residence where women from aristocratic families had their apartments and where they spent their daily life together.<sup>4</sup> While the separation of the *Frauenzimmer* from other courtly spaces was by no means absolute, it was

1 The location of the *lever* and *coucher*, however, had nothing to do with where the king had actually slept or intended to sleep.

2 See Ferdinand Kramer, “Piety at Court: The Wittelsbach Electors in Eighteenth-Century Bavaria”, in *Monarchy and Religion: The Transformation of Royal Culture in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Michael Schaich (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 283.

3 See Clarissa Campbell Orr, “Introduction: Court Studies, Gender and Women’s History”, in *Queenship in Britain 1660–1837: Royal Patronage, Court Culture and Dynastic Politics*, ed. Clarissa Campbell Orr (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 34; Lars Cyril Nørgaard, “Past Privacy”, in *Early Modern Privacy: Sources and Approaches*, eds. Mette Birkedal Bruun, Lars Cyril Nørgaard and Michaël Green (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 1–11.

4 See Katrin Keller, “Frauenzimmer”, *Encyclopedia of Early Modern History Online*, [https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopedia-of-early-modern-history-online/frauenzimmer-SIM\\_019376?s.num=0&s.f.sz\\_parent=s.f.book.encyclopedia-of-early-modern-history-online&s.q=Keller+Frauenzimmer](https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopedia-of-early-modern-history-online/frauenzimmer-SIM_019376?s.num=0&s.f.sz_parent=s.f.book.encyclopedia-of-early-modern-history-online&s.q=Keller+Frauenzimmer).

stricter at the German-speaking courts than at the courts of England or France. The gendered courtly systems seem to have required a particularly 'private' character for these rooms. In a much narrower sense, *Frauenzimmer* could also refer to the official entourage of the electress – the women who lived with and served her in the Munich palace.

For evidence of these varying meanings, one can consult the encyclopedic literature of the eighteenth century, such as the widely read *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste* by Johann Heinrich Zedler (1706–51).<sup>5</sup> In the entry on "Frauenzimmer", Zedler briefly mentions that this space was "actually the place where female persons reside."<sup>6</sup> The article then notes that the term "is also used for the sex itself, thus opposing the masculine", and goes on to describe "Frauenzimmer" as a term for women.<sup>7</sup>

At the Wittelsbach court in Munich, the ladies-in-waiting comprised the majority of the female retinue. There were usually four to six young, unmarried aristocratic women who had the honour of serving the electress and keeping her company. At the same time, they were educated at court until they married. The surroundings of the Munich court would generally ensure that their marriage was commensurate with their status.

In this chapter, the German term *Frauenzimmer* will be a spatial designation. For the entourage of the Bavarian electresses and princesses, the more specific *Hofstaat* will be used. An unambiguous linguistic distinction is thus made, and the German terms remain since their differences in meaning cannot be conveyed exactly in English.<sup>8</sup>

5 Johann Heinrich Zedler, *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste, Welche bißhero durch menschlichen Verstand und Witz erfunden und verbessert worden*, 64 vols., 4 supplements (Halle and Leipzig: Johann Heinrich Zedler, 1731–54).

6 Johann Heinrich Zedler, "Frauenzimmer", in *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste, Welche bißhero durch menschlichen Verstand und Witz erfunden und verbessert worden*, ed. Johann Heinrich Zedler (Halle and Leipzig: Johann Heinrich Zedler, 1735), 9: 1782.

7 The German entry is: "eigentlich derjenige Orth, wo sich die WeibesPersonen aufhalten [...] [der Begriff werde aber] auch vor das Geschlechte selbst genommen, so dem Männischen entgegen gesetzt wird", Zedler, "Frauenzimmer", 1782.

8 Cf. Katrin Keller, "Ladies-in-Waiting at the Imperial Court of Vienna from 1550 to 1700: Structures, Responsibilities and Career Patterns", in *The Politics of Female Households: Ladies-in-Waiting across Early Modern Europe*, eds. Nadine Akkerman and Birgit Houben (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 77–97; Johanna Ilmakunnas, Marjatta Rahikainen, and Kirsi Vainio-Korhonen (eds.), *Early Professional Women in Northern Europe, c. 1650–1850* (London: Routledge, 2018), 43–67; My Hellsing, *Hovpolitik: Hedvig Elisabeth Charlotte som politisk aktör vid det gustavianska hovet* (Örebro: Örebro Universitet, 2013).



## Research Overview

Since the itinerant court was replaced in the late Middle Ages by permanent residences, a more settled lifestyle of dynastic families across Europe led to the establishment of separate rooms for the princess and her entourage: the *Frauenzimmer*. With the stricter isolation of the *Frauenzimmer* at German-speaking courts, the physical separation of these spaces contributed to the illusion that they had a particularly 'private' character.<sup>9</sup>

Socio-political perspectives within historical research on privacy have recently broadened to refine the conceptual boundaries of 'public' and 'private'. Research into the division between public and private spheres at court has given way to a greater emphasis on how numerous elements (especially various leisure activities, such as horse riding, letter writing, playing parlour games, dining, outings, and pilgrimages) are associated with a clearly modern conception of the private and on how early modern privacy had a discernibly political and/or public meaning. Daily attendance mass as well as the journey there, surrounded by an entourage, and the aforementioned public dressing and undressing are both instances of this clear intertwining of public and private. In contrast to the openness of Versailles, there was only a courtly audience for attending mass as well as for the ruler's dressing and undressing in Munich. Over the past twenty-five years, extensive research on medieval and early modern court history has repeatedly pointed out that early modern ideas of private and public spheres do not correspond to our modern ideas of these spheres.<sup>10</sup> Since the 1980s, a debate has emerged regarding the boundaries of 'private' and 'public' and how such boundaries cannot be separated from women's opportunities for political action.<sup>11</sup> This

9 Cf. Britta Käglér, "Rückzugsort oder Anlaufstelle? Das 'Frauenzimmer' als Institution und Handlungsraum am Münchner Hof der Frühen Neuzeit", *discussions* 5 (2010): 26.

10 Cf. Barbara Harris, "Women and Politics in Early Tudor England", *Historical Journal* 33:2 (1990): 260. In dealing with correspondence in the environment of early modern courts and aristocratic networks, reference is repeatedly made to the semi-public character of this correspondence, for example in these studies: Regine Maritz, "Gender as a Resource of Power at the Early Modern Court of Württemberg, c. 1580–1630" (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2021), 33, 234; Corina Bastian, *Verhandeln in Briefen: Frauen in der höfischen Diplomatie des frühen 18. Jahrhunderts* (Köln: Böhlau, 2013): 24–27; Sophie Ruppel, "Das stilllose Zeitalter: Realität und Rezeption weiblicher Briefkultur an frühneuzeitlichen deutschen Fürstenhöfen im 17. Jahrhundert", *Historische Mitteilungen* 19 (2006): 67–82; Jane Couchman and Ann Crabb, "Form and Persuasion in Women's Letters: 1400–1700", in *Women's Letters across Europe, 1400–1700: Form and Persuasion*, eds. Jane Couchman and Ann Crabb (Aldershot: Routledge, 2005): 3–18.

11 A detailed overview of the scholarly discussion of the boundaries of 'private' and 'public' can be found in Katrin Keller's introduction to Katrin Keller, *Hofdamen: Amtsträgerinnen im Wiener Hofstaat des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2005), 10–12.

debate has transformed the political power of early modern female rulers or members of a court into an expected norm.<sup>12</sup> In addition, there has been increased interest in the informal influence of women, especially their communication in the private sphere for public purposes, and in the public appearances of women, whether at court or beyond. As a result, the retreat of women into a private sphere has been little studied recently.

Numerous studies of courtly festivities have addressed questions of ceremonial, social rank and representation, all of which are based on public visibility; sometimes even private spheres of life are interpreted as elements of rank and representation. For research on women at court, the publications of Katrin Keller, Cordula Nolte and Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly are particularly important.<sup>13</sup> These scholars have discussed the demarcation of private and public spheres, or spaces and places in which the relationship between public and private was negotiated primarily in terms of realms of the public sphere that have been little considered. Research into the history of gender has likewise showcased new approaches. The relationship between structural conceptions of rulership and everyday life at court has highlighted opportunities for intervention by female regents, consorts, mistresses, princesses and noblewomen at court. While informal spaces and informal communication have been emphasised as the primary avenues by which women could exert influence, the truly private has been disregarded. Consequently, important questions remain unanswered. What form of privacy remained when even informal, supposedly private, spaces were interwoven with hierarchy and ceremony? Was privacy made possible by physical spaces that facilitated withdrawal? Or was privacy limited to staying in certain small social groups?

By considering these questions, my analysis oscillates between the physical space with its different degrees of privacy and the individual privacy that

12 Cf. Erica Longfellow, "Public, Private, and the Household in Early Seventeenth-Century England", *Journal of British Studies* 45:2 (2016): 315–18, 332–34; Britta Kägler, *Frauen am Münchener Hof (1651–1756)* (Kallmünz: Michael Laßleben, 2011), 474–78. Most recently, the assumption that the private sphere almost always had a public function in the early modern period has found its way into current research on the theory of the ruler's two bodies. Cf. Elena Taddei, *Anna Caterina Gonzaga (1655–1621): Erzherzogin von Österreich, Landesfürstin von Tirol und Klosterstifterin* (Innsbruck: Tyrolia, 2021); Sandra Hertel, *Maria Elisabeth: Österreichische Erzherzogin und Statthalterin in Brüssel, 1725–1741*. (Vienna: Böhlau, 2014), 257–68.

13 Particularly useful overviews can be found in Katrin Keller, "Frauen und dynastische Herrschaft: Eine Einführung", in *Nur die Frau des Kaisers? Kaiserinnen in der Frühen Neuzeit*, eds. Bettina Braun, Katrin Keller, and Matthias Schnettger (Wien/Weimar/Köln: Böhlau, 2016), 16–18; Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, *Queens Consort, Cultural Transfer and European Politics, c. 1500–1800* (London: Routledge, 2016).



4.1 Nikolaus Prugger (also Prucker or Brucker), *Three Court Ladies as the Parcae*, overdoor for the Cabinet of Hearts of the Munich Residenz, oil painting, 1668–1669, Residence Museum, Munich. © Wittelsbacher Ausgleichsfonds München.

women at court could achieve and even had to defend. I am interested in both. On the one hand, the languages and practices that gendered individual privacy (evident from court instructions and similar “normative” records)<sup>14</sup> were inscribed into a social hierarchy. On the other hand, these gendered configurations of privacy had an impact on how power was practiced.

### View of a Painting: A Glimpse of Privacy?

An oil painting of three young ladies-in-waiting from the *Hofstaat* of Electress Henriette Adelaide (Figure 4.1) reveals several aspects of courtly privacy and also raises questions about these aspects. All three women are in dress typical for the second half of the seventeenth century. Yet the painting symbolises and portrays two particular aspects of these women.

14 The use of “normative” throughout this essay derives from the German “normativ”, which is usually used to differentiate sources into normative and descriptive texts. “Normative” denotes sources pertaining to regulations and instructions that are prescriptive or provide ideal descriptions of specific situations, activities, or practices. In the case of normative texts, the question arises of the extent to which they reflect reality. Therefore, the analysis of instructions and regulations (or even laws) should, if possible, always be paired with the evaluation of non-normative sources.

The first aspect revolves around the depiction of the ladies as the *Parcae*, the female personifications of destiny who directed the lives and deaths of humans (and gods) by controlling the metaphorical thread of life of every mortal and immortal from birth to death. From left to right, the three ladies-in-waiting can be seen spinning, weaving, and finally cutting the thread of life with a pair of scissors. Some scholars have suggested an additional mythological interpretation, based on the hearts embroidered into the blanket. The tale of the ancient Greek Arachne, who, in competition with Athena, displayed the love secrets of the gods on a tapestry, is depicted on the blanket.

The second symbolic aspect of this painting, however, extends beyond mythological references to offer insight into the Munich *Frauenzimmer*. The three ladies-in-waiting belonged to the innermost circle around Electress Henriette Adelaide (1636–76). Moreover, an actual activity within the *Frauenzimmer* is used to transform this portrait of three into the Fates. The women are engaged in needlework in private—that, in a closely controlled setting shown as exclusively female. Seemingly similar in age, they are spending time together in a socially acceptable way. Clearly visible, a cockatoo completes the trio; it sits on the right backrest of Anastasia von Törring’s chair.<sup>15</sup>

The identity of the young women is known. They are Electress Henriette Adelaide’s favourite ladies-in-waiting during the 1660s, all of whom were particularly intimate with the Bavarian electress. On the left side of the painting, there is Anastasia von Törring from one of the oldest Bavarian aristocratic families, who maintained close ties to the House of Wittelsbach. At the right is Catharina von Spaur, also of aristocratic origin. Both families—von Törring and von Spaur—regularly sent their unmarried daughters to serve as ladies-in-waiting (*Hoffräulein*) at the Munich court for several years. Finally, in the middle is Anna Maria di San Germano. She had already been one of Henriette Adelaide’s confidants at her home court of Turin, in northern Italy. Anna Maria was chosen as one of the four ladies-in-waiting to accompany the young bride, who was only fifteen years old, from Savoy

15 The cockatoo appears here in a format typical from the seventeenth century onwards, namely in profile and with its feathered crest raised as high as possible; this is the way in which one would prepare a stuffed version. Corresponding stuffed models, for instance from *Wunderkammern*, are conceivable. The interpretation of the cockatoo—almost exclusively sulphur-crested cockatoos in European paintings—ranges from exoticism to luxury and even to purity because of the white feathers and the cockatoo’s “human” attitude. Richard Verdi characterised parrots as “the nearest birds come to being little human beings wrapped in feathers.” Richard Verdi, *The Parrot in Art: From Dürer to Elizabeth Butterworth* (London: Scala, 2007), 12.

to Bavaria. She can thus be considered one of the most important and longest-standing confidants of the Bavarian electress.<sup>16</sup>

While the contents of the picture are evident, there are other questions that need to be addressed. Where did the picture hang? Can one glean any further information about the *Frauenzimmer* from the physical location of the painting? Interestingly, this canvas was largely shielded from public view; it was part of the exuberant ceiling and wall decoration of the so-called Cabinet of Hearts (*Herzkabinett*). This was a small chamber that Henriette Adelaide had commissioned after the death of her mother-in-law and the birth of the heir to the throne—at the moment when her own position within court society had been solidified. She not only formally held the position of first lady of the Bavarian court, but also filled this role after it had been unoccupied for several years due to an unhappy and unstable marriage. While the original sequence of rooms in the *Frauenzimmer* was changed in the eighteenth century and so is no longer preserved and, the Cabinet of Hearts has survived and can be visited in the Munich Residenzmuseum. The cabinet's dimensions are just a few square meters so that it is small and almost intimate. In fact, the tiny chamber was originally adjacent to the Electress's bedchamber and it was accessible only from the bed alcove of her bedchamber. Thus, the placement of the painting in a secluded space within Henriette's rooms means that it was effectively hidden from public gaze; it was just opposite the entrance door of the cabinet.

It thus becomes clear that the picture represented both the architectural sense of the term *Frauenzimmer* and its social definition that combined elements of space and gender. The question remains, however, as to whether the cabinet's unusually small size and proximity to the inner apartments, where access was restricted in terms of hierarchy and gender, might be considered a sign of privacy. If this cabinet was indicative of privacy, for whom was it private? Was privacy an institutionalised element of the early modern *Frauenzimmer*? Should privacy be inherent to the *Frauenzimmer*, these rooms for the female household could be understood as a place of retreat for women at court. Or could the *Frauenzimmer* be at least a kind of private retreat for the electress herself? Who had access to the *Frauenzimmer*? Furthermore, did restricted access by itself already indicate privacy at early modern courts? Was the overall idea of the *Frauenzimmer* as an exclusively female space a social means of safeguarding the sexual honour of the noble ladies-in-waiting? Or is such a pragmatic scenario a rather short-sighted approach? These questions point to the ways in which admission to the

16 See Kägler, *Frauen am Münchener*, 79–80.

*Frauenzimmer* was a crucial resource for the symbolic power of the entire courtly household.

### The *Frauenzimmer*: Architectural Features

At first glance, the Munich *Frauenzimmer* seems to have all the conditions that would allow for a bit of privacy, including fewer regulations and maybe even opportunities for secrecy and action. It was run separately from the men's household, and it was regulated according to its own rules. With some exceptions, which will be discussed later, one can therefore say that the Munich *Frauenzimmer* cohered with the contemporaneous separation between men and women.<sup>17</sup>

In order to facilitate our understanding of the system of the *Frauenzimmer*, this section will briefly outline its architectural features, as well as the composition and organisation of the female *Hofstaat*. First furnished around 1600, the electress's bedroom was remodelled and considerably enlarged several times. However, it remained in the same wing of the residence for four generations. While the furnishings, pictorial decoration, and use of the individual rooms have been detailed by the art historian Henriette Graf, the main point to note here is that the sequence of rooms comprising the Munich *Frauenzimmer* only existed after 1638.<sup>18</sup> From the middle of the seventeenth century, and after the completion of extensive building under Electress Henriette Adelaide in the 1660s, the *Frauenzimmer* contained a sequence of rooms, including a guardroom, an audience chamber, several private rooms, an artificial grotto, a bedroom, a cloakroom, and a narrow library as well as two antechambers, the Heroine's Room, the second antechamber, the Cabinet of Hearts. The apartments of the Bavarian Elector Ferdinand Maria (1636–79) were modest in comparison. A second antechamber was only installed during

17 Of course, the *Frauenzimmer* had a significance for early modern conceptions of gender. When Maritz criticises the formulation that the Munich *Frauenzimmer* needs to be seen as “gender-neutral”, this merely refers to the fact that men and women could enter the sequence of rooms. Here, the ambiguity of the term *Frauenzimmer* is once again evoked. Maritz, “Gender as a Resource of Power”, 60. For a discussion of how gendered responsibilities shaped early modern court culture, cf. Pernille Arenfeldt, “The Queen Has Sent Nine Frisian Cows: Gender and Everyday Cultural Practices at the Courts in Sixteenth-Century Germany”, in *Der Hof: Ort kulturellen Handelns von Frauen in der Frühen Neuzeit*, eds. Susanne Rode-Breymann and Antje Tumat (Vienna: Böhlau, 2013), 126–28.

18 Henriette Graf, *Die Residenz in München: Hofzeremoniell, Innenräume und Möblierung von Kurfürst Maximilian I. bis Kaiser Karl VII* (Munich: Bayer. Verwaltung der Staatl. Schlösser, Gärten und Seen, 2002), 15–63.

renovation work during the first half of the eighteenth century. In contrast to other architectural and art historians, Graf does not locate the electress's bedroom along the front of the residence, which faces the Residenzstraße. Instead, she argues that the bedroom follows Italian private cabinets and faces the garden.<sup>19</sup> The rooms of the *Frauenzimmer* were initially on different floors and were connected by stairs within the various rooms.

Sixteenth-century instructions for the *Obersthofmeisterin* (head court mistress) had stated that as the highest office bearer within the *Hofstaat* of Duchess Amalia, she should “keep the key to the top staircase door to the *Frauenzimmer* [...] with herself.”<sup>20</sup> Control of the *Frauenzimmer* keys belonged to the *Obersthofmeisterin* until the end of the eighteenth century. During the day, however, the *Frauenzimmer* doors were not locked, although they were guarded. Since there was only one entrance and the rooms belonging to the *Frauenzimmer* were almost uniformly arranged in a straight line, not all doors needed to be equipped with guards.

The spatial sequence of these rooms reflected the hierarchical structure within court society. This hierarchical structure found symbolic expression in architectural demarcations, such as doors and staircases, which were linked to rights of access and precedence.<sup>21</sup> In addition, that everyday life at early modern courts was firmly anchored in time and space. This point is reinforced when one looks at the instructions for servants. For example, servants responsible for supplying food and drink or transporting laundry were forbidden to enter the *Frauenzimmer* at specific times, without permission, and without announcing themselves. They had to knock or even ring a bell, announce themselves, and wait at the door of the *Frauenzimmer* to

19 See Henriette Graf, *Die Residenz in München*, 15–63, esp. 26–27. Cf. Samuel J. Klingensmith, *The Utility of Splendor: Ceremony, Social Life, and Architecture at the Court of Bavaria 1600–1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 132, including plan B (room 14). For a discussion of retreats into court gardens, see Susan Richter's recently published edition of love letters between Electress Elisabeth Augusta (1721–94) and Clemens Franz Duke in Bavaria (1722–70). Susan Richter (ed.), *Amo te solo: Briefe der Kurfürstin Elisabeth Augusta an Clemens Franz, Herzog in Bayern (1743–1770): Edition, Übersetzung und Kommentar* (Heidelberg: heiBOOKS 2021), 32, footnote 53. Cf. Michael Niedermeyer, *Erotik in der Gartenkunst: Eine Kulturgeschichte der Liebesgärten* (Leipzig: Edition Leipzig, 1995).

20 “[D]en Slussel an der aller obristen stiegern im frau[n]z[i]mer zu der dur [...] albey selbs [be]halten”, Joseph Baader, “Haus und Hofhaltsordnungen Herzogs Ludwig des Reichen von Niederbayern für das Residenzschloß Burghausen, während des Aufenthalts seiner Gemahlin Herzogin Amalia dortselbst”, *Oberbayerisches Archiv für vaterländische Geschichte* 37 (1877): 29.

21 See Mark Hengerer, “Court and Communication: Integrating the Nobility at the Imperial Court (1620–1665)”, *The Court Historian* 5 (2000): 224: “Personal access to the ruler and his family was subtly mediated through a sequence of rooms. Before the private rooms lay several antechambers, access to which depended on rank, office and favour.”

be allowed in to deliver the goods they were carrying. The same process occurred for guests who wanted to visit a lady-in-waiting or a chambermaid. Even male relatives of the aristocratic ladies-in-waiting were only allowed to enter the *Frauenzimmer* under the supervision of a court mistress and usually were admitted one of the antechambers. Thus, the *Frauenzimmer* was regulated according to its own rules, through which the rights of access were carefully regulated. In addition to officials from the electress's court, occasionally the wives of high court officials or foreign envoys, who did not hold court office themselves, had to gain access to the *Frauenzimmer*. Just as access to the court did not provide access to the *Frauenzimmer*, so too access to the *Frauenzimmer* was not synonymous with direct access to the private apartments of the electress.

Although the spatial arrangement of the *Frauenzimmer* was thus designed to imitate the multilayered hierarchy of courtly society, the respective rank of a person within the courtly hierarchy was also indicated by his or her ability to gain access to or move through architectural doors, staircases, ceremonial rooms, antechambers, and cabinets. Finally, it should be noted that the *Frauenzimmer* within the Munich Residence was neither in the centre nor on the periphery of the palace. Since some windows were on the front of the residence and had a view to St. Kajetan (the court church), the rooms were by no means located in a remote wing. On closer inspection, however, it quickly becomes clear that the layout of the Munich Residence can only be interpreted with caution. In contrast to the new buildings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Wittelsbach palace had to incorporate an already existing structure. Although partial wings were repeatedly reconfigured or enlarged by combining several rooms, the basic layout of the existing building complex remained unchanged. Consequently, the *Frauenzimmer* is located simply in a suitable, yet small-scale, area of the compact residence. What is most striking about the court chapel, which was regularly visited by the electresses in the company of the entire court, is that it was located in the immediate vicinity of the *Frauenzimmer*. Until the middle of the eighteenth century, the elector's rooms and the *Frauenzimmer* could not be coordinated to mirror each other due to the spatial configuration of the building.

### **The *Frauenzimmer*: Social Features**

Ultimately, women comprised only a small part of court society. This applies, in particular, to women who held a particular office, like ladies-in-waiting,



maids of honour, and even the *Hofmeisterinnen* (court mistresses). In the seventeenth century, one can assume that only ten percent of women held offices, compared to male officeholders at the Munich court. Fabian Persson describes the Swedish court as a man's world in his recent book, *Women at the Early Modern Swedish Court*; this statement also applies to other European courts.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, Persson rightly continues, “[a]nd yet women were always there.”<sup>23</sup> Expanding on Persson's point, I would add that women at court were also paid regularly.<sup>24</sup>

When we focus on the aristocratic women in the electress's *Hofstaat*, however, it becomes clear that these women had to fulfil certain social requirements. They had to be aristocratic in order to be eligible to serve in prestigious court offices. In Munich, they also had to be Catholic. Thus, the inner circle around the electress consisted of a mostly homogeneous group of women (and some men). Most of the female officeholders came from longstanding Bavarian noble families, who could trace their lineage back to the Middle Ages.<sup>25</sup> These families ensured the continuation of the well-established tradition of having young women educated at court, in the vicinity of the princely family.<sup>26</sup>

The *Hofstaat* of an electress—her official entourage—had a narrow scope because only a few adequate court offices existed for noblewomen. The lack of open positions even generated a waiting list, as young ladies vied for one

22 Fabian Persson, *Women at the Early Modern Swedish Court: Power, Risk, and Opportunity* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021), 33.

23 Persson, *Swedish Court*, 33.

24 On honorary offices and regular payments, see Britta Kägler, “Serving the Prince as the First Step of Female Careers: The Electoral Court of Munich, c. 1660–1840”, in *Early Professional Women in Northern Europe, c. 1650–1850*, eds. Johanna Ilmakunnas, Marjatta Rahikainen, and Kirsi Vainio-Korhonen (London: Routledge, 2018), 43–67.

25 Newly ennobled families could not integrate permanently into this system and only provided ladies-in-waiting sporadically. For more details on this, see Kägler, *Frauen am Münchener Hof*, 115–16, 251. The ladies-in-waiting, maids of honour, and court mistresses were served by their own female and male servants; thus, non-aristocratic women also belonged to the circle of the female officeholders.

26 However, male officeholders at court could not maintain this for centuries because highly qualified commoners with university degrees ousted the old nobility from top administrative positions and high court offices in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. However, the nobility was able to reclaim the highest offices in court and state administration during a comprehensive re-aristocratisation over the course of the seventeenth century. Cf. Rainer A. Müller, “Aristokratisierung des Studiums? Bemerkungen zur Adelsfrequenz an süddeutschen Universitäten im 17. Jahrhundert”, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 10:1 (1984): 31–46. Cf. Ronald Asch, “Rearistokratisierung statt Krise der Aristokratie? Neuere Forschungen zur Geschichte des Adels im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert”, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 30:1 (2004): 146.

of the six to eight lady-in-waiting positions or one of the two maid of honour positions.<sup>27</sup> However, the court instructions show that only the highest officials—the court mistresses—had institutionalised access to the inner chambers and thus to the immediate vicinity of the electress. Once again, it becomes clear that the *Frauenzimmer* can by no means be understood as a private space without restrictions or without ceremony, rank, or hierarchy.

Whilst widowed court ladies were allowed to continue serving until their death, the time in office for unwed ladies-in-waiting and maids of honour was finite. As soon as they married, these women had to resign from court service.<sup>28</sup> At the same time, as Persson points out, this ability to avoid marriage was one of the freedoms that court service conferred on women: “Service at court could also bring a degree of freedom. It meant an income and an array of pre-requisites. It could also mean, increasingly so over time, greater freedom in meeting and assessing men on the marriage market.”<sup>29</sup> The fact that this type of freedom was not equated with privacy becomes evident if we analyse the court instructions that regulated life in the *Frauenzimmer*.

### Achieving Privacy: Effort Is Necessary

In addition to the spatial characteristics of the *Frauenzimmer*, the frequent absence of men during the daytime and their complete absence of men during the night might suggest that free spaces were self-determined for and by women.<sup>30</sup> However, a close look at court instructions and similar “normative” records does not support this idea.

The purpose of the *Frauenzimmer* was to educate young noblewomen in courtly etiquette, religious and moral behaviour, the management of a household, the mend of clothes, embroidery, and other practical tasks. Because of this goal, the *Frauenzimmer* was a highly regulated and guarded

27 Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv (BayHStA), Kasten schwarz 16649 (2 November 1659).

28 For the Bavarian court in Munich, the Habsburg court was a model. See Keller, “Ladies-in-Waiting,” 79.

29 Persson, *Swedish Court*, 77. He also sees a trend towards more freedom from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries: “In the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries there were severe strictures on life [...]; the eighteenth century, however, appears to have offered a freer life. Service at court could also bring a degree of freedom.” Persson, *Swedish Court*, 101.

30 Visits from men to the *Frauenzimmer* were limited. No male over the age of 12 was allowed to stay in the rooms, and men were expressly forbidden from visiting the *Frauenzimmer* at night. Exceptions were made for the physician in the case of illness.

space at court. The mobility of all the women inside it was strictly controlled, and contact with men was strongly limited in order to protect the women's sexual honour and to maintain a Catholic lifestyle for them. Munich court instructions restricted the movements of female officials more than those of male officeholders; this restraint may have reduced their opportunities for action at times. In the following paragraphs, three aspects of the movement allowed to women will be highlighted; they were frequently stated in the Munich court instructions.

Particular attention was paid to appearance, the exclusivity of this female group, and punctuality. For example, the instructions explicitly state that the young women should get up sufficiently early "so that not only the young noblewomen come to the sermon and the service at the right time, but also their servants can appear at the same time, are not kept away or can only be present for a short time."<sup>31</sup> In addition, unmarried noblewomen were required to remain within a largely female social structure and were only allowed to speak to courtiers under the supervision of a court mistress or in public. For this reason, neither noblewomen nor their servants were permitted "to go out into the city without considerable cause".<sup>32</sup> Even with justifiable reasons, women could leave the court three times per week. There were also further restrictions; young women could not stay out longer than permitted and were always to be accompanied by the court mistress or another person.<sup>33</sup>

It was permissible for ladies-in-waiting to sit in a carriage and talk to courtiers who rode their horses next to the carriage. Even in this scenario, though, certain manners had to be visibly maintained in two ways: in physical distance and in the choice of words. It was not permitted under any circumstances for a courtier to sit down in the carriage with the ladies. The same applied to the *Frauenzimmer*; courtiers were not to "stay in the corridors or halls, still less upstairs in their [the women's] rooms".<sup>34</sup> A few years

31 "das nit nur sye Freylen zur rechten Zeit zu der Predig[t] und den Gottesdienst komen, sond[ern] auch ihre dienerinen zu gleicher Zeit dabey erscheinen, zuhönnen, nit abgehalten od[er] verkürzt sein mögen", BayHStA, Geh. HA, Hofhaushaltsakten 638. Kägler, *Frauen am Münchener Hof*, 307.

32 "ohne erhebliche ursach in die Statt [nit] hinaus gehen", BayHStA, Geheimes Hausarchiv (Abt. III), Hofhaushaltsakten 512 and Hofhaushaltsakten 638. See also Kägler, *Frauen am Münchener Hof*, 319.

33 The instructions state that in this situation, the court mistress should always be present "zu gebührender aufsicht, und beobachtung" ("for due care, attention, and observation"). See Kägler, *Frauen am Münchener Hof*, 319–20.

34 "auch nit auff den Gängen oder Saalen noch weniger oben in ihren Zimmer [...] aufhalten". In the seventeenth century, courtiers were permitted to accompany ladies-in-waiting up to the staircase of the *Frauenzimmer*. See BayHStA, Geheimes Hausarchiv (Abt. III), Hofhaushaltsakten 361.

later, this section of the instructions was revised to explicitly forbid men from staying in the upper rooms together with the ladies-in-waiting. If this regulation was violated, the ladies were to be dismissed. Even interactions with close relatives were newly regulated; the instructions now stated that “no courtiers should dine with the ladies, nor should any of their closest blood relatives, whether they be fathers or brothers, be allowed to dine with the ladies or to enter the room of a lady, if she were also a daughter or sister”.<sup>35</sup>

Such court instructions were repeatedly reissued, suggesting that certain norms of conduct were often not followed. A comparison of different sets of instructions reveals that some guidelines were consistently transgressed. One example was incidents where ladies were looking out of a window giggling, while another example refers to ladies making eye contact with male officeholders from a window. The fact that the court instructions discussed noblewomen as well as maidservants reveals that these rules and the ideals of chastity were not individualised according to concepts of class. A range of “normative” sources evokes a strictly monitored *Frauenzimmer*, which remained locked at night and which ideally separated men and women—for instance, through the rule that the women of the *Frauenzimmer* should never be left alone.

However, the young aristocratic women could not be wholly isolated. The symbolic and pragmatic opportunities afforded to the collective group of pious, loyal, and chaste women in the Munich palace included a degree of power and authority. If these opportunities were to be acted upon, it was not possible to have strict boundaries between the *Frauenzimmer* and the rest of the court. Regine Maritz recently introduced a convincing description of the limits—or rather the walls—of the *Frauenzimmer* as permeable and forming a membrane between one courtly group and another.<sup>36</sup>

At first glance, then, Ulrike Strasser’s observation that privacy was truly inconceivable at early modern courts still seems to hold true. In 2004, Strasser wrote: “The early modern society [...] still considered the household a part of the public sphere. [...] Privacy, as we have come to know it, was inconceivable in the early modern world of overlapping collectivities.”<sup>37</sup> On closer inspection, however, areas of private retreat do emerge, and were indeed

35 “das keine Cavaliers bey dem Speisen der Damen sich einfündten, ja auch keinen d[er] nechsten Bluets Verwandten, er mechte auch Vatter, od[er] Brueder sein, erlaubt seye, bey denen Damen zuspeisen, od[er] in d[a]s Zimer einer Dame, wan Sye auch Tochter, od[er] Schwester were, zugehen”, Kägler, *Frauen am Münchener Hof*, 320.

36 Maritz, “Gender as a Resource of Power”, 67.

37 Ulrike Strasser, *State of Virginity: Gender, Religion, and Politics in an Early Modern Catholic State* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 9.

formally established. There were specific times when all noblewomen were required to be present at court. There was the desirable obligation to serve at court, but there was also the right to days off, as well as regular weeks without court service. This meant that rarely were all ladies-in-waiting, maids of honour, let alone the entire service staff of valets, court maids, and chambermaids, staying in the *Frauenzimmer* at the same time. Depending on the weekly schedule, a lady-in-waiting could have hours or days off. There were so-called "duty weeks" and weeks in which individual servants were not on duty.<sup>38</sup> These circumstances reduced the actual entourage of the electresses; merely a fraction of the female officeholders were actually on duty at the same time. However, it was not simply the periods of service that led to a reduced *Hofstaat*. Rather, recurring events of court life also show that everyday court life consisted of patterns of scaling down. For instance, the entire entourage would have been a hindrance and would have not held its usual symbolic role during leisure activities and the travel by the electoral couple. Even hunting trips to Lake Starnberg or pleasure cruises on ships might not be official occasions that required all the *Hofstaat* women to accompany the electress and the princesses. Instead, a clear distinction was made between the official representative body and private occasions.

An element of court life that was neither public nor private was religious piety. The public display of religious piety, for instance on pilgrimages, was cultivated by the electress as the Catholic mother of the country, and it was also clearly deemed effective in terms of publicity. Accordingly, the Sunday visits to mass as well as processions and high offices on Catholic holidays were among the occasions when the electress presented herself to the public with her assembled entourage. On these occasions, it was obligatory for all noblewomen to accompany the electress on foot, walking behind her, or to publicly ride to church in their own carriages. The church calendar of festivities thus shaped the attendance of individual members of the court as well as the daily and weekly rhythm of the entire court.

At the same time, however, religious piety also encompassed private devotion. Not all the religious actions of the electresses may be understood as politically motivated demonstrations. The electresses clearly possessed deep personal piety, which manifested itself in the form of prayers, endowments, and the reading of religious texts. Not only did the libraries of the electresses contain instructions for meditations, lives of the saints, and religious devotional literature, but they were also personally involved in congregations and prayer associations. Nevertheless, attendance at mass or devotional

38 Cf. Kägler, *Frauen am Münchener Hof*, 419–20.

celebrations in the Baroque era, even on a small scale within the Munich residence, can by no means be separated from princely self-fashioning.

### Defending Privacy? A Nightmare Experience Leading to Expulsion from the Court

The Munich court instructions give valuable insights into how everyday life at court was to be organised. They also highlight special situations that could arise during travel or leisure activities and the rules of conduct that were used to control and also isolate the female entourage, especially unmarried young noblewomen. To ensure the moral coexistence of women and men at the Munich court, emphasis was placed on hierarchy, obedience to the court mistress, and social self-control within the group of ladies-in-waiting. All outside contacts were regulated; even the male servants with whom there was direct contact were handpicked, and this contact was strictly limited.

Harsh punishments were meted out when the rules were blatantly violated. The case of Maria Catharina von Salburg vividly illustrates what happened to women who violated basic court rules. Salburg was a lady-in-waiting, and therefore unmarried, when it was proven in 1664 that she was having an affair with Count Felix von Lodron (1635–72), who was married. It was established that she had been alone, without the careful supervision of a matron-chaperone, in the same room with Count Lodron. Moreover, the administrative records indicate that the very room where Salburg and the count were alone, had been locked from the inside. Regardless of what actually happened, the possibility of an unmarried young noblewoman being alone in a room with an adult man did not fit within the legal concept of courtly privacy.

Electress Henriette Adelaide admitted that the lady-in-waiting had at first behaved well in the performance of her duties. In a letter dated 7 September 1664, though, the electress described the events as follows:

However, after we went to Regensburg at the beginning of this current year, together with our beloved husband the elector, our female *Hofstaat* was allowed to talk more with the courtiers in view of the foreign people who were now visiting us, the aforementioned Fräulein von Salburg took advantage of this opportunity, and because we ourselves were indisposed for a long time and could not exercise our normal supervision, she has taken advantage of this freedom in such a way that she has made unseemly love to Count Felix von Lodron, who has a wife [...] as letters exchanged

between them [...] sufficiently reveal, to such an extent that she [Salburg] had no hesitation, if Count Lodron's wife could be put out of the way [...] even to marry him.<sup>39</sup>

Although many other ladies-in-waiting sought a good match, the accusations Salburg faced were serious: intimate relations behind closed doors and the intention to marry a man who was already married. To make matters worse, when Salburg was confronted with the allegations, she did not deny them. Consequently, Salburg was expelled from the Munich court and explicitly forbidden to have any further contact with other court ladies so that they would avoid her bad influence. Salburg was also unable to return to her parents' household and was forced to enter a convent. Interestingly, former fellow court ladies with whom she stayed in contact while she was in the convent were specified as "private contacts".

### Outlook: Rare Insights Based on Ego-Documents

The case of Maria Anna Catharina von Salburg raises the question of whether contacts without the context of a court office were automatically defined as private contacts. Could contacts outside the *Hofstaat* and also appearances outside the court, from which Salburg was excluded, also be understood as private contacts? Documentary evidence that would answer these questions is largely lacking. In his study on piety at court, Ferdinand Kramer regretted the absence of court diaries for Munich, as most "normative" sources concentrate on public appearances, social hierarchies, ceremonies, and religious obligations.<sup>40</sup> However, a few studies based on

39 "demnach wür unß aber neben unsers fr[eundlich] g[e]liebten Herrn Gemahls des Churfürsten Ld. zu anfang diß lauffenden Jahrs nacher Regensburg begeben, uns unseren Frauenzimmer in ansehung der frembden Leüth, welche unß iezo weilen besuecht, mehrers erlaubt gewesen, mit den Cavallieren zu reden, hat ermelte von Salburg sich dieser occasion bedient, und auß anlaß, daß wür wegen zuegestandtnr, und nit weniger ein geraume Zeith alhier continuierter Leibsindisposition nit alzeit selbst gegenwärtig sein und unser gewöhnliche aufsicht haben khünden, solche libertet dergestalt müßbraucht, sonderbar aber mit dem Graf Felix von Lodron, welcher vorhin ein Weib hat sich in unzimbliche Lieb [...] wie thailß zwischen ihnen gewexlete und hiemit khommende Brief genuegsamb zu erkhennen geben, in so weit eingelassen, daß sie auch nit scheuch getragenen hette, wan ermelten Grafens ieziges weib unvermerckht aus dem weg geraumbt werden khünden, sich mit ihme gar zu verhelichen", BayHStA, Kasten schwarz 16649.

40 Ferdinand Kramer, "Piety at Court", 287: "court diaries do not exist for Munich. Sources of this sort would, of course, be extremely helpful in allowing us to see more clearly the religious practices themselves, and especially how they changed over a longer period of time."

early modern personal sources, (for instance, diaries, letters, and writing calendars) have been published.<sup>41</sup> They include short chronicle-like records of clergymen from the second half of the seventeenth century, and weekly calendar notes from various noblemen, including Johann Maximilian IV. von Preysing-Hohenaschau (1687–1764), Andreas Felix von Oefele (1706–80), and Theodor Joseph von Ingenheim (1733–1807). These noblemen made diary notes in widely varying degrees of detail.<sup>42</sup> Especially popular were weekly calendars made in a small notebook with empty columns. These calendar notebooks were particularly widespread in aristocratic circles, although none of them was intended to reveal a private self.<sup>43</sup>

Count Preysing kept a diary with brief, often even abbreviated, entries, but he wrote for over 40 years.<sup>44</sup> On the other hand, the court librarian Andreas Felix von Oefele kept a personal diary in Latin that occasionally contains intimate details, including sexual references, written in ancient Greek. The diary also records sporadic moments of self-reflection, addresses primarily piety, religion, family life, and his professional activities as a scholar and librarian.<sup>45</sup> The diary entries of lesser nobles, for instance Sebastian

41 A still valid overview of research on ego-documents can be found in the following articles: Volker Depkat, "Ego-Documents", in *Handbook of Autobiography/Autofiction. Volume 1: Theory and Concepts*, ed. Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf (Boston: De Gruyter, 2019), 262–67; Marijke J. van der Wal and Gijsbert Rutten, "Ego-Documents in a Historical-Sociolinguistic Perspective", in *Touching the Past: Studies in the Historical Sociolinguistics of Ego-Documents*, eds. Marijke J. van der Wal and Gijsbert Rutten (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2013), 1–18; Karl von Greyerz, "Ego-Documents: The Last Word?", *German History* 28:3 (2010): 273–82. The concept of early modern "ego-documents" has recently also found its way into management and organisational history. Cf. Morton Tinning and Christina Lubinski, "Ego-Documents in Management and Organizational History", *Management & Organizational History* 17:3/4 (2022): 166–88.

42 The so-called *Libro Originale* was written by Antonio Spinelli, the confessor of Electress Henriette Adelaide, and covers the period from December 1673 to December 1700, including many retrospective reports. See Fabian Pius Huber, *'Mut zu prächtigen Dingen': Die Theatinerkirche in München* (Lindener: Kunstverlag Josef Fink, 2019), 22.

43 On the private self, self-fashioning, and ego-documents see Mary Fullbrook and Ulinka Rublack, "In Relation: The 'Social Self' and Ego-Documents", *German History* 28:3 (2010): 263–72. Cf. Mareike Böth, *Erzählweisen des Selbst: Körperpraktiken in den Briefen Liselottes von der Pfalz (1652–1722)* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2015); Elisabeth Schläwe, *Ins Gedächtnis geschrieben: Leben und Schreiben der Eleonora Wolff Metternich zur Gracht (1679–1755)* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2020), 23–24; Helga Meise, *Das archivierte Ich: Schreibkalender und höfische Repräsentation in Hessen-Darmstadt (1624–1790)* (Darmstadt: Hessische Historische Kommission, 2002), 47.

44 See Stefan Pongratz, *Adel und Alltag am Münchener Hof: Die Schreibkalender des Grafen Johann Maximilian IV. Emanuel von Preysing-Hohenaschau (1687–1764)* (Kallmünz: Michael Laßleben 2013), 20–31.

45 See Markus Christopher Müller, *Ein Gelehrter am Münchener Hof: Die Tagebücher des Andreas Felix von Oefele (1706–1780)* (Kallmünz: Michael Laßleben, 2020).



von Pemler (Hurlach/Leutstetten) (1718–72) and Theodor von Ingenheim (Burghausen), provide us with insights into aristocratic life away from Munich and the court. Such diaries read sometimes like account books and reminders of public obligations as landowners and electoral administrators.<sup>46</sup>

All of these male diary writers had close ties to the Munich court and seem to link three elements with privacy. In each diary, leisure time was especially connected to spending time outside, for instance hunting, or inside playing cards or board games. Preysing repeatedly mentions court ladies taking part in hunting events; their participation could be considered a form of female privacy.<sup>47</sup> In addition, reading seems to have been associated with an idea of privacy, including in references to religious texts and to leisure hours spent with a book when the diary writer was alone or in the company of family members. Occasionally, both reading and playing games at night were linked to expenditures for wax and candles. These diaries thus make it clear that the ability to withdraw to a more private part of the court or the palace was a mark of status, not least because the activities performed after one withdrew required an alternative, potentially expensive, source of light.<sup>48</sup> Thirdly, all of these eighteenth-century diaries treat cases of illness as an entirely private matter. Not only was illness connected to not being on duty, but also healing methods were presented as something private, or concerning the private, not the representative or publicly visible, body.<sup>49</sup>

46 See Barbara Kink, *Adelige Lebenswelt in Bayern im 18. Jahrhundert: Die Tage- und Ausgabenbücher des Freiherrn Sebastian von Pemler von Hurlach und Leutstetten (1718–1772)* (Munich: Kommission für Bayerische Landesgeschichte, 2007). Elisabeth Heistingering has recently begun a dissertation focusing on Ingenheim's diary, which is preserved for the period 1783–93. Elisabeth Heistingering, "The Diaries of Theodor Joseph Freiherr von Ingenheim from the Years 1783–1793" (PhD diss., LMU Munich, ongoing). With reference to the nineteenth century, see also Megan Richardson on "self-fashioning" and privacy: Megan Richardson, *The Right to Privacy: Origins and Influence of a Nineteenth-Century Idea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 38–62. 47 Pongratz, *Adel und Alltag*, 220–31; Kägler, *Frauen am Münchener Hof*, 352; Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Preysing diaries, Cgm 5456:3, 2 June 1719.

48 This aspect still receives far too little attention, so I would like to refer here at least to Katherine Forsyth and Mark A. Hall, whose article on medieval Celtic board games deals with the importance of light sources. See Katherine Forsyth and Mark A. Hall, "Rhetoric and Reality in the Visual Culture of Medieval Celtic Board Games: Literary and Archeological Evidence Combined", in *Games and Visual Culture in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, eds. Vanina Kopp and Elizabeth Lapina (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020), 61.

49 Count Preysing, who obviously seems to have a slightly hypochondriac streak, notes down an extraordinary amount of information about medical cures, be it bloodletting, herbal medicine, or other treatments, including milk baths. See Pongratz, *Adel und Alltag*, 458–79. Cf. Paul Kléber Monod, *The Power of Kings: Monarchy and Religion in Europe. 1589–1715* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 36–37.

However, specifically female aspects of privacy are not addressed in these diaries and can only be deduced for individual situations, such as the hunt, in which selected ladies-of-waiting were known to have participated with the electress.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the *Frauenzimmer* cannot be linked directly to any form of “institutionalised privacy”. Instead, there are the interwoven levels of public obligation and non-public activities and interactions within the *Frauenzimmer*. Non-public activities, however, were usually exclusively female activities. Contemporaneous notions of privacy did not allow for secluded individual activities, at least not for the unmarried women at court. The electress’s task of supervising the ladies of the court and ensuring the best possible education for them was also reflected in the fact that acceptable privacy was always subject to two basic conditions: separation of men and women and a “four-eyes principle”, which meant that the unmarried court ladies were never left alone at court or in the surrounding town.<sup>50</sup> Thus, the sexual honour of the noble ladies-in-waiting could be privately protected. This honour was, in turn, a crucial resource for the symbolic power of the entire courtly household; it reinforced the court as an important, high-end marriage market and the centre of early modern politics, where strategies were negotiated and careers were made and ended.

The possibility of retreating temporarily into a kind of private sphere whilst not losing touch with the court increased with social rank. However, a clear separation of public and private was hardly possible. At the Munich court, with its system of representation and early modern performance of

50 The “four-eyes principle” is known in the Middle Ages and in the early modern period mainly from economic history; it was argued that money, as well as natural goods, should be only spent or accepted in the presence of at least two responsible counterscribers (in addition to written accounting). Chests with two keyholes and two different keys provide evidence of this practice, as do two signatures in surviving documents. On the “four-eyes principle” in early modern ducal administration (examples from Bavaria and Württemberg), see: Alois Igelspacher, *200 Jahre Oberster Rechnungshof: Die staatliche Finanzkontrolle in Bayern: Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Munich: ORH Bayern, 2012), 27; Carl Heinrich Hoffmann, “Rechnungsinstruktion 28. Februar 1551”, in *Sammlung der württembergischen Finanz-Gesetze, enthaltend die Cameral-Gesetze von 1495 bis 1805*, ed. August Ludwig Reyscher (Tübingen: Fues, 1845), 29. For similar reasons, the “four-eyes principle” emerges in courtly society when unmarried women were assigned a chaperone or when two ladies-in-waiting—though preferably more—were allowed to go out in a small group. Here, the “four-eyes principle” takes on a decidedly social function linked to the understanding of honour.

power, its methods for stabilising and safeguarding itself through regulations, and its subversive patterns of action, there appear to have been private spheres of early modern life. Yet, all these forms of private retreat were only temporarily private and could be merged into a form of publicity at any time.

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## 5. Public Displays of Affection: Creating Spheres of Apparent Royal Intimacy in Public

*Fabian Persson*

### Abstract

At the Swedish court in the 1770s, the entrées and regulations aimed at creating a detailed hierarchy of visible access to members of the aristocracy were not a list of men and women particularly close to the royal family. Instead, the entrées fulfilled several functions including imitation of Versailles. In particular, they could boost the prestige of a number of men and women. However, the men and women who received this status were almost all courtiers. Increasing their prestige thus also intensified the potential respect due to the court and, therefore, the monarch himself. The court connections needed for an entrée emphasised how the king was the undisputed centre of this new political system after the 1772 coup. The handing out of entrées to a few princes furthermore aimed to augment the prestige of the court around the king.

**Keywords:** entrées, bedchamber, palace space, inclusion, public perceptions, access

In 1774, General Jacob Magnus Sprengtporten (1727–86), a deeply difficult, not to say deranged, man, chose to lie down in the wardrobe staircase of Stockholm Palace in order to force a meeting with the king. People had to step over Sprengtporten until, after two hours, he was admitted to the small bedchamber in the king's inner rooms.<sup>1</sup> He had the right (at least

<sup>1</sup> Gustaf Julin, "Gustaf III och Jakob Magnus Sprengtporten", *Historisk Tidskrift* (1903): 275. For Sprengtporten, see also Hans Norman, "Jacob Magnus Sprengtporten (Sprengtport)", *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon* (2007–11).



in 1778) of entry, the *entrée*, both to the White Room (*Vita Rummet*) and to the King's Great Bedchamber (*Sängkammaren*) at Stockholm Palace. Why, then, did he lie down in the wardrobe staircase for two hours so that servants and courtiers needed to step over him? During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, royal decrees and regulations in Sweden—and in Denmark—made public who enjoyed access to certain rooms in the royal palace or to the royal box at the opera. The public nature of this ostensible proximity to the royal person is revealing, as it indicates that such regulations served several purposes. One was clearly to stem and control the flow of people seeking entry into the royal rooms. Another purpose was to frame these entries as marks of distinction, though not necessarily as a means to facilitate contact with the monarch. It could simply be in the interest of several parties that notable men and women were known to have access to the monarch. Lists of names of the people who were allowed to enter the royal rooms yields a snapshot less of who was closest to the king than of who was thought have sufficiently right rank and importance to be included. Conversely, most of the courtiers enjoying access would not be included in these lists.

Access to the ruler had to be regulated, despite the early modern ideal of sovereigns being freely accessible to their subjects. This was a convenient fiction that did not fool contemporaries and only a few later historians. Yet a monarch completely shut off from the outside world was not a viable way to rule. Isolation of the monarch may have been carried out during short periods of extreme crisis, such as royal illness, death or efforts to control a monarch, for example during a minority (and only then partially).<sup>2</sup> To rule, monarchs needed to meet people, but they also needed to be shielded from the clamorous and grasping throng of petitioners, hopefuls, and simple time-wasters.

Thus, crucial but at the same time challenging aspect of space at court was the degree to which it allowed interaction between monarch and subject. Giora Sternberg has provided a fascinating study of how aristocrats and princes at the court of Versailles played the hierarchical game on a number of levels, sometimes simply by being absent in order to enhance and protect status through interaction with the monarch.<sup>3</sup> The spatial organisation of

2 See, for example, Fabian Persson, "The Struggle for Access: Access during a Royal Minority, 1600–1672", in *The Key to Power? The Culture of Access in Early Modern Courts, 1400–1700*, eds. Dries Raeymaekers and Sebastiaan Derks (Leiden: Brill Academic Press, 2016), 202–231.

3 Giora Sternberg, *Status Interaction During the Reign of Louis XIV* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). Hannah Smith has also studied how the Georgian court was a key arena for British

a court created both meeting places and secluded places protected from outsiders. The function of space as both channel and barrier has been called the Newtonian principle of court history, most visible in the succession of doors and guards to filter out people who did not have the right to enter, until the heart of the royal rooms were reached.<sup>4</sup> In recent research, Jeroen Duindam and others have highlighted “spatial and temporal thresholds” to restrict access.<sup>5</sup> Two main spatial traditions have been discerned at early modern courts: the French tradition, and the Burgundian or Imperial tradition. Imperial—and German—courts upheld strong spatial boundaries between public and private spheres in the Burgundian tradition, in which a number of antechambers were used, and to which access was graded according to the social status of the entrants.

In Denmark, the resurgent absolutist monarchy deployed detailed regulations to clarify who was to be allowed into which room of the royal Palace in Copenhagen. These royal Danish spatial regulations (*gemaksordinanser*) were issued in 1660 and 1670. The most detailed was the *Gemaksordinansen* (The Room Ordinance) from 1670 that determined who was allowed to enter which room according to rank. It stated that:

In the first Anticamera or Antechamber, called the Green Room here at Our Palace in Copenhagen, there will be free and unhindered access to all Our Court and Chancery Gentlemen, all nobility, all honourary Councillors, Danish and German secretaries in the chancery, as well as assessors and secretaries in all the other government colleges, all military officers down to and including ensigns, all royal and court physicians, clergy, and mayors, councillors, and prominent burghers of this town as well as other important towns.<sup>6</sup>

After the Green Room came the second antechamber into which “will be allowed all ministers from foreign Princes and Potentates of whatever

elites in the eighteenth century. See Hannah Smith, *Georgian Monarchy: Politics and Culture, 1714–1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

4 David Starkey, D. A. L. Morgan, John Murphy, Pam Wright, Neil Cuddy, and Kevin Sharpe (eds), *The English Court: From the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War* (London: Longman, 1987), 2.

5 Jeroen Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles: The Courts of Europe’s Dynastic Rivals, 1550–1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 161; Hugh Murray Baillie “Etiquette and the Planning of the State Apartments in Baroque Palaces”, *Archaeologia*, 101 (1967): 169–99.

6 Rigsarkivet (RA), Copenhagen, DK C 6, SR 11.5.1670. Sebastian Olden-Jørgensen has kindly shared with me the text in Danish of “The Room Ordinance”; any mistakes in the translation are mine.

degree up to Resident's rank including all Our *Geheimeräte* [a typically German title also used in Denmark, indicating close councillors of the king but non-members of the Council of the Realm] and Councillors from the Duchies, Knights. All high officers in court, war chancery, Admiralty down to and including colonels and vice admirals, be they serving or retired." Then, further treasury officials, chancery officials, local officials, bishops, and mayors in Copenhagen were listed as having access to the second antechamber. In the third antechamber—"Our Own Ordinary Audience Chamber"—access was even more restricted. Here, "no one may enter unless We have summoned him, except those Councillors needed for some decisions as well as assistant secretaries who will take minutes or [be] present and this only in the hours these matters are at hand and directly after they will leave the room again."<sup>7</sup>

People were to keep out of the third audience chamber and behave with decorum and without noise in all the antechambers. Chamber Gentlemen would be in charge and observe that order was upheld. The royal pages and lackeys were specifically exhorted to not be noisy or disorderly in rooms and on stairs.<sup>8</sup> The Room Ordinance of 1670 is a fascinating and telling document that shows us the importance of both inclusion and exclusion. The people allowed more privileged access tended to be of higher rank, but the most restricted access, which provided direct access to the king, was mainly given to officials who needed to carry out their duties. The occupants of the first two antechambers were determined according to rank, but the spaces that offered the closest royal proximity were for people whom the king needed or wanted to see, rather than the many high-ranking people crowding the first two rooms.

In Swedish court ordinances, similar, though far less detailed, regulations reflected the desire to both restrict access and preserve order in the palace.<sup>9</sup> No detailed regulations were issued, even though different categories of courtiers were allowed access into different rooms.<sup>10</sup> The ordinances of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were more general than the Room Ordinance of 1670. The introduction of entrées to different rooms in 1773 brought a clear spatial hierarchy and nuance also to the Swedish court. It

7 RA, DK C 6, SR 11.5.1670

8 RA, DK C 6, SR 11.5.1670.

9 See Fabian Persson, *Making Room for Order: Space and Ordinances in Early Modern Residences* (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).

10 See Fabian Persson, "Thrice-Gorgeous Ceremony Taking Form: Expansion and Differentiation of Space at the Court of Sweden", in *Royal Residences as Places of Exchange in the Early Modern Period*, eds. Krista De Jonge and Konrad Ottenheim (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming).

had clearly existed before, but it was now systematised and more complex and formal. King Gustaf's introduction of the entrées, and indeed the levées, brought a tart response from the king's continental friends with whom he corresponded. One of his closest friends, Madame d'Egmont, sharply criticised the measures in a letter:

I was very sorry to learn that you have established etiquettes and entrées at your court. This is indeed the advice of a courtier, who thinks himself a favourite of a king more powerful because he has taken on a more exalted form. How could you adopt such childishness? I know there are puerile etiquettes in themselves, which are very important in their consequences, and have such a real effect that it is very essential to preserve them. All the exterior pomp, for example, which strike the crowd, usually renders the throne more respectable to the people; Orders, and rights of nobility—but to establish court etiquette is miserable!<sup>11</sup>

Madame d'Egmont, as a representative of aristocratic Enlightenment, and critical of the old ceremonious framework of monarchy, was deeply disappointed in King Gustaf, the fresh face of a modern enlightened rule, for using spatial concepts that were so old-fashioned. The king, however, was eager to elevate the royal person, especially after half a century of humiliating treatment at the hands of aristocrats and parliamentarians.

The new and systematised entrées focussed on into three different rooms at the Swedish court in 1773. At first glance, these entrées seemed to provide a favoured few with access to the king's more intimate area. The reality, as we shall see, was strikingly different.

The rooms to which entrées were given tended to be in themselves more public, such as the royal box at the opera or the state bedchamber. They showcased an intimacy between the king and a number of prominent men and women and did not reflect more significant daily proximity. Most of royal palace life occurred in other rooms, to which access was not as readily granted. In the inner rooms and on the wardrobe stairs, everyday life faced less immediate scrutiny, although it was nevertheless routinely vilified and viewed with great suspicion. The public displays of royal affection largely provided a shield for other activities beyond the public eye. Sprengtporten

11 Horace Marryat, *One Year in Sweden* (London: Murray, 1862), vol. 1, 329. The quote is from a letter by Madame d'Egmont.

had been a key person in the royalist *coup d'état* of 1772. This great service to the king put him in Sprengtporten's debt, yet he was quarrelsome and not the kind of man King Gustaf would want to have around at all times. He was thus rewarded with only access to the White Room and to the Great Bedchamber. As we shall see, formally granted access was not the same as regular access to the king.

Intimacy or proximity—I am hesitant to say privacy—at the Swedish court of Gustaf III had several layers and functions. The late-eighteenth-century tradition of three different spheres of royal space can still be seen in Stockholm Palace as the categories of state rooms (*appartement de parade*), the king's apartment (*appartement de société*), and the inner rooms (*appartement de commodité*).<sup>12</sup> This division may have reflected contemporaneous French ideas, but the actual use of the spaces echoed Swedish and German practices, and, of course, Gustaf III's personal and political needs. Continuing Swedish and German practices meant that access would still be regulated according to the particular spaces and that the business of government would be a major component of the more private sphere.

The space most used for public appearances was the second-floor apartment that King Gustaf had used as crown prince. After his accession in 1772, this apartment was refashioned into a space for public or semi-public appearances. It would henceforth be referred to in various sources as the Great Apartment or the Upper Apartment. In the outer rooms of the Great Apartment, which overlooked the city, the king duplicated the rooms below, but with greater magnificence and a different purpose. These rooms were not intended to be lived in, but to be the public showcase of the new, strong Swedish monarchy.

It is in this rather public and magnificent set of rooms that we find the formal entrées. In January 1773, the king introduced the entrées, regulations aimed at creating a detailed hierarchy of visible access for members of the aristocracy. He had visited Versailles only two years earlier, and had been immersed in French history and admiration for French culture since childhood. His first birthday after his coup was marked with lavish festivities, and as the courtier Baron Ehrensvärd noted, "His Majesty's Birthday celebrated, the entrées [were] introduced and the first Levé".<sup>13</sup>

12 See Fabian Persson, *Survival and Revival: Sweden's Court and Monarchy, 1718 to 1930* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020). The go-to study on the architecture of Stockholm palace is still Martin Olsson and Tord Nordberg, *Stockholms slotts historia*, 3 vols. (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1940–41).

13 Kungliga Biblioteket (KB), D 965. Notes by Gustaf Johan Ehrensvärd.

The king proceeded to hand out three different entrées: to the White Room, to the bedchamber, and to the royal box at the Opera.<sup>14</sup> The surviving lists focus on the situation in 1778, with some names added afterwards. About 90 people were given the entrée of the White Room, of whom slightly more than 60% were men and slightly more than 30% were women. It was a select group of people. They were all nobles, 84% of them members of the titled nobility (counts and countesses, barons and baronesses). Only 26 people were also given the coveted entrée of the bedchamber, and only one of these individuals was not a count or a baron. This entrée meant being present when the king was dressed in the new Levé ceremony.

A number of people (about 40 in 1778) were given the entrée for the king's box at the Opera. The opera entrées were listed by function rather than by name. These functions are all court offices, which was, as we will see, a recurring attribute of all individuals listed on entrées. Still other individuals were included in the royal box, though only under a strict protocol. "Otherwise no one has entrée, if he has not especially for each time by His Majesty been ordered when he will receive a billet d'entrée to the box from the Chamber Gentleman" ("Eljest får icke någon inträde om han ej särskildt för hvarje gång blifwer af Kongl. Majjt befald, då honom af kammarherren gifves en billet d'entrée i Logen").<sup>15</sup>

The entrées to the White Room and the bedchamber were further divided into three categories: the people who enjoyed entrée because of their office, the people who enjoyed entrée because of their previous office, and the people who enjoyed entrée "personally" as a mark of special favour. It is important to stress that having an entrée was not about power, but about visible status through symbolic access for members of the elite. The importance of this visible status was underlined by the fact that the system was consolidated within a few years into a framed list that was attached to a door and that listed the people entitled to the entrée to the White Room. King Gustaf did not invent this system since the entrée to the White Room dated to at least the 1750s.<sup>16</sup> The White Room was mainly used before royal court receptions, and the entrée was a public privilege of not having to wait with the throng of nobility and dignitaries in the adjoining Great Gallery.<sup>17</sup>

14 Slottsarkivet (SLA) Riksmarskalksämberet, Överkammarherrens journal, ff. 13–46. The lists are from 1778, but names have been added.

15 SLA Riksmarskalksämberet, Överkammarherrens journal, f. 46.

16 Rudolf Mauritz Klinckowström (ed.), *Riksrådet och Fältmarskalken m.m. Grefve Fredrik Axel von Fersens historiska skrifter* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1867–72), vol. 1, 57.

17 The Cour receptions was a key part of courtly life since at least the 1690s. See Persson, *Survival and Revival*, 2020, and Persson, *Women at the Early Modern Swedish Court*, 2021.

Sprengtporten was listed among the people given the entrée to the bedchamber and the White Room, but are some groups strategically absent from these lists? There were remarkably few leading politicians with high formal offices, such as the Councillors of the Realm. From 1778 to 1781, 19 aristocrats were councillors. Of these, only nine were given an entrée. The remaining ten councillors had to meet the king during Council and along with the crowds attending the weekly court receptions. Indeed, attendance at these receptions was considered essential in order to avoid falling out of favour with the king. Notably, the wife of one councillor, Count Gustav Adolf Hjärne (1715–1805), was given the entrée while he was left off the list. Clearly, she was included because she had served at court in a prominent position. As we shall see, court service rather than other offices was the *pons asinorum* to master in order to gain entrées.

Similarly, other high government office holders were also mostly excluded.<sup>18</sup> The presidents heading a number of the colleges (government authorities) were absent. Governors representing the monarch in various counties were likewise missing. Seven field marshals lived in Sweden during the late 1770s. Of these, only Count Fersen and Prince von Hessenstein were given entrées. A number of secretaries of state (*statssekreterare*) were highly influential across these years. The king relied on the able but infamous Elis Schröderheim (1747–95), as well as on Carl Erik Wadenstierna (1723–87), Johan von Heland (1713–86), Carl Fredrik Fredenheim (1748–1803), and others. His financial wizard, Johan Liljencrantz (1730–1815), was ridiculed for his lowly birth, but was still the main financial brain (much needed by a king who had little understanding of economy). All of these men were excluded from the entrées. As stated, they still had to attend the weekly court receptions, the *Cours*, but they had to rub elbows with the crowd of elite in the Great Gallery rather than wait in the White Room or attend the king's Levé in his bedchamber. We find the same scenario if we consider other important offices, such as generals, admirals, and the Chancellor of the Justiciary. They had to attend the weekly Cour receptions, but were not honoured with an entrée.

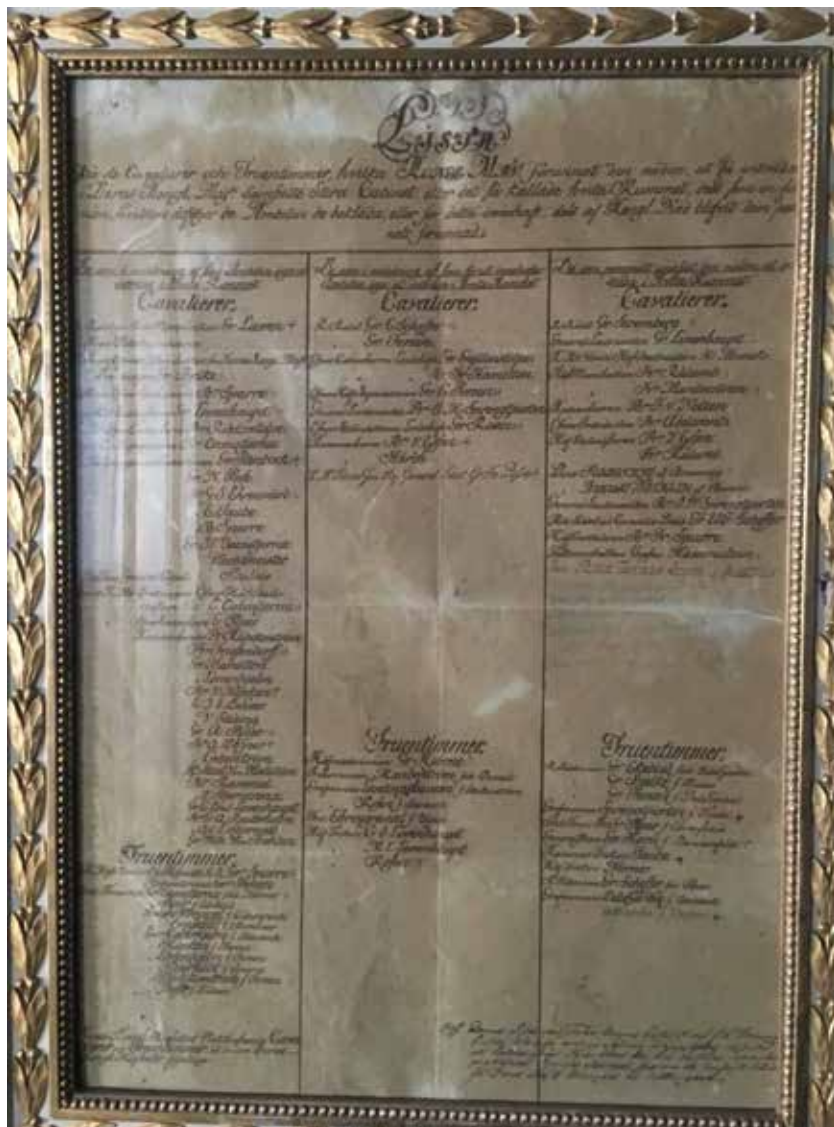
The presence of some individuals in the category of “entrée because of previous office” is telling. What “previous office” was meant was often unclear, and it apparently indicated the king's personal selection rather

18 Gunnar Artéus has studied the official lists of rank issued, especially with a focus on the strong position military officers were given. This can be seen as a backdrop to the prominence given to court offices in the entrées. Gunnar Artéus, *Krigsmakt och samhälle i frihetstidens Sverige* (Stockholm: Militärhistoriska förlaget, 1982).

than people who had held a particular office. The old politician Count Axel von Fersen (1719–94), one of the chiefs of the Hat Party before the royalist coup in 1772, was included; his most prominent offices had been Councillor, Speaker of the Nobility, and Field Marshal. However, other people who had held these offices were excluded. Fersen stood because of another position that he had held: Colonel of the Guards (1756–72). Similarly, Sprengtporten received an *entrée* after he served as Colonel of the Guards from 1772 until 1774. This military position clearly had a strong significance at court. Fersen's remarkable political achievements were not the reason for granting him an *entrée*; rather, this honour was bestowed on him because of his former courtly office. In the new political environment of 1778, the court was more important than all other arenas, and the king was determined to make this abundantly clear. Similarly, Councillor Carl Frederik Scheffer (1715–86) appears in this category of having received an *entrée* for previous office. As mentioned, most councillors were excluded, but Scheffer, apart from being an early royalist, also had held an important court office in the past. He had been the governor overseeing the education of the king's younger brothers.

The individuals who received an *entrée* as a personal favour from the king were a group handpicked by Gustaf III himself; in reality, however, he most likely included and excluded people from the other two groups as he saw fit. Some of the people in this third group were longstanding courtiers, such as Count Claes Stromberg (1698–1782) and Court Marshal Hans Gustaf Rålamb (1716–90). Others were specially favoured younger courtiers, for instance Hans Henric von Essen (1755–1824) and Claës Rålamb (1750–1826, son of Hans Gustaf Rålamb). A number of foreign princes were also included: Ferdinand of Brunswick-Lüneburg (1721–92), August Wilhelm of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel-Bevern (1715–81), and Friedrich Karl Ludwig of Schleswig-Holstein (1757–1816). In the early nineteenth century, the Hereditary Prince of Baden and the royal English Duke of Gloucester were added. The king also included Count Hessenstein, an illegitimate son of King Frederick I of Sweden. This man was also elevated by Gustaf III to become a prince. Another particularly individual favoured on this list was the young Count Magnus Fredrik Brahe (1756–1826). He was personally insignificant, but his family was seen as the premier counts of Sweden. His father, Erik Brahe (1722–56), had furthermore been executed after a failed royalist coup that had been planned, with a surprising lack of finesse, by the king's parents in 1756. Sprengtporten's brother, Johan Vilhelm (1720–95), had less clear court connections than most of the individuals in this group, apart from a brief time in the Guards as a young man. He was primarily a





5.1 Framed entrée list, c. 18<sup>th</sup> century, Gripsholm Castle, Mariefred. © Timothy Cox.

diplomat in Copenhagen, although it is likely that he was included because he was Sprengrporten's brother.

The public character of these entrées was particularly emphasised when the king had a list attached to the door of the White Room for all to see (Figure 5.1). The preserved copy of this list only mentions those with entrée to the White Room; the state bedchamber and the royal box at the Opera

are not included.<sup>19</sup> It is obvious that these entrées were intended to be semi-public performances. The cream of the Swedish elite (as well as some hopefuls) would regularly attend the royal court receptions in the Great Gallery. They would see who was allowed into the Great Bedchamber and into the White Room, and they could also read the list attached to the door. Thus, there was little risk of not noticing who these privileged individuals were. In some instances, the handing out of an entrée was even announced in the newspapers so that it could be read and disseminated throughout the kingdom.

Attendees of these royal ceremonies were likely to be included in the weekly suppers. In fact, so many people were invited to the weekly suppers that they were mockingly termed “the dragnet” by the king’s inner circle—his own “société”, as he referred to this exclusive group. The public nature of inclusion or exclusion was stressed here as well; at the weekly court receptions, Gustaf III began to carry a piece of paper, where he visibly jotted down who was to be invited to supper with him, “a new *façon* which makes many embarrassed”.<sup>20</sup> These invitations conferred prestige, but they were not meant to provide more intimate contact with the king. Such contact occurred at smaller suppers hosted by either royal favourites or the Ladies of the Palace. Only a select few were invited to these. Even the king’s sister-in-law, Duchess Hedvig Elisabeth Charlotta (1759–1818), was deeply frustrated at being excluded.

As we have seen, the entrées to the White Room and the king’s bedchamber were almost exclusively for men and women who served or had served in key court positions. At the same time, being an influential courtier did not automatically assure an entrée since some of the king’s closest confidants were excluded. For example, the favourite who would outshine all others was Gustaf Mauritz Armfelt (1757–1814). In 1783, he received the entrée to the White Room because of his office of Grand Chamber Gentleman (*överstekammarjunkare*). He had intimate evening conversations with the king from 1781 onwards, but this is not reflected in the entrées.<sup>21</sup> He was only given an entrée in 1783 when he was promoted to *överstekammarjunkare*, a newly created high court office. This was evidently in imitation of the four Premier Gentilhommes de la Chambre at Versailles, with the king justifying

19 Today, this copy is kept framed at the palace of Gripsholm.

20 Gustaf Näsström, *En gustaviansk dagbok: Johan Fischerströms anteckningar för året 1773* (Stockholm: Lagerström, 1951), 35.

21 Elof Tegnér, *Gustaf Mauritz Armfelt: Studier ur Armfelts Efterlemnade Papper Samt Andrra Handskrifna* (Stockholm, 1883), vol. 1, 41.

the introduction of this new office by arguing that ‘the title of Chamber Gentleman has at present been given to so many people at court that the six waiting on Us are often mixed up with the others, and, particularly at foreign courts, are not always given the distinction they should by their access to Our Own Person.’<sup>22</sup> Intimate access to the king’s person should give status and prestige.

At the heart of royal intimacy during the 1770s and 1780s was the inner circle, the king’s “société”. Some of these individuals had entrées, but many did not. Several would be invited to the weekly suppers, but, much more importantly, they were included in the more intimate suppers. The entrées to the Great Bedchamber and the White Room were focussed on the grand, more public ceremonies primarily held in the state rooms. However, the king spent far more time in his apartment on the floor below. Here, there was a similar set of rooms—a duplicate of the state rooms, but designed for socialising and work rather than display. These rooms corresponded in part to the French concept of an *appartement de société*. Contemporaries referred to these rooms as the “lower apartment” or the king’s “little apartment”.<sup>23</sup> Like the Upper Apartment, the Lower Apartment began with outward-facing, large rooms. Some meals, theatrical displays, card games, and other social activities occurred in these spaces. Here too were rooms for the more ‘private’ life of the king. The king spent a lot of his time in the rooms facing in towards the courtyard, and these were largely closed off to other people.

Evidently, the king’s *vie privée* was important, and he was not exposed to continuous public scrutiny. The king slept in the bedchamber in the courtyard-facing rooms, with a Page of the Body at the foot of his bed. Several pages became royal favourites, and as a symbol of their access to the king, they were given King’s Bedchamber keys in silver to wear. Contemporaries singled out the Chamber Pages and the Pages of the Body for special disdain. These young noblemen, in their teens or early twenties, served the king personally. One courtier noted that “they attend closest to His person, and can that way have opportunity to display both loyalty and make their expertise known, if they have any” (“de upvakta närmast dess person, de kunna således ha tilfällen at visa både sin tilgifenhet och gora sig kände for kunskaper, om de dem ega”).<sup>24</sup>

22 SLA RMÄ Hovexpeditionen, 6 June 1783.

23 For the King’s own rooms, see Otto Sylvan (ed.), *En Stockholmskrönika: Ur C. C. Gjörwells brev* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1920), 61; Gjörwell to Jonas Gothenius, Stockholm, 2 September 1774

24 Erik Vilhelm Montan (ed.), *Dagbokanteckningar förda vid Gustaf III:s hof af friherre Gustaf Johan Ehrensward* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1877), vol. 2, 167.

When the king wanted to eat alone, he would take his meals in “the Wardrobe.” The courtyard-facing rooms had always been where Gustaf III could enjoy his favourite pastimes and spend time with his circle of intimates. Some of the space in these inner rooms was taken up with corridors, stairs, and chambers for storage and body servants, which were often referred to collectively as “the Wardrobe.” The inner rooms could be reached through the Wardrobe, and favourites seem to have used this entrance frequently. To outsiders, the Wardrobe was elusive, disreputable, and vaguely threatening. There were rumours of eccentric goings-on—for instance, of séances and attempts to teach a magpie to talk.<sup>25</sup> These spaces were also as an important work space for the king. They were the main areas where daily decision-making occurred. One official’s notes about various political discussions with the king are marked “the passage through the Wardrobe”, “the little room by the Wardrobe”, and “the bedchamber”.<sup>26</sup>

The inner rooms could create a barrier shielding the monarch from even his closest advisors; one of Gustaf III’s main advisors complained that when the king was ill, “the secrecy which holds sway in the Wardrobe seems suspect to me”.<sup>27</sup> Gustaf himself grasped both the importance of the Wardrobe and its dubious reputation. He instructed one of his diplomats that a good envoy “never neglects to curry favour with the favourites, even if they are from the Wardrobe”.<sup>28</sup> It was the ability to come and go discreetly that made the Wardrobe useful for secret meetings. When, after Gustaf III’s death, one of his favourites was disgraced, he was only allowed to meet the regent in the Wardrobe until the scandal had subsided.<sup>29</sup>

The French practice of a *petit appartement* (roughly equivalent to an *appartement de commodité*), for instance at Versailles, had thus been echoed in Stockholm Palace. In France, the importance of the *petit appartement* increased across the eighteenth century; Louis XV would sleep in a bedchamber there rather than in the state bedchamber. To call these rooms private would, however, disguise the fact that they were both the king’s more intimate sphere and his main working space. In Sweden, the inner rooms

25 See, for example, Carl Tersmeden’s comments in 1750 in Nils Erdmann (ed.), *Amiral Carl Tersmedens memoare* (Stockholm: Wahlström and Widstrand, 1917), vol. 4, 83.

26 Per Olof von Asp, in Peter Wieselgren (ed.), *De la Gardieska archivert* (Lund: Lundbergiska boktryckeriet, 1821–43), vol. 18, 104–112.

27 RA Börstorpsamling E 2969, Elis Schröderheim to Fredrik Sparre, Gripsholm, 26 May 1782.

28 Carl Gustaf d’Albedyhll (ed.), *Anteckningar rörande f. d. Ministern, Kammarherren Friherre G. D’Albedyhll’s tjenstgöring under Konung Gustaf III’s Regementstid* (Stockholm, 1855), 11.

29 Henrik Schüick (ed.), *Rutger Fredrik Hochschilds memoarer* (Stockholm: Geber, 1909), vol. 3, 129.

were used for political meetings and to conduct business. In a schedule drawn up for a few weeks in the 1770s, the king was to spend negligible amount of time in the Council Chamber with the Royal Council. Instead, most of his time was spent in the Council Cabinet in the inner rooms, and in *cours* and *levées*. In the Cabinet, the king gathered select councillors and secretaries to do the business of government. A critical observer claimed that “deciphered dispatches, suggestions, plans, and other papers of the greatest importance, were scattered and strewn around the king’s writing desk in his cabinet”, making them easy to copy or purloin. All you needed was to suborn a page, lackey, or valet “to whom everything was accessible”.<sup>30</sup>

The different layers of royal proximity were visible in many royal spaces at the time. The royal box at the Opera was fairly public, and the king would show himself there to be adored by his subjects.<sup>31</sup> King Gustaf was usually met by great applause and acclamation when appearing at the Opera in the 1770s, but an English diplomat reported how these public appearances could also go awry. For instance, in 1780, when the king attended the Opera, a few people began to applaud him, “but the sullen Manner of the far Major Part of the House made it desirable that no such attempt had been made”.<sup>32</sup> An aristocrat noted some years later how the king attended the theatre, having returned from a journey and was greeted “with a thunderous huzzah, clapping of hands and long live the king”.<sup>33</sup> In the 1780s, the king had a set of rooms at the new Opera where he could dine and relax with a small group of courtiers. To be accepted into this select group was a stamp of one’s “comme il faut”.<sup>34</sup> Above the royal Great Box was a smaller latticed box, the so-called Small Box, from which the king could observe performances and

30 The observer was Carl Gideon Sinclair and the statement is located in Carl Bonde and Cecilia af Klercker (eds.), *Hedvig Elisabeth Charlottas dagbok* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1902–42), vol. 2, 46.

31 On social life at the opera, My Helsing has published an interesting article on “Court and Public in Late Eighteenth-Century Stockholm: The Royal Urban Life of Duchess Charlotte, c. 1790”, *The Court Historian*, 20:1 (2015): 43–60. She also makes the argument of royal visibility through public appearances as a strategy. The outward image of the king has also been discussed by Mikael Alm and Henrika Tandefelt. See Mikael Alm, *Kungorsord i elfte timmen: språk och självbild i det gustavianska enväldets legitimitetskamp 1772-1809* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2002), and Henrika Tandefelt, *Konsten att härskas: Gustaf III inför sina undersåtar* (Helsingfors: Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland, 2008).

32 The National Archives (TNA), London, State Papers (SP) 95/130, “Wroughton to Suffolk, Stockholm, 11 January 1780”.

33 RA Börstorpsamlingen Brev till Carl Leuhusen Gerhard Enhörning to Carl Anders Leuhusen, Stockholm, 4 December 1789.

34 Bernd von Schinkel and Carl W. Bergman, *Minnen ur Sveriges nyare historia* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1855), vol. 1, 363.

spectators without being seen. There is no extant list of entrées handed for the Small Box at the Opera.

A smaller group of courtiers and other people present at court would be invited to royal palaces outside Stockholm: the tiny Haga or the more stately palaces of Drottningholm and Ulriksdal. The Haga could house very few people, but Drottningholm was bigger. At the latter, the king had an adjoining *maison de plaisance* built in the Chinese style. Only a select few were invited to the days spent at this building. Suppers could also be served here in the Confidence Room (Figure 5.2), which was a small pavilion where the food was put on the table at a lower floor and then hoisted with machinery through the floor into the small dining room above (Figure 5.3). There was consequently no need for prying servants' eyes and ears to be near the dining room, and confidences (or secrets) could be spoken at table. A similar confidence dining room was constructed at Ulriksdal. These rooms offered an environment of intimate sociability in which the king could relax with a small circle—a sharp contrast to the weekly suppers at Stockholm Palace.

Public intimacy with the king also had sartorial manifestations. The most obvious was the golden key, a practice introduced at the Swedish court in 1751, while later the king's and queen's Chamber Gentlemen enjoyed golden keys "à droit", a privilege not accorded to the princes' and princesses' Chamber Gentlemen.<sup>35</sup> The keys were worn ostentatiously, fastened on one's clothing, but clothes themselves could tell of one's proximity to the royal person.<sup>36</sup> Interestingly, the silver key of the Pages of the Body and the Chamber Pages mentioned earlier might in reality have signified closer proximity to the king's person than the golden keys.

New versions of court uniform and court dress were established in 1778 for men and women presented at court. These individuals were of noble birth and were likely to take part in some of the weekly suppers and court receptions, but most of them were not close to the royal family. They could display their inclusion and membership in court society, even though many were in reality not part of the king's "société". An interesting sartorial marker preceded the more common court uniform of 1778. Over Christmas 1772, King Gustaf decided to create a court outfit and to name it after the place

35 SLA Hovkontoret, Kungligt brev, Stockholm 8 May 1751; KB B VII:1.20 Handlingar rörande Claes Ekeblads förvaltning av överstemarskalksämberbet; RA Överceremonimästarämbetets arkiv vol. 33 (1821).

36 Eva Bergman, *Nationella dräkten: En studie kring Gustaf III:s dräktreform* (Stockholm: Nordiska museet, 1938).



5.2 Confidance Room, c. 18<sup>th</sup> century, Chinese Pavilion, Royal Palace, Stockholm. © Fabian Persson.



5.3 Table hoist, c. 18<sup>th</sup> century, Confidance Room, Chinese Pavilion, Royal Palace, Stockholm. © Fabian Persson.

where they were celebrating, Ekolsund Castle. Ekolsund Uniform was only to be worn by a strictly limited number of courtiers; it thus indicated a high degree of favour from and proximity to the king. This uniform preceded similar initiatives in other countries to designate royal favour by clothing, such as the Windsor Uniform. The Ekolsund Uniform survived after 1778 and continued to be highly exclusive. Another sartorial signal of royal intimacy could be royal miniature portraits. However, possession of these portraits

was also linked to status. All the women serving the queen as Ladies of the Palace expected to receive such miniatures. However, these Ladies of the Palace were not chosen by the king rather than by the queen. They had apartments in the palace and hosted suppers, but the queen was not close to them. Indeed, she actively disliked at least one of them and refused to give her the royal portrait.

## Conclusion

The creation of royal intimacy at the Swedish court was a layered process that defies easy interpretation. The entrées handed out were not a list of men and women particularly close to the king. Instead, the entrées fulfilled several functions, in addition to imitating the Versailles court, which was always useful for Gustaf III. The entrées could boost the prestige and standing of a number of men and women. However, the men and women who received entrées were almost all courtiers. In reality, increasing their prestige also intensified the respect that the court and the monarch himself could garner. The court connections needed for an entrée emphasised how the king was the undisputed centre of the new political system that emerged after the 1772 coup. The handing out of entrées to a number of princes further elevated the court around the king.

The entrées also indicate the king's ideal society. They reflected his vision of ruling with the old nobility—or rather his wish to be seen to be doing so since his inner circle was more diverse in reality. When performing in public, the king should be seen surrounded by his most illustrious aristocrats. Thus, courtiers but few ministers or pen pushers were included in the weekly rituals of royal proximity. While the ministers, pen pushers, generals, and the other aristocrats would attend the weekly receptions and suppers, they would not be on display as being close to the king. Nor would the men and women who were closest to the king be displayed either. They were often too young, too junior, or in some cases of too undistinguished a family be shown off. One of the king's inner circle who did receive an entrée, Baron Adolf Fredrik Munck (1749–1831), is also the only one noted as having lost his entrée to the bedchamber. When he fell from grace in a scandal concerning the forgery of *fahnehielmarna* (fired tokens printed in the form of notes and only valid in Finland), the entrée was rescinded. The king's inner circle did not depend on entrées to sustain their intimacy with Gustaf III. His “société” had access to his inner rooms, as well as to his confidence suppers in the Chinese pavilions at Drottningholm and Ulriksdal.



It was only as he lay dying in a freezing cold March of 1792 that Gustaf III slept in the Great Bedchamber on the top floor of Stockholm Palace. The room, which had been used for his levée in the mornings since 1773, was where the king slept for the last fortnight of his life, but never before that. The fact that the Great Bedchamber was not a room for sleeping, but for public appearances, was part of the spatial complexity of the court. The Great Bedchamber was now crammed with people, several of whom used their entrées for the first time to be with a sleeping king rather than attend his dressing ceremony. King Gustaf, a consummate royal performer to his death, saw that dying in public would serve his memory and his son better than dying in the comfort of his inner rooms with his intimates. It was his last effort to carry out, with suitable people and a suitable space, a politically useful display of affection.

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## 6. The Translation of Court Culture from the Burgundian Court to the Kingdom of Castile: The Sovereign's Privacy and Relationship with Court Artists

*Oskar J. Rojewski*

### Abstract

This study compares court ordinances, chronicles, and state portraits from the Duchy of Burgundy and the Kingdom of Castile to explore the relationship between the sovereigns of these two courts and the painters in their employ. Indeed, the surviving sources that describe the court structure and hierarchies affirm that court painters were among the courtiers who could access the sovereign's chamber. Since creating the ruler's image would most probably have required direct contact and interaction with the ruler, there was a practical aspect to painters being granted permission to access the royal apartments and the monarch's private spaces. Together with court culture and the state portrait, the practice of privacy spread from the Burgundy towards Castile in the last decades of the fifteenth century.

**Keywords:** court artist, privy chamber, patronage, portraiture, ordinances

The international culture of Europe's kingdoms was established around 1400 and consolidated through the spread of the International Gothic. However, this international culture can also be detected in the manner in which monarchs began to govern their respective states. The transition from the Middle Ages to the early modern era can be traced not only through the diverse modes of literary, cultural, artistic, and visual expression, but also in the everyday practices of European courts. An ever-increasing output of

official documents, which suggests the bureaucratisation of court life, became commonplace at courts. Linked especially to France and, above all, to the ordinances of St Louis,<sup>1</sup> this phenomenon permits a detailed analysis of the intersection of politics, culture, and artistic patronage during the fifteenth century. Furthermore, official documents provide insight into the ruler's private sphere, which, in a phenomenological sense, can be understood as the restricted space around his or her body.<sup>2</sup> This chapter considers the role of the monarch's body in the private sphere at the Burgundian court and the Castilian court, where the royal chamber was identified as the "chambre" and "cámara", respectively. I compare Burgundian and Castilian court documents to explore the relationship between the sovereigns of these two courts and their painters, who were defined as court servants and granted the privilege and duty of contributing to the creation of the official image of the state by painting official portraits of the monarch and his family.<sup>3</sup> The typology of the royal portrait, which was disseminated over the course of the fifteenth century, was to some extent an expression of the religious and mystical movement of the *devotio moderna*, yet it was combined with a sense of realism and individualism that evoked the individual character of a specific person.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the creation of official images of the ruler and his family would most probably have required direct contact and interaction with the ruling family. That is, there was a practical aspect to the permission granted to painters for entering the royal apartments and the monarch's private spaces.<sup>5</sup>

1 Werner Paravicini, "Ordre et règle: Charles le Téméraire en ses ordonnances de l'hôtel", *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 143 (1999): 314; Jean-Marie Cauchies, "Un état inventeur de formes d'organisation?", in *La cour de Bourgogne et l'Europe: le rayonnement et les limites d'un modèle culturel*, eds. Torsten Hiltmann, Franck Viltart, and Werner Paravicini (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2013), 110; Werner Paravicini, "Structure et fonctionnement de la cour bourguignonne au XVe siècle", *Publications du Centre Européen d'Etudes Bourguignonnes* 28 (1988): 68–70.

2 For more information about the approach of the Centre for Privacy Studies, see: Mette Birkedal Bruun, "Privacy in Early Modern Christianity and Beyond: Traces and Approaches", *Annali dell'Istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento*, 44:2 (2018): 42.

3 Marianna Jenkins, *The State Portrait: Its Origin and Evolution* (New York: College Art Association, 1947) 8–9; Dagmar Eichberger, "Margaret of Austria's Portrait Collection: Female Patronage in the Light of Dynastic Ambitions and Artistic Quality", *Renaissance Studies* 10:2 (1996): 268–69.

4 Till-Holger Borchert, "The Image of Charles the Bold", in *Splendour of the Burgundian Court: Charles the Bold (1433–1477)*, eds. Susan Marti, Till-Holger Borchert, and Gabriele Keck (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), 73–81; Ingrid Falque, *Devotional Portraiture and Spiritual Experience in Early Netherlandish Painting* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 109–12.

5 Oskar Jacek Rojewski, "The Prosopographical Approach for the Study of Valets de Chambre at the Court of Philip the Good and Charles the Bold", *Mémoire des princes angevins* 11 (2018), 34–46.

The documents chosen here to analyse the Burgundian court are the ordinances issued during the reigns of Philip the Good (1396–1467) and Charles the Bold (1419–77).<sup>6</sup> They represent one of the best-preserved, fifteenth-century collections of court documents in all of Europe.<sup>7</sup> To further consider the Burgundian court structure, I also consider the treatise by Olivier de la Marche (1425–1502), entitled *Estât de la maison du duc Charles de Bourgoingne, dit le Hardy*.<sup>8</sup>

For the second case study, which addresses the question of cultural dissemination of the state portrait in Castille, my analysis focusses on the court of Isabella the Catholic (1451–1504) during the final decade of the fifteenth century. Particular attention is devoted to the *nóminas* (salary registers),<sup>9</sup> which are comparable to the Burgundian ordinances, although the *nóminas* were issued more frequently and have been only partially conserved.<sup>10</sup> In order to contextualise the information that the *nóminas* provide about the Castilian court hierarchy, the *Nuevo libro de cuentas* (New Account Book), which was created in 1497, is examined. Through these two case studies, my chapter provides insight into the dissemination and modes of reception of the Burgundian model of court organisation. It also sheds light on the status of artists within the ruler's inner circle, especially how they were responsible for fabricating the monarch's image in both the Burgundian state and the Castilian kingdom.

Although my case studies have individual chronologies, it is important to highlight the close political, economic, and cultural ties between the two courts, which developed from the connections established and maintained over the course of the fifteenth century. From the early years of the reign of Philip the Good, his marriage strategy was intended to forge ties to royal families. This approach is evident from his first marriage to the daughter of

6 Jean-Marie Cauchies, *Les ordonnances générales de Philippe le Bon (1430–1467)* (Brussels: Service Public Fédéral Justice, 2014); Holger Kruse and Werner Paravicini, *Die Hofordnungen der Herzöge von Burgund, Herzog Philipp der Gute: 1407–1467* (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2005).

7 Jean-Marie Cauchies, “État bourguignon ou états bourguignons? de la singularité d'un pluriel”, in *Power and Persuasion: Essays on the Art of State Building in Honour of W. P. Blockmans*, eds. Peter Hoppenbrouwers, Antheun Janse, and Robert Stein (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 49–58.

8 Olivier de la Marche, *Mémoires d'Olivier de la Marche maître d'hotel et capitaine des gardes de Charles le Téméraire*, ed. Henri Beaune and Jules d'Arbaumont, 4 vols. (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1883–88).

9 Archivo General de Simancas (AGS), CSR, leg. 43, f. 18, 19, 24, 49, 62, 72, 76, 89, 95, 104, 105, 112, 119, 121, 134, 148.

10 Antonio de la Torre, *La casa de Isabel la Católica* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Patronato “Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo”, 1954), 5.

the king of France, Michelle of Valois (1395–1422), and his second marriage to Bonne of Artois (1396–1425).<sup>11</sup> Widowed a second time during the outbreak of the Hundred Years War, the duke began to seek allies who would reinforce his position in Europe both militarily and politically. The search for his third wife began in 1427. First, he considered the daughter of the king of Aragon, Alfonso V (1396–1458), but the negotiations proved fruitless. His final choice was the Portuguese Infanta Isabella (1397–1471), the daughter of John I of Portugal (1357–1433).<sup>12</sup> The diplomatic delegation sent from the Burgundian court in 1428 not only travelled to the kingdom of Portugal, but also across the whole Iberian peninsula, where they met with the king of Castile, the king of Aragon, and Sultan Murad II (1404–51).

The apogee of the close ties between the duchy of Burgundy and the kingdom of Castile occurred in the second half of the fifteenth century, when the Habsburg Emperor Maximilian I (1459–1519), heir to the Burgundian legacy, was seeking allies to reinforce his position in Europe. The interests of Castile were represented by the ambassador Francisco de Rojas y Escobar (1446–1523).<sup>13</sup> The alliance between Castile and Maximilian I was confirmed in 1496 with the double marriage of John, Prince of Asturias (1478–97) to Margaret of Austria (1480–1530) and of Philip the Handsome (1478–1506) to Joanna of Castile (1479–1555).<sup>14</sup> The first royal couple resided in the Iberian

11 Wim Blockmans and Walter Prevenier, *The Promised Lands: The Low Countries under Burgundian Rule 1369–1530* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 70; Richard Vaughan, *Philip the Good: The Apogee of Burgundy* (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2014), 76–82.

12 Bart Fransen, “Jan van Eyck, ‘el gran pintor del ilustre Duque de Borgoña’: su viaje a la Península y la Fuente de la Vida”, in *De Van Eyck a Rubens: la senda española de los artistas flamencos en el Museo del Prado* (Madrid: Fundación Amigos del Museo del Prado, 2009), 105–25; Manuel Parada López de Corselas, *El viaje de Jan van Eyck de Flandes a Granada (1428–1429)* (Madrid: La Ergástula, 2016), 43; Till-Holger Borchert, “The Mobility of Artists: Aspects of Cultural Transfer in Renaissance Europe”, in *The Age of Van Eyck: The Mediterranean World and Early Netherlandish Painting 1430–1530*, ed. Till-Holger Borchert (Ghent–Amsterdam: Luidon, 2002), 42–43.

13 Antonio Rodríguez Villa, “D. Francisco de Rojas, embajador de los Reyes Católicos”, *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, 28 (1896): 180–202, 295–339; Jesús Félix Pascual Molina, “Don Francisco de Rojas, embajador de los Reyes Católicos, y sus empresas artísticas: a propósito de una traza de Juan de Borgoña y Antonio de Comontes”, *BSAA: Arte*, 81 (2015): 59–78.

14 Raymond Fagel, “El mundo de Felipe el Hermoso: la política europea alrededor de 1500”, in *Felipe I el Hermoso: la belleza y la locura*, eds. Miguel Ángel Zalama and Paul Vandebroek (Madrid: Fundación Carlos de Amberes, Fundación Caja de Burgos, and Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica, 2006), 57; Ana Martínez-Acitores González, “Suenan campanas de boda en Castilla: las nupcias del príncipe Juan y la princesa Margarita en la catedral de Burgos”, in *A la sombra de las catedrales: cultura, poder y guerra en la Edad Moderna*, eds. Cristina Borreguero Beltrán, Asunción Retortillo Atienza, Oscar R. Melgosa Oter, and Ángela Pereda López (Burgos: Universidad de Burgos, 2021), 119–31.

peninsula until John's death the following year, while Philip and Joanna remained in Flanders until the death of Isabella the Catholic in 1504.<sup>15</sup> The key effect of these marriages was that the Iberian kingdoms would be inherited by the Habsburgs, and those kingdoms subsequently became united during the reign of Emperor Charles V (1500–58).

### *Chambre* and Privacy in the Burgundian Sources

To define and fully comprehend the notion of privacy as it was understood within the inner circle of the Burgundian sovereigns, we must consider Olivier de la Marche's *Estât de la maison du duc Charles de Bourgoingne, dit le Hardy*. This treatise was written around 1474 for King Edward IV of England (1442–83), who wished to establish rules similar to those of the Burgundian dukes.<sup>16</sup> La Marche, who served as *Maitre d'Hostel* to the Duke of Burgundy, offers an explanation of courtly etiquette and lists the hierarchy of court posts and their corresponding duties, thereby setting out the court's ordinances as a literary narrative. His account cannot be distinguished at a semantic level from narratives by contemporaneous writers, and he clearly knew the work of Burgundian chroniclers since he incorporated textual forms used by them.<sup>17</sup> In addition to political issues, la Marche includes anecdotes, rituals, and other details of court life that do not appear in contemporaneous accounts.

He sheds light, for instance, on the position of artists at court and their relationship to the sovereign's private sphere since he included court painters within the group of servants referred to as the *valets de chambre*. Such servants could enter the ducal apartments without warning. La Marche described this group of courtiers as consisting of around 40 servants with a diverse range of privileges, changing periods of service at the court, and various forms of attending the sovereign. Their sole common characteristics were that they had access to the private ducal chambers, termed *la chambre*,

15 María Concepción Porras Gil, *De Bruselas a Toledo: el viaje de los archiduques Felipe y Juana* (Madrid: Doce Calles, Fundación Carlos de Amberes, Universidad de Valladolid, and Fundación Cultural de la Nobleza, 2015), 82–89.

16 Werner Paravicini, "La cour de Bourgogne selon Olivier de La Marche", *Publication du Centre Européen d'Études Bourguignonnes* 43 (2002): 89–124.

17 Graeme Small, "Qui a lu la chronique de George Chastelain?", in *A la cour de Bourgogne: le duc, son entourage, son train*, ed. Jean Marie Cauchies (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), 115–26; Theo Venckelee, "Olivier de la Marche, chroniqueur et/ou rhétoriqueur?", *Le moyen français* 34 (1994), 217–27.



and that they, despite their unique accessibility, lacked noble titles. The latter characteristic, in part, assured that they had no interest in participating in any form of state coup. La Marche also highlighted that access to the ducal apartments was a privilege granted to barbers, tailors, cobblers, the yeomen of the beds, and the four *sommelliers* whose duty it was to guard the king's bedroom as well.<sup>18</sup> Because of this variety of servants, it is clear that "la chambre" was the *chambre de retrait*, which was the private space within the Burgundian residences.<sup>19</sup>

The Burgundian court ordinances, which followed the tradition established by St Louis, centred on the idea summed up in the legal expression *Car ainski nous plaît-il* (For thus it is pleasing to us).<sup>20</sup> During the reign of Philip the Good (1396–1467), the frequency with which the ordinances were to be published was established at between five and ten years, while his successor, Charles the Bold (1433–77), modified the ordinances five times over the course of the ten years of his reign. In addition to outlining the salaries and privileges assigned to servants, the ordinances established the court's hierarchy.<sup>21</sup> The ordinances and Olivier de la Marche's treatise coincide on a considerable number of points and make it possible to identify which servants had the rank of *valet de chambre* and so could access the sovereign's private spaces.

The surviving documents from the duchy of Philip the Good reveal how the court's structure developed through an increased number of courtiers. The extant documents from the duchy of Charles the Bold, however, reveal a greater focus on maintaining the court structure introduced under his father.<sup>22</sup> During the 1470s, there was a notable trend towards awarding posts to members of the ducal court with greater frequency than in past decades; this strategy suggested a new mode of government.<sup>23</sup> The legal expression

18 Olivier de la Marche, *Mémoires d'Olivier de la Marche*, vol. 4 (1888), 89.

19 Krista De Jonge, "Espacio ceremonial: intercambios en la arquitectura palaciega entre los Países Bajos borgoñones y España en la Alta Edad Moderna", in *El legado de Borgoña: fiesta y ceremonia cortesana en la Europa de los Austrias (1454–1648)*, eds. Krista De Jonge, Bernardo García García, and Alicia Esteban Esrínzana (Madrid: Fundación Carlos de Amberes, 2010), 62–63.

20 Olivier de la Marche, *Mémoires d'Olivier de la Marche*, vol. 3 (1885), 231; Holger Kruse, Werner Paravicini, *Die Hofordnungen der Herzöge von Burgund, Herzog Philipp der Gute: 1407–1467* (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2005); Louis de Mas-Latrie, "De la formule 'Car tel est notre plaisir' dans la chancellerie française", *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* 42 (1881), 560–64.

21 Kruse, Paravicini, *Die Hofordnungen*, 12.

22 Kruse, Paravicini, *Die Hofordnungen*, 314.

23 André Uyttebrouck, "Phénomènes de centralisation dans les Pays-Bas avant Philippe le Bon", *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 69:4 (1991): 872–904; Mario Damen, "Gift Exchange at the Court of Charles the Bold", in *In but Not of the Market: Movable Goods in Late Medieval and Early Modern Urban Society*, ed. Marc Boone and Martha Howell (Brussels: Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie van België voor Wetenschappen en Kunsten, 2007), 86.

*Car ainsi nous plaît-il*, which concerned the sovereign's ability to modify the ordinances, thus appears to have become obsolete during the reigns of these two dukes of Burgundy.

The ordinances issued by Philip the Good in 1426 modified the court hierarchy established by his father. They ordered court posts in accordance with their importance, and this ordering was reflected in the privileges and salaries assigned to each courtier. The ducal court was divided into two principal institutions: the ducal council and the stewards, or *maîtres d'hôtel*. The ducal council was the senior body and consisted of 12 ducal councillors and chamberlains, who were supervised by a senior chamberlain. Beneath them were 24 additional chamberlains; these were honourific posts assigned to members of the nobility. Four senior chamberlains also oversaw the stewards, and each of them served for a period ranging from three months to a year. Their principal task was to supervise the wine pantry, trencher squires, *valets servants*, *cuisine*, fruit pantry, squire, *valets de chambre*, office clerks, archers and secretaries.<sup>24</sup> The ducal stewards were responsible for everyday life in the palace and the duke's private servants, who included the painters appointed as *valets de chambre*. Concerning the service provided by these servants, who were granted the privilege of access to the ducal apartments, as indicated by Olivier de la Marche, the ordinances state:

My aforementioned Lord will have as many valets de chambre as he pleases: they will be taking turn serving [him], each time three valets together [and] with the head valet de chambre: they shall, each of them, have two horses as a part of their salary and one valet [assistant] paid.<sup>25</sup>

The ordinances allowed the number of servants appointed to the ducal chamber to vary between their issuing of the next set of ordinances. In 1430, no further ordinances were issued, and no modification was made to the status of the *valets de chambre* until 1433.<sup>26</sup> Thus, the new court structure articulates the hierarchies of the previous rules through the modifications made to court personnel. These modifications extended the offices overseen by the chamberlains (baker, wine pantry, trencher, *valets servants*, *cuisine*,

24 Kruse and Paravicini, *Die Hofordnungen*, 50–80 (“eschançonnerie, escuiers trenchans, valets servans, cuisine, fruicterie, escuierie, valets de chambre, clers d'office, archiers and secretaires”).

25 “Ordonnance de l'ostel de monseigneur de Bourgoigne, 1426/1427”, in Kruse and Paravicini, *Die Hofordnungen*, 278 (“Mondit seigneur aura des varletz de chambre telz qu'il lui plaira lesquelz serviront a tour, chascune fois trois avec le premier varlet de chambre et seront compez chascun d'eulx deux chevaulx a gaiges et un varlet a livree”).

26 Kruse and Paravicini, *Die Hofordnungen*, 81–134.

fruit pantry, squire, *fourriere*, *valets de chambre*, secretaries, office clerks, archers).<sup>27</sup> Regarding the reform of the ducal chamber and the post of *valet de chambre*, the ordinances explain:

My aforementioned Lord will have twelve valets de chambre: they will be taking turn serving him without terms, except two head valet de chambre who will be taking turn serving him half and half of year, each one of them will have two horses and one valet [assistant] paid. The head valets de chambre will have a reserved seat at the ducal table and will have their two horses and one valet [assistant] paid.<sup>28</sup>

After listing the 12 *valets de chambre*, the ordinances mention other servants assigned to the ducal chamber: an herbalist, a keeper of the jewels, *sommelier du corps*, three barbers, three tailors, a tapestry weaver, two assistants of the tapestry store, a cobbler, a painter, a supervisor of the wardrobe with his assistants, a poet, an apothecary, and two doctors. It is thus evident how the ducal chamber had been significantly expanded; the difference between its members is clearly demonstrated, not only with regard to payments but also in terms of professions and activities undertaken by the *valets de chambre*. All of these professions required direct access to the sovereign, which was assured by the privilege granted to each servant of entering the ruler's private chambers.

The next set of ordinances, issued in 1437, are essentially descriptive, but they modify a number of salaries and make substitutions for court posts. No mention is made either of any *valet de chambre* or of any other changes in the operation of the ducal chamber.<sup>29</sup> For the servants assigned to the ducal chamber, the only impact of these ordinances seems to have concerned their indirect privileges, such as the reimbursement of travel expenses and masses for the dead.

In 1438, a new set of ordinances was approved. This set mostly repeated the previously established court structure; the only modifications made were to staff. 36 names appear in the list of the *valets de chambre*, the

27 Kruse and Paravicini, *Die Hofordnungen*, 107–34 (“pannaterie, eschançonnerie, sommeliers d’eschançonnerie, escuriers trenchans, valets servants, cuisine, fruiterie, escuirie, fourriere, valets de chambre, secretaires, clerks d’office, archiers”).

28 Kruse and Paravicini, *Die Hofordnungen*, 121 (“Item, aura mondit seigneur douze varles de chambre lesquelz serviront tousiours sans ordonnance avec les deux premiers varles de chambre qui serviront a tour de demi an en demi an, ey auront chascun deux chevaux et un varlet a gaiges, sauf et reservé le premier varlet de chambre qui mangera en chambre et aura ses deux chevaux et son varlet a gaiges ou a livree”).

29 Kruse and Paravicini, *Die Hofordnungen*, 135–46.

majority of whom were unchanged from the previous ordinances.<sup>30</sup> Once again, the ordinances identify the servants assigned to the chamber and the professionals who attended to the duke.

From 1445 onwards, the ducal ordinances made the court structure more complex by extending the group of lower-rank servants.<sup>31</sup> As a result, the *valets de chambre* were given greater importance within the court structure. However, these new ordinances did not provide any general description of the ducal chamber; instead, they assigned each individual a salary for their annual service at the court.

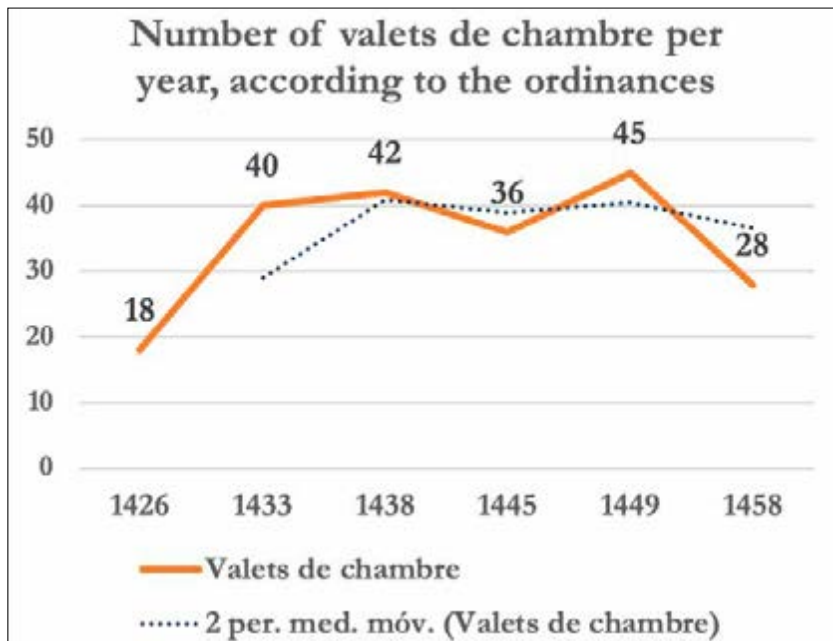
The ordinances issued in 1449 and 1454 had no direct impact on the *valets de chambre*, their position, or the organisation of them that had been approved four years earlier.<sup>32</sup> Finally, the ordinances of 1458 established a still more complex court structure, which had a significant impact on the composition of the ducal chamber. A clear distinction was now created between the *valets de chambre* and the servants who performed professional functions. Amongst the *valets de chambre*, the ordinances distinguished those who played a supervisory role in the ducal chamber from lower-ranking servants, and it was stipulated that both groups would serve the duke for set periods of time. The senior *valets* were paid 18 *sous*; the ordinances also detailed the salaries for other court and professional posts in this category of servants. Listed amongst the other *valets de chambre* were the herbalists, who attended the court for six months per year and received a daily salary of 12 *sous*, and the barbers, who were paid 12 *sous*, although the duration of their courtly service is not specified.<sup>33</sup> Importantly, these ordinances contain a section on the other *officiers de la chambre*. The document thus lists the other members of the ducal chamber along with their individual salaries: these are also identified as *valets de chambre*. These men were to accompany the court when it travelled. The next two sets of ordinances, issued between 1468 and 1475, maintained the structure of Philip the Good's

30 Kruse and Paravicini, *Die Hofordnungen*, 147–212.

31 In the wake of this modification, the structure remained fixed with the following hierarchy: “pannetiers, sommeliers de panneterie, eschançonnerie, sommelier de l'eschançonnerie, garde de huches, escuriers trinchans, valets servants, cuisine, fructerie, fourriere, valets de chambre, maistres des request, secretaires, clers d'office, huissiers d'armes, valets de levriers, faulconniers, archiers.” Kruse and Paravicini, *Die Hofordnungen*, 234–61.

32 Kruse and Paravicini, *Die Hofordnungen*, 262–63, 368–433.

33 Monique Sommé, “Que représente un gage journalier de trois sous pour l'officier d'un hôtel à la cour de Bourgogne au XVe siècle?”, in *Les niveaux de vie au Moyen-Age: mesures, perceptions et représentations: actes du colloque international de Spa*, eds. Jean-Pierre Sosson et al. (Louvain-la-Neuve: Bruylant-Academia, 1999), 300.



6.1 Number of *valets de chambre* per year, according to the ordinances (© Oskar J. Rojewski).

final ordinances, including no new features other than a number of specific instructions concerning salaries.

The ducal ordinances provide a periodic record of the number of court servants assigned to the *chambre* (Graph 6.1). Importantly, they reveal a major increase in the number of servants during the years of the court's bureaucratisation—that is, from the 1430s onwards. The ordinances also show how the number of servants identified as *valets de chambre* was maintained at around 40 until the 1450s. With regard to the number of painters registered at the court, the ordinances indicate that their presence was limited; for the whole period analysed, only three artists are listed: Hue de Boulogne, Daulphin, and Jehan Hennekart. However, the evidence for painters serving in the ducal chamber is more extensive if other Burgundian sources are considered.<sup>34</sup>

### Absence of a Private Sphere in Castilian Sources?

The relevant sources for the kingdom of Castile are different from those for the Burgundian court, despite being of a similar type. Regrettably, there is

34 Rojewski, *The Prosopographical Approach*.

no source comparable to the treatise by Olivier de la Marche for the Castilian court during the reign of Isabella the Catholic. Analysing the Castilian court structure without reference to other fifteenth-century courts means that it is not possible to define the private sphere of the sovereign and which servants had access to it. However, juxtaposing the data for the structure of the Castilian court with that of the Burgundian court reveals several similarities.

The *Nuevo libro de cuentas* or *Libro de asientos de los gastos de la reina doña Isabel*, which was compiled around 1497, has at least one page dedicated to each individual and lists in painstaking detail all courtier salaries until the death of Isabella the Catholic in 1504. The volume contains information on over 600 people who served the queen, as well as a number of close relatives, including her daughters Isabella (1470–98) and Maria (1482–1517) and her grandson Miguel de la Paz (1498–1500). It is striking that this book faithfully reproduces the hierarchy set out in the ordinances and lists the institutions of the royal household in the correct order. The chapel, comprising chaplains, choristers, and acolytes, appears before the royal chamber, with its variety of staff, encompassing pages, silver bearers and carvers, cup bearers, the king of arms, pastry chefs, porters, cooks, huntsmen, minstrels and trumpeters, sword-bearers, squires, and other posts.<sup>35</sup> It should also be noted that the servants' salaries are either organised into three payments paid over the course of one year or are listed as a total amount given per year.<sup>36</sup>

The *Nuevo libro de cuentas* does not provide details on the tasks undertaken by the members of the royal chamber, except for some succinct indications about honorary titles, for example the lady-in-waiting of the queen's household (*Dueña de la casa de su Alteza*), or about the roles played by certain courtiers, for instance scribes. However, a number of the duties performed by the servants of the chamber, such as the pages, yeoman of the wardrobe, and yeoman of the robes, would have required access to the exclusive royal apartments. Professions with similar requirements are listed in the section entitled *otros oficios de cámara* (other offices of the chamber). This section includes scribes, silversmiths, ladies-in-waiting, washerwomen, cobblers, tailors, apothecaries, bloodletters, and, finally, painters and illuminators.<sup>37</sup> No mention is made in this document of these servants' privileged access to the royal apartments, but it may be deduced

35 De la Torre, *La casa de Isabel la Católica*, 9–11.

36 Rafael Domínguez Casas, *Arte y etiqueta de los Reyes Católicos: artistas, residencias, jardines y bosques* (Madrid: Alpuerto, 1993), 263.

37 De la Torre, *La casa de Isabel la Católica*, 14.

from the similarity of the professions to those at the Burgundian court that the situation at the Castilian court echoed the one documented in Olivier de la Marche's treatise. Therefore, the servants included in these two lists would most likely have had direct contact with Isabella the Catholic and also have had access to her most exclusive and private apartments.

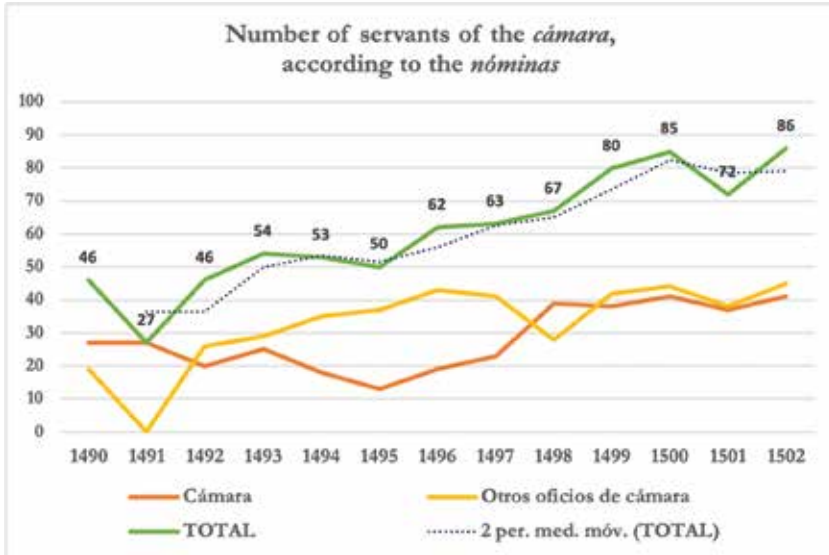
The information provided by this book is also further corroborated by the *Nóminas*, that is, the registers of salary. Like the *Nuevo libro de cuentas*, this legal document delineates the court's structure; its list of names and salaries assigned for each individual follows the court's hierarchy.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, the *Nóminas* is similar to the Burgundian ordinances discussed above. However, the list of salaries does not include any legal requirements, the absence of which suggests their exclusive nature and so that they may be read as the fulfilment of the sovereign's wishes. The *Nóminas* were issued with a far greater frequency than the Burgundian ordinances. From 1490 to 1504, at least one register per year survives; in some years, up to three salary registers were issued to ensure payment in quarterly instalments.

The Castilian *Nóminas* do not list the members of the royal council. Instead, they are exclusively devoted to the *mayordomía* (the court stewards), or *la casa de la reina* (the queen's household), and evoke the same daily service provided to the sovereign as the *Nuevo libro de cuentas* records. Amongst the posts recorded for the royal household are the categories of servants, such as chaplains, acolytes, the chamber, pages, silver bearers, cup bearers, the king of arms, porters, cooks, huntsmen, and trumpeters, alongside other chamber posts, including swordbearers and squires. Likewise, courtiers could be organised according to professions related to the production of artworks, and silversmiths were included amongst the silver bearers. The practitioners of other professions included in the chamber were painters and manuscript illuminators.<sup>39</sup>

Both the *Nuevo libro de cuentas* and the *Nóminas* indicate that the Burgundian *valets de chambre* were equivalent to professions assigned to the *cámara* of the Castilian court. In Castile, however, the *cámara* was divided into two sections, and the honourific professions, such as the queen's ladies-in-waiting and scribes, were placed above other domestic servants. Nevertheless, it may be argued that both groups enjoyed similar privileges.

38 The salaries conserved for the period under study were issued in 1490 (AGS, CSR, leg. 43, f. 18), 1491 (f. 19), 1492 (f. 24), 1493 (f. 49), 1494 (f. 62), 1495 (ff. 72, 76), 1496 (f. 89), 1497 (f. 95), 1498 (ff. 104, 105), 1499 (f. 112), 1500 (ff. 119, 121), 1501 (f. 134), and 1502 (f. 148).

39 Carmen Heredia Moreno, "Una obra inédita de Jerónimo Alemán, platero de Isabel la Católica", *Archivo español de arte*, 78:309 (2005): 98.



6.2 Number of servants of *cámara*, according to the *nóminas* (© Oskar J. Rojewski).

In the absence of any Castilian sources concerning the servants who could access the royal apartments of Isabella the Catholic, comparison with the Burgundian court might suggest that access was granted to those members of the royal chamber who practised professions in direct relation to this space. Furthermore, the number of *camareros*, who served in close proximity to the queen during the early 1490s, is close to the number of similar servants noted by Olivier de la Marche. Sharp increases in the number of servants of the chamber were perhaps due to the many journeys made by the court and, above all, to the expansion of its wealth and prestige (Graph 6.2).

Due to the lack of documentation, it is not possible to analyse in detail the specific tasks undertaken by the servants of the chamber. However, the variation in salaries of servants might provide some indications of their roles. A representative example is the painter Michel Sittow (c. 1469–1525), who served at the Castilian court between 1492 and 1502. Throughout this period, he was assigned a special salary of 50,000 *maravedís*, which placed him amongst the four highest-paid servants.<sup>40</sup> In addition to his salary,

40 Matthias Weniger, *Sittow, Morros, Juan de Flandes: drei Maler aus dem Norden am Hof Isabellas der Katholischen* (Kiel: Ludwig, 2011), 393–419; Jessica Weiss, “Juan de Flandes and His Financial Success in Castile”, *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 11:1 (Winter 2019): 1–38; Jazeps Trizna, *Michel Sittow: peintre revalde de l’école brugeoise (1468–1525/1526)* (Brussels: Centre National de Recherches Primitifs Flamands, 1976), 68.



Sittow was granted a number of privileges and elite tasks. The painter seems also to have won the sovereign's confidence: other sources related to the Castilian court record the different journeys that Sittow made as part of Isabella the Catholic's court.<sup>41</sup>

### State Portraits and Commissions Made to Court Artists

In addition to Sittow, three individuals are identified as official court painters by the Castilian *Nóminas*: Antonio Inglés (active in Castille in 1491–92), Juan de Flandes (c. 1460–1519), and Felipe Morros (active in Marseille and Castille in 1492–1505), who also served as illuminator. These three painters served during the period from 1498 to 1504.<sup>42</sup> It should be noted that the surviving documents offer few references to the still extant artworks as well as those known in later copies. Nevertheless, the portraits of sovereigns are of key importance for the analysis of the sovereigns' private sphere and the question of painters' access to the ducal apartments: the veracity and realism of these portraits suggest direct contact between artist and model.<sup>43</sup>

In the case of the Burgundian court, the depictions of the duke and his family are some of the most celebrated fifteenth-century northern European portraits. However, we know that the extant portraits were by no means the only ones produced at the court. Amongst the earliest portraits documented as having been produced by a Burgundian court artist, the portrait of Isabella of Portugal, the wife of Philip the Good, is of particular relevance. Completed in 1428 by Jan van Eyck (1390–1441), the portrait was finalised after the artist's arrival in Portugal and during the marriage

41 Carmen Morte García, "Artistas de la corte de los Reyes Católicos en Zaragoza", *Archivo español de arte* 280 (1997): 426–30.

42 These artists were appointed as court servants, but other artists worked for commissions of the monarchs. See Fernando Mariás Franco, "Petrus Hispanus en Urbino y el bastón del Gonfaloniere: el problema Pedro Berruguete en Italia y historiografía española", *Archivo español de arte* 75 (2002): 361–80; Pilar Silva Maroto, *Pedro Berruguete: el primer pintor renacentista de la Corona de Castilla* (Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, Consejería de Educación y Cultura, 2003); Pilar Silva Maroto, "Pedro Berruguete en Castilla", in *Actas del simposium internacional Pedro Berruguete y su entorno*, ed. Rafael Martínez González (Palencia: Diputación de Palencia, 2004), 23–48; Joaquín Yarza Luaces, *Isabel la Católica: promotora artística* (Léon: Edilesa, 2005), 34–46.

43 Lorne Campbell, "L'art du portrait dans l'œuvre de Rogier van der Weyden", in *Rogier van der Weyden – Rogier de la Pasture: Peintre officiel de la Ville de Bruxelles. Portraitiste de la Cour de Bourgogne*. (Bruxelles: Musée Communal de Bruxelles. Maison du Roi, 1979), 56–67; Lorne Campbell, *Renaissance Portraits: European Portrait-Painting in the 14th, 15th and 16th Centuries* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990), 102–07.

negotiations; he sent three portraits by land and sea to the newly established ducal court.<sup>44</sup> However, we only have a sixteenth-century engraved copy of one of these portraits (Figure 6.1). Since Van Eyck travelled with the diplomats sent to the Portuguese court, this official, prenuptial portrait must have required at least one encounter between the painter and his royal model. This portrait is the sole example that demonstrates the production of portraits by a court artist serving under Philip the Good. Indeed, we know that the other *valets de chambre* produced artworks commissioned by the sovereigns, but these works were principally jewels, ephemeral decorations, panels depicting coats of arms, tableware, or stage designs for court plays.<sup>45</sup> On some occasions, the *valets de chambre* collaborated, and artists from outside the court were even engaged.

Although we have examples of other portraits of the Burgundian rulers, none of them is attributed to a court artist; their authors remain unidentified or were painters working in Flemish cities. For example, a drawing now at the Gelders Archief in Arnhem is possibly a preparatory sketch for a rare profile portrait of the young Charles the Bold.<sup>46</sup> The identification of this anonymous drawing has been made through comparative analysis with the *Chronicles of Hainaut*, which is attributed to Rogier van der Weyden (c. 1400–64), who worked in Tournai and had the title of Painter to the City of Brussels.<sup>47</sup>

Van der Weyden is mentioned as having collaborated with the court painter and *valet de chambre* Pierre Coustain (active between 1455 and 1476) on the creation of polychrome sculptures of St Philip and St Elizabeth, which were located in the passage connecting the ducal apartments and the garden at the Palace of Coudenberg.<sup>48</sup> However, surviving documents do not list any other work by Van der Weyden as having been made under

44 Bart Fransen, "Jan van Eyck y España: un viaje y una obra", *Anales de historia del arte* 22 (2010): 39–58.

45 Albert Châtelet, "Résurrection de Pierre Coustain", *Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de l'art français* (1962), 7–13.

46 Till-Holger Borchert, "Portraits of the Habsburg Children", in *Renaissance Children: Art and Education at the House of Habsburg (1480–1530)*, eds. Samuel Mareel, Till-Holger Borchert, Hilde De Ridder-Symoens, and Annemarieke Willemsen (Tielt: Lannoo, 2021), 41–43; Altena Van Regteren, "Over een verloren jeugdportret van Karel den Stoute", *Oud Holland* 45 (1928), 267–70.

47 Claire Dickstein-Bernard, "Rogier Van der Weyden, la ville de Bruxelles, et son métier des peintres", in *Rogier van der Weyden – Rogier de la Pasture: Peintre officiel de la Ville de Bruxelles. Portraitiste de la Cour de Bourgogne*. (Brussels: Musée Communal de Bruxelles. Maison du Roi, 1979), 36–40.

48 Bart Fransen, *Rogier van der Weyden and Stone Sculpture in Brussels* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 198.



6.1 Anonymous, *Possible Copy of the Portrait of Isabella of Portugal*, c. 16<sup>th</sup> century, pen and brush on paper. Arquivo Nacional Torre de Tombo, Lisbon. CC-BY-SA.

ducal patronage. It is striking that precisely this artist, who seems not to have been recognised as a member of the court is identified as the painter of the most important portraits representing Philip the Good (Figure 6.2) and Charles the Bold.<sup>49</sup>

Both the drawing and Van der Weyden display the same techniques. They contain a dark background that highlights both the sitters' black garments, which are adorned with the insignia of the Order of the Golden Fleece, and the rolls of parchment held in their hands. Over the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the numerous repetitions of these

49 Borchert, *The Image of Charles the Bold*, 74–76.



6.2 Rogier van der Weyden, *Portrait of Philip the Good*, c. 1460, oil on panel. Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen, Antwerp. CC-BY-SA.

compositional features demonstrate the wide dissemination of this ideal portrait of rulership. The Burgundian sovereigns seem to have established the conventions of the state portrait—conventions that display their dignity as the holders of supreme power.<sup>50</sup> The composition of the two portraits is attributed to Rogier van der Weyden, his workshop, or his followers, and, most likely, the paintings were produced during the 1460s. Van der Weyden is also linked to the portrait of Isabella of Portugal, which was likewise executed in the 1460s. Unlike the portraits of Philip the Good and Charles

50 Dagmar Eichberger and Lisa Beaven, “Members and Political Allies: The Portrait Collection of Margaret of Austria”, *The Art Bulletin* 77:2 (1995): 227.



6.3 Rogier van der Weyden, *Portrait of Isabella of Portugal*, c. 1450, oil on panel. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. CC-BY-SA.

the Bold, however, it was not imitated, and so not disseminated, as widely (Figure 6.3).<sup>51</sup>

These images are a useful form of evidence concerning the ruler's private sphere because the ordinances were careful to specify the name of those members of staff who could access the sovereign's chambers. Thus, portraits

51 Lorne Campbell and Yvonne Szafran, "The Portrait of Isabella of Portugal, Duchess of Burgundy in the J. Paul Getty Museum", *The Burlington Magazine* 146:1212 (2004): 148–57.

demonstrate that court painters had direct contact with the family of the Dukes of Burgundy because of the high degree of naturalism in these paintings. Indeed, it is possible that Rogier van der Weyden insisted on sitting with his subjects in their private spaces, as Jan van Eyck had done when portraying Isabella of Portugal.

A strikingly different dynamic is encountered at the Castilian court. During the second half of the fifteenth century, state portraits and portraits of the ruler's family had become a popular subject that was widely disseminated at court.<sup>52</sup> The first indications of the new courtly interest in individual portraits can be traced to the instructions issued by Ferdinand the Catholic (1452–1516) to Jerónimo González, who was to inform the queen of Naples, Joanna of Aragon (1454–1517), that the portrait of her daughter, Joanna of Naples (1478–1518), had been received as part of the marriage negotiations between the latter and the heir to the Catholic monarchs. Likewise, the king commented in 1486 that he had no portrait painter in his service:

Item, you are to inform her serenity how much pleasure we take [...] from the painting of the illustrious infanta which was sent by you, and it is our great pleasure to send you our painting of our daughter and the most illustrious Prince, which we will send to you when we have them, we are presently lacking such a painter, but we will have them painted very soon and they will be sent to you.<sup>53</sup>

Just three years later, in 1489, surviving documents mention the painter Antonio Inglés, who received a salary and extra payments for the creation of a number of artworks, including paintings of the prince and infantas.<sup>54</sup>

52 Elisa Bermejo, "Retratos de Isabel la Católica", *Reales Sitios* 110 (1991): 49–56; Rafael Domínguez Casas, "The Artistic Patronage of Isabel the Catholic: Medieval or Modern?", in *Queen Isabel I of Castille: Power, Patronage and Persona*, ed. Barbara Weissberger (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2008), 123–48; Miguel Falomir, "Los orígenes del retrato en España: de la falta de especialistas al gran taller", in *El Retrato Español: del Greco a Picasso*, ed. Javier Portús Pérez (Madrid: Museo del Prado, 2004), 68–83.

53 Antonio de la Torre, *Documentos sobre relaciones internacionales de los Reyes Católicos* (Barcelona: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Patronato Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, 1951); Juan Manuel Martín García, "El pintor Antonio Inglés y la embajada inglesa en España en 1489", in *El intercambio artístico entre los reinos hispanos y las cortes europeas en la Baja Edad Media*, eds. María C. Cosmen, María Victoria Herráez Ortega, and María Pellón Gómez-Calcerrada (León: Universidad de León, 2009), 153.

54 Antonio de la Torre, *Cuentas de Gonzalo de Baeza, tesorero de Isabel la Católica* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Patronato Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, 1955), 272, 281, 310–11, 318.

This artist's brief period of service lasted barely a year, and regrettably no still extant artwork has been attributed to him.<sup>55</sup>

From 1492, Michel Sittow, whom I discussed above, appears in Castilian documents. He had been born in Reval and trained in Bruges, but his arrival on the Iberian peninsula still needs to be studied in depth.<sup>56</sup> It is possible that he became aware of Isabella the Catholic's need for a court painter via the French court in Amboise, where his future patron, Margaret of Austria, resided; she went on to marry the Prince of Asturias in 1496.<sup>57</sup> Alternatively, he may have established contact with the Castilian court via his master, Hans Memling (c. 1430–94),<sup>58</sup> who painted the portrait of Francisco de Rojas y Escobar (1446–1523), the Castilian ambassador in Rome, France, and the Low Countries. Little is known about Sittow's period of service as a court painter in Castile because few works by him have been identified for the period between 1492 and 1502, when he was active at court.<sup>59</sup> However, a number of works by him are cited in the inventories of the Palace of Mechelen, which was the residence of Margaret of Austria. For instance, she owned a portrait by Michel Sittow of Isabella of Portugal, Isabella the Catholic's daughter.<sup>60</sup> This work is now lost, but a formal parallel can perhaps be drawn with the polemical portrait attributed to Sittow, which some scholars have identified as a portrait of Catherine of Aragon (1485–1536 and others as a depiction of Mary Tudor (1496–1533)).<sup>61</sup>

It must be pointed out that Michel Sittow, in 1498, may also have painted portraits of the Castilian rulers during the visit he made to Zaragoza with them in 1498. The Monastery of Santa Engracia once owned two portraits of Isabella the Catholic and Ferdinand of Aragon, but these paintings are now

55 Some scholars have tried to trace the career of Antonio Inglés at the court of Henry VII. See Domínguez Casas, "The Artistic Patronage of Isabel the Catholic", 123–48.

56 Matthias Weniger, "Michel Sittow, a la luz del retablo de los Luna", in *Retórica artística en el tardogótico castellano: la capilla fúnebre de Álvaro de Luna en contexto*, eds. Olga Pérez Monzón, Matilde Miquel Juan, and María Martín Gil (Madrid: Sílex, 2018), 481–500.

57 Jazeps Trizna, *Michel Sittow*, 9.

58 Matthias Weniger, "Bynnen Brugge in Flandern: The Apprenticeships of Michel Sittow and Juan de Flandes", in *Memling Studies*, eds. H. Verougstraete, R. van Schoute, and M. Smeyers (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 115–31.

59 Jazeps Trizna, *Michel Sittow*, 13–31.

60 Dagmar Eichberger, *Leben mit Kunst Wirken durch Kunst: Sammelwesen und Hofkunst unter Margarete von Österreich Regentin der Niderlande* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), 168.

61 Paul G. Matthews, "Henry VIII's Favourite Sister? Michel Sittow's Portrait of a Lady in Vienna", *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Museums Wien* 10 (2008): 140–49.



6.4a Anonymous, *Portrait of Ferdinand II of Aragon*, c. 1500, oil on panel. Musée Sainte-Croix, Poitiers. CC-BY-SA.



6.4b Anonymous, *Queen Isabella the Catholic*, c. 1500, oil on panel. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid. CC-BY-SA.

considered lost after the monastery collapsed in the eighteenth century.<sup>62</sup> However, their composition may well have been similar to the existing portraits of Isabella and Ferdinand (Figures 6.4a–b), as this composition was repeated on a number of occasions, for example in state portraits made at the Burgundian court. Furthermore, these portraits demonstrate the adaptation of several northern European traditions in Castile—a fact that is further demonstrated by the significant activity of Flemish painters and other representatives of the Flemish artistic style, including painters of the royal chamber.

Finally, consideration must also be given to how the court's artistic output was linked to the portraits of Philip the Handsome and his wife Joanna of Castile, which were attributed to Juan de Flandes, as well as the portraits of the Infanta, which are likely also by Flandes.<sup>63</sup> However, there is no

62 Morte García, *Artistas de la corte de los Reyes Católicos*, 426–30.

63 Pilar Silva Maroto, "Pintura y pintores flamencos en la corte de Isabel la Católica", in *De Van Eyck a Rubens: la senda española de los artistas flamencos en el Museo del Prado* (Madrid: Fundación Amigos del Museo del Prado, 2009), 45–62.



documentary evidence to substantiate the attribution to Flandes, who served Isabella the Catholic between 1496 and 1504. Only stylistic similarities link Flandes to these panels, which were commissioned in 1515 and which are now at the University of Salamanca.<sup>64</sup>

It should also be noted that the painters working at the Castilian court were commissioned not only to paint portraits of the monarchs, but also to produce other works for their royal patrons. Some of these works were collaborative efforts, such as the *Polyptych of Isabella the Catholic* and the *Altarpiece of St John the Baptist* at the monastery of Cartuja de Miraflores.<sup>65</sup> The *Polyptych* consisted of 47 panels, and later documentation allows us to attribute at least two of the panels (the *Assumption* and the *Ascension*) to Michel Sittow, while the other panels may be by Juan de Flandes and Felipe Morros.<sup>66</sup> More recently, it has been established that not only Juan de Flandes contributed to the *Altarpiece of St John the Baptist*; various parts of the altarpiece were accomplished by an artist whose style seems strikingly similar to that of Sittow.<sup>67</sup> The diversity of paintings commissioned from court artists in Castile is remarkable. In addition to royal portraits, they painted altarpieces and perhaps also took part in the creation of ephemeral decorations and the decoration of palace interiors, as did the painters at the Burgundian court.<sup>68</sup>

## Conclusions

Read as a form of legal regulation and compared with other documentary sources, the Burgundian ordinances enable us to chart the sovereign's private sphere and identify the type of courtiers who could access this sphere, which was identified as the *chambre* or *cámara*. In addition, the sources consulted here provide a wealth of detail about individual servants, their salaries, their professions, and the duties they undertook during the day-to-day life

64 Pilar Silva Maroto, *Juan de Flandes* (Madrid: Caja Duero, 2006), 72–76; Nicola Jennings, “Imitation, Inspiration or Innovation? Juan de Flandes and Use of Models from Illuminated Manuscripts”, in *Copies of Flemish Masters in the Hispanic World (1500–1700)*, eds. Eduardo Lamas and David García Cueto (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021), 54.

65 Weniger, *Michel Sittow, a la luz del retablo*, 487.

66 Chiyo Ishikawa, *The Retablo de Isabel La Católica by Juan de Flandes and Michel Sittow* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 34–39.

67 Weniger, *Michel Sittow, a la luz del retablo*, 493.

68 Miguel Ángel Zalama and Rafael Domínguez Casas, “Jacob van Laethem, pintor de Felipe el Hermoso y Carlos V: precisiones sobre su obra”, *Boletín del Seminario de Estudios de Arte y Arqueología* 61 (1995): 347–58.

at court. At the Burgundian court, there was a clear interest in increasing the staff of the *chambre* from the 1430s onwards. Until the 1450s, there was also a concerted effort to maintain this number of servants. At the Castilian court, during the same period, there was also strong motivation to expand the number of staff serving in the *cámara*; their number doubled in barely seven years.

The court painters formed part of the entourage that was closest to the monarch, with whom they were able to interact directly in the private royal chambers. They were part of the group that established the ruler's private sphere as the staff of his or her *cámara*.<sup>69</sup> However, when state documents are juxtaposed with state portraits, which demonstrate how artists had in-depth knowledge of the royal family because of the meticulous detail deployed, we can observe how the ordinances were not always followed.

At the court of Philip the Good and Charles the Bold, the ordinances defined the court's private and public spaces, indicate how the court should function, and reveal its hierarchy, including those who had access to the duke. The artworks, however, demonstrate the sovereigns' interest in commissioning state portraits by artists outside the court, instead of from the salaried court painters. These portraitists from outside the court may have been able to access the dukes' innermost spaces in order to produce their portrait, which suggests the legal regulations were not strictly applied. Therefore, there was evidently a degree of flexibility in the interpretation of the ordinances.

At the Castilian court, Isabella the Catholic and Ferdinand of Aragon adapted their court traditions and hierarchies to those established by the dukes of Burgundy, and they copied the Burgundian model assiduously.<sup>70</sup> It is this close adherence to Burgundian practices that reinforced the creation of their state portraits and the portraits related to marriage negotiations. Both groups of portraits were almost exclusively made by artists cited in the state documents that established the limits of the royal chamber's privacy. Furthermore, it seems that the Isabella's and Ferdinand's commissions for artworks were given primarily to the painters who were officially employed at court.

69 Martin Warnke, *The Court Artist: On the Ancestry of the Modern Artist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 43–45.

70 José Martínez Millán, "The Political Configuration of the Spanish Monarchy: The Court and the Royal Households", in *A Constellation of Courts: The Households of Habsburg Europe, 1555–1665*, eds. René Vermeir, Dries Raeymaekers, and José Eloy Hortal Muñoz (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2014), 35–38.

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# 7. On Privacy—or Rather the Lack Thereof—at Court in the Polish Literature of the Sixteenth Century

*Marta Wojtkowska-Maksymik*

## Abstract

The sixteenth century saw an expansion of the institution of the court in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. This was partly due to the complexity of crown inheritance and the beginnings of a system of elective monarchy. The court and courtiers were discussed in the various literary works analysed in the present chapter. Through this analysis, I aim to define the meaning of privacy at court. Sixteenth-century Polish writers were often closely associated with the court, and they understood privacy as tightly intertwined with the *raison d'état* and public service—as opposed to the privacy of a landed nobleman far from court. During the sixteenth century, threats to privacy at court were considered serious concerns, and principles that delineated privacy and regulated relations between an individual, the community of the court, and the ruler were defined.

**Keywords:** Jagiellonian dynasty, courtier, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, literary studies

## Introduction

Polish literature of the sixteenth century bears witness to a growing interest in court and courtiers.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this chapter is to formulate a

<sup>1</sup> One of the reasons why life at court became an interesting subject for Polish writers in the sixteenth century was the highly complex political situation behind the development of the royal court during the reigns of the two last Jagiellons in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.



definition of privacy at court, based on an analysis of selected texts written and published between 1555 and 1579; the main purpose of these texts was either political or didactic. Discussions about the court and privacy were typically delivered as an aside or were used as examples of a main point in these works. Yet it is evident that these authors, who were present at the royal court, used their literary genres to effect a strong impact on the image of the court at the time and on definitions of privacy in a courtly context.

This chapter deals specifically with the following texts: Łukasz Górnicki's (1572–1603) *Dworzanin polski* (*The Polish Courtier*), Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski's (1503–72) *Commentariorum de republica emendanda libri quinque* (*On the Reform of the Commonwealth*), Stanisław Orzechowski's (1513–66) *Dyjalog albo rozmowa okoto egzkucyjej Polskiej Korony* (*Dialogue or Conversation on the Reform of the Polish Crown*), Stanisław Koszutski's (d. 1559) *Księgi o wychowaniu i ćwiczeniu każdego przełożonego* (*Books on Tutoring and Training Each Superordinate*), Mikołaj Rej's (1505–69) *Żywot człowieka poczciwego* (*The Life of an Honest Man*) and *Wizerunk własny żywota człowieka poczciwego* (*The Image of the Life of an Honest Man*), Jan Kochanowski's (1530–84) *Marszałek* (*The Marshal*) and *Elegiarum libri quattuor* (*Four Books of Elegies*), Andrzej Krzycki's (1482–1537) epigrams, and, finally, Jan Dantyszek's (1485–1548) *Vita Joannis Dantisci* (*The Life of Jan Dantyszek*). As mentioned above, discussions about the court and privacy in most of these texts are simply asides or illustrate key themes. In the works of Modrzewski and Orzechowski, these themes are political, and the books by Rej and Koszutski are didactic. It is important to note that the aforementioned texts belong to varied literary genres. For example, Górnicki's work is a dialogue, *The Marshal* by Kochanowski is an *excusatio*

See Zygmunt Wojciechowski, *Zygmunt Stary* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Z. Arcta, 1946); Kenneth F. Lewalski, "Sigismund I of Poland: Renaissance King and Patron", *Studies in the Renaissance* 14 (1967): 49–72; Stanisław Cynarski, *Zygmunt August* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 2004); Stanisław Cynarski, "Dwór królewski w Polsce za ostatnich Jagiellonów", in *Kraków w dobie renesansu. Materiały sesji naukowej z okazji Dni Krakowa w roku 1986*, ed. Jerzy Wyrozumski (Kraków: Towarzystwo Miłośników Historii i Zabytków Krakowa, 1989), 75–84; Adam Chmiel, *Rachunki dworu królewskiego 1544–1567* (Kraków: Akademia Umiejętności, 1911); Marek Ferenc, *Dwór Zygmunta Augusta. Organizacja i ludzie* (Oświęcim: Napoleon V, 2014); Stanisław Tomkowicz, *Na dworze królewskim ostatnich Jagiellonów* (Kraków: Drukarnia "Czasu," 1924). See also general histories of Poland in the sixteenth century: Antoni Mączak, *The Space of Power: Poland-Lithuania in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1995); Robert Frost, *The Oxford History of Poland-Lithuania. Volume 1: The Making of the Polish-Lithuanian Union 1385–1569* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 23–25. The importance and power of the Jagiellonian dynasty are also analysed from many angles in Natalia Nowakowska, *Remembering the Jagiellonians* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018).

in the form of a rhyming letter, and Dantyszek's *Vita* is an elegy. The genre chosen by each author influenced the way in which the court and courtly privacy were discussed in them; specifically, discussions of private matters were subordinated to a given literary convention. Łukasz Górnicki and Stanisław Koszutski were Sigismund II's (1520–72) librarians, while Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski, Jan Kochanowski, Andrzej Krzycki, and Jan Dantyszek were royal secretaries or worked at the royal chancery. It can be argued that the presence of these writers at the royal court also had an impact on the image of the court and its definition of privacy.

The following sections will discuss various definitions of courtly privacy and will highlight certain courtly activities and courtiers who were closely connected to public service (tied to the state and/or to the ruler) and who were also often influential in the quality of public service delivered by their courts.<sup>2</sup> The risks and benefits of courtly privacy will then be explored. Finally, as mentioned, a general definition of courtly privacy based on the range of literary sources written and published in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth will be posited.

## Łukasz Górnicki and His Definition of Privacy

Łukasz Górnicki—King Sigismund II's courtier, librarian, and the executor of his will—is widely believed to have been a bard and a champion of the Polish court.<sup>3</sup> He wrote *The Polish Courtier* (1566), a work influenced by Baldassare Castiglione's *Il libro del cortegiano* (*The Book of the Courtier*, 1528). Górnicki's book idealises the court and was based on the court of

2 Dena Goodman, "Public Sphere and Private Life: Toward a Synthesis of Current Historiographical Approaches to the Old Regime", *History and Theory* 31 (1992): 20. Goodman writes about the interpenetration of public and private spheres in the political culture of the Ancien Régime. Other scholars who mention the same phenomenon in the context of privacy in the early modern period include: Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), xix–xx; Mette Birkedal Bruun, "Privacy in Early Modern Christianity and Beyond: Traces and Approaches", *Annali dell'Istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento/Jahrbuch des italienisch-deutschen historischen Instituts in Trient* 44:2 (2018): 34–35.

3 For information on Górnicki, a courtier and a librarian of the last Jagiellonian ruler, see Alodia Kawecka-Gryczowa, *Biblioteka ostatniego Jagiellona: Pomnik kultury renesansowej* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1988), 58–76; Marek Janicki, "Górnicki, Kochanowski, Nidecki—wspólne lektury, wzajemne inspiracje?: Kilka uwag o środowisku humanistycznym kancelarii Zygmunta Augusta w Wilnie", in *Łukasz Górnicki i jego włoskie inspiracje: Materiały z sesji zorganizowanej przez Komisję Dziejów Odrodzenia i Reformacji przy Komitecie Nauk Historycznych PAN* (Warszawa, 28–19 listopada 2003), ed. Piotr Salwa (Warsaw: Semper, 2005), 65–84.

the bishop of Kraków, Samuel Maciejowski (1499–1550), in Prądnik near Kraków.<sup>4</sup> Górnicki describes that court as “a unique school for chivalrous men”, comparing it to “a Trojan horse”. He adds, however, that the Trojan Horse never yielded “as many soldiers as Monsignor Maciejowski’s house did good, virtuous and worthy people”.<sup>5</sup> Glancing through conversations penned by Górnicki (and disregarding for the time being their fictitious nature), we find a courtly world devoid of jealousy, gossip, lies, and lawlessness and also showing no sign of the pursuit of riches or glory, despite being hierarchical. The courtier himself (for Górnicki, a combination of an early modern gentleman, knight, and scholar) is to be the ethical *alter ego* of the ruler: a virtuous man leading the ruler on the path of virtue and righteousness towards the happiness of the commonwealth.<sup>6</sup>

It should be noted, however, that Górnicki also criticises courtly reality. He is strikingly critical when he describes courtiers who were arrogant or who exhibited excessive and rude familiarity with the ruler—especially when telling jokes or pulling pranks.<sup>7</sup> When writing about the rules of appropriateness and *sprezzatura*, which were intended to ensure social success at court, Górnicki, follows Castiglione and suggests that “he [the courtier] pretended to be one of them”; that is, each speaker acted like different people on various occasions, depending on their circumstances, time, person, gender, and position at court.<sup>8</sup> This piece of advice transforms the courtier into an actor, lacking intimacy but not the privacy closely associated with courtly society.<sup>9</sup> Górnicki bases his division of public and

4 Górnicki, in adapting Castiglione, changed the venue from Urbino to Poland. He also removed women, as there were no women at the bishop’s court. Finally, he slightly abridged Castiglione’s text, adjusting it to the mentality of a sixteenth-century Polish reader. See Marta Wojtkowska-Maksymik, “L’immagine letteraria della corte suburbana del vescovo Samuel Maciejowski”, in *Corti rinascimentali extraurbane: un modello di cultura tra Italia e Polonia*, eds. Mirosław Lenart and Magdalena Wrana (Padova-Opole: Archiwum Państwowe w Opolu-Accademia dei Rampanti, 2016), 189–98; Anna Gallewicz, *Dworzanin polski i jego włoski pierwowzór* (Warsaw: Semper, 2006); Anna Gallewicz, “Urbino i Prądnik: dwa dwory, dwa światy”, *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* 45 (2001): 45–61.

5 Łukasz Górnicki, ed., *Dworzanin polski*, ed. Roman Pollak (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1954), 21, 23.

6 The question of a model for the perfect courtier was tackled in Marta Wojtkowska-Maksymik, ‘*Gentiluomo cortigiano*’ i *dworzanin polski: Dyskusja o doskonałości człowieka i jej humanistyczne źródła w ‘Il Libro del Cortigiano’ Baldassarra Castiglione’ i w Dworzaninie polskim Łukasza Górnickiego* (Warsaw: Instytut Badań Literackich and Stowarzyszenie “Pro Cultura Litteraria,” 2007). For the function of the courtier in *Il cortegiano*, see Amedeo Quondam, “*Questo povero cortigiano*,” in *Castiglione, il libro, la storia* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2006), 404–29.

7 See Górnicki, *Dworzanin polski*, 70–75, 150–53.

8 Górnicki, *Dworzanin polski*, 145.

9 This question never appears in *Dworzanin polski*. A “courtly man” there is never alone; he is always in the company of others, and there is always an external locus of his identity: “A przeto

private spheres on the number and types of people present in a given venue and on the type of entertainment present. The public sphere is associated with venues for jousting, fencing tournaments, or masquerades, where participation (both active and passive) is not limited: there can be people below the courtier in social rank.<sup>10</sup> The private sphere, on the other hand, is linked to entertainment “among the select few, among your peers, not the *hoi polloi*.”<sup>11</sup> These exclusive occasions are usually feasts and are sometimes accompanied by dances, singing, or musical instruments, but their central element is conversation. It is the word then—not the deed—that permits private relations with another human being, regardless of gender (the deed acquired greater significance during public entertainment associated with horse-riding, fencing, or jousting.) The word also becomes an effective tool for social influence, determining who will succeed or fail within the social space of the court. The public/private division also justifies the restraint of the courtier and his somewhat *laissez-faire* attitude. Among those of lower social rank, he should behave in a staid, distinguished, and safe manner. In a trusted circle of peers, however he may be allowed more leeway, but he must at all times bear in mind the rules of appropriateness and *sprezzatura*.<sup>12</sup>

Górnicki also points out differences between the private sphere of a courtier as a servant and official and the private sphere of the ruler. The latter sphere is enclosed within “the master’s rooms”, where the king or prince may do or say whatever he pleases—including things not to be seen or heard by indiscreet or overly harsh people. This does not, however, mean that such rooms are off limits to courtiers; on the contrary, the best courtiers among the multitude are invited to enter. These select individuals are distinguished by their modesty, humility, tact, and ability to put the ruler in a good mood. The “master’s rooms” are an area for *otium*: a type of entertainment which Górnicki associates primarily with the laughter accompanying risqué, lascivious jokes. The jokes and laughter would be out of place in the public sphere of ceremonies.

According to Górnicki, the ideal courtly environment is composed of specific public and private places and the feasts or ceremonies connected

kto chce ująć dobrze między tak wiewielu ludzi i udać się za jednego z nich, potrzeba mu swego własnego dobrego baczenia i rozsądku, aby się też i on odmieniał na czas według przyrodzenia tych, między którymi żyć będzie” (“And should one wish to make a good impression among so many people and be like one of them, he will need his wits about him and the common sense to change his ways according to preferences of those he would live among”), Górnicki, *Dworzanin polski*, 145.

10 See Górnicki, *Dworzanin polski*, 132–38.

11 Górnicki, *Dworzanin polski*, 138.

12 See Górnicki, *Dworzanin polski*, 139.

with them. Public and private spheres are separate, but their borders are fluid: the public sphere can turn into the private and vice versa. Both spheres depend on people—courtiers—so it is enough to decrease or increase their number in order to distinguish public from private. It is also worth remembering that privacy (or the lack thereof) is dependent on equality of status and court position. This rule has just one exception: relations between a courtier and the ruler, in which the courtier is subordinated to the ruler and the distance reduces (but does not eliminate) the courtier's capacity to make the ruler laugh. The courtier's presence in the ruler's rooms allows him to gain the ruler's trust so that he may in time become the counsel for and guardian of his master's moral standing, as already mentioned. The courtier's behaviour in the private sphere can ensure his success, and this success will then be visible in the public sphere, transcending the court itself.

### **The Dark Face of the Court and Negative Aspects of Courtly Privacy: Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski, Mikołaj Rej, Stanisław Orzechowski, and Stanisław Koszutski**

In 1551, the first three books of the treatise *De republica emendanda* were published in Kraków.<sup>13</sup> Their author, Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski, often used the terms 'public' and 'private': but related them to the definition of the state: a republic was created by people to protect the private sphere, or the family and its assets.<sup>14</sup> For Modrzewski, the ruler's family is the court, which needs to be looked after because:

numerous and grand are the benefits flowing from the court to the whole Republic and the affairs of common men; it protects and safeguards all that is good: private property, married couples, procreation and bringing up children, proper obedience, relations between people, public order—the entirety and majesty of the state.<sup>15</sup>

13 This work was supplemented by two further books: *On Church (De Ecclesia)* and *On School (De Schola)*, which were published in Basel in 1554.

14 Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski, *Commentariorum de republica emendanda libri quinque*, ed. Kazimierz Kumaniecki (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1953), 30–31.

15 "Plurima et maxima commoda ad cunctam rempublicam ab aula pervenire atque ad res privatorum constat inter omnes, quippe cuius in tutela et praesidio sin res omnes bonae, possessions privatorum, coniugia, liberorum procreation et institution, honesta disciplina, hominum commercia, pax publica, salus et dignitas reipublicae", Modrzewski, *Commentariorum*, 49.

Modrzewski focuses on the functions of the court. It affects the private sphere (involving every citizen) and the public sphere (involving only the state) because the main roles of the court are to educate the political elite and to create the best conditions for the elite to properly serve the ruler. It should be noted that the passage quoted above describes an ideal court, which, of course, did not exist. In chapter 7 of the first book (*De moribus*), Modrzewski offers a negative view of contemporaneous courts, which he delineates not as seats of wise counsellors, but as breeding grounds for idlers because there is virtually no time for work that is *pro publico bono*. Courtiers in Modrzewski's text prefer to flit about, dress up, play games such as dice and chess, and feast.<sup>16</sup> That is, they perform activities or take part in ceremonies that Górnicki (and Castiglione before him) defined as private; such activities were to be performed in the ruler's private chambers and/or in a small group of trusted courtiers who held equally important positions at court. Let us also remember that according to Łukasz Górnicki, these entertainments were supposed to prepare courtiers for public service, so that they could become the king's ethical *alter ego*. In Modrzewski's text, the courtiers interact only with other courtiers, not the king. Comparing the descriptions of the court in *The Polish Courtier* and *De republica emendanda*, we may conclude that private courtly events foster what is public and related to state work in Górnicki's dialogue, while those same private court functions in Modrzewski's treatise block the functions of the state and threaten the court's *raison d'état*.

Mikołaj Rej writes about the dangers connected with privacy in chapter 9 of book 1 of *The Life of an Honest Man* (1567/68). He also divides public matters into three common themes—public, general matters of state, and civil or military service. Private matters, he avers, can be judged either positively as landed property, which should be managed justly by every man, or negatively as private interest (self-interest), which often encourages people to break

16 Modrzewski, *Commentariorum*, 48–50: “Maxima pars temporis consumitur ab hoc institutum vite sequentibus in tesseriis, amoribus, conviviis, comotationibus, alii cum scurris et assentatoribus multas horas transmittunt; sunt quid nihil aliud quam de fama et existimatione hominum detrahere didicerunt maleditisque et conviciis alios insectari. Quae quidem omnia negotii inopia plerumque fieri videmus. Itaque assuefaciendi omnes essent ad res aliquas agendas et qui laborare nollent, ii [...] ne manducarent. Aiunt in moribus Turcis esse, ut omnes quantumvis divites ac genere clari, a primis poeritiae annis arte aliqua manualia erudiantur, qua et corpus exerceant et, si egestate premantur, victum sibi parent. Nostris vero aulicis non tantum manualia, sed et ingenuas artes callere nimis plebeium videtur. Itaque vivitur in ignavia et soccordia, quam sequuntur latrunculi, tesserae, comotationes, libidines et reliquae aularum pestes”.

the law and harm the republic or their neighbours.<sup>17</sup> According to Rej, having your own personal gain as an overriding goal harms decency and makes the courtly space dangerous; he likes it to freezing rain.<sup>18</sup> The private in Rej's descriptions of the court also refers to a small group of people, who are united by similar habits and preferences, including entertainments: courtship, playing music together, gambling, and banquets. These activities are so absorbing that it can be difficult to go beyond the private sphere (here connected with pleasure and taking care of one's own property) and into the public sphere (connected with duty, work, service to the king, and the state). It is possible, according to Rej, that a few, select courtiers will behave well and prudently in the private sphere, while at the same time acting effectively in the public space. Only those excelling in both domains, he maintains, should be allowed to take up state offices.

A distinction between public and private matters also influences the description of courtier duties in Stanisław Orzechowski's *Dialogue or Conversation on the Reform of the Polish Crown* (1563). He argues that the only "real courtiers" are those who serve the public good as civil servants, soldiers, or ambassadors and so effectively limits the courtier's activities to the public sphere.<sup>19</sup> Any other activities (masquerades, dances, feasts,

17 See Mikołaj Rej, *Żywot człowieka poczciwego*, ed. Julian Krzyżanowski (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1956), 134.

18 See Rej, *Żywot*, 91–92: "A trzeba tam pilnie upatrować, gdzie stępić, jako po grudzie bosymi nogami, bo tam siłna gruda a siłny mróz około ciebie z pirwotku będzie. A wierz mi, iż trzeba wielkiego uważenia każdej rzeczy i wielkiej roztropności, niżli się tam wszystkiemu przypatrzysz. Bo będzie się zdało, iż cię wnet wszyscy chwalić i miłować będą, między się cię pociągać będą; ano wierz mi, iż cię tak będą nosić po kołędzie, iż się długo nie obaczysz, co się z tobą dzieje, a zwłaszcza jeśli jeszcze będziesz miał jaki dostateczek około siebie. Tu cię jedni pociągną do miłości, drudzy do muzyki, drudzy cię pilno będą namawiać, abyś z nimi pograł, a nie będziesz li chciał o pieniądze, więc o rozkazanie. Ty będziesz mnimał, abyć się miał kazać obłapić wygrawszy, a on ci każe posłać po pieczenią a po garniec wina. A tak dziwnych a dziwnych przypadków, niżli się dobrze przypatrzysz figlom dworskim, będzie około ciebie" ("And you should watch your step, as if you were walking barefoot across clods of soil with cold tilled earth all around you for a start. And believe you me, you need great attention to minutiae and great common sense before you see everything there. You would think that everyone praises you and loves you, wants you to be a part of their group; well, trust me, they will drag you from house to house till you have no idea what is going on, especially if you have a bit of money to your name. Some will lure you with love, some with music, others will convince you to have a game or two with them, and if you decline to play for money, they will accept playing for commands. You think such commands would be to hug yourself? They will command you to order a pot of wine and a roasted boar. A multitude of such queer and bizarre things will surround you before you are familiar with courtly habits").

19 See Stanisław Orzechowski, *Dyalog albo rozmowa około exekucyjeje Polskiej Korony oraz Quincunx, to jest wzór Korony Polskiej na cynku wystawione*, ed. Kazimierz Józef Turowski (Kraków:

games, wooing, and pranks) are of a private nature, meaning that they are undertaken by an exclusive group of courtiers and in a specific, closed space—the court. Orzechowski understands the court in concrete terms, as the ruler's palace or castle. Private activities and celebrations are also distinguished by their goals: namely, entertainment and satisfying the desires of the senses. They give sensual, temporary pleasure to the community of courtiers, but do not have a positive impact on external and internal politics of the commonwealth.

The issue of privacy and its dangers is also considered in the *Books on Tutoring and Training Each Superordinate* (1558) by Stanisław Koszutski, a secretary of Sigismund Augustus's second wife, Barbara Radziwiłł (d. 1551). After her death, Koszutski served as the royal librarian.<sup>20</sup> He translated *De institutione principum*<sup>21</sup> (1538) by Reinhard Lorich (c. 1510–64) into Polish, but did not dedicate his work to the king; instead, he addressed it to the young Duke Semen Olelkowicz (d. 1560).<sup>22</sup> While discussing the proper education of the ruler, who should act for the public good, Koszutski reflects on privacy, and unlike Górnicki, Modrzewski, Orzechowski, and Rej, he tackles this topic from the perspective of the sovereign rather than courtiers. For Koszutski, what concerns the immediate surroundings of the ruler is private, including both family members (parents, wife, and children) and courtiers (teachers and a trusted group of advisors). These individuals assist in political decision-making and accompany the sovereign in everyday activities of a private nature. There is a broad range of activities, including: assistance with dressing, eating, walking in orchards and gardens, hunting, playing games,

Wydawnictwo Biblioteki Polskiej, 1858), 87: "Wierzę ja nie wiem, co innego jest ten dworzanin, który na wojnie nie bywał, ani rzeczy wielkich koronnych na dworze albo gdzie indziej nie sprawował, a który jedno kabaty rzezał, stroje wymyślał, maszkar patrzył, biesiad szukał, grał, miłował, błaznował, utracając na dworze; nie baczę, komu by miał być taki dworzanin równy, jedno pięknie ubranej dworskiej pannie, która z pewnego datku królowej służy" ("Truly I do not know what kind of beast is a courtier who has never gone to war, who has never been a court official for grand crown matters or elsewhere, and who has only designed vestments, pleated coats, watched masques, attended feasts, played games, had affairs, clowned around, idled away. I really don't know what use there is for one such, save for a prettily dressed maid—a maidservant to the queen").

20 See Kawecka-Gryczowa, *Biblioteka*, 58–76.

21 This work is part of a set of important texts for early modern writings on *institutio*—in this case, a ruler. See, for example, Alessandra Mantovani, "Speculum veritatis: Giovanni Garzoni e la tradizione dell'*institutio principis* nella Bologna del Bentivoglio", *Annali d'italianistica* 34 (2016): 97–120; Lester K. Born, "Erasmus on Political Ethics: The *Institutio Principis Christiani*", *Political Science Quarterly* 43:4 (1928): 510–43.

22 See Tomasz Kempa, "Zabiegi kniaziów Olelkowiczów słuckich o uzyskanie miejsca w senacie po 1569", *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* 47 (2003): 66–67.



attending masquerade balls, watching theatrical performances, dancing, singing, and playing instruments. Koszutski draws attention to the danger of participating in celebrations and ceremonies of a private nature: they often lead to improper behaviour. Sensual desire is usually the unwanted effect of activities or games connected with the private sphere. Dancing is a good example. “When dancing, the present pleasure is smaller than the promise of future pleasures”, writes Koszutski, reminding readers to use caution during events involving music and, importantly, women.<sup>23</sup> The latter also appear in the chapters of the treatise that deal with the sexual life of the sovereign—with intimate, sexual relations between the royal couple in the closed space of the sovereign’s bedroom, which is inaccessible to courtiers.

Koszutski mainly considers the proper education of the sovereign, who is to act for the public good, but there are some ideas on privacy in his book. As noted above, his private circle includes his parents, wife, children, tutor and trusted array of close associates, who are selected by considering aspects of their character: discretion, education, religiosity, fidelity, and temperance regarding matters such as clothes, eating, and drinking. These individuals are members of the court, which should not be too large as “it is difficult indeed to rule over servants, even when there are few, and when there are many, it is next to impossible to govern them well”.<sup>24</sup> Thus, for Koszutski, the limits of privacy are set by kinship and the degree of one’s intimacy with the ruler. Private chambers are those which only family members and trusted courtiers can enter. In the small groups that gather in these chambers or outdoors, one can feast, dance, sing, walk, watch theatre performances, or hunt. However, activities performed in private chambers, such as dancing with a woman, can be dangerous because they arouse sexual desire. Koszutski notices the influence of these activities on the senses, and he offers recommendations for temperance, the lack of which can lead the ruler to ruin.

However, the purpose of private celebrations is not only to satisfy elementary physiological needs or to entertain, but also to rest and relax. To ensure that nothing disrupts this relaxation—and also to ensure that entertainment does not become the main occupation of the sovereign—the king and the courtiers should have suitable qualities for pursuing such recreation appropriately. Koszutski expresses the belief that private court ceremonies need not overlap with public ceremonies and service to the

23 Stanisław Koszutski, *Reinharda Lorichiusa Księgi o wychowaniu i ćwiczeniu każdego przełożonego nie tylko panu, ale i poddanemu każdemu ku czytaniu barzo pożyteczne* (Kraków: Mikołaj Szarfenberger, 1558), sig. 126r.

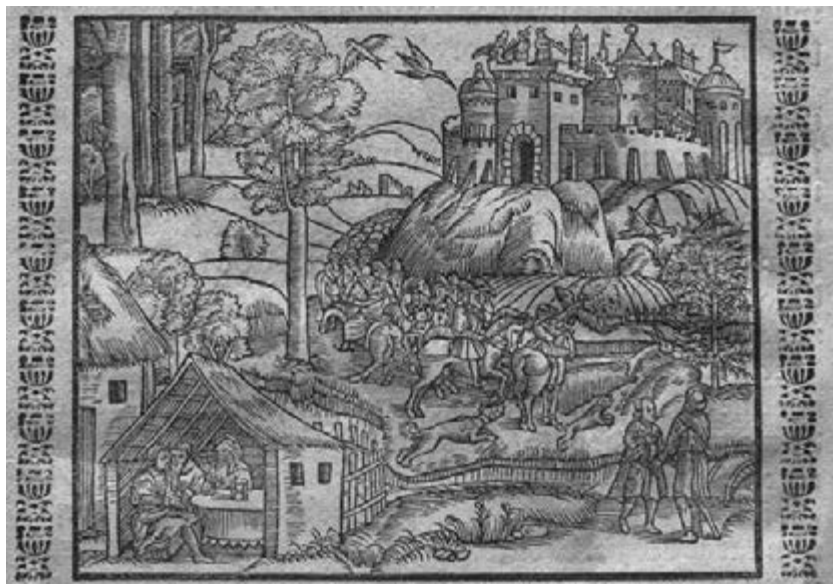
24 Koszutski, *Reinharda*, sig. 71v.

state, but whether this overlap occurs depends on the ruler rather than on the ruler. It is the ruler—properly educated, virtuous, and informed—who must take responsibility for the court. The sovereign selects the courtiers with whom he will spend his free, or private, time.

### Privacy? Yes, but Only in One's Own Home: Mikołaj Rej and Jan Kochanowski

From the 1560s, in addition to texts describing or criticising the court and courtiers, works appeared that contrasted the life of a courtier with the life of a nobleman (*szlachcic*). These works—for instance, *The Marshal* (written in 1570, published in 1586/95) by Jan Kochanowski—praise the abandonment of the courtly world for a life working on a manor farm.<sup>25</sup> It should be noted that Mikołaj Rej had recommended this lifestyle as well in the *The Life of an Honest Man*. He allowed for court or soldierly service at a certain stage of life, but averred that otherwise one should spend one's time at home and on one's own piece of land. Chapter 9 from book 1 of Rej's treatise is illustrated by a woodcut (Figure 7.1) showing a palace and a retinue of courtiers going hunting near a modest cottage in the foreground. There are three men sitting at a table: a young man, a middle-aged man, and an old man. Unlike the people in the retinue, they are talking to each other, looking at each other, and drawing attention to themselves. Two more men stand by the fence separating the hunters from the farm; they too are conversing with each other. This woodcut compares courtiers with noble landowners, but it also draws attention to two types of entertainment: courtly entertainment, which was linked to crowds, pressure, rigor, and restrictions (evocatively symbolised by a group of armed men); and entertainment outside the court, on a noble estate—which Rej discusses extensively in chapter 16. At the same time, he stresses that the life of a nobleman, unlike the life of a courtier, takes place entirely in the private sphere. This life focuses on the nobleman's estate, a limited, enclosed space (a house with fields, a garden, and an orchard), and also on a particular group of people connected to the host by ties of kinship, neighbourhood, or servitude. Comparing the description of the manor from chapter 10 of Rej's treatise to the description of the life of a landowner from chapter 16, it is clear that Rej presents the duties of the landlord (tilling the land, looking after his family, and overseeing his servants) not only as work, but also as a pleasurable pastime.

25 See Kochanowski, *Marszałek*, 423.



7.1 Woodcut, in Mikołaj Rej, *Żywot człowieka poczciwego* (Kraków: Maciej Wirzbięta, 1567–68), sig. 1r [List 25]. Reproduced with the permission of the University of Warsaw Library (inventory number Sd. 612.636).

Interesting assessments of life at and outside the court can also be found in the works of Jan Dantyszek. He was one of the foremost diplomats in the sixteenth century, a favourite of kings and emperors and an acquaintance (as evidenced by copious correspondence) of Hernán Cortes (c. 1485–1547), Erasmus of Rotterdam (1467–1536), Philip Melanchthon (1497–1560), and Baldassare Castiglione (1478–1529).<sup>26</sup> Dantyszek was born into burgher family in Gdańsk, as is indicated by his assumed name, Dantiscus (“of Gdańsk”), which he used more often than his family name, von Höfen. He succeeded at court, being appointed, for example the ambassador of Poland for Emperor Maximilian I (1459–1519) and an envoy to the court of Emperor Charles V (1500–58). These offices were a gateway to a spectacular church career: he subsequently became the bishop of Warmia.<sup>27</sup> In his rhyming

<sup>26</sup> Dantyszek’s letters are available online at <http://dantiscus.ibi.uw.edu.pl>. The site was created thanks to Internet Publication of Corpus of Ioannes Dantiscus’ Texts & Correspondence, a part of *Registration and Publication of the Correspondence of Ioannes Dantiscus (1485–1548)*, a programme that has been running since 1989 at the University of Warsaw.

<sup>27</sup> For the biography of Dantyszek, see Inge Brigitte Müller-Bleessing, *Johannes Dantiscus von Höfen: ein Diplomat und Bischof zwischen Humanismus und Reformation (1485–1548)* (Osnabrück: Sonderdruck aus Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde Ermlands, 1968); Wouter Bracke and Josef Ijsewijn, *Johannes Dantiscus (1485–1548): Polish Ambassador and Humanist:*

biography, *Vita Ioannis Dantisci*, he presents his life, dividing it into two stages: the years before leaving courtly service and those afterwards. The narrative of his years at court relates a series of successes, with numerous and often dangerous travels, and his service to the king and to the people. That of his later years outside the court describes a time of stability and service to God, a time when he became a private being who focussed on prayer and quiet reflection about the world:

Then without my knowledge they honoured me with a bishopric,  
 So I leave the court, hoping for a respite.  
 I devote myself to God at His altar,  
 And I completely change my old way of life. (73–76)<sup>28</sup>

Jan Kochanowski likewise contrasted life at court to life in the country. He was a royal secretary until the death of Sigismund Augustus, but after 1572, he decided to live in Czarnolas, a village in the land of Radom, devoting himself to the life of landowner.<sup>29</sup> Probably around that time, he wrote the poem entitled *Marszałek*.<sup>30</sup>

This work is linked to specific circumstances: Jan Firlej (1521–74), grand marshal of the crown (1563–74), had summoned Polish magnates and *szlachta* (nobility) from the Małopolska region to Kraków to discuss election issues following the death of Sigismund Augustus.<sup>31</sup> In *Marszałek*, reasons are given for abandoning the public duties of a Polish *szlachcic* (nobleman), who was obliged to appear in the electoral field, to hold offices, and to be present at the annual military reviewa. Kochanowski associates these duties with a courtly career characterised by buffoonery: one is rewarded according to

*Proceedings of the International Colloquium, Brussels, 22–23 May 1995* (Brussel: Centrum voor Europese Cultur, 1996).

28 Jan Dantyszek, *Pieśni*, ed. Anna Kamińska (Olsztyn: Pojezierze, 1987), 126–28: “Inscius atque absens post factus episcopus aulam / Deserui rediens spesque quietis erat. / Meque Deo totum dedidi sacrisque dicavi / Commutans vitae, quod fuit ante, genus.”

29 See Michael J. Mikoś, “Introduction”, in Jan Kochanowski, *Trifles, Songs, and Saint John’s Eve Song*, ed. and trans. Michael J. Mikoś (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2018), 23; David Welsh, *Jan Kochanowski* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1974), 33–50.

30 Addressed either to 1) Andrzej Zborowski (1525–98), marshal of the court from 1574 to 1578, 2) Andrzej Opaliński (1540–93), marshal of the court from 1572 to 1574 and then marshal of the crown until 1593, or to 3) Jan Firlej, grand marshal of the crown. See Roman Krzywy, *Sztuka wyborów i dar inwencji. Studium o strukturze gatunkowej poematów Jana Kochanowskiego* (Warsaw: Instytut Badań Literackich, 2008), 252.

31 Offices of the Polish royal court are analysed in Zbigniew Góralski, *Urzędy i godności w dawnej Polsce* (Warsaw: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1983), 130–53.

the ruler's whim and, therefore, lacks dignity. But Kochanowski also notes the competitive hunt for money and lucrative posts:<sup>32</sup>

It falls to me, incapable of buffoonery round the table  
 Who by presenting the other cheek is not able  
 To reap a crop, I do not want to acquire  
 Court skills, useful for pecuniary desire. [...]  
 I care not for titles, with pomp I do not thrive;  
 An honest education—that I can contrive. [...]  
 Tersely speaking: less abundance of money,  
 But your thoughts will quieten and be sweet as honey.  
 Work hard, and then never will you ever be broke  
 Plough fields, never let your oxen be afraid of the yoke,  
 Don't fret when goats start kidding, don't be work shy  
 So your flock of lambs may multiply. (17–20, 27–28, 47–52)<sup>33</sup>

According to Kochanowski, life away from the court (even when compared to that of a courtier who benefitted from the court) meant freedom, was much sought after, and secured privacy and self-sufficiency—all of which were difficult to achieve at court. At court, an abundance of duties (as Górnicki put it), the twists and turns fate, or temptations lead one away from a virtuous life and make one prey to capricious fortune.<sup>34</sup> Evocatively, Kochanowski expressed his distance from the court world in elegy 15 of book 3 of *Elegiarum libri quattuor* (1584). Serving at court, even in the inner circle of the ruler, risks numerous humiliations. Here, the courtier becomes not an actor, who may behave (“act”) more freely in a group of trusted peers, as Górnicki wrote, but a slave, unable to decide his own fate:

I till my fathers' land; fare thee well o false court,  
 I care not for your grand promises.

32 See an analysis of the poem in Krzywy, *Sztuka wyborów*, 259–61.

33 Kochanowski, *Marszałek*, 423–24: “A mnie więc, który k'stołu nie umiem błaznować / Ani, wydawszy, co raz gęby nadstawować, / Potrzeba kłosy zbierać, nie chcę li nauki / Uczyc się sobie trudnej dla obroczej sztuki. [...] / Ani ja dbam o pompę, ani o infuły; / Uczciwe wychowanie—to moje tytuły. [...] / To tylko krótko powiem: dochody szczuplejsze, / Ale myśl bezpieczniejsza i serce wolniejsze. / Tylko jako ktoś mówi, nie trzeba się zbraniać / Pługu jąc czasem albo i woły poganiać, / Nie lenić się do domu nieść jagnięcia w łonie / Albo jeśli mać kózki odbieży na stronie.”

34 It is worth noting that this way of describing courtly and landed life was popular among the *szlachta*, and that counterposing the life of landed gentry to the life at court was one of the *topoi* of Polish landowner literature. This *topos* was begun by Rej and Kochanowski. See Adam Karpiński, *Staropolska poezja ideałów ziemiańskich. Próba przekroju* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1983), 106–17.

Freedom is for me like a jewel, like that sand,  
 Which is carried by gold-bearing waters of a Lydia river.  
 Here I am not stuck at a doorstep, waiting for a nod,  
 Hurting my fragile back against a hard door.  
 I need not, before dining,  
 Pray that the master is already hungry,  
 Or to force my way with clenched fists among the crowd.  
 I do not adjust my life to anybody's laws and I can  
 Order my time as I like. (1–10)<sup>35</sup>

Across the texts and fragments of texts discussed in this section, privacy at court does not seem to exist—at least not a privacy that would include security, freedom, and independence. The court is a place of forced and, fortunately, temporary exile, not of permanent residence. Rej, Kochanowski, and Dantyszek are not interested in specific court ceremonies; they focus rather on the onerous duties and humiliations experienced by a courtier. Privacy for them means the company of well-known family members and friends and the activities typical of a nobleman, farmer, and landowner, or—in the case of Dantyszek—a clergyman serving God.

### The Loneliness of Crowds at Court (*The Story of Happiness*, Andrzej Krzycki, Mikołaj Rej)

In an anonymous piece, *Historyja [...] o Szczęściu a o Swej woli, a zwłaszcza o żywocie dworskim* (*The Story [...] of Happiness and One's Own will, and Especially of the Court Life*), published in 1515, the court is used to symbolically represent deceitful and murderous fortune. The court is depicted as “Mr Happiness”: “I don't know what to tell you about Mr Happiness, as his advice is changeable like a weathercock, and even his greatest admirers do not know anything for sure. There are courtiers in every shape—courteous, loquacious, greedy or stubborn—who will try to befriend you and be your companion.”<sup>36</sup> At the

35 Jan Kochanowski, *Carmina latina/Poezje łacińskie*, vol. 1, ed. Zofia Głombiowska (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, 2008), 559: “Patria rura colo: nunc fallax aula valebis, / Nil promissa equidem magna tua illa moror. / Libertas gemmarum instar mihi et instar arenae est, / Lydius aurifera quam vehit amnis aqua. / Hic ego nunc nutum alterius, nec limina servo, / Infringens duris molle latus foribus. / Nec votis exopto famem incenatus herilem, / Nec cuiquam in turba pugno aperire viam. / Nullius ad leges vitam compono licetq[ue] / Tempora mi arbitrio ponere cuncta meo.”

36 “Historyja [...] o Szczęściu a o Swej woli, a zwłaszcza o żywocie dworskim”, in *Proza polska wczesnego renesansu 1510–1550*, ed. Julian Krzyżanowski (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut

court of Mr Happiness, the lord provost is Frolic and the marshal is Liberty, while the servants include Lust, Mischief, Pride, and High-Mindedness. It is no wonder that the end is bad for those who join the court. The young man in this work is first abandoned by his friends—Virtuous, Wise, Sagacious, and Merciful—and then dies in the ramshackle hut of Poverty. This allegory was intended as a warning against performing evil deeds, and so to encourage instead good deeds that would strengthen one's virtue. Readers are supposed to rejoice at the hope of salvation—as they are reminded in a brief *Morale* accompanying the text.<sup>37</sup> The message is reinforced by the setting: a court depicted as hell on earth, with no place for service to the state nor for courtly events of a private nature. This vision of the court—a seat of vice and tragedy that is only superficially pretty—is also present in Andrzej Krzycki's epigrams and in Mikołaj Rej's *The Image of the Life of an Honest Man* (1558), where Prince Zelator has the following servants: Tumult, Invidious, Cupid, Avaricious, Simulator, Adulator, Superbeat, Private, Trump, and Self-Gain.<sup>38</sup>

In *The Image*, Rej, who was never a courtier himself, mentions the marshal of the court who “viciously crowns the king [...] on the block”.<sup>39</sup> The marshal also dies, and his fate reveals the truth about the comedy:

Wydawniczy, 1954), 67: “o panu Szczęściu nie wiem, coć mam powiedzieć, którego tako przemienne są rady, iż i nawiętszy miłośnicy jego nic pewnego powiedzieć nie mogą. Mać dworzan dosyć rozmaitych: dwornych, mownych, chciwych, upornych, którzy z tobą wnet ci znajomość wezmą i za towarzysza cię będą chcieli mieć.”

37 See *Proza polska*, 81.

38 See Andrzej Krzycki, *Carmina*, ed. Kazimierz Morawski (Kraków: Typis Universitatis Jagellonicae, 1888), 249–50: “Hospes quae pictura haec? Aulica vita. Quis iste / Limen adit cultus? Qui novus ingreditur. / Quae sedet in summo? Regina opulentia. Quaendam / Obvia suscipit hunc? Spes eademque fovet. / Quae prendunt dehinc? Servitus et fallacia. Cuinam / Obiciunt? Contra cui venit ecce labor. / Quid tum ille? Arreptum curis comitantibus et spe / Quae subeunt una? Iactura, illusio, probra. / Evolat hinc quae nunc? Spes male fida comes. / Quae pugno hunc contundit? Desperatio. Sed quae / Huic maesta adsistit? Quae metaneoae manet. / Exitus hinc non est nisi quos opulentia raros / Respicit hisque aliis vindicat e minibus” (“What image is that?—This is the image of courtly life. / Who is that who enters?—He is a new man here. / Who rules here?—The Queen of Wealth. / Who welcomes a guest here?—Hope, strengthening him. / And who took him now?—Deceit and servility. / Where do they send him?—To waiting Toil. / What will he do with him?—Between worry and hope / He will lead him until old age. / Has anyone escaped his grasp?—Only hope, that unfaithful companion. / And who is striking him with their fist?—Despair.—But did anyone stay with him / In his sadness?—Yes, vain grief after the fact. / Few escaped here / Except those with rare wealth / When Riches saw them, giving them what it took from others”). Krzycki also wrote about the court and courtiers in *Ad novas aulicos, de harpyiis aulicis, quidam de se ipso aulae deditus, aula regia Petro Tomicio epo tum Posnaniensi, vicecancellario* (Krzycki, *Carmina*, 250–52). See Mikołaj Rej, *Wizerunek własny żywota człowieka poczciwego*, ed. Władysław Kuraszewicz (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1971), vol. 1, 338.

39 Rej, *Wizerunek*, 458.

deceived by people and directed by Fortuna, in this world he is a “true and poor fool”.<sup>40</sup> The world of the court, either symbolising fortune or being its domain, does not leave people much choice; it lures, tempts, and misleads people, as described by Rej in an epigram called *Dworski stan tak malują* (*Zwierzyniec*, 1564):

A courtier is pictured dressed in merry way,  
 Chains he wears aplenty, like a hoopoe gay;  
 He twists and contorts his hand to his foot,  
 His other hand scratches his ear, like a merry coot.  
 His life seems pretty pleasant, but I ask hereby,  
 Won't freedom and conscience with each other vie;  
 Don't do what just be done, see what time will bring,  
 And freely, like a lark, then in forest sing.<sup>41</sup>

Likely sources for this poem were *Adagia* by Erasmus of Rotterdam and/or one of Alciato's (1492–1550) *Emblemata* (CXI *In aulicos*. This source seems more certain because of the phrase “A courtier is pictured” from verse 1). In Erasmus's tome (II, 329) we read: “Golden chains, a proverbial metaphor describes the glorious and enticing service which is the life of courtiers.”<sup>42</sup> Alciato likewise noted in his *Emblemata*: “It is said that a court [is] filled with vanity, which breeds its clients / and chains them with golden chains.”<sup>43</sup> The emblem accompanying this quotation contains a woodcut (Figure 7.2) of an empty castle yard and a richly dressed man

40 See Rej, *Wizerunk*, 460–61: “Wierę, naszymi dworzanie podobno się strwożą, / Użrawszy, ano króla bez litości sieką, / Marszałka czasem za nim i za nogi wleką. / A kto by z góry patrzył, jest się naśmiać czemu, / Temu światu marnemu błaznowi prawemu, / Jako tu nami miesza, a jako kugluje, / A każdy sobie tusząc, nic tego nie czuje” (“I say our courtiers may fear / when they see the king, they lash him mercilessly, / Sometimes they also trail the marshal aimlessly / Were someone to look at them from a certain height / He would laugh at them and their sheer delight / They behave like fools, and their buffoonery / seems to them quite illusory”).

41 See Mikołaj Rej, *Zwierzyniec 1564*, ed. Wilhelm Bruchnalski (Kraków: Akademia Umiejętności, 1895), 225: “Dworzanina malują pięknie ubranego, / Łańcuchów na nim pełno, jako dudka pstręgo; / A on w pęcie za nogi, podjął rękę sobie, / A drugą się za ucho, schyliwszy łeb, skrobie. / Jesteś żywot rozkoszny, lecz kto ci rozważy, / Już swobodę z sumnieniem prawie na szanę waży; / Bo nie czyni, co się zda, lecz co czas przyniesie, / Być swobodnie z sumnieniem, byś też nie chciał w lesie.”

42 Andrea Alciato, *Il libro degli emblemi: secondo le edizioni del 1531 e del 1534*, ed. Mino Gabriele (Milan: Adelphi, 2015), 708: “Aurea compedes, proverbiali methaphora dicit servitus splendida et amabilis, quails est aulicorum vita.”

43 Alciato, *Il libro*, 563: “Vana palatinos, quos educat, aula clientes / Dicitur auratis nectere compedibus.”





7.2 Woodcut, in Andrea Alciato, *Emblematum libellus* (Paris: Christianus Wechelus, 1542). Reproduced with the permission of the University of Warsaw Library (inventory number Sd. 608.845).

who wears a feathered cap, is locked in a pillory, and has his feet chained. For Rej, a courtier is an example not of servility punished—as suggested in the woodcut by the wooden pillory and the iron chains—but of everyman: a sinner who does whatever he pleases, fails to listen to his conscience, and uses freedom wrongly. This courtier, or everyman, is finally left alone with his sins.

Thus, in *The Story*, Rej's *The Image*, Rej's epigrams, privacy at court is replaced by solitude, which is not portrayed positively. Instead, solitude acquires tragic, and even universal, connotations. After all, the court symbolises the seat of evil—the kingdom of Fortuna—and the courtier symbolises a man who is unable to fight against the temptations of the world and sin itself. He also has no helpers in this fight: he goes into battle alone, defenceless and doomed to failure.

## Conclusion

Using specific literary sources from sixteenth-century Poland, a general and synthetic definition of privacy at court can be formulated. In these texts, privacy at court is always analysed in the context of being public or private, not in terms of the spaces of the court and courtiers. Courtly privacy may serve the *raison d'état*, but may also threaten it if that privacy is used solely to satisfy one's desires and pleasures. Here, privacy at court is defined by repeated everyday activities necessary to fulfil basic physiological needs (feasts and sex, however strictly controlled) and entertainment (balls, masquerades, games, dances, and music). Its borders are formed by the principles that, like public life, are governed by the virtues of temperance, prudence, wisdom, discretion, and modesty. In the private sphere, there is more leeway in the application of these virtues, but this leeway may undermine them.

We also must bear in mind that reflections on the court, courtiers, and courtly events seldom become the leitmotif of literary works from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth of the sixteenth century. The court usually appeared in works devoted to governing the commonwealth and its system of rule or works about raising children. These works were frequently penned by authors who had themselves been accomplished courtiers, supported and rewarded by rulers (examples here include Kochanowski, Krzycki, Dantyszek, Orzechowski, and Rej).<sup>44</sup> Still other texts equate the court and courtly life with sin and evil—and/or Fortuna—and contrasted the courtly life with ways of life that are conducive to virtue—in particular, the life of the rural nobility (as we saw with Kochanowski, Rej, and Dantyszek).<sup>45</sup>

44 The gains these writers achieved through their courtly service is analysed, within the general context of patronage, in Leszek Hajdukiewicz, "Społeczne aspekty mecenatu literackiego w Małopolsce w czasach Jana Kochanowskiego", in *Cracovia litterarum: Kultura umysłowa i literacka Krakowa i Małopolski w dobie Renesansu. Księga zbiorowa Międzynarodowej Sesji Naukowej w czterechsetlecie zgonu Jana Kochanowskiego (w Krakowie, 10–13 października 1984 r.)*, ed. Tadeusz Ulewicz (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1991), 117–41. The function of the court in developing the clientele system in Poland is discussed in Antoni Mączak, "Patronage im Herzen des frühneuzeitlichen Europa", in *Klientelensysteme im Europa der Frühen Neuzeit*, eds. Elisabeth Müller-Luckner and Antoni Mączak (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1988), 83–90. Patronage and clientele for Sigismund I are described in Anna Sucheni-Grabowska, "Obsadzanie urzędów senatorskich i ministerialnych przez Zygmunta Augusta", in *Studia nad gospodarką, społeczeństwem i rodziną w Europie późnofeudalnej*, eds., Jerzy Topolski and Cezary Kukło (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Lubelskie, 1987), 179–84.

45 The association of the court with the twists and turns of fate, culminating in the court being a source of all vice and misfortune, took root in Polish literature. This is particularly clear with *Tragedyja o polskim Scylurusie (The Tragedy of Polish Scylurus)* (1604) by Jan Jurkowski. Here, the character of the student says that there are no wise men at court because "they value horse

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masters and dog masters all the more” (“w większej wadze tam mają psie mistrze i końskie”); the court, for Jurkowski, was peopled by “jesters, parasites, last-year’s sycophants [...who] live with a great array of deaf people, dwarfs, dogs, fools [and] histrionic flatterers” (“Kuglarze, pasożyty, głaszczouchy końskie [...] żyją z wielką zgrają / Głuchów, karłów, psów, błaznów, pochlebców”). (Jan Jurkowski, *Tragedia o polskim Scylurusie*, in *Dramaty staropolskie*, vol. 3, ed. Julian Lewański (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1961), 106–07).

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## 8. ‘Au Milieu d’une Cour Superbe & Tumultueuse’: Devotional Privacy at the Court of Versailles

*Mette Birkedal Bruun and Lars Cyril Nørgaard*

### Abstract

Privacy is often associated with sharply defined dichotomies and strong delineations. Like many other frameworks for the historical study of early modern privacy, such dichotomies and delineations do not hold up under closer scrutiny. Privacy at court was malleable, temporal, and situational. Religious devotion seems particularly useful for studying the malleability, temporality, and situation-based nature of privacy. In this case study, we analyse the different forms of religious withdrawal available to female members of the highest nobility in early modern France. We focus on Mademoiselle de Montpensier and Madame de Guise, who fashioned different modes of devotional privacy at court. In the correspondence between the half-sisters, we identify a varied system of scales and means of withdrawal: from monastic retreats, which entailed a demonstrative withdrawal in appearance and action, to pockets of solitude in the daily devotional routine.

**Keywords:** Mademoiselle de Montpensier, Madame de Guise, withdrawal, solitude, religion

### Prologue

During the latter half of the seventeenth century, two half-sisters shared the Palais d’Orléans in Paris. They shared the same father, Louis XIII’s brother Gaston d’Orléans (1608–60), but Anne Marie Louise d’Orléans, Duchess of Montpensier (1627–93), known as la Grande Mademoiselle, was Gaston’s



daughter with his first wife, Marie de Bourbon (1605–27). Meanwhile, Élisabeth Marguerite d'Orléans (1646–96), known as Madame de Guise, was born in Gaston's second marriage to Marguerite de Lorraine (1615–72). The two sisters were not the best of friends. According to Saint-Simon, Madame de Guise “était fort maltraitée par Mademoiselle” (“was severely mistreated by Mademoiselle”). Montpensier was powerful and wealthy: she accepted neither her father's second marriage nor its offspring.<sup>1</sup>

For contemporaries and scholars alike, the sisters' mutual animosity is unsurprising. The two women could hardly have been more different. Mademoiselle de Montpensier seemed worldly, and she was known for her Amazonian involvement in the Fronde and for the penetrating written portrayals of her peers.<sup>2</sup> Madame de Guise was manifestly pious and ever intent on her own religious rectitude and the devotion of those around her. Interestingly, the Old Testament figure of Judith appears in funeral sermons for both women, but it is significant that Montpensier elicited a comparison with the heroic side of Judith (Jdt 15) as “une femme forte” (“a strong woman”),<sup>3</sup> while Madame de Guise inspired an allusion to Judith as a sack-clothed widow, withdrawn in her chamber and immersed in prayer (Jdt 8).<sup>4</sup>

In this chapter we argue that, despite the perceived contrast between the half-sisters, when we read Montpensier's devotional work *Réflexions sur les huit Béatitudes* against the foil of Madame de Guise's religious profile,

1 Louis de Rouvroy, duc de Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, ed. Y. Coirault, 8 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1983–88), vol. 1, 278. This chapter rests on research conducted at the Danish National Research Foundation Centre for Privacy Studies (DNRF138).

2 Anon., *Divers portraits* (s.l., s.n.: 1659). These portraits were collaborative efforts, and it remains uncertain how many Montpensier authored. See the discussion of the sixteen signed portraits in D. Mayer, “Les seize portraits littéraires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier”, in D. Mayer, *Mademoiselle de Montpensier: trois études d'après ses mémoires* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1989), 13–91. Plantié argues that at least two of the seven unsigned portraits should be ascribed to Montpensier (Anon., *Divers portraits*, 183–84; 186–87). Cf. J. Plantié, *La mode du portrait littéraire en France (1641–1681)* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1994), 185–224.

3 Antoine Anselme, *Eloge funebre de tres-haute, tres-puissante et royale princesse Anne-Marie-Louïse d'Orleans, Souveraine de Dombes* (Lyon: Jacques Guerrier, 1693). For the *femme forte* and Judith, see, for example, B. Baumgärtel and S. Neyster (eds.), *Die Gallerie der starken Frauen: Regentinnen, Amazonen, Salondamen* (Munich: Klinkhardt and Biermann, 1995). For early modern reappropriation of Judith, see E. Ciletti, “The Judith Imagery in Counter-Reformation Italy”, in *The Sword of Judith*, eds. K. R. Brine, E. Ciletti, and H. Lähnemann (Cambridge: Open Books, 2010), 345–68; K. Llewellyn, *Representing Judith in Early Modern French Literature* (London: Routledge, 2016), 121–22; M. Birkedal Bruun, S. R. Havsteen, E. Nagelsmit, K. Mejrup, and L. Nørgaard, “A Marvellous Model of Female Conduct: Judith in Seventeenth-Century France”, *Transfiguration* 2014 (publ. 2018): 9–64.

4 Jean-Baptiste Mareschaulx, *Oraison funebre de tres-haute, tres-puissante et tres-excellente princesse Elisabeth d'Orleans, duchesse de Guise* (Paris: Florentin & Pierre Delaulne, 1697).

we can come to a better understanding of devotional privacy at court; both its means and its ends. We define privacy along the lines indicated by Irwin Altman, that is, as a matter of boundary control and regulation of access. Translated to an early modern religious context, privacy marks a state of physical and mental withdrawal that is religiously motivated and segregates the votary by way of material or immaterial boundaries.<sup>5</sup> Across confessions, early modern Christianity entailed a propensity for withdrawal from the world.<sup>6</sup> In the Catholic world, the penchant for a life in the world, but not of the world, could take the grand and lasting form of monastic profession. However, it also fostered forms of existence at the material or social margins of monasteries, for instance encouraging traffic in and out of monasteries for devotional as well as social purposes.<sup>7</sup> More influential in scope was the call for moments of intense daily withdrawal, be they physical or mental. Prayer and contemplation supplemented the official rhythm of the public liturgy and its ordering of time.<sup>8</sup> These moments of withdrawal do not always connote privacy. In many instances, *retraiter* (to withdraw) is conducted in two dimensions; the votary moves away from *le monde* (the world) and moves to a *retraite* (a place of withdrawal). This place of withdrawal is perceived as closer to the divine.<sup>9</sup> For privacy to be

5 According to Altman, privacy is a process of controlling boundaries, whereby people sometimes make themselves open and accessible to others and sometimes close themselves off from others. I. Altman, "Privacy Regulation: Culturally Universal or Cultural Specific?", *Journal of Social Issues* 33:3 (1977): 66–84, esp. 67. Margulis adds a teleological component with his argument that the aim of such control is to "enhance autonomy and/or to minimize vulnerability". S. T. Margulis, "Conceptions of Privacy: Current Status and Next Steps", *Journal of Social Issues* 33:3 (1977): 5–21, esp. 10.

6 See M. Birkedal Bruun, S. R. Havsteen, K. Mejrup, E. Nagelsmit, and L. Nørgaard, "General Introduction" and "Withdrawal and Engagement in the Long Seventeenth Century: Four Case Studies", *Journal of Early Modern Christianity* 1:2 (2014): 195–205, 249–343.

7 See M. Birkedal Bruun, "A Solitude of Permeable Boundaries: The Abbey of La Trappe between Isolation and Engagement", in *Solitude: Spaces, Places, and Times of Solitude in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, eds. C. Göttler and K. A. E. Enenkel (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 451–79.

8 The Christian tradition of secluded prayer and personal contrition includes scattered appearances of terms derived from *privatus* and *secretus*; these terms designate a devotion distinct from the official liturgy. See, for example, the twelfth-century Cistercian Aelred of Rievaulx's *Sermo* 9 for the Annunciation, where Virgin Mary is portrayed in "priuatum thalamum suum" ("her private bridal chamber"), Aelred of Rievaulx, *Sermones I–CLXXXII*, ed. G. Raciti (Turnhout: Brepols, 1989), 12 (9.18). Words deriving from *privatus* are more abundant in early modern Anglophone devotional literature than in, say, German or French devotional literature; for examples, see J. Martin and A. Ryrie (eds.), *Private and Domestic Devotion in Early Modern Britain* (London and New York: Ashgate, 2016).

9 This movement is built into the Latin *tractus* when the prefix *re-* is added. The Latin *trahere* and the Greek *τράχειν* entail running, dragging, and pulling. This makes *trahere* (and related

a valuable analytical tool here, it must help us pinpoint elements of the historical sources that *retraiter* and *retraite* do not elucidate. It must come with a form of enclosure that heightens the intensity of the withdrawn activities. We thus argue that boundary-drawing is key to the distinction between withdrawal and privacy, and that boundary-drawing intensifies the devotional immersion afforded in this form of withdrawal.

Terminology matters. Terms derived from the Latin *privatus* occur, if rarely, in religious contexts in early modern France. For example, the Jesuit Jean Suffren (1571–1641) defines “prière privée” (“private prayer”) as distinct from the prayer led by the clergy; that is, he emphasised the ‘lay’ quality of *privatus*. Most often, however, the link between *privé(e)* and religion appears when a religious component is added to a secular retirement from civic life and its duties. The term *privé(e)* does not have the same religious connotations as terms like *retraiter*, and the term *particulier* (‘particular’, ‘aside’, ‘individual’, etc.) is of relevance in this context but offers little additional analytical insight.<sup>10</sup>

words) suitable for a theological context in which the votary is dragged out of the world and returned to a state that is closer to her original, prelapsarian state. This idea of a return draws on a theological anthropology that centres around alienation; this understanding of the human condition permeates the Christian tradition and is made explicit in the monastic tradition. See H. von Campenhausen, *Asketische Heimatlosigkeit* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1930); B. Kötting, *Peregrinatio religiosa: Wallfahrt und Pilgerwesen in antike und alter Kirche* (Munich: Regensburg, 1950); J. Leclercq, “Mönchtum und Peregrinatio im Frühmittelalter”, *Römische Quartalschrift* 55 (1960): 212–55; J. Leclercq, “Monachisme et pérégrination du IXe au XIIe siècle”, *Studia monastica* 3 (1961): 33–52; G. Ladner, “Homo Viator: Medieval Ideas on Alienation and Order”, *Speculum* 42 (1967): 233–59.

10 For a discussion of Suffren, see M. Birkedal Bruun, “Time Well Spent: Scheduling Private Devotion in Early Modern France”, in *Managing Time: Literature and Devotion in Early Modern France*, eds. R. Maber and J. Barker (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2017), 35–68. For connotations of the phrase *vie privée* in late seventeenth-century France and a study of its religious dimensions, see M. Birkedal Bruun, “Towards an Approach to Early Modern Privacy”, 26–49; A. Régent-Susini, “How to Make Exemplarity with Secret Virtues: Funeral Sermons and Their Challenges in Early Modern France”, in *Early Modern Privacy: Sources and Approaches*, eds. M. Green, L. C. Nørgaard, and M. Birkedal Bruun (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 186–88. Hélène Merlin-Kajman has studied extensively early modern French articulations of the boundary between the individual or the particular and the public. See, for example, Hélène Merlin-Kajman, *Public et littérature en France au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1994); Hélène Merlin-Kajman, “Le moi dans l’espace social: métamorphoses du XVIIIe siècle”, in *Raisons pratiques: l’invention de la société, nominalisme politique et science sociale au XVIIIe siècle*, eds. L. Kaufmann and J. Guilhamou (Paris: Éditions de l’École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2003), 23–43; Hélène Merlin-Kajman, “Sentir, ressentir: émotion privée, langage public”, *Littératures classiques* 68 (2009): 335–54; Hélène Merlin-Kajman, “Privé’ and ‘Particulier’ (and Other Words) in Seventeenth-Century France”, in *Early Modern Privacy: Sources and Approaches*, eds. M. Green, L. C. Nørgaard, and M. Birkedal Bruun (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 79–104, esp. 80–81.

More significant than words deriving from *privatus* is the term *solitude*, which features prominently in the religious literature of early modern France.<sup>11</sup> As Jean-Louis Quantin has observed, *solitude* was part of the discourse of interiority, meditation, and self-knowledge, but also had negative associations of singularity, pride, and potentially causing schism within the church.<sup>12</sup> Although the words 'privacy' and 'solitude' are terminologically and etymologically distinct, their semantics similarly involve the absence of things that are characteristic of the collective; in this sense, *solitude* approaches the original Latin meaning of *privatus*.<sup>13</sup> As an illustrative example, we may consider *De la solitude* by the Port-Royal doctor Jean Hamon (1618–87), who explains that solitude is “sortir du monde tout nuds, & se contenter de Jesus-Christ seul, avec lequel on a tout quoiqu'on soit privé de tout le reste” (“to leave the world entirely naked and content oneself alone

11 See B. Beugnot, *Loin du monde et du bruit: le discours de la retraite au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Hermann, 2015), 209–56; B. Beugnot, “Loisir, retraite, solitude: de l'espace privé à la littérature”, in *Le loisir lettré à l'âge classique*, eds. M. Fumaroli, P. J. Salazar, and E. Bury (Geneva: Droz, 1996), 173–95; B. Beugnot, “Y a-t-il une problématique féminine de la retraite?”, in *Onze études sur l'image de la femme dans la littérature française du dix-septième siècle*, ed. W. Leiner (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1978), 29–49; S. Beauvalet-Boutouyrie, *La solitude: XVIIe–XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Belin, 2008); É. van der Schueren, *Les sociétés et les déserts de l'âme dans la France du XVIIe siècle* (Brussels: Académie Royale de langue et de littérature française, 2001); P. Naudin, *L'expérience et le sentiment de la solitude dans la littérature française de l'aube des Lumières à la Révolution* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1995); D. Stanton, “The Ideal of ‘Repos’ in Seventeenth-Century French Literature”, *L'esprit créateur* 15 (1975): 79–104.

12 J.-L. Quantin, “Paradoxes of Christian Solitude in the Seventeenth Century”, *Journal of Early Modern Christianity* 1:2 (2014): 219–31. This ambiguity resembles present-day concerns about privacy as both a common good that must be protected and a potential threat to society if it shields activities that are considered harmful. An equation of privacy and solitude, based on early modern English material, appears in R. Huebert, “Privacy: The Early Social History of a Word”, *The Sewanee Review* 105 (1997): 21–38, esp. 24. It is worth recalling that solitude is one of the four meanings of privacy listed in Alan F. Westin's classic *Privacy and Freedom* (New York: Atheneum, 1967).

13 Like *retrahere*, the Latin terms *privus*, *privo*, and *privatus*, as negations, entail a motion that begins in front of something or someone and ends by being separated from something or someone. *Seul*, *solitude*, and *solitaire* are derived from the Latin *solus*, *solitudo*, and *solitarius*. Considering solitude as a foil for religiously tinged privacy helps us see how both terms grant access to an interior landscape not readily available to anybody other than the “self”, who is focused on her relation to the divine. This intimate conception of religious life, aptly summed up in the Greek “ἀναχωρεῖν εἰς εαυτὸν” (“to retire into oneself”) that, like *retrahere*, implies a movement of the votary to a place—*χωρὸς*—that is his or her own or himself or herself. On this interior space and its architecture in early modern France, see, for example, N. D. Paige, *Being Interior: Autobiography and the Contradictions of Modernity in Seventeenth-Century France* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001); B. Papasogli, *Le ‘fond du cœur’: figures de l'espace intérieur au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2000).

with Jesus Christ with whom one has everything, while being deprived of everything else”).<sup>14</sup> This abandoning of the world is at the heart of the religious solitude that involves severing worldly bonds and entering into an intense dialogue with the divine.

In this chapter, we focus on religious privacy at court by examining the cases of Mademoiselle de Montpensier and Madame de Guise as foils for each other. Between them, the half-sisters exemplify a grand and varied system of scales and means of withdrawal: from monastic retreats, which entailed a demonstrative withdrawal in appearance and action, to pockets of solitude in the daily devotional routine. We shall begin by surveying some of Madame de Guise's different forms of withdrawal to demonstrate the religious forms of withdrawal usually available to the elite of early modern France. We argue that indications of withdrawal also appear in Montpensier's *Mémoires*, but these indications are relatively scattered and therefore seem less deliberate. We then consider the purchasing, gifting, and composition of religious books as a key component of active religious retreat. When we turn to Montpensier's *Réflexions*, we shift from a broad notion of retreat to a more specific kind of boundary-drawing that warrants being defined as privacy. The overall aim of the chapter is to show that when used as an analytical term, and despite its risks of anachronism, the notion of privacy helps us ferret out specific aspects of a religious practice that is remote in time, class, and quality.

## Religion in Public

On 11 September 1676, Madame de Guise made her entry into her duchy of Alençon. To the sounding of bells and cannons, the duchess proceeded to Notre-Dame of Alençon, where the bishop of Séez, Jean de Forcoal (1627–82), and his clergy greeted her and celebrated mass. She then settled into her new lodging, the Hôtel de Guise, in the Faubourg of Saint Blaise.<sup>15</sup> From this point, Madame de Guise would spend summers in this Norman outpost and return to Paris for the winters; after the court moved to Versailles in 1682, she spent her winters there.<sup>16</sup> Élisabeth d'Orléans entered Alençon as a childless

14 Jean Hamon, *De la solitude* (Amsterdam: n. p., 1734), 316. For a discussion of Hamon's work, see Quantin, "Paradoxes of Christian Solitude".

15 H. Tournouër, "Élisabeth d'Orléans", *Bulletin de la Société historique et archéologique de l'Orne* 61 (1942): 75–125, esp. 98.

16 See Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, vol. 1, 279–80. On her accommodation in the *Aile des Princes* at Versailles, see W. R. Newton, *L'espace du roi: la cour de France au château de Versailles. 1682–1789* (Paris: Fayard, 2000), 244.

widow, following the death of her husband, the Duke of Guise, Louis-Joseph de Lorraine (1650–71), and their only child, François Joseph (1670–75).<sup>17</sup> During their marriage, the couple had lived in the Hôtel de Guise in Paris (now the Hôtel de Soubise) with Louis-Joseph's aunt, Mademoiselle de Guise, Marie de Lorraine (1615–88). The widow retained the title of Madame de Guise and moved back to the Palais d'Orléans, from which she navigated a rich devotional geography. She had a private chapel at her parish church of Saint-Sulpice, close to the Palais d'Orléans. At the fashionable Sainte-Anne-La-Royale, home to the Theatines, she witnessed exuberant liturgies and funded the furnishing of a chapel for the order's founder, Gaetano dei Conti di Thiene (1480–1547).<sup>18</sup> To the Abbaye de Saint-Pierre in Montmartre, she retreated regularly with Mademoiselle de Guise, who was the sister of its abbess, Françoise-Renée de Lorraine de Guise (1619–82). Twice a year, when travelling to and from Alençon, Madame de Guise visited the Cistercian abbey of La Trappe and its abbot, Armand-Jean de Rancé (1626–1700), who had been her father's chaplain.<sup>19</sup> Madame de Guise and her entourage stayed at a lodge with its own garden in the abbey's outer court.<sup>20</sup>

With her entry into Alençon, Madame de Guise added a new set of sites to her devotional geography: the town soon became her stage for devout civic engagement, and she strove to take control of both intendants and clergy.<sup>21</sup> Saint-Simon describes how her sense of rank made her mistreat the

17 For the economic implications of this situation, see J. Spangler, "Benefit or Burden? Elite Widows in Seventeenth-Century France", *Proceedings of the Western Society for French History* 17:3 (2003): 65–83, esp. 74.

18 For references, see M. Birkedal Bruun, S. R. Havsteen, E. Nagelsmit, K. Mejrup, and L. Nørgaard, "A Marvellous Model of Female Conduct".

19 For the relationship between Madame de Guise and Armand-Jean de Rancé, see M. Birkedal Bruun, L. Nørgaard, E. Nagelsmit, S. R. Havsteen, and K. Mejrup, "Withdrawn amidst the World: Rancé's *Conduite Chrétienne* for Mme de Guise (1697)", *Early Modern French Studies* 39:1 (2017): 57–74. See also M. Birkedal Bruun, *The Unfamiliar Familiar: Armand-Jean de Rancé (1626–1700) between Withdrawal and Engagement* (Copenhagen: Det Teologiske Fakultet, 2017), 334–56.

20 For this lodge, see D. Georges, "Procès-verbal", in P. de Maupeou, *La vie du très-révérénd père dom Armand Jean Le Bouthillier de Rancé*, 2 vols. (Paris: L. d'Houry, 1602 [instead of 1702]), vol. 2, 274. According to Dubois, the lodge had moulded panels and simple but tasteful sculptures. L. Dubois, *Historie de l'Abbe de Rancé et de sa réforme*, 2 vols. (Paris: Bray, 1866) vol. 1, 618.

21 She was most likely involved in several appointments and depositions of priests to Notre-Dame d'Alençon. For her ecclesiastical involvement, see P. Belard, *Inventaire des titres, papiers & enseignemens concernant la cure d'Alençon avec un mémoire précis de titres anciens et modernes de toutes choses en 1720*, ed. E. Laurent (Alençon: T. Renaut de Broise, 1895), 7–10. When Jean de Forcoal, bishop of Sées, died on 22 February 1682, Madame de Guise attempted to recruit the Saint-Sulpician Paul Godet des Marais (1647–1709), who later became bishop of Chartres. See the letter from Louis Tronson to Monsieur Baudrand of April 1682 in Louis Tronson, *Correspondance de M. Louis Tronson, troisième supérieur de la Compagnie de Saint-Sulpice*, ed. L. Bertrand, 3 vols.

intendant of Alençon and leave the Bishop of Séez standing for hours, while she sat calmly in a chair.<sup>22</sup> Servants strutted her colours in the streets, and soon her heraldic signature towered on several local buildings.<sup>23</sup> In both spiritual and material ways, Madame de Guise hovered over Alençon, and, somewhat paradoxically, all this activity played into her profile as a widow withdrawn from the world.<sup>24</sup> She enacted the obligation of *les Grands*, which had been instilled in her by religious directors, to be an example to the world in everything from her hairstyle to the colour of her dress.<sup>25</sup> Madame de Guise also reformed the Hôtel-Dieu and its community of *Filles de Charité*.<sup>26</sup> She was actively involved as well in conversions of local Protestants.<sup>27</sup>

Somewhat surprisingly perhaps, Mademoiselle de Montpensier's life shows traces of a religious landscape akin to that of her half-sister. In her *Mémoires*, she recorded visits to religious institutions in Paris, during her periods of exile, and along travel itineraries of the court. She frankly admits that in her youth, she would frequently fall asleep during daily litanies.<sup>28</sup> As an adult, she nevertheless tended to spend her holidays in convents, where she hosted meetings with friends and family.<sup>29</sup> She also established charitable

(Paris: Lecoffre, 1904) vol. 1, 306–07. In September 1676, she had the appointment of Michel Colbert (1615–95) revoked. P.-J Odolant-Desnos, *Mémoires historiques sur la ville d'Alençon et sur ses seigneurs*, 2 vols. (Alençon and Paris: Poulet-Malassis and T. Renaut de Broise, 1858 [1787]), vol. 1, 452. Colbert's successor, Claude Méliand (1634–95), showed himself indulgent towards the Protestants and left on 1 March 1677. Finally, Antoine Barillon de Morangis (d. 1686) left Alençon at the duchess's initiative, allegedly because of leniency towards the Protestants. See B. Robert, "La Réforme à Alençon: deux notes inédites", *Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire du protestantisme français* 83:1 (1934): 97.

22 On her friction with the bishop of Séez, see the letters from Rancé to Madame de Guise of 30 September 1687 and 15 October 1687. Armand Jean le Bouthillier de Rancé, *Abbé de Rancé: Correspondance*, ed. A. J. Krailsheimer, 4 vols. (Paris: Cerf, 1993), vol. 3, 479, 485–86.

23 This is noted in Élie Benoist, *Histoire de l'édit de Nantes, contenant les choses les plus remarquables qui se sont passées en France avant & après sa publication à l'occasion de la diversité des religions et principalement les contraventions, inexécutions, chicanes, artifices, violences et autres injustices que les réformes y ont soufferts jusques à l'edit de révocation en octobre 1685 avec ce qui a suivi ce nouvel édit jusques à présent*, 5 vols. (Delft: Adrian Beman, 1693–95), vol. 4, 451.

24 See Jerothée de Mortagne, *Oraison funebre de tres-haute, tres-puissante, tres-religieuse, et tres-excellente princesse Elisabeth d'Orleans, duchesse de Guise, d'Alençon et d'Angoulesme* (Alençon: la Veuve de Martin de La Motte, 1696), 33–34.

25 For these nuances of her engaged withdrawal, see Bruun, Nørgaard, et al., "Withdrawn amidst the World".

26 See Tournoüer, "Élisabeth d'Orléans".

27 See, for example, Benoist, *Histoire de l'édit de Nantes*, vol. 4, 451–52.

28 Anne-Marie-Louise d'Orléans, duchesse de Montpensier, *Mémoires de Mlle de Montpensier, petite-fille de Henri IV*, ed. A. Chérueil, 4 vols. (Paris, 1848–68), vol. 2, 207–08.

29 For example, during Christmas in 1670, she visited different religious orders, including the Carmelites in Rue du Bouloi. Montpensier, *Mémoires*, vol. 4, 248. For meetings in convents

programmes on her lands.<sup>30</sup> Montpensier even had a bit of interaction with Rancé.<sup>31</sup> When, on 23 August 1661, she entered Eu between Calais and Le Havre, the estate of which she had bought in 1660 from Louis-Joseph de Lorraine, the future husband of her half-sister, the ceremony was more elaborately religious than Madame de Guise's entry into Alençon.<sup>32</sup> The *Mémoires* corroborates the following statement in Montpensier's reflections on the *Imitatio Christi*: "toute ma vie j'ai fréquenté les couvents, et que j'ai toujours compris combien ce commerce était utile aux gens du monde qui veulent quelquefois se retirer" ("I have frequented convents all my life, and I have always understood the benefits of such frequentation for people of the world who wish to withdraw occasionally").<sup>33</sup> Scattered statements show Montpensier's keen sense of religious propriety. In Apt, Montpensier accompanied the queen to the mass for saint Anne, and she recorded that the relics were being mistreated: they were placed in a miserable wooden chest, which was constantly opened by the canon and handled by all and sundry.<sup>34</sup> Overall, we find numerous references to sermons, to devotion on Sundays, to celebrations on feast days, and even to a few miracles.<sup>35</sup> The Carmelites are particularly prominent in Montpensier's *Mémoires*. As early as 1657, she visited Robert Arnauld d'Andilly (1589–1674) at Port-Royal-des-Champs and, in a conversation that she summarised, expressed her admiration for the Carmelite foundress, saint Teresa of Ávila (1515–82). Mademoiselle de Montpensier knew d'Andilly from his diplomatic career but had not seen

with Madame de Guise and Madame de Longueville, see Montpensier, *Mémoires*, vol. 4, 270, 375.

30 Mayer, *Mademoiselle de Montpensier*, 95, 112; Sophie Maríñez, *Mademoiselle de Montpensier: Writing, Chateaux, and Female Self-Construction in Early Modern France* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 3.

31 A meeting in Paris, dated 1676, is described in Montpensier, *Mémoires*, vol. 4, 399–400. Rancé did not come to Paris after 1675, but he mentioned a Parisian meeting with Montpensier at the Carmelites' convent in a letter to Jean Favier of 3 October 1675. de Rancé, *Correspondance*, vol. 1, 701.

32 See D. le Beuf, *La ville d'Eu* (Paris: Chez du Moulin, 1844), 429–34. For the ancestral kinship between Montpensier and Louis-Joseph de Lorraine, see J. Spangler, "Points of Transferral: Mademoiselle de Guise's Will and the Transferability of Dynastic Identity," in *Dynastic Identity in Early Modern Europe: Rulers, Aristocrats and the Formation of Identities*, eds. Liesbeth Geever and Mirella Marini (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 131–50.

33 Anon., "Réflexions morales et chrétiennes sur le premier livre de l'Imitation de Jésus-Christ", in *De l'Imitation de Jésus-Christ: traduction nouvelle, avec des réflexions morales & chrétiennes, sur le premier livre, dédié à Son Altesse Royale madame de Guise*, trans. Nicolas Le Tourneau (Paris: Elie Josset, 1694), 421.

34 Montpensier, *Mémoires*, vol. 3, 437–38.

35 In the chapel for Marguerite du Saint-Sacrement (d. 1648), Montpensier kissed the marble tomb and sensed an extraordinary fragrance; her ladies had similar experiences. She wished to spend the night in the chapel, but she feared a sore throat owing to the heat and went to bed instead, Montpensier, *Mémoires*, vol. 4, 359–61.



him for years. She met him in his chamber, where his desk testified to his ongoing work on the translation of saint Teresa's writings,<sup>36</sup> which elicited from her a remark of interest and insight: "J'aime tant cette sainte que je suis fort aise de voir ce qu'elle a fait, en bons termes; car jusqu'ici on a mal traduit ses œuvres"<sup>37</sup> ("I love this saint so much that I am pleased to see her work [appearing] in good language, for up until now her works have been poorly translated"). The religious timbre of Montpensier's memoirs reappears in the utopian vision created in her correspondence with Françoise Bertaut de Motteville (c. 1621–89). Her design for an ideal, secluded society includes minute religious prescriptions, in which a Carmelite convent takes pride of place:

Je voudrais que dans notre désert il y eût un couvent de Carmélites et qu'elles n'excédassent point le nombre que Sainte Thérèse marque dans sa règle ; son intention était qu'elles fussent ermites, et le séjour des ermites est dans les bois, leur bâtiment serait fait sur celui d'Avila qui fut le premier. La vie d'ermitte nous empêcherait d'avoir un commerce trop fréquent avec elles, mais plus elles seraient retirées du commerce du monde plus nous aurions de vénération pour elles. Ce serait dans leur Église qu'on irait prier Dieu ; comme il y aurait d'habiles Docteurs retirés dans notre désert on ne manquerait pas d'excellents sermons.<sup>38</sup>

(I would like there to be a convent of Carmelites in our wilderness, not exceeding the number that Saint Teresa established in her regulations. She intended for them to be hermits, and the abode of hermits is in the woods. Their convent would be built on the model of the one in Ávila, which was the first. Their hermit's life would keep us from having much contact with them, but the more distanced from the business of the world they would be, the more we would admire them. It would be in their church that we would pray to God. Since able theologians would retire to our retreat, we would never want for excellent sermons.)

Montpensier remarks that she would want everything in this ideal society to be focussed on enabling inhabitants to lead a consistently moral and

36 In 1660, d'Andilly's translation appeared as *Les sept méditations de S. Thérèse sur le Pater*; in 1670, his translations of St Teresa's life and the *Camino de Perfección* were published.

37 Montpensier, *Mémoires*, vol. 3, 72.

38 Letter from Montpensier to Madame de Motteville (Saint-Jean-de-Luz, 14 May 1660), in Joan deJean, *Against Marriage: The Correspondence of La Grande Mademoiselle* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 32.

Christian life, although innocent pleasures would not be banned; on the contrary, she believes, such pleasures would be truly enjoyed in this environment. Mademoiselle de Montpensier informs Madame de Motteville that

j'ai remarque aussi que ceux qui n'ont point connu le Christianisme le cherchaient sans y penser, ils ont été fort raisonnables et sans savoir ce qui leur manquait ils s'apercevaient bien qu'il leur manquait quelque chose.<sup>39</sup>

(I have also noticed that those who were not familiar with Christianity were looking for it without thinking about it; they clearly perceived that, while they did not know what they were lacking, something was missing.)

This rather subtle statement seems to imply some familiarity with devotional sentiments. In sum, Mademoiselle de Montpensier's religious actions resemble those of her half-sister but seem less deliberate. This difference owes something to the sources. We know of Madame de Guise's religious life from letters exchanged with her spiritual director, a treatise summarising his guidelines,<sup>40</sup> and evidence of patronage of religious institutions and artworks.<sup>41</sup> Montpensier's *Mémoires*, however, was composed in many stages, with a wealth of digressions and a host of different topics. Religion was a common feature of courtly existence, but the younger sister promoted this cause in a more robust and direct manner. She was also more purposeful in her effort to make a religious impact on those around her.

## Disseminating Private Devotion

Madame de Guise's desire to spread an ideal devotional attitude to her peers and subjects is evident in the books that she purchased from the Parisian publisher Élie Josset (1636?–1711?).<sup>42</sup> An invoice lists her acquisitions from 20 May 1693 to 9 February 1696, a month before her death, complete with

39 Letter from Montpensier to Madame de Motteville, 32.

40 Armand-Jean le Bouthillier de Rancé, *Conduite chrétienne adressée à son Altesse Royale Madame de Guise* (Paris: Florentin & Pierre Delaulne, 1697).

41 For the latter, see the articles on Ranum's homepage. <http://ranumspanat.com/index.html>

42 Papiers de la famille d'Orléans, BnF, Arsenal Ms. 6631. Sincere thanks are due to Patricia Ranum for pointing us in the direction of this manuscript and to Eelco Nagelsmit. A first discussion of it appeared in M. Birkedal Bruun, "Hertuginde's Bøger: Noter vedrørende Mme de Guises afregning hos Élie Josset (1693–96)", in C. Selch Jensen and C. Gottlieb, eds., *Teologien i Historien: Historien i Teologien* (Copenhagen: Eksistensen, 2016), 195–214.

acknowledgement by Josset's wife, Jeanne Palliot, of the total demand of 2163 *livres* and 4 *sols* from the executors of Madame de Guise's estate. The invoice concerns only the books purchased from Josset and offers no complete bibliographical profile. Nonetheless, we learn a great deal from this list, which includes several Bible translations, the works of Cyprian (c. 210–48/49) and Basil of Caesarea (330–79),<sup>43</sup> letters by Jerome (d. 420), sermons and the *Confessions* by Augustine (354–430), the *Dialogues* by Gregory the Great (c. 540–604), the *Tridentine Catechism*, and a range of contemporaneous devotional works. Many of the books were gifts, and the list mentions the intended recipients, offering a window into Madame de Guise's network. Above all, the list shows her interest in the religious education of her staff. The “Dames d'Honneur” in her household were given eight copies of a *Directeur des âmes chrétiennes*,<sup>44</sup> while the “Officers” received 36 *Livres des Pseaumes*.<sup>45</sup> For her “Chirurgien” (“surgeon”), “Apothicaire” (“apothecary”), “Aumônier” (“chaplain”), and “Valet de chambre”, she bought the *Année chrétienne*,<sup>46</sup> a work largely written by the Port-Royalist Nicolas Le Tourneux (1640–86), whose devotional works were widely popular.<sup>47</sup>

43 The period was rich in translations and editions of Greek theologians. Particularly significant in this context are the Port-Royal editions and translations of Eastern theologians, for instance Robert Arnauld d'Andilly's translations of the desert theologians (1647), John Climacus's *Scala paradisi* (1653), and Godefroi Hermant's lives of Athanasius, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus, and John Chrysostom, as well as the ascetic treatises of Basil the Great. In addition, there were the Maurists' *Analecta Graeca* (1688), their edition of Athanasius (1698), and Bernard de Montfaucon's work, which was collected in the *Collectio nova partum et scriptorium graecorum* (1706). On these translations, see J.-L. Quantin, *Le catholicisme classique et les pères de l'Église: un retour aux sources (1669–1713)* (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1999) 188–91, 209–22, 396–415; M.-A. Calvet-Sebasti, “La traduction française des Pères grecs”, in E. Bury and B. Meunier (eds.), *Les pères de l'Église au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Cerf, 1993), 337–54. The introductions to these translations often remind their readers that, despite the monastic origins of these works, they are relevant for a general audience. See, for example, the introductions to d'Andilly's *Vie de saints pères des déserts* (1647) and Rancé's *Les instructions de Saint Dorothee* (1686).

44 [Pierre Nicole?], *Le directeur des âmes chrétiennes* (Paris: Josset, 1696).

45 This version of the Psalter was perhaps the *Pseaumes distribués*, a collection translated by Le Tourneux and dedicated to Madame de Guise: Anon., *Les Pseaumes de David traduits en français selon l'hébreu* (Paris: Elie Josset, 1689). Cf. B. Chédozeau, *Port-Royal et la Bible: un siècle d'or de la Bible en France 1650–1708* (Paris: Nolin, 2007), 328.

46 Nicolas Tourneux (and Ernest Ruth d'Ans), *L'année chrétienne, ou les messes des dimanches, fêtes et fêtes de toute l'année, en latin et en français, avec l'explication des Épîtres et des Évangiles et un abrégé de la Vie des Saints, dont on fait l'office*, 12 vols. (Paris: Josset, 1682–1701).

47 Madame de Sévigné mentions coffee with milk, the homilies of John Chrysostom, and sermons by Le Tourneux as her “Lenten pleasures”. See her letter to Madame de Grignan of 19 February 1690 in L.-J.-N. Monmerqué (ed.), *Lettres de Madame de Sévigné, de sa famille et de ses amis*, 14 vols. (Paris: Hachette, 1862–68), vol. 3, 690.

The *Année chrétienne* was a companion to the liturgical year: it presents religious readings in Latin and French, accompanied with expositions for each feast day. The prevalence of this volume and other liturgically anchored works in the list echoes the contemporaneous predilection for a private and personalised devotional praxis aligned with the official liturgy.<sup>48</sup>

The list of books purchased from Josset adds another dimension to the relationship between Madame de Guise and Rancé. It is true that he supervised her religious practices, but her stance was not one of docile submission. Several entries in the list refer to “the five chapters of La Trappe” or “the five chapters from The Monastic Life”, both of which are Madame de Guise’s personal selection from Rancé’s bulky work, *De la sainteté et des devoirs de la vie monastique* (1683). She constructed a handy excerpt, consisting of the chapters on the love of God, death, judgement, and compunction. Probably she added the chapter on prayer at Rancé’s instigation.<sup>49</sup> Six entries from 1693 and 1694 concern these five chapters: one is listed as a gift to Madame de “Mekelbourg”,<sup>50</sup> while another was intended for Madame de Guise’s sister, Marguerite Louise d’Orléans (1645–1721), who was back in Paris after her failed marriage to Cosimo III of Tuscany (1642–1723). These entries show Madame de Guise as an active reader, moulder, and distributor of the Trappist spirit. It is noteworthy that Rancé’s reminder was necessary for her to add the chapter on prayer. Perhaps she found that this matter was treated equally well—or better—elsewhere. Indeed, the abbot’s suggestion makes sense if Madame de Guise’s aim was to create a general compendium, but her selection of chapters indicates that she sought something else. The chapters

48 Such alignment was also pursued by other members of Louis XIV’s court. See, for instance, M. Langlois, *Pensées intimes du Duc P. Beauvillier* (Paris: Plon, 1925), 26–36. We thank our colleague Bastian Felter Vaucanson for sharing with us his ongoing research into the correspondence between Madame Guyon and Fénelon, where the ideal of abandoning the breviary and creating one’s own liturgical handbook is voiced. For the king’s secret wife, Madame de Maintenon, and her sustained attempt at aligning the personal with the communal, see L. C. Nørgaard, “Copie ou création? les petits livres secrets de Madame de Maintenon”, in M. de Vinha and N. Grande (eds.), *Tout la cour était étonnée: Madame de Maintenon ou l’ambition politique au féminin: actes du colloque* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2022), 137–48; L. C. Nørgaard, “Time Materialized: Madame de Maintenon’s *Petits Livres* as a Devotional Instrument”, in *Managing Time: Literature and Devotion in Early Modern France*, eds. R. Maber and J. Barker (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2017), 69–91; L. C. Nørgaard and H. Pasquier, “Les ‘petits carnets’ de Madame de Maintenon: grandeur de la spiritualité (1688–1709)”, *Revue d’histoire des religions* 233:3 (2016): 343–87.

49 See the letter from Rancé to Madame de Guise of 4 May 1687: de Rancé, vol. 3, 453.

50 This refers to Élisabeth-Angélique de Montmorency-Bouteville (1627–95), who became Duchess of Mecklenburg-Schwerin in her second marriage. The Duchess of Mecklenburg-Schwerin’s copy of *Les 5 chapitres de la Trappe* was purchased on 18 March 1694, and already on 30 April, Madame de Guise also bought Augustine’s sermons for her.

she chose represent areas of Trappist expertise: death, judgement, contrition, and a love of God permeated by penitence. Her interest in these topics conforms with general trends of the time. The preoccupation with death is pervasive in contemporaneous religious literature,<sup>51</sup> but the Trappists were the ultimate specialists.<sup>52</sup> The duchess also spread knowledge of the Trappists in more conventional ways. On 22 June 1695, she purchased 49 copies of the biography of the Trappist Brother Palemon.<sup>53</sup> Three copies were given to unidentified Carmelites; 22 copies were bought for Cosimo III.

Ten years before Madame de Guise's gift to Cosimo III, in 1685, a Carmelite nun named Theresa of Jesus (1628–87) passed two small volumes to Domenico Zipoli, a Tuscan who functioned as Cosimo's agent in Paris: these volumes were copies of the *Réflexions sur les huit Béatitudes* that Montpensier gifted to Cosimo and to his mother, Vittoria della Rovere (1622–94).<sup>54</sup> To this book we now turn.

### Pocket-Size Privacy

Published in 1689,<sup>55</sup> the *Réflexions sur les huit Béatitudes* was completed before April 1685 and may have been conceived as early as in 1662.<sup>56</sup> This volume of Montpensier's reflections on the Beatitudes has largely been

51 See D. Roche, "La mémoire de la mort": recherche sur la place des arts de mourir dans la librairie et la lecture en France aux XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles", *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 31:1 (1976): 76–119; M.-J. Pierre "Mort et mortifications dans le sentiment religieux du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle", in *Un homme et son temps: l'Abbé de Rancé*, ed. H. de Seréville (Bégrolles-en-Mauges: Abbaye de Bellefontaine, 2004), 55–77.

52 See, for example, Armand-Jean le Bouthillier de Rancé, *Relations de la mort de quelques religieux de l'abbaye de la Trappe*, 2 vols. (Paris: Florentin & Pierre Delaulne, 1696).

53 They appear in the duchess's account as *Mort du Comte de Santena* and *Mort du f. Palemon*. BnF Arsenal MS 6631.

54 E. Rodocanachi, "Preface", in *Un ouvrage de piété peu connu de la Grande Mademoiselle*, ed. E. Rodocanachi (Paris: Émile-Paul, 1903), VII. On Zipoli, see P. A. Ranum, "Un foyer d'italianisme chez les Guises", in *Marc-Antoine Charpentier: un musicien retrouvé*, ed. C. Cessac (Sprimont: Mardaga, 2005), 101–04.

55 Anon., *Réflexions sur les huit Béatitudes du sermon de Jesus-Christ sur la montagne* (Brussels: Lambert, 1689).

56 In the "Avertissement", Montpensier mentions that she has been inspired after attending mass on All Saints' Day, when Matthew 5.1–12 was (and is) one of the prescribed readings. In 1662, she spent All Saints' Day at Jouarre, attending a sermon by Bossuet. Montpensier, *Mémoires*, vol. 3, 547. This could be the famous "Amen, alleluia" sermon that survives in fragments. Bossuet's secretary, François Ledieu (1658–1713), confirmed Montpensier's presence, mentioning that this sermon was a great success and much discussed. François Ledieu, *Mémoires et journal sur la vie et les ouvrages de Bossuet*, ed. M. l'abbé Guettée (Paris: Didier et C<sup>e</sup>, 1856), 227.

brushed aside. Scholars agree that she was nudged into devotion by her shipwrecked relationship with her clandestine husband, Antonin Nompar de Caumont (1633–1723), the Duke of Lauzun. After his release from prison and return to court in 1681, Lauzun's relationship with Montpensier cooled, and it finally ended in 1684. Garapon has argued that Montpensier's reflections on the Beatitudes and her reflections on the *Imitatio Christi*, which appeared posthumously in 1694,<sup>57</sup> were a reaction to the emotional hardship and social shame that followed her break with Lauzun.<sup>58</sup> Biography is, however, not all there is to Montpensier's devotional writings and their literary strategies.

In the prefatory statement to the reflections on the Beatitudes, she refers to "une personne de qualité" ("a person of quality") who has difficulty "de pouvoir faire son salut dans les agitations de la cour et dans les affaires du monde" ("being able to work on her salvation amidst the excitements at court and the affairs of the world").<sup>59</sup> This person regrets that she "ne pouvait pas toujours se retirer en particulier pour s'examiner, n'y être de soi-même" ("could not always withdraw herself into a private setting to examine herself, nor be left to herself there").<sup>60</sup> This despair is in stark contrast to the opening of another set of *Réflexions* that had appeared a few years before. In 1680, five years after Louis XIV's mistress, Louise de La Vallière (1644–1710), had professed vows as a Carmelite, she published her *Réflexions sur la Miséricorde de Dieu*.<sup>61</sup> Despite a certain generic similitude, there is a fundamental difference between the tenor of her volume and Montpensier's. Louise de La Vallière's reflections begin with an exclamation: "Que vous rendrai-je, mon Dieu, pour m'avoir rendu la santé et la vie, pour retirée des portes de l'Enfer, pour avoir conservé mon âme" ("How can I repay you, my God, for having given me good health and life itself, for having dragged me from the gates of Hell, for having protected my soul").<sup>62</sup> In this spectacular opening, the verb *retirer* evokes a movement through which La Vallière's soul escapes from court, which is cast as the gates of Hell, and moves into the convent which,

57 Anon., "Réflexions morales et chrétiennes sur le premier livre de l'Imitation de Jésus-Christ".

58 J. Garapon, *La culture d'une princesse* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2003), 348–59. Related interpretations appear in V. J. Pitts, *La Grande Mademoiselle at the Court of France: 1627–1693* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 231; Mayer, *Mademoiselle de Montpensier*, 117–77; Rodocanachi, "Preface", XI; Maríñez, *Mademoiselle de Montpensier*, 2.

59 Anon., "Avertissement", in *Réflexions sur les huit Béatitudes du sermon de Jésus-Christ sur la montagne* (Brussels: Lambert, 1689), unpag. [1–2].

60 Anon., "Avertissement", unpag. [3].

61 The work was published numerous times between 1680 and 1684.

62 Louise de La Vallière, *Réflexions sur la Miséricorde de Dieu* (Paris: Dezallier, 1682), 1–2.

by implication, becomes a gateway to Heaven. Such a grand and definitive retreat is not available to the person addressed in Montpensier's prefatory statement. Unlike La Vallière, she must remain at court, but Mademoiselle de Montpensier muses "qu'il lui serait fort nécessaire d'avoir quelque petit livre pour y voir marques les devoirs essentiels d'un Chrétien, qu'elle pourrait prendre et lire à tout heure" ("that it would be utterly necessary for her to have some booklet which she could always grab and read, so that she might see therein the essential obligations of a Christian written down").<sup>63</sup> The book then becomes a vehicle for virtual withdrawal; the reader has retreat in her pocket, so to speak, and the material object thus replaces the physical act of withdrawal.

Mademoiselle de Montpensier is the "Nous" that narrates this small story of a frustrated courtier, but she is also the distinguished person who longs to escape. The solution proposed is the *Réflexions sur les huit Béatitudes du sermon de Jésus-Christ sur la montagne* itself—the handy booklet offering a withdrawal from court that can be activated at any moment and that exists as soon as the book is opened. In its literary technique, this preface shows a degree of self-reflection that is absent from the other extant sources related to Madame de Guise.

## Entering Solitude

According to her text, Montpensier pondered forms and motivations of solitude throughout her life. In her literary self-portrait within *Divers portraits*, dated November 1657, that is, the same year that she professed to d'Andilly her veneration for saint Teresa, she remarks: "Je ne suis point dévote, je voudrais bien l'être, et déjà je suis dans une fort grande indifférence pour le monde, mais je crains que ce qui me le fait mépriser, ne m'en détache pas" ("I am not devout, but I would like to be, and I am already highly indifferent to the world, but I fear that what makes me despise it does not detach me from it").<sup>64</sup> Is this a sincere statement? Earlier in the text, we learn that Montpensier thinks so highly of herself and her own company that "je passerais ma vie dans la solitude" ("I could spend my life in solitude").<sup>65</sup> Indeed, she states, "j'aime à être seule" ("I love to be alone"), yet also that "j'aime le monde, et la conversation des honnêtes gens" ("I love the world, and the conversing with

63 Anon., "Avertissement", unpag. [2–3].

64 Anon., *Divers portraits*, 34.

65 Anon., *Divers portraits*, 33.

distinguished people").<sup>66</sup> While Montpensier may desire to be devout, her rejection of the world is neither pious, nor definitive. In the *Réflexions sur les huit Béatitudes*, she is still concerned with solitude, but the tone has changed. She now seeks to carve out a religious retreat amidst the bustle at court.

Apparently, Madame de Guise was also an expert at creating such solitude for herself. Rancé praised her for barricading herself from the world: "Votre Altesse Royale se fait une solitude de Paris dans le dessein où elle est de ne voir personne; je souhaite qu'elle la goûte et qu'elle en fasse un saint usage; c'est une grâce bien particulière d'être solitaire dans le milieu du monde" ("Your Royal Highness makes a solitude for yourself of Paris in your plan not to see anybody; I wish that you savour it and make good use of it; it is a quite particular grace to be solitary amidst the world").<sup>67</sup> François Lamy (1636–1711) agreed, and in his dedicatory letter to Madame de Guise in *De la connaissance de soi-même*, he rhetorically asks: who could be better suited to command and receive a work on self-knowledge than "une Princesse qui fuit le monde tout autant qu'elle peut; et qui, lorsqu'il est inévitable, sçait trouver l'art de vivre solitaire au milieu de son tumulte; et de goûter la tranquillité des Cloîtres, dans la plus florissante Cour de l'Europe?" ("a princess who flees the world as much as she can, and who, when it is inevitable, knows the art of living solitarily amidst its [the world's] uproar, and of savouring the tranquillity of the cloister in the most flourishing court of Europe?").<sup>68</sup> Funeral sermons would join the chorus. The *grand vicaire* of the cathedral of Chartres, Jean-Baptiste Mareschaulx (d. 1710), praised Madame de Guise's ability to create a retreat for herself amidst the chaotic glamour at court:

Au milieu d'une Cour superbe & tumultueuse, elle s'étoit fait comme Judith dans le secret de sa Maison, un lieu consacré au silence & à la priere. C'étoit-là qu'elle se retiroit avec une extrême ponctualité à certaines heures : tantost pour s'y mettre comme à couvert contre les attaques de l'ennemy : tantost pour y élever son coeur à Dieu par l'oraison, & nourrir sa foy par de bonnes & saintes lectures [...].<sup>69</sup>

(Amidst a superb and tumultuous court, she made for herself what Judith did in the secrecy of her house, a place dedicated to silence and prayer.

66 Anon., *Divers portraits*, 32.

67 Letter from Rancé to Madame de Guise (1688); Rancé, *Correspondance*, vol. 3, 510–11.

68 François Lamy, *De la connaissance de soi-même*, 3 vols. (Dijon: Ed. universitaires de Dijon-Université de Bourgogne, 2009 [1694–98]), vol. 1, 11.

69 Mareschaulx, *Oraison funebre*, 88. For this and other funeral sermons for Madame de Guise, see Bruun, Nørgaard, et al., "Withdrawn amidst the World", 70–73.



It was there she withdrew with extreme punctuality at certain hours: as much in order to shield herself from the attacks of the enemy [the devil] as to elevate her heart to God in prayer and nourish her faith with good and saintly reading.)

These descriptions of Madame de Guise remind us that in order to create the ideal religious solitude, the individual withdrawing must construct boundaries between herself and society by, for instance, renouncing social calls or isolating herself physically and spiritually. The “Avertissement”, or introduction, to Montpensier’s *Réflexions* adds another technique to these methods of boundary-drawing: immersion in a religious book. We suggest that the emphasis on boundaries warrants a tentative definition of such pockets of solitude as instances of privacy. The quotations above underline the character and quality of the activities conducted in this privacy, and particularly Lamy’s dedication takes us back to Jean-Louis Quantin’s definition of solitude as a place of interiority, meditation, and self-knowledge. When we follow Montpensier into her solitude, open her book, and read the reflections that she summarised there, we get a sense of the kind of self-knowledge that she longed to pursue in privacy: one that centres on the suppression of courtly mores.

The first Beatitude concerns poverty of the spirit. Here, Montpensier rehearses a commonplace criticism of polite society, and rejects the worldly implications of “bon esprit”—polished conversation, mockery of others, and refined eloquence—as being contrary to everything that God demands of human beings.<sup>70</sup> Instead of such social refinement, the sermon on the Mount recommends a *simplicité* that is “inconnue à la plûpart des hommes” (“unknown to most human beings”).<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, Montpensier reminds her readers that Jesus “rejette ce que tout le monde estime. Il estime ce que tout le monde rejette” (“rejects what everyone esteems. He esteems what everyone rejects”).<sup>72</sup> We begin to understand that Montpensier’s portable solitude comes with directions about how to draw boundaries between oneself and the world: one should shun everything loved by the world and replace it with its opposite. Her book leads the reader through a largely critical modulation of themes that were treated in more favourable light by her *Mémoires*.

She admires the gentleness that makes itself known by “la docilité de nostre ame, qui se rend souple & maniable entre les mains de Dieu pour se laisser

70 Montpensier, *Réflexions*, 21.

71 Montpensier, *Réflexions*, 22.

72 Montpensier, *Réflexions*, 24–25.

conduire en tout par l'impression secrète de son Esprit" ("the docility of our soul, which makes itself supple and malleable in God's hands in order to let itself be directed in everything by the secret impression of his Spirit").<sup>73</sup> We are far from the *femme forte* here. The reflection on the third Beatitude praises the lachrymose lamentation of one's sins.<sup>74</sup> Montpensier concludes that when we shed tears from a contrite and humiliated heart, even if it is not filled with the love of God, we shall be blessed for having cried; she thus echoes the contemporaneous discourse of devotional tears.<sup>75</sup> While other commentators fretted over the sincerity of such tears,<sup>76</sup> Montpensier professes less concern with fake devotion than with the tears shed over vain and base things.<sup>77</sup>

In her reflection on the fifth Beatitude, which concerns mercy, Montpensier reminds herself and her readers, somewhat reiterating her *Mémoires*, that they will be judged according to the standards outlined in Matthew 25.30–40, which explains how at the Last Judgement, Christ will hold human beings responsible for the extent to which they have performed the works of mercy: feeding the hungry and thirsty, welcoming the stranger or traveller, clothing the naked, caring for the sick, and visiting prisoners. The biblical reference casts those in need as embodiments of Christ in his human form. Montpensier's practical demonstration of this principle echoes the charitable programmes of women such as herself and Madame de Guise; such programmes included teaching, hospitals, and care for widows and orphans.<sup>78</sup>

73 Montpensier, *Réflexions*, 32.

74 Montpensier, *Réflexions*, 37.

75 Montpensier, *Réflexions*, 43. In his *Introduction à la vie dévote*, François de Sales (1567–1622) reminds Philothée that, however pleasurable, tears are worthless unless accompanied by a change of heart. François de Sales, *Introduction à la vie dévote* (Paris: l'imprimerie royale du Louvre, 1641 [1609/1619]), 412–27. See S. Page Bayne's discussion in *Tears and Weeping: An Aspect of Emotional Climate Reflected in Seventeenth-Century French Literature* (Tübingen and Paris: Gunter Narr Verlag and Jean-Michel Place, 1981), 35. For discourses on tears of repentance elicited by good sermons, see A. Régent-Susini, *L'Éloquence de la Chaire: Les sermons de saint Augustin à nos jours* (Paris: Seuil, 2009), 34–8. See also J.W. McCormack, "Discerning Tears in Early Modern Catholicism", in *A Mirror for Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, ed. L. Aydelotte (Chicago: The Newberry Center for Renaissance Studies, 2010), 49–59.

76 Tears of contrition were subject to the same critical scrutiny as tears of conversion. See S. Page Bayne, "Le rôle des larmes dans le discours sur la conversion", in *La conversion au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. R. Duchêne (Marseille: Centre Méridional de Rencontres sur le 17. Siècle, 1983), 417–27.

77 Montpensier, *Réflexions*, 39. On this movement from the public domain, where tears could potentially be perceived as acts of dissimulation, to the past, the private, and the interior domain, see H. Merlin-Kajman, "Les larmes au XVII<sup>e</sup> Siècle: entre *pathos* et *logos*, féminin et masculin, public et privé", *Littératures classiques* 62:1 (2007): 203–21.

78 Montpensier, *Réflexions*, 55.

While the fifth Beatitude involves withdrawal that is still closely related to the world, the sixth Beatitude, which addresses cordial purity, brings us to the core of religious withdrawal. Christ says “que c’est par le cœur qu’on voit Dieu, & que les yeux du cœur sont ses affections. Si le cœur aime le monde cet amour du monde le rend impur” (“that one sees God with the heart, and that the eyes of the heart are its affections. If the heart loves the world, this love of the world renders it impure”).<sup>79</sup> Cordial purity is fostered by adversities and misfortunes that God allows. It is hard not to recall Montpensier’s biography and her shipwrecked relationship when reading that if misfortunes are received with humility, anything impure is destroyed, and that this way of recovering initial innocence is dearer to God than hair shirts, cilices, fasts, and other exterior forms of mortification.<sup>80</sup>

While the message is standard, what is striking is the voice with which Montpensier utters the message. In her reflections on the Beatitudes, Montpensier removes herself from the mores and values of her previous life and the lives of those around her by continuing to ponder the role of solitude and what it takes to enter solitude.

## Epilogue

Privacy at court is not a matter of sharply defined dichotomies and strong delineations. Like many other forms of early modern privacy, it is malleable, temporal, and situational. Privacy at court appears, and it disappears. The religious realm is particularly useful for studying such appearances and disappearances since devotional withdrawal was so prevalent in the early modern period. Arguably, privacy is a precondition for—and an outcome of—this kind of devotion. In this chapter, we have tried to indicate different versions and nuances of religious withdrawal that were available to women from the highest-ranking nobility in early modern France. Not all these versions of religious withdrawal amount to privacy in the strictest sense. However, in the passages concerning the different manners in which Mademoiselle de Montpensier and Madame de Guise draw boundaries that render them inaccessible to the world and its ways for a time and in some measure, we may detect features that warrant being defined as courtly privacy.

79 Montpensier, *Réflexions*, 66–67.

80 Montpensier, *Réflexions*, 70–71.

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## 9. Private Justice or Ducal Power? Testing the Strength of Public Authority and Dynastic Loyalty among Transnational Nobles at the Court of the Duke of Lorraine

*Jonathan Spangler*

### Abstract

This chapter uses the case study of the duchy of Lorraine during the reign of Duke Léopold (1679–1729) to investigate the effects of the transnational identities of high-ranking nobles in Europe's small states. In his efforts to rebuild his state after decades of French occupation and to establish a public sphere, Léopold successfully attracted the high nobility back to his court and re-established a degree of loyalty to his dynasty. However, private interests and established ties to other states and other dynasties gave the high nobility of Lorraine a more independent identity; these interests and ties proved to be strong counter-forces to the task of state-building.

**Keywords:** nobility, state-building, identity, jurisdictional borders, personal influence

During the Carnival season of 1725, a fight broke out on a small street in the old town of Nancy in Lorraine. The domestic servants of one nobleman had thrown insults (and even manure) at the domestic servants of a rival nobleman until officials of the Duke of Lorraine arrived and arrested them. Shortly after this, one of the noblemen, the Comte de Madruce, travelled to this same street in Nancy from the ducal court at Lunéville, and entered the kitchens of the house where his rival, the Marquis d'Heudicourt, lived. When

he encountered Heudicourt, the argument escalated to physical violence, and two servants were killed. Heudicourt's account, which was presented to the duke during the subsequent trial, claims that Madruche had come to his house prepared to fight, wearing armour and accompanied by five armed men. Madruche's version counters that he was wearing ordinary clothes, and that he came to Nancy only to defend his aged mother, whose servants were being attacked. Both men produced witnesses of the highest rank to defend their versions of the story.<sup>1</sup>

The complication in this affair was that the mother of Madruche, the Marquise de Balestrin, was in fact sharing a residence with the Marquis d'Heudicourt. They were cousins by marriage and had divided their local mutual inheritance between them by means of a private settlement.<sup>2</sup> The Duke of Lorraine attempted to use formal legal intervention to resolve the conflict by obliging Madruche to pay Heudicourt for damages and requiring Heudicourt to pay the elderly Balestrin money with which to find another place to live.<sup>3</sup> This story has another angle that makes it worth examination when we consider conflicts between the exercise of princely authority in public and the expectations of the high-ranking nobles to be able to exercise private justice. This particular incident was exacerbated by the fact that the nobles in question had only tenuous loyalty to the Duke of Lorraine; they were members of a transnational nobility whose lands and privileges extended across numerous jurisdictions.<sup>4</sup> The importance of transnational identities in public and private justice can be seen from a letter written by one of the chief counsellors of Duke Léopold of Lorraine (1679–1729), Monsieur Lefebvre, who suggests that the duke should treat the Comte de Madruche with caution, since he is from “one of the most illustrious families of Italy, a branch of which are actually sovereign, and on his mother's side one of the most ancient of your estates.”<sup>5</sup> Further investigation reveals

1 Archives départementales de Meurthe et Moselle, Nancy [hereafter M&M], 3 F 320, no. 30, Memoir to the Duke of Lorraine from the Comte de Madruche on the circumstances between himself and the Marquis d'Heudicourt (undated, but c. 1725); no. 32, Memoir on the same, from the Marquis d'Heudicourt.

2 M&M, 13 J 279, plan for reconciliation between the Marquis d'Heudicourt and the Marquise de Balestrin regarding division of their properties in Italy and Lorraine (c. 1712).

3 M&M, 13 J 114, no. 147, Extract of Registers, secretariat of the Maréchaussée of Lorraine & Barrois, 29 March 1725. See also the Factum produced by the Marquise de Balestrin [sic] relating to the case: Bibliothèque nationale de France, Fm 5201.

4 This chapter originated in a workshop at the University of Strasbourg, “Personnalisation et privatisation du pouvoir à l'époque moderne: pour une comparaison européenne du pouvoir local de la noblesse (XV<sup>e</sup>–XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle)”, 13 June 2014.

5 M&M, 3 F 320, no. 31, letter from Lefebvre to the duke, 29 March 1725.

that the names presented in the documents relating to this incident are misleading. In fact, “Madruce” is Madruzzo, the leading noble family of the Trentino, the subalpine province northeast of Milan, while “Balestrin” is Del Carretto di Balestrino, one of the oldest names in Piedmont and Liguria, whose sovereign territories dated back to the dismemberment of the Carolingian empire in northern Italy during the tenth century.<sup>6</sup> Mother and son were also claimants to the lucrative succession of the House of Challant in the Val d’Aosta and the sovereign principality of Valangin in the Swiss Confederation.<sup>7</sup> But one further name should be added to this already complex network of European noble houses. This name lurks within the reference Lefebvre makes to “one of the most ancient of your estates”, which refers to Mme de Balestrin’s birth name: Lenoncourt. Indeed, it was the Hôtel de Lenoncourt where the brawl took place in the spring of 1725.<sup>8</sup> The Lenoncourt estates were amongst the most lucrative in the duchy.

Why are this fight and the names attached to it significant in the examination of ducal power and private justice? Partly, the incident helps us see the interconnectedness and conflicts between overlapping and competing early modern jurisdictions, particularly in frontier zones such as the Duchy of Lorraine, the Swiss Cantons, and Savoy-Piedmont. For example, although the Marchesa di Balestrino (Christine-Maurice de Lenoncourt, d. c. 1725) and her son, the Conte di Madruzzo (Domenico Donato del Carretto, 1685–1736) had been removed from the Challant succession by a judicial decree of the Duchy of Savoy in Turin in June 1696, a contrary judgement by a French court in Metz, later that same year, granted the same succession to Antoine, Marquis de Lenoncourt (d. 1709), whose heiress married the Marquis d’Heudicourt.<sup>9</sup> Simultaneously, according to the Lorraine records, there was a lawsuit pending in Savoy also involving the Del Carretto di Balestrino family and concerning the pursuit of different Lenoncourt heirs, another family with

6 Genealogical material for this chapter comes from Père Anselme de Sainte-Marie, *Histoire généalogique et chronologique de la maison royale de France, des pairs, grands officiers de la couronne et de la maison du roy [...]*, 9 vols. (Paris, 1726–33), vol. 2, 52–69 (Lenoncourt); vol. 8, 822–24 (Sublet d’Heudicourt); Pompeo Litta, *Famiglie celebri di Italia* (Milan: n. p., 1819–84), Madruzzo di Trento (1841) and Saluzzo (1873), which includes the junior branches known as Del Carretto.

7 M&M, 13 J 278. On the Challant family, see Matthew Vester, *Transregional Lordship and the Italian Renaissance: René de Challant, 1504–1565* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020).

8 The Hôtel de Lenoncourt was (and is) located in the rue de la Charité, just off the main square of the old town, not far from the ducal palace. Frédéric Maguin, *Les plus beaux hôtels particuliers de la Ville-Vieille de Nancy* (Nancy: Editions Koidneuf, 2008), 38.

9 M&M, 13 J 278; 13 J 272. See also M&M, 13 J 96, where Madame de Balestrin presents herself to the Duke of Savoy as the rightful heiress, 1693.

divergent French and Italian forms of their name (de Carail / di Caraglio).<sup>10</sup> The language of the ducal judgments has a touch of pleading: the court asks “M de Madruzzo” to accept the terms of the sentence of 1725 “if he would desire to obey the wishes of His Royal Highness [the duke]”, and “enjoins the lords d’Heudicourt and Madruzzo to conform to the ordinances of His Royal Highness and to live in peace, union and concord together.” However, the latter request is followed by a threat of financial penalty if the noblemen do not follow the duke’s decision.<sup>11</sup> Such lawsuits, and the wording of the surviving documents, demonstrate the ongoing problem in trying to create a ‘public sphere’ as part of early modern state-building despite persistent demands of high-ranking nobles to be able to exercise their own private justice.<sup>12</sup> This problem is especially pertinent for a small state like Lorraine, which had ambiguous borders and a high-ranking nobility with a long history of relative independence from ducal authority.<sup>13</sup>

The local noble family at the centre of these lawsuits, Lenoncourt, was a family whom Duke Léopold particularly needed to keep amongst his chief supporters; they were one of the largest landowning families in the duchy, especially in the area around the capital, Nancy. For centuries, they had held many of the leading public positions within the twin duchies of Lorraine and Bar as bailiffs, marshals, and governors, but they were also crucial to the smooth running of the more private sphere of the ducal court and regularly dominated the major household offices. In fact, Lenoncours from multiple branches held nearly all the key posts in the early years of Léopold’s restored reign, including the Grand Chambellan, the Grand Écuyer, the *dame d’atour* of the duchess, Governess of the Ducal Children, and, later, the posts of Premier Gentilhomme de la Chambre and Maître de la Garderobe.<sup>14</sup> Holding one of the most intimate positions within the ducal household, the Governess of the Ducal Children was Marie-Françoise de Lenoncourt (d. 1709), one of the main Lenoncourt co-heirs and wife of the Marquis d’Heudicourt.

10 M&M, 1 F 230, no. 15, lawsuit for the succession of François d’Havard de Senantes, a prominent French commander in Savoyard service. This case was still pending as late as the 1780s.

11 M&M, 13 J 114, f. 3.

12 For recent case studies regarding the importance of the court and private links between princes and nobles for developing a public sphere, see Liesbeth Geever and Harald Gustafsson (eds.), *Dynasty and State Formation* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2023).

13 Anne Motta, *Noblesse et pouvoir princier dans la Lorraine ducale: 1624–1737* (Paris: Garnier, 2015).

14 See Henri Lepage, “Les offices des Duchés de Lorraine et de Bar et la maison des ducs de Lorraine”, *Mémoires de la Société d’archéologie lorraine*, 2:11 (1869): 350–51, 370; M. de Bermann, *Dissertation historique sur l’ancienne chevalerie et la noblesse de Lorraine* (Nancy: Haener, 1763), 196, 199.

In contrast to his wife, Heudicourt, like Madruce and Balestrin, could be described in Lorraine terms as an outlander. Denis Sublet (c. 1653–?) was the fifth son of a minor nobleman, who was originally from Normandy and who had risen in the ranks of the nobility as part of the Parisian *noblesse de robe*. But his family was close to both Louis XIV and Louis XV—with two generations of Grand Louvetiers (Wolf-Hunters) de France, one of the most intimate of all court offices in a monarchy obsessed with hunting—and so had significant private influence at the French court. This influence would have been useful for the Duke of Lorraine in re-establishing the independence of his state after the Treaty of Rijswijk in 1697. Denis Sublet d'Heudicourt had himself served in the French military administration that occupied Lorraine and Bar during the 1670s–90s. In particular, he had been appointed bailiff of the town of Epinal in 1685, and his income was sufficient to pay off the sizeable Lenoncourt debts in order to claim his wife's inheritance in the region.<sup>15</sup> The marquis was thus someone whose friendship the Duke of Lorraine needed to cultivate, and Léopold used his private connections to nobles like the Lenoncours and Heudicourts, who became senior officers in his household, to influence perceptions of his public authority—notably, the authority of his gendarmes in the streets of his capital city of Nancy. This chapter will examine the complex task that confronted Duke Léopold in rebuilding the public sphere of an early modern state, using the private conflict involving the Lenoncourt family as a case study.

Duke Léopold was in a difficult position trying to rebuild his state from the ashes of a semi-sovereign duchy that had been mostly destroyed across nearly 70 years of war and occupation.<sup>16</sup> According to Charles Lipp, like many early modern state builders, the Duke of Lorraine used the technique of promoting new nobles (*anoblis*) in his government. These men were thus more loyal to him and to his dynasty than they were to the duchy itself; they were “new men” who were educated and financially savvy.<sup>17</sup> This technique works well from the viewpoint of the *anoblis*, and it fits in with contemporaneous thinking about state-building more generally; debasing the ancient self-interested nobility and then promoting a new, dynasty-centred

<sup>15</sup> M&M, 13J 140.

<sup>16</sup> For a good overview in English, see William Monter, *A Bewitched Duchy: Lorraine and Its Dukes, 1477–1736* (Geneva: Droz, 2007). See also Phil McCluskey, *Absolute Monarchy on the Frontiers: Louis XIV's Military Occupations of Lorraine and Savoy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013).

<sup>17</sup> Charles Lipp, *Noble State Strategies in an Early Modern Small State: The Mahuet of Lorraine* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2011).

(or state-centred) nobility was a common strategy. Lipp even points out that because of the destruction of the old independent noble institutions of Lorraine earlier in the century by the occupying French—notably the Assizes, a self-regulating noble tribunal, almost entirely outside the jurisdiction of the duke—Duke Léopold was actually in a better position to exercise absolutism than had been his counterpart, the archetypal absolutist, Louis XIV.<sup>18</sup> The Sun King had still had to contend with provincial estates and lingering grandee power in the provinces and amongst the great court office-holders.<sup>19</sup> However, Lipp's suggestion does not take into account the parallel development that took place in Lorraine across the seventeenth century and that affected the traditional, high-ranking nobility more than the *anoblis*: a significantly increased cosmopolitanism or transnationalism. By the time Léopold attempted to rebuild his duchy, most of the higher nobility had developed close ties to Paris, Vienna, or Brussels, or to all three. In many instances, this intensifying transnationalism benefitted the ruling dynasty and indeed was encouraged by the dukes themselves. However, it also revealed that Lorraine was not viable as a modern state conceived along “nationalist” lines, in a pre-figuring of the similar tensions within the Austrian Empire a century and a half later. With the destruction of the Assizes, the high-ranking nobility lost their private, autonomous authority, that is, their ability to regulate their affairs without the interference of the duke (or “the state”), and they turned to places outside the duchy, for opportunities to flex their political, social, and economic muscle.<sup>20</sup>

What are the opposing forces at work here, both drawing the political forces of the duchy together and pulling the duchy apart? To return to the example of the Lenoncourts, they were a family rooted in Lorraine for

18 Lipp, *Noble State Strategies*, 122–23; Guy Cabourdin, *Encyclopédie illustrée de la Lorraine: les temps modernes*, 2 vols (Nancy: Presses universitaires de Nancy, 1991), vol. 1, 20.

19 There is a wide-ranging historiography on the limits of French absolutism, from Roger Mettman, *Power and Faction in Louis XIV's France* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988) to Julian Swann, *Provincial Power and Absolute Monarchy: The Estates General of Burgundy, 1661–1790* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), to my own work on the enduring power of the “princes étrangers,” *The Society of Princes: The Lorraine-Guise and the Conservation of Power and Wealth in Seventeenth-Century France* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), and, more specifically, “Holders of the Keys: The Grand Chamberlain, the Grand Equerry and Monopolies of Access at the Early Modern French Court”, in *The Key to Power? The Culture of Access in Early Modern Courts, 1400–1700*, eds. Dries Raeymaekers and Sebastiaan Derks (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 155–77.

20 Anne Motta, “Le pouvoir princier délocalisé: errances de la noblesse lorraine et sentiment national au XVIIe siècle”, in *Adel und Nation in der Neuzeit: Hierarchie, Egalität und Loyalität 16.–20. Jahrhundert*, eds. Martin Wrede and Laurent Bourquin (Ostfildern: Thorbecke Verlag, 2017), 193–207 (on the Assizes specifically, 196–97).

as long as the ducal family itself; their written family histories asserted that they had been in fact an offshoot of the ruling dynasty during the eleventh century.<sup>21</sup> They were one of four families called at the time the “Grands Chevaux”, and while they had served the ducal family in the public sphere—in military and political capacities— across several centuries, they also maintained private dynastic interests of their own.<sup>22</sup> For instance, there had been two significant Lenoncourt prelates active in French, not Lorraine, affairs during the sixteenth century, both of whom were cardinals.<sup>23</sup> Their dynastic interests only increased, by necessity, in the seventeenth century, when the displacement and exile of the ducal family meant that Lorraine grandees had to seek princely patronage elsewhere. Lenoncourt sons served in foreign armies (French, Spanish, and imperial) and solidified their position through foreign marriages, including a 1621 marriage to a Madruzzo from northern Italy, a family equally renowned for its cardinals in the sixteenth century, and a 1677 marriage to a member of the occupying French forces (Heudicourt). In the latter marriage contract, the father of the bride, the Marquis de Lenoncourt, states clearly that he had been awarded claims to the Madruzzo succession by the French *parlement* in Metz.<sup>24</sup> When Duke Léopold then attempted to regulate the lawsuit over the succession of the Lenoncours in Lorraine, he thus found himself entangled with the much larger succession lawsuits being thrashed out in Savoyard courts in Turin, French jurisdictions in Paris and Metz, and in the Swiss cantons of Neuchâtel and Bern. Madame de Balestrin could virtually do what she liked in Lorraine because she could rely on the semi-sovereign status of her husband’s micro-principality of Balestrino in Liguria and her own claims to the sovereign Swiss principality of Valangin.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, Heudicourt’s version

21 There are a variety of genealogies, printed and manuscript, in the collection Lenoncourt-Heudicourt in M&M, 13 J 1–18.

22 Henri Lepage, “Les grands et les petits chevaux de Lorraine”, *Journal de la Société d’archéologie de Lorraine*, (1876), 172–91. The others were Haraucourt, Lignéville, and Du Châtelet.

23 Robert, bishop of Châlons, cardinal in 1538 (d. 1561) and Philippe, cardinal in 1586 (d. 1592). An earlier Robert de Lenoncourt was archbishop of Reims, the highest post in the French church (d. 1532).

24 M&M 13 J 467.

25 On the fascinating topic of micro-principalities in northern Italy, see Blythe Alice Raviola, “The Imperial System in Early Modern Northern Italy: A Web of Dukedoms, Fiefs and Enclaves along the Po”, in *The Holy Roman Empire, 1495–1806: A European Perspective*, eds. R. J. W. Evans and Peter H. Wilson (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 217–36; Blythe Alice Raviola, “Sabaudian Spaces and Territories: Piedmont as a Composite State (Ecclesiastical Enclaves, Fiefs, Boundaries)”, in *Sabaudian Studies: Political Culture, Dynasty, and Territory (1400–1700)*, ed. Matthew Vester (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013), 278–297. For a study that focuses on how these tiny states influenced (or hindered) the growth of absolutism in places



of the story asserted that his elderly cousin, annoyed by the sluggishness of the ducal judiciary process, threatened to bring men from Italy “who would execute her orders better”, in attacking her rival’s house.<sup>26</sup>

Surviving documents from the period provide several other examples of lawsuits that likewise reveal how the traditional noble families of Lorraine were increasingly connected to powerful families outside the duchy, undermining its usefulness as an independent polity. At about the same time as the Madruzzo-Heudicourt case, for example, Charlotte d’Haussonville, from another of Lorraine’s oldest noble families, was pursuing her cousins for a large inheritance in Flanders, the fortune of the great sixteenth-century Spanish financier, Juan Lopez Gallo—whose last direct descendants had perished in Bruges in the 1690s.<sup>27</sup> By the 1720s, a cousin who took the name “Comte Lopez Gallo” was appealing to the Duke of Lorraine for support, clearly making use of his personal relationship with the sovereign. He was the Duke’s Chamberlain and Premier Écuyer, and his wife was a Lignéville, another of the four *Grands Chevaux*, and also a *dame d’atours* of the duchess. In addition, she was the sister of the Duke’s long-term mistress. It is clear, though hardly surprising, that private court and household connections were crucial in sorting out public and official justice.

It is important to note that both of these lawsuits—for the Madruzzo properties in Italy and for the Lopez Gallo properties in Flanders—involved a claimant from still another Italian noble family who were now based in Lorraine: the Torniello of Lombardy. The Marquis de Gerbéviller, Anne-Joseph de Tornielle (d. 1737), was one of the largest landowners in Lorraine, a counsellor of state, bailiff of Barrois, and Premier Gentilhomme de la Chambre.<sup>28</sup> His ancestor, the first in the family to move from Lombardy to Lorraine, had been both the Grand Maître de l’Hôtel and Chef des Finances of Duke Charles III at the beginning of the seventeenth century. This earlier Gerbéviller had thus been considered of great importance by the occupying forces of France: he had intimate, private connections to the dukes, and was consulted on

like Savoy or Lorraine, see Paul Delsalle and André Ferrer (eds.), *Les enclaves territoriales aux temps modernes, XVIe–XVIIIe siècles* (Besançon: Presses universitaires franc-comtoises, 2000).

26 M&M, 3 F 320, no. 32.

27 The papers concerning the Lopez-Gallo succession are also in M&M, 3 F 320. See nos. 37 and 38, judgements from the Parlement of Metz in December 1671 and January 1672.

28 Louis Moréri, *Le grand dictionnaire historique*, 8 vols. (Amsterdam: Brunel, 1740), vol. 8, 169. See the report of the French intendant Desmarets de Vaubourg, which details the landholdings and political power of the Lorraine nobility in 1697, “Mémoire concernant les états du duché de Lorraine”, in Marie-José Laperche-Fournel, *L’intendance de Lorraine et Barrois à la fin du XVIIe siècle* (Paris: CTHS, 2006), 207, 212.

matters of local policy or invoked as a mediator between the king of France and the exiled duke of Lorraine during the French occupation.<sup>29</sup>

Although the confusion of multinational jurisdictions made state-building difficult, we know that Duke Léopold's court was highly cosmopolitan by design.<sup>30</sup> This idea makes a great deal of sense: Léopold had been partly raised in Vienna by his Habsburg mother and his uncle and namesake, Emperor Leopold I. His exiled dynasty's damaged prestige was revived, gloriously, by his father's military skill in the defence of Vienna and the subsequent liberation of Hungary from the Turks.<sup>31</sup> When he re-established his government in 1698 after the Treaty of Rijswijk, Léopold's chief advisors were a mix of Lorrainers (Le Bègue), Germans (Pfüttschner), and various other nationalities, notably the Earl of Carlingford, an Irish émigré.<sup>32</sup> His court was known for its blending of French and imperial influences in architecture, music, etiquette, and ritual.<sup>33</sup> He encouraged the careers of members of his Bourbon wife's French household, and welcomed former servants of the dynasty from his father's court in Innsbruck, notably Italians like the Counts Ferraris, Spada, and Lunati-Visconti. These courtiers can all be said to have been loyal to the dynasty more than to any physical place, in a transnational, Habsburgian way. They were supplemented and supported by a large number of newly ennobled servants of the dynasty, like the Mahuet or Hoffelize, and by artists, engineers, and scholars, both native Lorrainers and those attracted from abroad, such as the composer Henri Desmarest and the architect Germain Boffrand, both from France, or the theatre designer Francesco Galli da Bibiena, an Italian highly in favour at the court of Vienna.<sup>34</sup> All of these men were loyal to the duke himself

29 McCluskey, *Absolute Monarchy on the Frontiers*, 127.

30 See Anne Motta (ed.), *Échanges, passages et transferts à la cour du duc Léopold (1698–1729)* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2017); Jérémy Filet, "Jacobitism on the Grand Tour? The Duchy of Lorraine and the 1715 Jacobite Rebellion in the Writings about Displacement (1697–1736)" (PhD diss., Manchester Metropolitan University, 2021), part 2.

31 Ferenc Tóth and Alain Petiot, "Un héros chevaleresque et chrétien: le prince Charles de Lorraine à la bataille de Saint-Gothard (1664)", *Le pays lorrain* 97:3 (September 2016): 255–64.

32 Francis Taaffe, 3<sup>rd</sup> earl of Carlingford (d. 1704) was essentially the prime minister of Lorraine. See Jérémy Filet, "The Networks of Francis Taaffe, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Carlingford and Irish Jacobite Émigrés in the Duchy of Lorraine", *Eighteenth-Century Ireland* 36:1 (2021): 27–47.

33 Eric Hassler, "Définir et élaborer l'étiquette: les réflexions du duc Léopold de Lorraine (1679–1729) sur la mise en place d'un nouveau cérémonial de cour au début du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle", *Bulletin du Centre de recherche du château de Versailles* (2016), DOI: 10.4000/crcv.13706.

34 Laurent Versini, "Lunéville au temps des lumières: les mécénats de Léopold et de Stanislas", in *Lunéville: fastes du Versailles lorrain*, ed. Jacques Charles-Gaffiot (Paris: Carpentier, 2003), 139–43.

or his dynasty, but if their personal or private needs were not being met, they could, and did, move on to search for princely patronage elsewhere.

Another prominent Lorraine noble house, the Beauvau, provides a further example of this transnationalism. Originally from Anjou, they had initially followed the Angevin dukes to Provence and Sicily and had then settled in Lorraine through service to the last Angevin duke, René d'Anjou, who became duke of Lorraine (r. 1430–80).<sup>35</sup> The Beauvau were powerful servants of the dukes in the early seventeenth century and stood by them when they went into exile in the 1630s, under Duke Charles IV (r. 1624–75). Henri II, Marquis de Beauvau (1610–84), left a compelling memoir, which was a history of Charles IV's reign but which, unlike many noble memoirs of the period, was not merely a hagiography of his ducal patron; he was instead sharply critical. Henri II blamed the duke for many of the calamities that had devastated Lorraine. Notably, he attributed the failures of ducal government to the duke's preference for satisfying his own private desires rather than the needs of the state.<sup>36</sup> As the son of a published historian and an educator himself (see below), Henri II was likely aware of the medieval topos that the archetype of a tyrant is a ruler who pursues his own interests and sets aside those of the common good.<sup>37</sup> He also lamented the failure of the ducal regime to provide a consistent source of patronage for the high-ranking nobility of Lorraine, especially for court offices, so that they were forced to enter the service of foreign sovereigns, as he himself did. Many, such as the Lenoncourts, accommodated themselves to the occupying regime of Louis XIV, some joined the French military, and others continued to serve Duke Charles IV.<sup>38</sup> Henri II entered the service of the Elector of Bavaria, where he became tutor to the elector's heir. Nevertheless, when the ducal

35 Jonathan Spangler, "Transferring Affections: Princes, Favourites and the Peripatetic Houses of Lorraine and Beauvau as Trans-Regional Families", in *Internationale Geschichte in Theorie und Praxis: Traditionen und Perspektiven*, eds. Barbara Haider-Wilson, Wolfgang Mueller, and William D. Godsey (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2016), 635–63.

36 Henri II, Marquis de Beauvau, *Mémoires du Marquis de Beauvau pour servir à l'histoire de Charles IV, duc de Lorraine et de Bar* (Cologne: Pierre Marteau, 1687), 88. The text was published just after the Marquis's death, by a fictional publishing house that allowed it to avoid the censors (likely in Paris). It was immediately popular, as is evidenced by the numerous subsequent editions in 1688, 1689, 1690, and 1691.

37 See Hélène Merlin-Kajman, "'Privé' and 'Particulier' (and Other Words) in Seventeenth-Century France", in *Early Modern Privacy*, eds. Michaël Green, Lars Cyril Nørgaard and Mette Birkedal Bruun (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 79–104.

38 See M&M, 13 J 92, letters of Louis XIV, 24 October 1658, delaying procedures for all the lawsuits of Henri de Lenoncourt for the duration of his service as colonel of the Lorraine cavalry in French service, and 13 J 93, nomination by Charles IV of Antoine de Lenoncourt as his Master of the Horse, 2 May 1664.

family was restored in 1698, the high nobility returned in droves and, as we have seen, were among the chief supporters of the regime.<sup>39</sup> Rather than a hindrance, their multinational connections were helpful to Duke Léopold in maintaining his precarious diplomatic balance between France and the Holy Roman Empire. They supported young Léopold in his reorganisation of the state, his attempts to limit the power of the church, and his establishment of a glittering court in a new ducal palace at Lunéville. They were not happy, however, with his refusal to re-establish the Assizes or restore their previous autonomy.

Furthermore, the cosmopolitan character of the high nobility and the court also complicated matters. The composite state formed from the twin duchies of Lorraine and Bar was itself multilingual, with a mostly German-speaking population in the northeastern area. Social and legal customs also varied, for example in the fragmented nature of patrimonial land-holding in the duchy; it was after all still legally, if only loosely, part of the Holy Roman Empire, where partible inheritance was dominant, rather than the primogeniture of France. Consequently, many of the most prominent court families sustained mixed loyalties, which could be useful for pursuing private dynastic interests. Lorraine's ecclesiastical connections were cosmopolitan as well. Since one of the primary needs of any important noble family was having access to church benefices for the support of younger sons and daughters, and since all three Lorraine bishoprics (the "Trois Evêchés": Metz, Toul, and Verdun) were by the late seventeenth century fully part of France, these families had to remain on good terms with the French regime.<sup>40</sup> As many nobles held estates within the temporal lands of these bishoprics, they could ignore ducal justice if it suited them, and appeal their legal cases to French royal justice in the Parlement of Metz or alternatively to the ecclesiastical tribunal in Trier (the metropolitan archdiocese). The bishop of Toul in particular had spiritual jurisdiction over most of Lorraine, including Nancy; appeals for contested marriages, annulments, and other issues thus fell within the purview of a prelate who had been nominated not by the Duke of Lorraine, but by the king of France.<sup>41</sup> Simultaneously, because the convents of Lorraine continued to operate under the much stricter system of entry requirements prevalent

39 M&M, 13 J 97, 98, and 100, documents pertaining to Antoine de Lenoncourt returning to the service of Duke Léopold.

40 The Three Bishoprics were first occupied by France militarily in 1552, then annexed legally under the terms of the Treaty of Westphalia, 1648.

41 Note that the family of one French bishop of Toul, Thiard de Bissy, even managed to scoop up the inheritance of one of the four *Grands Chevaux*, Haraucourt, which, like Lenoncourt, became extinct at this time.

in the Holy Roman Empire, according to which sons and daughters needed completely unblemished noble genealogies (all 16 quarters) to gain admittance, any attempt to integrate the old and new nobilities of Lorraine through intermarriage was stymied.<sup>42</sup> These two factors connecting ecclesiastical jurisdiction and private dynastic interests—the competing judicial systems and the problems surrounding intermarriage—cannot be overlooked when we consider ducal authority in the early eighteenth century.

The *Grands Chevaux* and the rest of the old nobility of Lorraine thus operated with rules established by centuries of dynastic behaviour that had long linked them to their native ducal family, which itself had historically maintained close connections both east and west, but at the same time increasingly looked outside the duchy to advance their position.<sup>43</sup> Some became highly successful transnational families, for example, Bassompierre or Choiseul, whose possession of lands in both Lorraine and France and personal intimacy with dukes and kings alike, made them obvious intermediaries and diplomats. Christophe II, Baron de Bassompierre, was Grand Maître d'Hôtel and Chef des Finances of Duke Charles III of Lorraine and an important peace negotiator between the duke and King Henri IV of France in the 1590s. Of his sons, one was Grand Écuyer de Lorraine and the other a Marshal of France, as well as a surrogate father for the young Louis XIII in some ways.<sup>44</sup> A century later, the heiress Françoise-Louise de Bassompierre added her family's estates to those of the Choiseul-Stainville family, who were landowners on both sides of the frontier. She was a maid of honour of the Duchess of Lorraine, while her husband was Grand Chamberlain to the duke (François III Etienne) and his ambassador to France; he even retained these positions when the duke was crowned Holy Roman Emperor (Francis I) after 1745. Their youngest son, Jacques-Philippe, was a field marshal in Austria, and the eldest, Etienne-François (clearly named for the duke), moved into French service and became the celebrated Duc de Choiseul, Minister of Foreign Affairs under Louis XV. He was also the mastermind behind the new alliance between France and Austria and the marriage of the Archduchess Marie-Antoinette (both a Habsburg and a "Princess of Lorraine") in 1770.<sup>45</sup>

42 This was especially true for noblewomen. See Michel Parisse and Pierre Heili, eds., *Les chapitres de dames nobles entre France et Empire* (Paris: Editions Messene, 1998).

43 See a recent study of this multidirectional complex of loyalties, a factor in Lorraine state-building as early as the fourteenth century: Christophe Rivière, *Une principauté d'empire face au royaume: le duché de Lorraine sous le règne de Charles II (1390–1431)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018).

44 See François de Bassompierre, Marquis de Haroué, *Journal de ma vie: mémoires du maréchal de Bassompierre*, ed. Marquis de Chantérac Audouin, 4 vols. (Paris: Renouard, 1870–77).

45 Anselme, *Histoire généalogique*, vol. 7, 464–69 (Bassompierre), vol. 9b, 245–51 (Choiseul).

Bassompierre and Choiseul, despite their links to Paris and Vienna, remained firmly devoted to the ducal family of Lorraine. Other transnational families were much less reliably loyal to Lorraine, partly because they had sufficient power to develop their own foreign policies. A memoir written for Louis XIV during the occupation of Lorraine in the 1690s refers to members of these families simply as the “hauts hommes” who took precedence at court and public events in Lorraine, even over the *Grands Chevaux*.<sup>46</sup> The “hauts hommes” included the Prince of Salm, whose sovereign principality straddled the Vosges mountains between Alsace and Lorraine and whose family held offices and military commands both in the duchy and at the Habsburg court in Vienna. Other similar families with properties in this liminal zone were the princes of Leiningen (or “Linanges” in French) in their county of Dachsburg and the “Comtes Sauvage du Rhin” (the Wild- und Rheingrafen in German), who held several large, allodial imperial fiefs enclaved inside Lorraine: the lordships of Mörchingen and Püttlingen. Aristocratic families based mostly in the Southern Netherlands also maintained significant landholdings, and thus influence, in Lorraine: the Prince de Ligne, who was heir to the Marquis de Moÿ, from a cadet branch of the house of Lorraine, and who in this period was pressing claims for 1.5 million *francs barrois* (about half a million *livres tournois*) against the duke;<sup>47</sup> or the Duc de Croÿ-Havré, who, as a Catholic co-ruler of the “Baronnie Souverain” of Fénétrange (Finstingen to its German-speaking residents), had to appeal to the Duke of Lorraine for assistance in suppressing the other co-barons’ constructions of Protestant chapels within the barony.<sup>48</sup> In this instance, the Duke of Lorraine was acting both as a sovereign prince regulating public justice and as a private lord since he too held a portion of the shares of lordship into which this estate was divided.

The ducal archives in Nancy are full of lawsuits concerning these noble families, usually involving overlapping or competing jurisdictions. Duke Léopold got on with all of these “hauts hommes” as best he could, but

46 Desmarests de Vaubourg, “Mémoire concernant les états du duché de Lorraine”, 263. The genuineness of this distinction between “hauts hommes” and the “ancienne chevalerie” was debated by nineteenth-century historians of Lorraine (see editor’s notes of this source, 263, fns 500 and 501).

47 M&M, 3 F 289, no. 44.

48 Jean Gallet, *Le bon plaisir du baron de Fénétrange* (Nancy: Presses universitaires de Nancy, 1990), 49–57. See also Jonathan Spangler, “Les usages des petites souverainetés dans la construction de l’identité aristocratique” and Nette Claeys and Violet Soen, “Les Croÿ-Havré entre Lorraine et Pays-Bas”, in *Noblesses transrégionales: les Croÿ et les frontières pendant les guerres de religion*, eds. Violet Soen and Yves Junot (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021), 55–68, 333–53.

as they considered themselves mostly his equals—both Salm and Croÿ were, for example, his relatives—rather than his subjects, his claims to public authority could be significantly diminished by them. He thus had to maintain his position primarily through personal relationships; this technique is clearly seen in his voluminous private correspondence.<sup>49</sup> The danger posed by these men was not new. In the 1660s, Duke Charles IV had competed with the claims for autonomy of one local noble family, the counts of Aspremont, whose assertions of sovereignty stretched back to the mid-fourteenth century.<sup>50</sup> He even went so far as to marry an Aspremont daughter and heiress, in spite of the loud complaints of his courtiers about such a *mésalliance*. Indeed, the problem of overlapping jurisdictions did not vanish after the king of France became the sovereign of Lorraine after 1766. The mixed loyalties and privileged claims of these “hauts hommes”, the so-called “princes possessionés”, continued to cause friction between France and the Holy Roman Empire, and would in fact become the spark that ignited the wars against Revolutionary France in 1792.<sup>51</sup>

In the long term, we might argue that Duke Léopold's efforts at public state-building failed, at least where the high-ranking noble families were concerned. None of them fought for Lorraine's independence during the final annexation of the duchy to France in 1737 or objected strongly as Léopold's son, Duke François III, departed for Tuscany to become its grand duke. But on a dynastic level, or one centred around private and personal connections, we could argue that Léopold successfully forged durable bonds that transcended local politics or the concept of a public sphere. Indeed, some members of the nobility, old and new, emigrated with the ducal family to Florence and then on to Vienna, as did a significant number of artisans, artists, soldiers, and other courtiers.<sup>52</sup> The extent of a noble family's loyalty, however, varied. Many of the *anoblis* and merchant families that had been patronised through

49 Much of Léopold's correspondence can be found in M&M, Série 3F, “Fonds de Vienne.”

50 See Dom Calmet, *Histoire ecclésiastique et civile de Lorraine* (Nancy, 1730), vol. 1, cols. ccxvii–ccxx; numerous pieces relating to litigation with the House of Aspremont in M&M, 3 F 252.

51 Stephen A. Lazer, *State Formation in Early Modern Alsace, 1648–1789* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2019), 177–78.

52 Alain Petiot, “Entre France et l'Autriche: le cas des lorrains sous la Révolution et l'Empire (1789–1815)”, *Le pays lorrain* 95:2 (June 2014): 131–38; Alain Petiot, *Au service des Habsbourg: officiers, ingénieurs, savants et artistes lorrains en Autriche* (Paris: Messene, 2000); Renate Zedinger, “Les lorrains à la cour de Vienne: innovations culturelles, économiques et scientifiques (1745–65)”, *Lotharingia* 9 (1999): 121–36; Renate Zedinger and Wolfgang Schmale (eds.), *Franz Stephan von Lothringen und sein Kreis / L'Empereur François I<sup>er</sup> et le réseau lorrain / L'imperatore Francesco I e il circolo lorenesse* (Bochum: Winkler Verlag, 2009).

public institutions of government, justice, and finance by Léopold in his capital of Nancy had become closely entwined with the much larger urban commercial centre of the region, Metz, and its French Parlement, military garrison and financial organisations, and thus to the *robe* noble families of France. While some of the higher-ranking nobility followed the ducal family and served in key leadership positions in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany—like Beauvau and Richecourt (viceroy and head of finance, respectively)—most of these soon returned to Lorraine. A small number persisted in their loyalty and emigrated to Vienna with the ducal family after 1745, transforming their identities as the dynasty shifted to become “Habsburg-Lorraine”. The noble family closest to the dukes, the Lignéviles, remained steadfastly loyal and were rewarded. All of the daughters, for example, were given the Habsburg Order of the Sternkreuz, and one of them, Thérèse-Angélique, was appointed chief lady of the court of the Abbess of Mons (Anne-Charlotte de Lorraine, the emperor’s sister), heading up her households in Brussels and Vienna.<sup>53</sup> Except for the Lignéviles, however, such durable loyalty was mostly limited to the nobles who had most recently arrived in Lorraine, for example, Count Ferraris, who became an imperial Field Marshal and vice-president of the Hofkriegsrat.<sup>54</sup> Much later, and demonstrating the remarkably long-lasting power of this dynastic, rather than territorial, connection, Count Taaffe, a descendant of Duke Léopold’s First Minister, the Irishman Francis Taaffe, Earl of Carlingford, served as Prime Minister of Austria from 1879 to 1893.<sup>55</sup> Other Lorraine names prominent in Habsburg service in the nineteenth century, such as Ficquelmont or Mensdorff-Pouilly (both Ministers of Foreign Affairs), had other connections tying them to regions of the former Holy Roman Empire that were close to Lorraine, notably lands in the Saarland and in Luxembourg.

Yet personal connections between princes and nobles had their limits, and for the most part, Lorraine’s noble families did not emigrate to Vienna. They had more to gain from maintaining their local privileges, notably private access to the prince at the small but influential court of Stanislas Leszczinski, the former king of Poland-Lithuania and the Duke of Lorraine

53 Petiot, *Au service des Habsbourg*, 323; Pierre Heili, *Anne-Charlotte de Lorraine (1714–1773), abbesse de Remiremont et de Mons: une princesse européenne au siècle des lumières* (Remiremont: Gérard Louis, 1996), 113.

54 William D. Godsey, “La Société Était au Fond Légitimiste’: Émigrés, Aristocracy, and the Court at Vienna, 1789–1848”, *European History Quarterly* 35:1 (January 2005): 63–95, esp. 77.

55 The history of the long relationship between the houses of Lorraine and Taaffe is detailed in Karl, Graf Taaffe, *Memoirs of the Family of Taaffe* (Vienna: M. Auer, 1856), with useful printed primary sources.



after 1737. Even some of the families closest to Duke Léopold swiftly moved into Stanislas Leszczinski's service, for example the Beauvau siblings, who served Leszczinski and his wife in various capacities, including ladies-in-waiting and Grand Maître de l'Hôtel; one was even Stanislas's mistress.<sup>56</sup> The Beauvau family was thus ideally placed within the social sphere of Stanislas's daughter, Marie Leszczynska, queen of France, when they needed to shift their loyalties to the court of Versailles following the death of Stanislas in 1766. Their mutable loyalty is especially striking given the favours they had received from Léopold: a marquisate, large estates, and even the very rare (and costly) title of Prince of the Empire (1722). But because they now were *grandees* of the first order, they no longer needed ducal patronage. In a similar fashion, the Comte d'Haussonville, from the old Lorraine nobility, served as Grand Louvetier for King Stanislas in Lorraine and then translated his post into the corresponding office for his son, Grand Louvetier of France, under Louis XV.<sup>57</sup> Several Lorraine nobles, like Choiseul and Du Châtelet, were lured to Versailles with awards of offices and titles (dukedom for both). The middling ranks of the nobility, those who remained in Nancy, were disappointed however, when the promised retention of a degree of self-rule, agreed in the Treaty of 1735, was denied and Lorraine became a French province just like any other. But the transnational nobles, the "hauts hommes" with a long history of maintaining their own private affairs, continued to do so, and most simply left Lorraine altogether, for instance Croÿ, Salm, and Madruzzo.

By the end of the reign of Duke Léopold of Lorraine in 1729, the Count of Madruzzo—Domenico Donato del Carretto—had succeeded his father as Marchese di Balestrino, married a daughter of a Genoese patrician, Angela Negrone, and returned to the Ligurian coast to tend his affairs and raise his children at the court of the King of Sardinia in Turin. Denis Sublet d'Heudicourt remained in Lorraine and tended the Hôtel de Lenoncourt in Nancy and the Lenoncourt lands for his children, who continued his late wife's lineage into the modern era. His youngest grandson, Philippe-Gaspard, Comte de Lenoncourt, moved to Florence, where he established his family at the court of the "Lorena" grand dukes of Tuscany. These transnational families had enough independent connections that they were free to move around Europe, placing family members where they could best serve individual ambitions or the needs of the dynasty as a whole. Thus, in a small

56 Spangler, "Transferring Affections", 659–60.

57 François-Alexandre Aubert de La Chesnaye-Desbois and Jacques Badier (eds.), *Dictionnaire de la noblesse, contenant les généalogies, l'histoire et la chronologie des familles nobles de France*, 19 vols. (Paris: Schlesinger, 1863–77), vol. 5, cols. 932–33.

state like Lorraine, a prince could establish public justice and could make use of private connections with the nobles who served in his household to maintain order in his court and in his capital city, but he lacked the authority of a major sovereign to command his nobles' loyalty. The eighteenth century would see a further disintegration of the system whereby private justice could be carried out by the higher-ranking nobility, who could no longer get away with brawling in the streets, as small states like Lorraine were absorbed by the greater powers of Europe.

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# 10. The Politics of Privacy: Examining Influence and Personal Relationships at the English and Holy Roman Imperial Courts

*Dustin M. Neighbors and Elena Woodacre*

## Abstract

This chapter offers two contrasting, yet nevertheless complementary, case studies to demonstrate the vital connection between personal relationships and political privacy that not only blurred the boundaries between the public and private spheres, but also enabled individuals to move between the spheres, to informally exert control, to influence politics, and to negotiate the limits of power. Dustin M. Neighbors examines how degrees of privacy emerged from the hunt arranged for Maximilian's visit to the Dresden court of August of Saxony in 1564; this hunt created an important opportunity for political privacy in which the two men could deepen their connection and reinforce their political bonds. In contrast, Elena Woodacre focuses on a plethora of interpersonal relationships in the household and private sphere of Joan of Navarre, queen of England during the early fifteenth century; these relationships prompted intense suspicion of foreigners, who might be able to use their access to the queen to gain political influence at court.

**Keywords:** agency, Joan of Navarre, Maximilian II, August of Saxony, personal bonds, secluded spaces

## Introduction

The essays in this collection have the common aim of illuminating the relationship between notions of privacy and court culture, and thus underscoring

the complexities of early modern royal and noble households and courts throughout Europe. Because of this shared aim, these essays have repeatedly highlighted a few common threads. First, the boundaries between the public and private spheres, particularly at court, were often blurry and interdependent. Second, instances of historical privacy emerged via ephemeral encounters and the regulation of access. Third, and perhaps most importantly for our volume, the interplay of privacy and agency, whereby personal interactions, privacy, and intimate access enabled individuals to exercise a greater degree of agency and exert more control and/or influence, has emerged in a variety of contexts. For instance, Britta Kägler suggests in her essay (chapter 4) that the private nature of and close relationships within the *Frauenzimmer* enabled high-ranking women and confidants of the Wittelsbach electress to exercise greater control over younger women and their social advancement, while public access to this private female space at court was also strictly regulated.<sup>1</sup> Oskar Rojewski (chapter 6) indicates that court painters, including the servants listed in household ordinances, had a higher level of agency within the private spheres of the Burgundian royal household and court. This enhanced level of agency influenced the ways in which court painters interpreted and depicted the court, interior spaces of the household, and individual sitters.<sup>2</sup> Finally, Mette Birkedal Bruun and Lars Cyril Nørgaard (chapter 8) allude to degrees of privacy that emerged from religious withdrawal and devotional practices, which provided a greater measure of agency for women in the French court. For instance, Anne Marie Louise d'Orléans, Mademoiselle de Montpensier and others, could not only control their own devotional content and practices, but also influence the devotion and practices of others through "disseminating private devotion" and writings.<sup>3</sup>

The notion of agency is a key theme and has significance for both royal and court studies because the very nature of monarchy and royal courts was predicated on personal relationships. These relationships defined the actions of individuals and helped characterise, as David Starkey has established, the "politics of intimacy" in early modern Europe.<sup>4</sup> Yet it remains

1 See chapter 4, "Institutionalised Privacy? The Need to Achieve and Defend Privacy in the *Frauenzimmer*", 117-141.

2 See Oskar J. Rojewski's essay in this collection; chapter 6, "The Translation of Court Culture from the Burgundian Court to the Kingdom of Castile: The Sovereign's Privacy and Relationship with Court Artists", 163-90.

3 See chapter 7, Bruun and Nørgaard, "Au Milieu d'une Cour Superbe & Tumultueuse: Devotional privacy at the Court of Versailles", 215-39.

4 David Starkey, "Innovation and Intimacy: The Rise of the Privy Chamber, 1485-1547", in *The English Court: From the War of the Roses to the Civil War*, eds. David Starkey, D. A. L. Morgan,

unclear how influence, agency, and privacy were connected. Thus, there is a further question that this chapter seeks to address: how did influence and agency exist within or emerge from historical privacy? Here, agency is not a conceptual or linguistic replacement for power, especially female power,<sup>5</sup> but is rather understood as the ability of an individual or a group of people to act in order to exert influence or exercise power.<sup>6</sup>

Throughout history, personal relationships have been a central element in the development of sociability and of politics and power at courts; they have also been important more broadly within societies across early modern Europe. Personal relationships and interactions were at the heart of how the court functioned because household and court spaces were manifestations of the ruler's personal rule and prerogative. Furthermore, early modern social advancement and patronage, especially royal preferment, relied on personal connections, recommendations, and trust. Consequently, strong personal bonds and the designation of private or semi-private spaces enabled individuals at court to exercise agency and exert influence. The combination of intimate access and trust provided moments for foreign sovereigns, courtiers, mistresses and queens, diplomats, and favourites to influence the ruler. This kind of influence, whether past or present, can be hard to define or quantify, as it occurs in secluded spaces and through intimate activities. Yet privacy and influence were undeniably factors in political decision-making, so much so that there was often fear, jealousy, or distrust of those who had influence, either perceived or actual.

Privacy and influence are difficult to quantify because the moments in which privacy enabled influence were most often not directly observed or formally documented. Accordingly, there was fear or distrust of what could and could not be seen, known, or intervened within the intimate, or private, spaces or encounters of individuals or groups at court, especially within the royal household. This was certainly the case when councillors tried to prevent the influence of foreigners by multiple calls to expel them from Joan of Navarre's household so that their private relationships with and access to the queen would be prevented. Alternatively, the fear and distrust of the close relationship and private meetings between Emperor Maximilian

John Murphy, Pam Wright, Neil Cuddy, and Kevin Sharpe (Harlow: Longman Group UK Limited, 1987), 100.

5 Theresa Earenfight, "A Lifetime of Power: Beyond Binaries of Gender", in *Medieval Elite Women and the Exercise of Power, 1100–1400: Moving beyond the Exceptionalist Debate*, ed. Heather J. Tanner (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 271–93.

6 Dustin M. Neighbors, "With my rulinge": Agency, Queenship and Political Culture through Royal Progresses in the Reign of Elizabeth I" (PhD diss., University of York, 2018), 11.



II and Elector August of Saxony caused concerns within and beyond the Holy Roman Empire during the mid-sixteenth century. An underlying facet of this fear is the belief that through personal relationships, intimate access to the ruler's private spaces, or moments of privacy, individuals had a greater ability to exercise agency and influence the ruler. Interestingly, it is this nexus through which personal relationships, agency, and influence intersected that opportunities for political privacy shaped premodern European court cultures.

Expanding on the previous chapters, this chapter offers two case studies that illustrate how agency was deeply linked to privacy and that serve as examples of political privacy. The first case study, by Dustin M. Neighbors, investigates the role that court figures and personal activities played in fostering politics through private activities, such as the meeting between Elector August of Saxony and Emperor Maximilian II during the 1564 visit to Dresden. This example offers insight into how political privacy was fostered through the activity of hunting, which offered an opportunity for August and Maximilian to meet privately in a secluded space and reinforce their personal relationship and further their individual and joint political agency. Elena Woodacre discusses a second case study that takes a strikingly different perspective, demonstrating the importance of the private sphere as a locus of agency by examining attempts to influence and interfere with the household of the fifteenth-century English queen consort, Joan of Navarre. Woodacre's analysis demonstrates the concern of contemporaries about the political influence of foreign courtiers within Joan of Navarre's private sphere, noting both how her household was subject to criticism and interference and how Joan used her agency to protect her privacy and the individuals who were part of her inner circle.

These two case studies differ in chronology, geography, gender identity, court settings, and historical contexts. Neighbors's case study deals with Maximilian and August's personal relationship as peers of equal standing during a single occasion, a hunt. This meeting in a secluded environment reinforced homosocial bonds and a long-standing friendship, while also reaffirming a political partnership. By contrast, Woodacre's example deals with a multiplicity of relationships within Joan's household, which primarily consisted of "power couples"—both women (ladies-in-waiting) and men—who were in service to Joan and could act as close, personal confidants. Woodacre thus highlights the political conditions that were unique to the queen and the mixed gender dynamics in a household that did not exist for kings.

These two case studies are deliberately divergent; they reveal how different scenarios can be characterised by the same process of personal relationships, agency and politics emanating from privacy. More importantly, taken together, these case studies demonstrate not only methods for applying the lens of privacy, but also the various ways in which the principles of proximity, intimate access, privacy, and influence operated. The chapter also highlights how the public and private intersected—through hunting as a spectacle, an event, and an acceptable environment for privacy or in the female household, where the activities of everyday life played out, but were also treated with suspicion as environments closed off from the scrutiny and control of outsiders.

### Emperor Maximilian II's 1564 Visit to the Dresden Court of Elector August of Saxony: A Case of Political Privacy?<sup>7</sup>

In 1564, Emperor Maximilian II (1527–76) visited the court of Elector August of Saxony (1526–86) in Dresden. August organised a 'high hunt' for the Emperor, during which they hunted alone and "talked of many things", including the confessional conflicts within the Holy Roman Empire.<sup>8</sup> An account of Maximilian's visit and the hunt appears in a single manuscript now located at the Hauptstaatsarchiv in Dresden. Written on the cover of the thinly bound manuscript in sixteenth-century German are the words:

Wie der Römische König Maximilian und sein Sohn, Erzherzog Ferdinand Kurfürst August in Dresden be-sucht haben. 1564.	How the Roman King Maximilian and son of Archduke Ferdinand visited Elector August in Dresden. 1564. <sup>9</sup>
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The manuscript is interesting in several ways. First, it appears that this particular document has not been extensively examined or employed within the historiography pertaining to Maximilian, August, or Dresden. In fact,

7 This case study stems from work that began with the Dresden case team at the Centre for Privacy Studies in 2019. The case team has noted that Dresden provided "an emblematic context to explore notions of privacy and the private in the early modern period [...] as it underwent a range of transformations", which includes a study of the public consequences of privacy. Details about the case team can be found at <https://teol.ku.dk/privacy/research/cases/>.

8 Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden, Geheimes Rat (Geheimes Archiv), Bestand 10024, Loc. 10735/01, f. 2. Hereafter, this archive is abbreviated as HStA Dresden.

9 HStA Dresden, Loc. 10735/01.

many of the studies of early modern Dresden have not commented on Maximilian's visit.<sup>10</sup> Second, the manuscript is a two-part text; it includes a list of instructions and an account of Maximilian's visit. The list of instructions deals specifically with organising "*den hohem Jagten*," or "the high hunt".<sup>11</sup> With this in mind, the manuscript prompts an initial flurry of questions: why was Maximilian II visiting August of Saxony? Why was August arranging a "high hunt"?

In order to answer these questions, it is necessary to examine the relationship between August and Maximilian within the context of forging close bonds between princely states and the Holy Roman Empire. The Holy Roman Empire, particularly the German-speaking areas, was by no means an empire with an identifiable political structure. Instead, as Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger has defined, it was "a loose political body. The empire contained very different members [...] that formed individual ties to a common overlord, or 'head' (emperor), through oaths of personal fealty".<sup>12</sup> This "loose political body" was rooted in the German culture of "Kaiser und Reich", whereby the "Reich" comprised limbs consisting of "electors, knights, cities, and towns".<sup>13</sup> The key here is the distinction of "individual ties" and "personal fealty". This is even more interesting when one remembers that the German-speaking part of the empire consisted of 420 territories.<sup>14</sup>

The Elector and Emperor were close friends. Although it is not unusual for rulers to maintain close bonds, these two had an incredibly loyal friendship that was crucial to their success and livelihood as rulers. This friendship lasted until Maximilian's death in 1576. It began at the imperial court of Charles V (1500–58), where Maximilian and August met as part of a group of young princes (*Edelknaben*), including August's brother Moritz of Saxony (1521–53), who were studying the "emperor's [military] tactics".<sup>15</sup> In this princely environment at the imperial court, according to Maximilian's recent biographer, "the three struck up a lively friendship which would figure

10 Helen Watanabe O'Kelly, *Court Culture in Dresden: From Renaissance to Baroque* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Winfried Müller, Martina Schattkowsky, and Dirk Syndram, *Kurfürst August von Sachsen: ein nachreformatorische 'Friedensfürst' zwischen Territorium und Reich: Beiträge zur wissenschaftlichen Tagung vom 9. bis 11. Juli 2015 in Torgau und Dresden* (Dresden: Sandstein Verlag, 2017).

11 HStA Dresden, Loc. 10735/01, f. 2.

12 Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, *Holy Roman Empire: A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021), 11.

13 Stollberg-Rilinger, *Holy Roman Empire*, 18.

14 Pernille Arenfeldt, "Political Role of the Consort in Protestant Germany, 1550-1585: Anna of Saxony as 'Mater Patriae'" (PhD diss., European University Institute, 2006), 2.

15 Paula Sutter Fichtner, *Emperor Maximilian II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 8.



10.1b Nicolas Neufchatel, *Kaiser Maximilian II.* (1527–1576), c. 1566, oil on canvas. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. Wikimedia Commons.

10.1a Lucas Cranach the Younger, *Kurfürst August von Sachsen* (1526–1586), c. 1564, oil on canvas. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. Wikimedia Commons.

large in their political futures”.<sup>16</sup> The friendship was further strengthened when they fought together during the Schmalkaldic War in the 1546 siege of Ingolstadt. As a result of the Schmalkaldic War and the loyalty of August’s brother, Moritz, to the Emperor, the electoral authority of Saxony was transferred from the Ernestine to the Albertine line in 1547. Shortly thereafter, August inherited Saxony upon his brother’s death in 1553. Over the next few years, beginning with the Treaty of Augsburg in 1555, Saxony became a “politically influential imperial estate”, and August an important territorial ruler.<sup>17</sup> Throughout the remainder of August’s life, he was a vital figure in

<sup>16</sup> Fichtner, *Maximilian II*, 14.

<sup>17</sup> Jens Bruning, “August”, in *Der Herrscher Sachsens: Markgrafen, Kurfürsten, König. 1089–1918*, ed. Frank-Lothar Kroll (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 2007), 119. Interpreted from the German text: “So war Kursachsen seit 1562, also noch in den späten Regierungsjahren Kaiser Ferdinands, als Motor der Friedenssicherung in zentraler Verantwortung und damit der *politisch tonangebende Reichsstand*, was auch außerhalb des Heiligen Römischen Reichs entsprechend eingeschätzt wurde.”

the empire as the “hinge” between Maximilian and the imperial states; he was Maximilian’s chief councillor and best friend (Illustrations 10.1a–b).<sup>18</sup>

The friendship between August and Maximilian was crucial during the 1550s, when Maximilian was “cultivating the goodwill of Germany’s territorial rulers”, like August,<sup>19</sup> in order to gain support for his election as King of the Romans, which was successful in 1562. Furthermore, the confessional conflicts in early modern Europe were shaped by Maximilian’s vigorous support for initiatives that advanced Protestant and Catholic cooperation. For the Catholic members of his family, including his own wife, Maria of Austria (1528–1603), Maximilian’s push for religious cooperation was not acceptable. His familial relationships deteriorated, and pressures from his pro-Catholic Habsburg family increased to the point where Maximilian seriously considered “taking refuge with some German Protestant princes” in 1559.<sup>20</sup> His consideration of this possibility is evidenced by a series of letters that he sent to Protestant electors in the 1550s, including Moritz and August. At the same time, the Saxon princes provided support and counsel to Maximilian regarding the religious and dynastic conflicts. In July 1560, August wrote to Maximilian to remind him of his “filial duties” and to attempt to temper relations between Maximilian and his father, Emperor Ferdinand I (1503–64), over confessional convictions.<sup>21</sup> August’s personal support of and mediation between father and son certainly seemed to help, because by 1562, Maximilian and Ferdinand were working together in governing the empire. Maximilian was engaging directly with the Protestant electors and negotiating the religious settlement.<sup>22</sup>

August’s and Maximilian’s personal relationship was essential to their individual identities and sovereignties. Personal in that they were two friends who had a history together, valued one another, and shared similar interests.

18 Christian Heinker, “Kontrollieren oder Delegieren?: zur Interaktion Kurfürst Augusts mit seinen Geheimen Räten”, in *Kurfürst August von Sachsen: ein nachreformatorische ‘Friedensfürst’ zwischen Territorium und Reich: Beiträge zur wissenschaftlichen Tagung vom 9. bis 11. Juli 2015 in Torgau und Dresden*, eds. Winfried Müller, Martina Schattkowsky, and Dirk Syndram (Dresden: Sandstein Verlag, 2017), 102. Interpreted from the German: “ließ den nunmehrigen sächsischen Kurfürsten zwischen 1564 und 1576 im Kurfürstenrat als ‘Scharnier zwischen Kaiser und Reichsständen’ und als wichtigsten ‘inneren’ Rat des Kaisers erscheinen.”

19 Fichtner, *Maximilian II*, 24–25.

20 Fichtner, *Maximilian II*, 42.

21 Fichtner, *Maximilian II*, 43. Cf. Robert Holtzmann, *Kaiser Maximilian II. bis zu Thronbesteigung, 1527–1564* (Berlin: Schwetschke und Sohn, 1903), 367–70; Viktor Bibl, *Maximilian II: der rätselhafte Kaiser* (Hellerau bei Dresden: Avalun, n. d.), 98.

22 Ernst Laubach, *Ferdinand I. als Kaiser: Politik und Herrscherauffassung des Nachfolgers Karls V.* (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2019), 574.

This mutual respect is demonstrated by the desk Maximilian gave to August depicting the succession of Holy Roman Emperors and several virtues.<sup>23</sup> The desk not only symbolised their close friendship, but also reflected the imperial bond that tied them together. The imperial imagery on the desk was meant to signal to August and visitors at the Dresden court Maximilian's role in transferring electoral power to the Albertines, thus serving as a reminder of the significance of imperial loyalty. Furthermore, the depiction of the virtues evoked desirable qualities that perhaps Maximilian saw in August and that also bound August and Maximilian in friendship.<sup>24</sup> However, the relationship between August and Maximilian was also political because both men were rulers; August was the sovereign prince of Saxony, and Maximilian was the Holy Roman Emperor. More important to note is that August and Maximilian lived at a time when early modern princely power, sovereignty, and statehood in German-speaking areas was predicated on the "personal", which included techniques and activities used to exert influence.<sup>25</sup> Thus, the Elector of Saxony had to maintain personal relations as well as a personable reputation, and also played a key role in the political dynamics of the Holy Roman Empire, particularly as the key Protestant stronghold within the empire and as a vital Protestant figure beyond the empire.<sup>26</sup>

The core socio-political characteristics of the Holy Roman Empire were rooted in social distinctions and rank; sociability, communications, and interactions formed relationships and bonds, tested loyalty and honour, were means of negotiating status, and determined who had access. As noted by historians, imperial, royal, and princely households and, by extension, courts "shape[d] [the...] socialization" and politics across societies in early modern Europe.<sup>27</sup> This sociability is certainly evident from the itinerant nature of the imperial household and court, which was key to ruling the empire;

23 Dresden Castle. Watanabe-O'Kelly, *Court Culture*, 75.

24 Watanabe-O'Kelly, *Court Culture*, 75–76.

25 Manfred Rudersdorf, "Ein neuer nachreformatorischer Fürstentypus im Konfessionsstaat des Alten Reiches", in *Kurfürst August von Sachsen: ein nachreformatorische Friedensfürst' zwischen Territorium und Reich: Beiträge zur wissenschaftlichen Tagung vom 9. bis 11. Juli 2015 in Torgau und Dresden*, eds. Winfried Müller, Martina Schattkowsky, and Dirk Syndram (Dresden: Sandstein Verlag, 2017), 15.

26 David Gehring, "Elizabeth's Correspondence with the Protestant Princes of the Empire, 1558–1586", in *Elizabeth I's Foreign Correspondence: Letters, Rhetoric, and Politics*, eds. Carlo M. Bajetta, Guillaume Coatalen, and Jonathan Gibson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 196. Cf. E. I. Kouri, *England and the Attempts to Form a Protestant Alliance in the Late 1560s: A Case Study in European Diplomacy* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1981).

27 Jeroen Duindam, "Introduction", in *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires: A Global Perspective*, eds. Jeroen Duindam, Tülay Artan, and Metin Kunt (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 1.

like travel and entries into cities that hosted the Imperial Diets. However, “informal interactions” of activities would not have operated according to the rules of formal and public spheres. Therefore, personal visits or meetings and informal interactions that were not visible or that did not involve formal institutions of government or imperial states aided individuals in exercising agency and influence within the empire. Alternatively, formal institutions and groups also created socio-political bonds. For instance, the *Reichskreis*, or imperial circles, were composed of ten legislative, regional groups, in which were electors, princes, and town authorities who counselled each other, contributed to the development of the imperial military, and implemented laws. The *Reichskreis* were also based on personal bonds and fealty to the emperor.

Saxony was a political force because of Dresden’s iron and copper mines, which were instrumental for provisioning the imperial armoury, making Saxony a wealthy territory. The abundance of resources, especially for armoury, in Saxony was unique; “the like [was] not to be found in anie other place of Europe” in the sixteenth century.<sup>28</sup> As the richest man in the empire,<sup>29</sup> Elector August, along with his equally influential wife, Electress Anna of Saxony (1532–85),<sup>30</sup> was a key figure for religious cooperation; he presided over confessional politics and the regulation of religious practice in the northern Protestant areas of the empire. In addition to supervising political and economic administration, legal reforms, provision of regional security, and martial support, August was one of the principal royal electors that determined who would be the King of the Romans and/or the Holy Roman Emperor.<sup>31</sup> August played a significant role in supporting the election of Maximilian as emperor after his father’s death in July 1564. It is difficult to determine whether August voted for Maximilian because he was the right candidate or because of their close relationship. Consequently, Maximilian’s visit to Dresden in 1564 certainly warrants further scrutiny. The timing is crucial for understanding the nature of the visit and for considering whether the visit was personal, political, or both, especially given the fact that the visit revolved around a hunt. The overlap of the public and private realms has

28 Daniel Rogers, “The State of Germany”, British Library, Additional MS 48062, ff. 193–202.

29 Rogers, “State of Germany”, f. 200.

30 Katrin Keller, *Kurfürstin Anna von Sachsen (1532–1585)* (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 2010); Dustin M. Neighbors and Natacha Klein Käfer, “Zones of Privacy in Letters between Women of Power: Elizabeth I of England and Anna of Saxony”, *Royal Studies Journal* 9:1 (2022): 60–89.

31 Rudersdorf, “Ein neuer nach reformatorischer”, 9–10; Joachim Whaley, *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire. Volume 1: From Maximilian I to the Peace of Westphalia, 1493–1648* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

often been associated with the personal or private recreation of sovereigns.<sup>32</sup> Did this visit and the private discussions that occurred affect Maximilian and August's ongoing political relationship or the wider political culture of the Holy Roman Empire?

Studying Maximilian's visit and the organisation of the hunt offers the opportunity not only to explore how activities like the hunt, facilitated the interplay of politics and notions of privacy within European court culture, but also to reassess the traditional boundaries of the public and private divide. The very nature of hunting and its required practices often functioned as a political vehicle or an environment that enabled agency and cultivated politics through the private realm, revealing a "series of rival foci of authority and influence, where the decisions taken touched the lives of every subject".<sup>33</sup> To understand how the activity of hunting was a vehicle for personal relations and political privacy, we must grasp the nuanced culture of hunting and its pivotal role in court life (Illustration 10.2).

The practice and pursuit of hunting was a common activity and necessary skill entrenched in the various courts across early modern Europe. In a broad sense, hunting was a natural substitute for warfare, a mode of military training, a symbol of chivalric culture, and a form of exercise that was an acceptable alternative to idleness. However, the art of hunting was a complex endeavour; there were different types of hunting, and hunting also had myriad purposes. Paradoxically, hunting was rooted in the public/private divide due to how many individuals were involved and at which point they participated. The public/private duality of hunting enhanced its coded and ambiguous nature, especially since a specific set of skills, knowledge, and

32 William Mahan, "Peregrine Pleasures: The Sport of Falconry, Lovers, and Self-Identity in Medieval German Literature", in *Pleasure and Leisure in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: Cultural-Historical Perspectives on Toys, Games, and Entertainment*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin: De Gruyter 2019), 333–35. In the "Introduction" (p. 33), Classen even states that "private activities", including recreational activities, from card games to hunting, "reveal much more about the basic sentiments and feelings prevalent at a certain time". Cf. Albrecht Classen, *Pleasure and Leisure in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: Cultural-Historical Perspectives on Toys, Games, and Entertainment* (Berlin: De Gruyter 2019), 33. At the same time, Johan Verberckmoes has observed: "In their more private moments of play and fun, [sovereigns and] court members sought a rapprochement with everyday pleasures [...] and in doing so did not imperil but rather strengthened their commitment to the diverse cosmopolis of the court." Johan Verberckmoes, "Games, Jesters and Jokes", in *Early Modern Court Culture*, ed. Erin Griffey (London: Routledge, 2022), 545–46. See also Alessandro Arcangeli, *Recreation in the Renaissance: Attitudes toward Leisure and Pastimes in European Culture, c. 1425–1675* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 98–99.

33 John Adamson, "Introduction", in *The Princely Courts of Europe, 1500–1750*, ed. John Adamson (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1999), 41.





10.2 Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Hunting near Hartenfels Castle*, c. 1540, Oil, originally on wood, transferred to masonite. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland. Printed with permission under the Cleveland Museum of Art Open Access Initiative (CC0 1.0).

experiences was necessary to navigate the multitude of hunting elements: weapons, animals used for the hunt and animals being chased, physical strength, hunting methods (par force, hawking, etc.), and environmental spaces. Moreover, although hunting was a widespread early modern activity, the particular practices, deployment, and meanings of hunting varied across early modern Europe and beyond. Thus, it is important to analyse hunting comparatively and within distinct geographic and cultural contexts in order to understand the extent to which it stressed “the structural and cultural differences between courts”.<sup>34</sup>

Hunting occurred in both the public and private spheres. Within the public sphere, hunting commonly functioned as a martial ritual, a spectacle of status, and a visual and material display of power that required and depended on the royal and noble courts. Hunting for survival and hunting for sport were rooted in meanings and performance that were crucial for people engaged in hunting to “justify their existence and order their actions”.<sup>35</sup> The

34 Hannah Smith, “Court Studies and the Courts of Early Modern Europe”, *The Historical Journal*, 49:4 (2006): 1229–38.

35 Clifford Geertz, “Centers, Kings, and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolics of Power”, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1982), 124.

performative aspects of hunting was particularly evident when hunting occurred on a stand or viewing platform while animals, primarily deer, were herded past the ruler. Alternatively, hunting within the private sphere often took place in restricted or private physical environments (e.g., enclosures, parks, and forests), not only because its organisation and personnel were tied to the royal household, but also because it was a form of personal recreation or withdrawal from the demands of government and court. In addition, hunting in the private sphere was based on degrees of privacy as it was rarely a solitary activity. Hunting could be conducted with a few people, most likely hunting staff, or in a small, intimate group consisting of a few close courtiers and family. Par force hunting involved intense pursuit of an animal on horseback. With this type of hunting, there would have been only a few people to maintain the chase for a successful kill. However, for the most part, hunting within the private sphere had very little to do with the ceremony and spectacle of hunting. This is evident by the fact that August hunted frequently with his wife in remote environments that were “very deep and impassable” for large entourages.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, early modern hunting consisted of a hierarchical “front stage” aspect, yet simultaneously had a “back stage” aspect that was intimate and personal, whereby each individual had a distinct function and role in the hunt.<sup>37</sup>

The very nature of hunting was informal and ephemeral because it did not occur in a structured environment with specific and expected actions; that is, its environment offered a contrast to the palaces where formal politics and the ceremony of diplomacy unfolded. The ephemerality of the hunt stemmed from numerous informal elements—from the various skills and knowledge of the people involved, which types of hunting that were pursued, to the different hunting practices that were used and the unpredictability of animal movements. Hunting was mobile, unreliable, and fluid. Thus, the ephemerality and informality of the hunt created moments of closeness and opportunities for private and personal conversations, while it also fostered a collaboration and cooperation dynamic that added to the camaraderie between huntsmen and increased the personal sociability of the hunt. Accordingly, echoing Duindam’s sociability model, the self,

36 Karl von Weber, *Anna Churfürstin zu Sachsen geboren aus Königlichem Stamm zu Dänemark* (Leipzig: Verlag von Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1865), 237. Interpreted from the German: “da die Wege dahin sehr tief und unwegsam”.

37 The use of “front stage” and “back stage” in this sentence is a reference to Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger’s distinctions for the public and private spheres of the court that are outlined in her chapter included in this volume. See chapter 6, “Privacy at Court? Considering the Public/Private Dichotomy”, 73–93.

household, community, and state heuristically intersected through the sociability and activity of hunting.<sup>38</sup> Yet traditional early modern court studies have generally trivialised hunting as “so common that it tends to be acknowledged and then ignored” and “construed [it] too narrowly [...] [as] simply an aspect of elite behavior to be included in discussions of everyday life in Europe.”<sup>39</sup> The hunt, as Neighbors and others have argued elsewhere, constituted a stage that blended the personal with the political and that offered an arena in which political privacy played out.<sup>40</sup> That is, hunting reinforces Stollberg-Rilinger’s emphasis on how the front stage/back stage dichotomy contains the visible and non-visible, lead actors and supporting individuals, where “the secret back stage allowed for [...] consultation, discussion, and even controversy.”<sup>41</sup>

Maximilian II arrived in Dresden on 10 January 1564, and he remained at the electoral court until 14 January.<sup>42</sup> During his visit, August entertained Maximilian with a banquet and multiple days of hunting. Although it is not clear why, other German princes and noblemen were also in Dresden for the banquet honouring Maximilian and celebrating his visit.<sup>43</sup> August began organising the Emperor’s hunting excursions in December 1563, including arrangements that catered to Maximilian’s hunting practices based on August’s hunting “encounter[s] with him [the Emperor]”.<sup>44</sup> It is not surprising that August would have had direct knowledge of how Maximilian hunted

38 See Bruun and Nørgaard’s use of Duindam’s model in chapter one of this volume. Duindam’s model of sociability is based on the chapter divisions of his book. Cf. Jeroen Duindam, *Dynasties: A Global History of Power, 1300–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 7–8.

39 Thomas T. Allsen, *The Royal Hunt in Eurasian History* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 7.

40 Dustin M. Neighbors, “The Performativity of Female Power and Public Participation through Elizabethan Royal Progresses”, *Liminalities* 18:1 (2022): 118–75; Dustin M. Neighbors, “Elizabeth I, Huntress of England: Private Politics, Diplomacy and Courtly Relations Cultivated through Hunting”, *The Court Historian* 28:1 (2023): 49–80. See also Luc Duerloo, “The Hunt in the Performance of Archducal Rule: Endurance and Revival in the Habsburg Netherlands in the Seventeenth Century”, *Renaissance Quarterly*, 69 (2016): 116–17. Duerloo’s important work illuminates how Dutch hunting environments were theatres, a “performative sphere” that was political, a component of “the economy of rule”, and a space of verbal and non-verbal communication that enhanced the performance of power.

41 Stollberg-Rilinger, “Privacy at Court?”, 87.

42 Syvende Aargang, *Folkekalender for Danmark* (Copenhagen: C. C. Lose & Delbauco’s Forlag, 1858), 67.

43 Anton Weck, *Der chur-fürstlichen sächsischen weiteruffenen Residentz- und Haupt-Vestung Dresden Beschreib: und Vorstellung* (Nuremberg: Verlegung Johann Hoffmanns, 1680). HStA Dresden, Loc. 10735.

44 HStA Dresden, Loc. 10735/01, f. 2v: “als ist unnser begenenn himit”.

since they had previously participated in hunting “parties” together.<sup>45</sup> Still, the question remains as to why Maximilian was visiting Dresden? It would be unusual for Maximilian to leave his palace and court in Vienna just to journey all the way to Dresden for a purely social visit. Thus, it is important to examine the possible context for political motivations for the trip.

The timing of the visit certainly suggests that it was politically motivated. Although Maximilian became King of the Romans with his election in 1562, there was still no consensus among the electors about installing him as the elected heir of the Holy Roman Empire.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, Emperor Ferdinand’s health was in decline, and Maximilian was taking on more sovereign responsibilities.<sup>47</sup> The uncertainty of Maximilian’s status and the slight shift in imperial power sheds contextual light on the visit, which can be viewed as an attempt to secure or ensure August’s electoral support. This strategy would not have been out of the ordinary because previously Maximilian had “secretly solicited” electoral support in his election as the King of Germany.<sup>48</sup> Additionally, the war between Denmark and Sweden, which had begun in August 1563, was becoming increasingly problematic, as several German princes were involved and there were conflicts that disrupted the stability and peace of the empire.<sup>49</sup> Importantly, August was a key figure in the war, in a number of ways. First, he was providing support to his brother-in-law, the Danish king, Frederick II. Second, given his connections to the Danish king, Maximilian’s father, Emperor Ferdinand I, directed Maximilian to meet with August to persuade him to oversee another peace talk with the Scandinavian rulers.<sup>50</sup>

Based on these historical contexts, it is safe to deduce that August’s planned hunts provided the communication space and informal setting that would create the necessary opportunities for privacy in which these political matters could be discussed. August’s agency is demonstrated not only through the organisation of the hunt to indulge Maximilian, which can be interpreted as August reinforcing his status, but also through counselling

45 Fichtner, *Maximilian II*, 23.

46 Fichtner, *Maximilian II*, 45–47.

47 Fichtner, *Maximilian II*, 38; Heinker, “Kontrollieren oder Delegieren?”, 110.

48 Fichtner, *Maximilian II*, 24.

49 Austrian State Archives, Hof-, Haus- und Statsarchiv, Vienna (OHHStA Vienna), Dänemark 1 Konv. 1560–63, ff. 16–18v, 1 December 1563. Cf. Jason Lavery, *Germany’s Northern Challenge: The Holy Roman Empire and the Scandinavian Struggle for the Baltic, 1563–1576* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 52–54.

50 Lavery, *Germany’s Northern Challenge*, 54. It should be noted that although the timing of the letters suggest that the Dresden visit served as this meeting, it is not explicitly clear that this was the case.

Maximilian regarding the imperial election and the war. At the same time, the hunt enabled Maximilian to exercise agency to influence August to support the imperial election in his favour and to get August to agree to participate in the peace talks. To reinforce this notion that the personal and intimate nature of the hunt facilitated agency and politics, there are two comparative incidents linked to August's hunting activities. The first incident occurred in 1571, when Duke Ulrich von Mecklenburg (1527–1613) did not want to participate in a planned courtly hunt due to a dispute involving his brother and August. Through a letter from August's wife, Anna of Saxony, it was conveyed that Mecklenburg should participate in the hunt as it would provide an opportunity for them to resolve the conflict.<sup>51</sup> The second incident emphasises the degree to which hunting was a personal and private affair. In 1565, Frederick II of Denmark wrote to August expressing thanks for some information and advice on the "art of hunting" and noted that the hunt was shared between them alone.<sup>52</sup> Similar to how hunting gifts and the subjects of hunting were cultural mediators for engaging, establishing bonds, and strengthening diplomatic and personal relationships, the activity of hunting functioned as a social, cultural, and political mediator.

Following Maximilian's stay in Dresden, several significant events took place that reflected the public consequences of August's and Maximilian's private meeting. First, upon Ferdinand's death in July 1564, Maximilian was immediately elected Holy Roman Emperor. This outcome gives credence to the fact that the Dresden meeting, and the hunting activities, contributed to securing August's electoral support. Second, at the Reichstag zu Augsburg in 1566, August and his court were "greeted with dramatic ceremony", whereby August's entry (prominently featuring his wife, Anna) that illustrated his "social and political capital".<sup>53</sup> Third, and finally, during the 1566 Reichstag, August was not only formally conferred the Electorate of Saxony, but he was also invested with the office of *Reicherzmarschall* (Imperial High Marshall).<sup>54</sup> These outcomes of Maximilian's stay at the Dresden court demonstrate

51 HStA Dresden, Kopial, ff. 137r–139v, 183r.

52 Weber, *Anna Churfürstin*, 245. Interpreted from the German: "der Jagdkunst [...] wollen die für uns allein behalten und Niemand offenbaren".

53 Katrin Keller, "Die Fürstin und das Reich: Anna von Sachsen in der kursächsischen Politik", in *Kurfürst August von Sachsen: ein nachreformatorische 'Friedensfürst' zwischen Territorium und Reich: Beiträge zur wissenschaftlichen Tagung vom 9. bis 11. Juli 2015 in Torgau und Dresden*, eds. Winfried Müller, Martina Schattkowsky, and Dirk Syndram (Dresden: Sandstein Verlag, 2017), 63. Interpreted from the German: "um soziales und politisches Kapital eindrucksvoll in Szene zu setzen".

54 Watanabe-O'Kelly, *Court Culture*, 15.

how the combined use of agency and privacy as analytical lenses can help us to uncover new perspectives on German court culture and new insights about August and Maximilian. Such new perspectives enable researchers to move forward in assessing and understanding how the nuances of hunting, relationship building, and politics merged to reveal the political privacy or backstage politics of the early modern German courts.

### **Influence and Interference in the Queen's Private Sphere: The Case of Joan of Navarre**

The disruption of privacy or the private sphere can threaten an individual's agency. This threat is evident when we consider the situation of Joan of Navarre, (c. 1368–1437), first Duchess of Brittany and then Queen of England.<sup>55</sup> A queen, as the most prominent and visible woman in the land, arguably operated largely in the public sphere, leading the women of the court through daily rituals and participating in public spectacles and ceremonial. Yet her household provided another sphere, a space of politicised privacy where she could operate within a network of individuals tied to her through personal connections, bonds of service, and loyalty. Her household retinue served her in a public sense, representing her at court and in ceremonial settings. Some members also attended her in the more private and intimate setting of her quarters—waking her in the morning, helping her to wash and dress, and tending to her during periods of illness. These individuals who formed a part of the queen's innermost household were trusted individuals, many of whom were with the queen for long periods, and in the case of a foreign queen like Joan of Navarre, they may have left their homelands and families to accompany the queen and serve her abroad. The queen depended on these individuals to serve her well and loyally and to keep the secrets of her inner sanctum. However, many of the individuals closest to her and within her private sphere were foreigners, which contributed to rising concerns in the English court that these courtiers were taking advantage of their privileged access to the queen as a vehicle for foreign influence.

Joan left her homeland of Navarre in 1386, when she became the Duchess of Brittany as the third wife of Duke Jean IV. She spent over 15 years at the Breton court, first as duchess and then, after her husband died in

55 This case study is drawn from a wider biography of Joan of Navarre. See Elena Woodacre, *Joan of Navarre: Infanta, Duchess, Queen, Witch?* (London: Routledge, 2022).

November 1399, as regent for her son Jean V. In January 1403, she finally left the duchy to marry Henry IV of England.

During Joan's time in Brittany, she built up an inner circle of individuals with whom she retained long-term connections over several decades and major changes in her life. Many of them left their homelands and moved with Joan as she transitioned from being a Navarrese infanta to a Breton duchess and then to an English queen. Indeed, one even followed her through both changes—her squire known as 'Bolyte', or Guillem Arnaut de Saut, who served Joan in Navarre before she married Jean IV, went with her to Brittany, and moved again with her to England, serving her for more than 20 years.

Interestingly, the bulk of her inner circle comprised several married couples who both served in Joan's household—the women as damsels or ladies-in-waiting and the men in various important roles: John Periaunt and his wife Jeanne, Nicholas Alderwiche and his wife Alice (possibly Constance), and Antony Rys and his wife Peronelle Alderwiche, who was very likely related to Nicolas, possibly his daughter. Another possible addition to this list of couples is Joan's esquire Perot de Gruer and his wife Antonyne Davyar, another damsel or lady-in-waiting. While it was hardly unusual for married couples to be in service to the same royal figure or at the same court, this phenomenon is important because it gave these "power couples" twofold access to Joan's private sphere. The women had intimate physical access to Joan as those who waited on her, while the men dealt with some of her most important affairs, both personal and political.

Rys, Alderwiche, and Periaunt had all served Joan's first husband, Jean IV, in various roles. Either before or after his death in 1399, they transferred their service to Joan and played important roles in her transformation from duchess to queen. Joan's negotiations with Henry IV for a possible marriage after she was widowed were conducted with considerable discretion and secrecy, as they feared (rightly, it turned out) that her Valois cousins at the French court and the Breton nobles would oppose the match. Thus, Joan chose those members of her inner circle who had her complete trust and confidence to carry out these delicate diplomatic negotiations. Antony Rys played a particularly significant role. He was Joan's primary envoy, travelling to England for the negotiations in November 1401 and acting as Joan's representative in the proxy ceremony in April 1402.<sup>56</sup> Both Alderwiche and John Periaunt were noted as Joan's esquires who played a role in these

56 Michael Jones, "Between France and England: Jeanne de Navarre, Duchess of Brittany and Queen of England (1386–1437)", in *Between France and England: Politics, Power and Society in Late Medieval Brittany* (Aldershot: Variorum, 2003) 10; Dom Hyacinthe Morice, *Memoires pour*

negotiations; Alderwiche may have been responsible for taking gifts of jewellery to the duchess during the royal courtship, for example.<sup>57</sup>

The success of the negotiations resulted in Joan's elevation to queen consort. When she left Brittany in 1403, all three men were given places in the English royal household, and their wives became ladies-in-waiting to a queen, retaining their place in her inner circle. Nor were they the only ones to follow their mistress across the channel; Joan brought with her a large host of servitors, included the aforementioned Navarrese squire Guillem de Saut (or Boloyte), Marie Sainte (her chief lady-in-waiting), Perot de Gruer and his wife Antoyne, her squire Berart de Montferrand, and many other servants.

Another important individual joined her English household directly from Navarre, her cousin Carlos de Beaumont—an experienced diplomat who had served as *alferez* under both her father Carlos II of Navarre and her brother Carlos III.<sup>58</sup> Beaumont became Chamberlain of Joan's household, enhancing Carlos III's connection to the English court and its ruler through his sister. The Navarrese king could thus influence Joan's inner circle by having his own "right-hand man" there. As chamberlain, Beaumont was in charge of the workings of Joan's private sphere because he was effectively the head of her household. While his duties did not afford the same intimate physical access as the ladies-in-waiting possessed, he would have had considerable access to her person both within and outside Joan's private sphere. Beaumont's important role in her household, coupled with his close familial connection, guaranteed that he would likely become a trusted confidant—or, at the very least, be able to closely observe her and the workings of the English royal household so that he could send valuable information on the English court back to Navarre.

However, the arrival of so many foreign individuals with the new queen—from her intimates to washerwomen—triggered a response in the English court that reflected concerns about the expenses of the royal court and wider political concerns about the number of foreigners at court. Within a year of the queen's arrival, Parliament moved to expel foreigners from

*servir de preuves a l'histoire ecclesiastique et civile de Bretagne* (Paris: Charles Osmont, 1742), vol. 1, cols. 83–84.

57 Alan Rogers, "The Royal Household of Henry IV" (PhD diss., University of Nottingham, 1966), 579, 642.

58 The role of *alferez* is difficult to directly translate into English. Perhaps the closest meaning is "lieutenant," but not in a strictly military sense. Beaumont's role was largely that of a diplomatic envoy and was intensely political, although he did engage in military engagements on behalf of Navarre and their allies. For more on Beaumont's background and relationship with Joan, see Woodacre, *Joan of Navarre*, 18–20 and 209–16.



the court, stating “especially all French, Bretons, Lombards, Italians and Navarrese, whether they are schismatics or not, and whether they are men or women, should be removed from the households of the king our lord and of my most honoured lady the queen”.<sup>59</sup> However, the queen’s inner circle was exempted from this decree:

for the greater comfort, benefit and well-being of my lady the queen and of my ladies her daughters, it was agreed by the king and the lords in parliament that, besides the said Marie Sainte, Nicholas Alderwich and John Puryan, and their wives, the persons named below could also remain in England: that is, Sir Charles de Navarre Montferant, Sir Guillem Arnaud, Damoiselle Peronelle, two ladies in waiting, one mistress, two esquires, a nurse, a lady in waiting for the said daughters of the queen, and Antoinne Rys, who may go to the king’s household and return from there, but he should not be continually resident in the aforesaid household.<sup>60</sup>

These members of Joan’s inner circle were amply rewarded for their services, beyond just access to the queen’s private sphere and lucrative court posts. In August 1405, Rys was awarded a grant for life of £100 a year from the issues of the manor of Petworth in Sussex.<sup>61</sup> His wife Peronelle Alderwiche was granted 100 marks a year on “the corn, and other goods, chattels and estovers” from the same manor in November 1405.<sup>62</sup> Also in November, Periaunt was awarded a grant of lands in Nottinghamshire worth 40 marks a year, and two months following, in January 1406, Nicholas Alderwiche and his wife gained an estate in Essex.<sup>63</sup> Perot de Gruer and Antonye Dayvar were also granted an annuity of 20 marks in March 1405, and Berart de Montferrand was granted a £20 annuity in the same year.<sup>64</sup> The richest rewards went to

59 “Henry IV: January 1404”, in *Parliament Rolls of Medieval England*, eds. Chris Given-Wilson, Paul Brand, Seymour Phillips, Mark Ormrod, Geoffrey Martin, Anne Curry, and Rosemary Horrox (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005), <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/parliament-rolls-medieval/january-1404>.

60 “Henry IV: January 1404”.

61 *Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Henry IV. Volume 3: 1405–1408* (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1907), 1 August 1405, 36. The National Archives, London (henceforth TNA), Special Collections: Ancient Petitions (henceforth SC), SC 8/137/6835.

62 *Calendar of the Patent Rolls, Henry IV, vol. 3*, 1 November 1405, 103.

63 For the Petworth grant, see TNA SC 8/255/12744 and *Calendar of the Patent Rolls, Henry IV, vol. 3*, 1 November 1405, 103. For Alderwiche, see *Calendar of the Patent Rolls, Henry IV, vol. 3*, 4 January 1406, 110.

64 For the grant to Perot and Antonye, see *Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Henry V. Volume 2: 1416–1422* (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1911),

Beaumont, the queen's cousin and chamberlain; in 1404 Beaumont and his son Charlot were confirmed as the holders of the "baylie", or bailiwick, of Labourd for their lifetimes, and in 1405, Beaumont was granted an impressive annuity of 250 marks a year from the king.<sup>65</sup>

The substantial rewards and clear marks of favour given to these foreigners, who could be seen as monopolising access to the queen's private sphere, triggered another backlash against foreign members of the royal household. This time, the queen's intimates topped a list delivered to the steward of the king's household of all the individuals that the Commons wanted expelled from the realm. First on the list were Antony Rys and his wife; Perot Gruer and his wife were also on the list, as was Nicholas Alderwiche. The Queen's secretary, Robynet, a Breton cook, and even her laundresses were listed. Of the 44 names on the list, the majority were from Joan's household, not the king's.<sup>66</sup>

Previous analysis of these expulsions has focused on the political tensions of the time, which were certainly a factor in the seemingly xenophobic attacks as were the considerable financial difficulties of the royal household, which had been greatly exacerbated by the arrival of the queen and her large retinue of foreign servants. However, an aspect of these expulsions that has not been explored is their impact on the queen and her private sphere. If we look at the queen's inner circle, we can see the impact of the 1404 and 1406 expulsions in terms of both departures and strategies employed to circumvent the purges. A few key personnel seem to have left after 1406: Marie Sainte (Joan's chief damsel), Boloyte (or Guillem Arnaut, her long-serving Navarrese squire), and Perot de Greuer and his wife Antonyne (one of Joan's damsels). These individuals no longer appear in the records, indicating that they had left the realm, or at least Joan's service. Antony Rys and his wife Peronelle Alderwiche also left Joan's service and returned to Brittany to serve Joan's son, Jean V. Rys became Jean V's *maître d'hôtel*, and Peronelle transitioned into the household of the duchess, Jeanne de Valois, to serve once again as a lady-in-waiting. In recognition of their service to both Joan and Jean V, Rys and Peronelle were granted lands and rents in the Guerande, which

21 March 1405, 501. For Montferrand, see The Gascon Rolls Project (1317–1468), <http://www.gasconrolls.org/en/> (henceforth GSR), Document C61/110/29, 22 April 1405.

65 See TNA E 404/20/196.

66 "Henry IV: March 1406, Part 1", in *Parliament Rolls of Medieval England*, ed. Chris Given-Wilson, Paul Brand, Seymour Phillips, Mark Ormrod, Geoffrey Martin, Anne Curry, and Rosemary Horrox (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005), <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/parliament-rolls-medieval/march-1406-pt-1>.

were part of Joan's dower holdings, in September 1414.<sup>67</sup> While the loss of key members of her private sphere, whom Joan had entrusted with her most delicate and significant missions and kept close to her was surely difficult for Joan, Rys and his wife were able to continue their successful careers as courtiers despite the loss of their prominent positions at the English court, thanks to the continued patronage of Joan and the ducal dynasty of Montfort in Brittany.

However, some members of Joan's inner circle managed to survive the purges and stay by her side, including the Periaunt and Alderwiche couples. Both Jeanne Periaunt and Constance Alderwiche are on a list of the queen's ladies from 1408, indicating that they had remained in Joan's private sphere. Further patronage from the crown solidified their position in England, giving them greater protection from expulsion. The Periaunts were given papers of denisation, and around the same time that they were naturalised, the couple and their son Thomas were granted lands in the honour of Peveler that were valued at £10 per annum.<sup>68</sup> Nicholas Alderwiche was given a prominent post as Sheriff of Lincoln, and his lands in Essex were reconfirmed, which seems to have given him additional security. John Periaunt appears to have maintained a long-term connection to Joan; in household records from 1427–28, he is noted as her Master of the Horse and was given a gift of cloth and an annuity of £5 from the manor of Langley Marish.<sup>69</sup>

In 1404, Berart de Montferrand was listed as an exception to the expulsion of foreigners, and he appears to have survived the 1406 purge by making himself useful to the entire royal family for several decades. Henry IV used him as an envoy to the Breton court in 1410, and he later worked for Henry's son, John, Duke of Bedford for a considerable period.<sup>70</sup> However, he never completely severed his connection to Joan, as we subsequently find Berart working as a trusted go-between in a dispute over Joan's Breton dower; there are multiple records of payments from Jean V of Brittany to Berart, compensating him for journeys to negotiate with the queen.<sup>71</sup> Montferrand

67 Archives de Bretagne, *Lettres et mandements de Jean V, Duc de Bretagne de 1407 à 1419. Volume 5*, ed. René Blanchard (Nantes: Société des Bibliophiles Bretons, 1890), no. 2658, 63.

68 *Calendar of the Patent Rolls, Henry IV. Volume 4: 1409–1413*, ed. A. E. Stamp (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1932), 19 December 1411, 368 and 28 December 1412, 460.

69 See TNA E 101/69/3/374 and John Bugge, "Queen Joan: primus compotus Johannis Bugge (Household Accounts 1427–28)", Society of Antiquaries, London, SAL/MS/216.

70 Jenny Stratford, *The Bedford Inventories: The Worldly Goods of John, Duke of Bedford, Regent of France (1389–1435)* (London: Society of Antiquaries, 1993), 414–17.

71 Archives de Bretagne, *Lettres et mandements de Jean V, duc de Bretagne de 1420 à 1431. Volume 6*, ed. René Blanchard (Nantes: Société des Bibliophiles Bretons, 1892), no. 1876, 29 December 1429 and no. 1880, 6 January 1430.

reaped considerable rewards, including annuities, grants of lands and sizable monetary gifts from all of his royal patrons, for his lengthy service to the crown.<sup>72</sup> Thus, Periaunt, Alderwiche, and Montferrand demonstrate successful survival strategies. While all retained a connection to Joan, they also secured their positions at court by taking on new roles outside of Joan's private sphere or inner household; they served new royal masters, and Periaunt obtained naturalisation—ensuring that they would be less vulnerable to future court purges.

Although Joan did not lose her entire inner circle, losing those whom she trusted and who had been part of her private sphere since her days in Brittany (or even Navarre), like Marie Sainte, Boloyte, Antony Rys and his wife Peronelle, would have had a profound impact on the queen, leaving her more isolated at the English court. To combat this isolation, Joan sought to rebuild her inner circle with new people, especially more Englishmen and -women, to serve in her private sphere. A good example of 'new blood' for her inner circle is Isabel Thorley, a lady-in-waiting who made her first appearance in the records for Joan's household in 1408 and who retained a close connection with Joan for at least 20 years.<sup>73</sup> Moreover, in an echo of the couples who had previously been important in Joan's inner circle, other members of Isabel's family may have also served the queen across the following years, including Agnes Thorley, another lady-in-waiting. Joan also co-opted servitors who had connections to the households of her predecessors in order to replenish her own private sphere, such as the ladies-in-waiting Alice Mauley and Agnes Hervy, who appear in the aforementioned 1408 records. Agnes's relative Marie was a damsel of Philippa of Hainault, while Alice Mauley had served Anne of Bohemia.<sup>74</sup>

Yet while Joan's private sphere had become more English and had been reinforced with some protection for the foreign individuals who remained in England after the purges of 1404 and 1406, her household was still subject to attacks and interference. Shortly after the battle of Agincourt, the heightened political tensions caused by the renewed conflict between England and

72 See Archives départementales de Loire-Atlantique, Nantes (henceforth ADLA), ADLA E 152–20. *Calendar of the Patent Rolls, Henry IV, vol. 3*, 27 January 1408, 395; *Calendar of the Patent Rolls, Henry IV, vol. 4*, 12 March 1410, 182, 9 January 1410, 234, 12 August 1411, 304 (noting Joan's letter patent of 16 May 1411), and 24 January 1412, 367.

73 TNA E 101/407/4.

74 I would like to thank Caroline Dunn for her insights on the Mauley and Hervy connections to the households of Philippa of Hainault and Anne of Bohemia from her work on ladies-in-waiting in medieval England. See also Caroline Dunn, "All the Queen's Ladies? Philippa of Hainault's Female Attendants", *Medieval Prosopography* 31 (2016): 171–06.

France led to more concern over the foreigners who remained in Joan's service. In 1416, there was another call for a household purge, which appears to refer to the remaining foreign members of Joan's household, for instance Alderwiche, Periaunt, and their wives:

Yet recently, notwithstanding this ordinance, many Bretons, having no regard for the aforesaid ordinance and penalty, have returned to the realm, and some are dwelling about the queen's person in her household, and others very close to the said household and elsewhere within the realm, in order to hear, know and learn the secrets of the realm and reveal them to the Bretons, who are the greatest enemies of your realm, and in order to remove the money and treasure from the said realm, to the great harm of the king and the great damage of all the realm.<sup>75</sup>

An even more serious attack on the queen was to come, however. In 1419, Joan was accused of plotting to cause the "death and destruction of our said lord the king in the most evil and terrible manner imaginable."<sup>76</sup> While Joan was never subject to trial for this supposed crime, which some chronicles opined included witchcraft, she was placed under house arrest, and her household was cut back—all of which had a significant impact on her private sphere.<sup>77</sup> Although as A. R. Myers has noted, Joan was kept comfortably in her confinement, much of which took place at her former residence of Leeds Castle, she was under the supervision of a custodian, and she was largely isolated from court and nearly completely restricted to her private sphere.<sup>78</sup> Due to the enhanced survival of records from this period and the more static nature of her household during her confinement, we can observe marked consistency in servants, particularly her ladies-in-waiting, the group who had the most intimate and private access to the queen.

Joan appears to have had four ladies-in-waiting during her confinement; they are named in three surviving documents as the aforementioned Isabel

75 "Henry V: March 1416", in *Parliament Rolls of Medieval England*, eds. Chris Given-Wilson, Paul Brand, Seymour Phillips, Mark Ormrod, Geoffrey Martin, Anne Curry, and Rosemary Horrox (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005), <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/parliament-rolls-medieval/march-1416>.

76 "Henry V: October 1419", in *Parliament Rolls of Medieval England*, eds. Chris Given-Wilson, Paul Brand, Seymour Phillips, Mark Ormrod, Geoffrey Martin, Anne Curry, and Rosemary Horrox (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005), <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/parliament-rolls-medieval/october-1419>.

77 Anon., *The Chronicles of London*, ed. Charles L. Kingsford (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), 73.

78 A. R. Myers, "The Captivity of a Royal Witch: The Household Accounts of Queen Joan of Navarre, 1419–21", *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 24:2 (1940): 263–84.

Thorley and Agnes Thorley, Dame Margaret Trumpyngton, and Katherine Wharton.<sup>79</sup> Since Joan had had at least seven ladies-in-waiting in 1408, when Isabel Thorley was first noted in her household records, her damsels had been scaled back in number. Indeed, the queen's household shrank still further over the course of her confinement, from nearly 35 in 1419 to just over 20 by 1422. The smaller size of Joan's household, and particularly her damsels, would have given her private sphere an even more intimate feel. Five women now spent a great deal of time together, with little of the normal ceremonial and few of the social events of court to interrupt their companionship.

Perhaps because of this enforced intimacy, the women who formed part of her private sphere during this difficult time continued to remain close to Joan. The rewards that Joan bestowed upon them demonstrate her appreciation for their loyalty and service in challenging circumstances, or indeed could indicate how this long period of enforced privacy gave them influence with the queen. After Joan was released from confinement in 1422, she ensured that an annuity previously made to Isabel in 1408 was reconfirmed.<sup>80</sup> In records of Joan's household expenses from 1427–28, both Isabel Thorley and Margaret Trumpyngton were given cloth, and Margaret was also given an annuity of £18 4s 8d from Joan's fee farm of the city of Portsmouth.<sup>81</sup> These account books demonstrate that after her release, Joan did not increase the household back to its previous size before 1419 and certainly not anywhere near the scale that it had been during her days as queen consort. However, her household was targeted once again in 1426 by a petition that noted "the great damage to the king and his subjects because of the foreigners dwelling in England with Queen Joan".<sup>82</sup> This petition demonstrates that even when Joan was an elderly dowager living largely outside the court milieu and in a more private setting at her favourite manor houses of Kings Langley and Havering-atte-Bower, her household was still seen as a potentially threatening den of foreigners, and the agency and influence that foreign courtiers might possess in the privacy of Joan's country residences provoked concern at the English court.

79 TNA E 101/407/4.

80 *Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Henry V. Volume 1: 1413–16* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1910), 8 May 1423, 110.

81 Household Accounts 1427–28, SAL/MS/216, ff. 53–55.

82 "Henry VI: February 1426", in *Parliament Rolls of Medieval England*, eds. Chris Given-Wilson, Paul Brand, Seymour Phillips, Mark Ormrod, Geoffrey Martin, Anne Curry, and Rosemary Horrox (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005), <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/parliament-rolls-medieval/february-1426>.

## Political Privacy

What unites these seemingly divergent case studies of the English and Imperial courts is the notion of political privacy, which in turn is underpinned by the concepts of sociability and agency. The idea of agency highlights the ways in which historical actors were able to “construct an identity, a life, a set of relationships, a society with certain limits and with language—conceptual language that at once sets boundaries”,<sup>83</sup> while also “interpret[ing] his or her life in terms of cultural norms, tradition, moral and familial values and feelings, and religious beliefs”.<sup>84</sup> Thus, agency allows individuals to act or operate in ways that enable them to control or influence their surroundings, whether socially, culturally, politically, or religiously. Most often, the concept of agency has been employed to examine women and gender dynamics within the early modern period in order to “address a capacious set of questions about how women, from their teenage years through older adulthood and across the social scale, asserted agency through social practices, speech acts, legal disputes, writing, viewing and exchanging images, travel, and community building”.<sup>85</sup> More recently, the concept of agency has been utilised more broadly to investigate the extent of political activity within early modern social structures.<sup>86</sup> Yet Theresa Earenfight has cautioned against a perception “that agency is a lesser form of power” associated with women and with a limited impact; it should be considered to be indirect, like influence, in contrast to the overt, hard power exercised by men and male rulers. Earenfight notes that “agency, influence and autonomy mark the gendered gradations of power that subtly signal that an actor is subordinate”.<sup>87</sup> However, in the context of the early modern court, where courtiers were by definition subordinate to their royal counterparts, or in the case of August of Saxony, who was subordinate to the soon-to-be Holy Roman Emperor, Maximilian, these

83 Joan Scott, “Gender as a Useful Category of Historical Analysis”, *American Historical Review*, 91:5 (1986): 1067.

84 Gabrielle Spiegel, *Practicing History: New Directions in Historical Writing after the Linguistic Turn* (London: Routledge, 2005), 7.

85 Merry Wiesner-Hanks, *Challenging Women’s Agency and Activism in Early Modernity* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021), 9.

86 Michael J. Braddick and Phil Withington (eds.), *Popular Culture and Political Agency in Early Modern England and Ireland: Essays in Honour of John Walter* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2017); Julia Gebke, “Auf den Spuren der Weiberhandlung: Gender, Space und Agency in der Casa de Austria im 16. Jahrhundert”, *L’Homme: europäische Zeitschrift für Feministische Geschichtswissenschaft* 30:2 (2010): 37–56.

87 Earenfight, “A Lifetime of Power”, 277.

established notions of agency and influence are appropriate and highlight the ability of courtiers and princes, such as August of Saxony, to affect change through their relationship with royal actors.

Similar to agency, sociability has been understood as consisting of “formalized rituals and rites, [and] informal interactions”,<sup>88</sup> but sociability also involved the seen and unseen, the public and private, as well as personal connections and perceptions “that made up the social order” and that determined how individuals related to one another.<sup>89</sup> In fact, early modern courtly sociability necessitated personal interrelationships and intimate interactions. Thus, the dynamics of politics, diplomacy, power, and dynastic affairs relied heavily on early modern “personal relations” and personal communication, especially with regard to political influence—another expression that needs to be analysed within the public/private dichotomy in a separate study.<sup>90</sup> However, by examining “personal relations”, particularly between powerful figures, scholars are able to uncover how the “experience of authority has [...] emerged as a crucial context in which medieval and early modern individuals exercised agency”.<sup>91</sup> Personal relationships between powerful figures highlight the ways in which the heuristic zones of state or community and the household intersect. Such intersections raise questions about the connection between the public and the private, and whether privacy existed in the interactions and/or meetings of highly public figures. At the same time, by analysing the interactions and/or meetings, it is possible to identify how connections between people or intersecting moments enabled individuals to exercise agency in an attempt to influence situations and relationships or to negotiate authority.

The personal is typically that which is exclusive, unseen, or private. Thus, it stands to reason that early modern personal relations and communication were shaped by unseen and informal mechanisms, including the agency of individuals or institutions. The personal added to the complexity of court cultures and delimited public thresholds, along with degrees of privacy,

88 Phil Withington, “Company and Sociability in Early Modern England”, *Social History* 32:3 (2007): 294.

89 Karin Sennfelt, “A Discerning Eye: Visual Culture and Social Distinction in Early Modern Stockholm”, *Cultural and Social History* 12:2 (2015): 180–81.

90 Florian Kühnel, “‘Minister-Like Cleverness, Understanding, and Influence on Affairs’: Ambassadors in Everyday Business and Courtly Ceremonies at the Turn of the Eighteenth Century”, in *Practices of Diplomacy in the Early Modern World c. 1410–1800*, eds. Tracey A. Sowerby and Jan Hennings (London: Routledge, 2017), 131.

91 Bronach Kane and Fiona Williamson (eds.), *Women, Agency, and the Law, 1300–1700* (London: Routledge, 2016), 1.



within early modern courts. Consequently, the personal created ambiguity about what was distinctively public or private at court. This ambiguity prompts us to consider not only the context and situations unfolding at court, but also the roles that individual agents, their motivations, and their personal interactions played in the life and activities at court and within the broader court cultures in Europe. However, the question remains whether the complexity at court was similar across early modern courts? To what degree were notions of privacy extended beyond the personal? One area in which the personal, which includes individual agency, and privacy were intertwined is political privacy, as has been pointed out in the preceding case studies.

Political privacy is by no means a new term or concept; elsewhere, Neighbors has discussed the difficult, nebulous, and anachronistic nature of political privacy.<sup>92</sup> However, he has introduced a model to examine political privacy as an “analytical perspective” of the past and to aid in distinguishing “the degrees of political privacy that emerged within specific topics and contexts” in the early modern period.<sup>93</sup>

The concept of political privacy potentially encompasses three specific aspects or lenses as illustrated in this diagram (Diagram 10.1): institutionalised privacy, politicised privacy, and private politics.<sup>94</sup> Broadly, political privacy can be characterised as the informal, unseen, and unheard actions and interactions of monarchs, court agents, diplomats, and families who attempted to influence policies, encourage religious conformity, shape identity and perceptions, and transform political authority.

It is important to note that political privacy often included the intrinsic forms of privacy within political institutions, or institutionalised privacy (i.e., *arcana imperii*).<sup>95</sup> These institutions or versions of institutional privacy

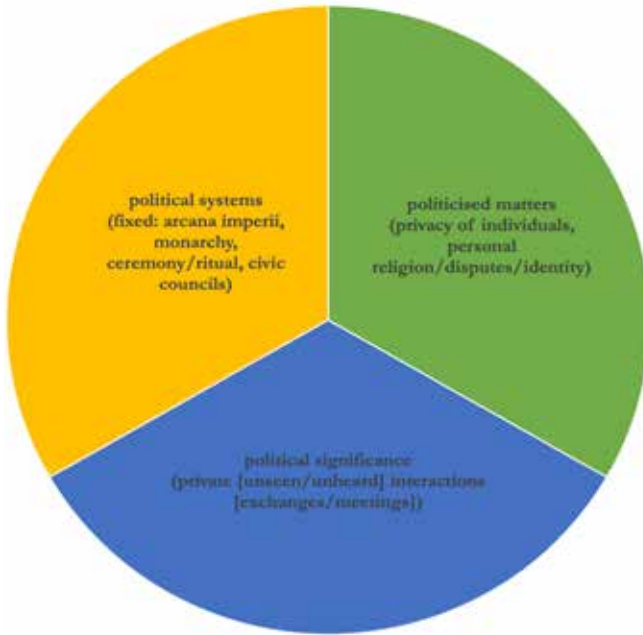
92 Dustin M. Neighbors, “Privacy and the Private within European Court Culture”, *The Court Historian* 28:1 (2023): 9.

93 Neighbors, “Privacy and the Private”, 10.

94 Neighbors, “Privacy and the Private”, 10. Neighbors’s theoretical development of political privacy stems from conversations at the Centre for Privacy Studies (PRIVACY) at the University of Copenhagen, where he created this model, “Lenses of Political Privacy”, as a means of analysing and distinguishing specific degrees and contexts of political privacy.

95 The idea of *arcana imperii* comes from Roman political culture and denotes the protection of government secrets and privileged information. However, from the early modern period to the modern day, *arcana imperii* has expanded to encompass much more, including political discussions, privy council meetings, and political and diplomatic information. Thus, *arcana imperii* was entrenched in early modern political systems. Cf. Alastair Bellany, *The Politics of Court Scandal in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 133; Lawrence Quill, *Secrets and Democracy: From Arcana Imperii to WikiLeaks* (Basingstoke:

*Lenses of Political Privacy*



10.1 Lenses of political privacy (© Dustin M. Neighbors).

include the private audiences, private counsel, and private discussions that punctuated the course of politics in the formal spaces and political mechanisms (i.e., royal audiences, Privy Council chambers, and diplomacy).

The more common forms of political privacy can be classified as either politicised privacy or private politics because these forms emerge when everyday practices or formal processes surrounding the household, court, or politics are transposed to “informal tactics, personal spaces, or ephemeral activities, which impacted and shaped politics, social orders, and cultures across Europe”.<sup>96</sup> In the case of Joan of Navarre, the queen’s household or private sphere was seen as a space where privacy enabled foreigners to have undue influence over the queen and, by extension, could influence the king and the court at large. This privacy was thus politicised because it

Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). See also Christensen-Nugues’s discussion of *arcana imperii* and the distinctions among secrecy, discretion, and privacy in Charlotte Christensen-Nugues, “Only to the Benefit of Some Private Persons’: The Concept of ‘Private’ in Records from the Swedish Estates Assembly, 1521–1731”, in *Private/Public in 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Scandinavia*, eds. Sari Nauman and Helle Vogt (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021), 29–30.

<sup>96</sup> Neighbors, “Privacy and the Private”, 9–10.

was considered to be a threat. Petitions to Parliament to expel the foreign individuals in Joan's household were attempts to control or impose regulations on the hierarchy and operation of her household and, therefore, to interfere in her private sphere. While Joan attempted to protect her private sphere and those within it, the purges did result in some Breton and Navarrese courtiers leaving her household and the English court. Alternatively, the 1564 visit and the hunting activities in Dresden functioned as informal courtly environments and as vehicles for politics, reflecting how private politics (the personal relations, private interactions, and agency of August and Maximilian) had public consequences. In these two case studies, formal practices and processes were not followed because often the actors involved exercised agency to disrupt operations through unseen actions and to seize moments of opportunities when they could engage privately with individuals in positions of power, or exert influence via secluded interactions or intimate relations. Consequently, the individual's "personal sentiments, ambitions, or objectives become [a] causal factor in the decision-making process or in the course of events, precipitating public consequences",<sup>97</sup> for instance when a queen's personal relationships and private interactions threaten the state, or when it is possible to provide personal counsel and reinforce power relations between sovereigns through secluded settings. It is this interplay of privacy and agency and its intersection with politics and sociability that are evident in the case studies of this chapter.

## Conclusion

Through the case studies considered in this chapter, it becomes clearer that historical privacy, in its various shades and degrees, cultivated and triggered informal and ephemeral moments when individuals could exercise a greater degree of agency that prompted broader, particularly political, consequences. Thus, in analysing the interconnections between privacy, agency, and politics, scholars can identify experiences, practices, and values that defined the culture and distinguished the specific nature of courts across early modern Europe. Along with the other essays in this collection, this chapter has added different perspectives on court studies that enrich and expand our existing knowledge of courts and court cultures.

The contrasting court settings and contexts of these two case studies allow us to examine different aspects of influence and personal relations,

97 Neighbors, "Privacy and the Private", 9.

in which agency and privacy were intertwined, and the notion of political privacy. For example, the different genders of the key protagonists give us varying perspectives on privacy. Maximilian's visit with August in Dresden combined personal relations and politics. Thus, his visit not only highlights privacy within the context of male relationships and homosociality through the activity of hunting,<sup>98</sup> but also illustrates the process of exercising agency through personal, or to a certain degree private, courtly activities. More importantly, the meeting between August and Maximilian serves as an example of private politics, a dimension of the political privacy model, and elucidates "how political participation and social order were demonstrated and renewed" at the early modern German courts.<sup>99</sup>

By examining Joan's private sphere, we can see how foreign influence and domestic interference could potentially undermine the link between agency and privacy. Joan's family sought to influence her household by inserting Carlos de Beaumont into a key position that offered access to her private sphere. They could thus maintain a close connection to Joan, which could both support her and work to their benefit by creating a steady stream of potential information for those in Navarre and ensuring that Navarrese interests were well represented at the Breton, and later English, court. We can also observe the perception that there was too much foreign influence in Joan's household from the cosmopolitan group of foreign courtiers who had accompanied Joan to England and carved out lucrative careers for themselves at court. Resentment can be seen regarding the access that these individuals had to her private sphere, the preferment and rewards they received, and the cost of her household. This resentment connects to a second theme that emerges from this case study—the idea that her private sphere posed a real threat to the court as a den of spies feeding intelligence back to England's enemies across the Channel. Such fears in turn led to Joan's privacy coming under threat, triggering a series of attacks on her household to break up her foreign inner circle and guarantee English access to her private sphere. We can also see how servants and courtiers could themselves come under threat by being part of her private sphere, losing their position in her household (and potentially some of the monetary benefits that came with it) and even their place in the realm due to their connection with her during the purges of 1404, 1406, 1416, and 1426.

98 For a cogent definition of homosociality, which Hammarén and Johansson link to power, intimacy, and "the maintenance of hegemonic masculinity", see Nils Hammarén and Thomas Johansson, "Homosociality: In between Power and Intimacy", *SAGE Open* (2014): 1–11.

99 Elizabeth Harding, "Staging Individual Rank and Corporate Identity: Pre-Modern Nobilities in Provincial Politics", in *The Holy Roman Empire Reconsidered*, eds. Jason Philip Coy, Benjamin Marschke, and David Warren Sabean (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010), 107.

Taken together, these two case studies illustrate how notions of privacy, particularly political privacy, were tied to personal relationships that not only blurred the lines between the public and private spheres, but also enabled individuals to move between the spheres, to informally exert control, influence politics, and negotiate the boundaries of power. Ultimately, this chapter has argued that the personal relationships and ephemerality of privacy facilitated greater degrees of influence, control, and agency within early modern court cultures. Therefore, in addressing the central questions posed at the beginning of this chapter, we can conclude that more often than not, influence occurred through agency, which existed and was enhanced via instances of privacy, and became forms of political privacy. Consequently, political privacy functioned as a “relation between individuals, language, and social practice, operating as the ‘the site of mediation between discourses and experience’”.<sup>100</sup>

With rising concerns and public discourse about modern rights to privacy, for instance the privacy issues surrounding the British royal family and other royal families in Europe, it is important not only to examine, but, more importantly, to make sense of the significance and evolution of privacy and the private from the past to the present. Accordingly, to help reveal the intricacies, nuances, and contexts of past public and private domains, to identify individual agency within specific situations and contexts, and to holistically understand the human experiences and interactions within the history of European courts and societies, it is imperative to investigate historical privacy and the private, regardless of its complexities and challenges.

By tackling privacy at court, the perspectives and approaches that the contributors of this edited volume have graciously shared draw attention to potential new avenues of research. This collection demonstrates the benefits of incorporating interdisciplinary frameworks and methods by connecting both court studies and privacy studies to several disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, including the fields of architecture, literature, and gender studies, as well as social, political, and religious history. This volume has aimed to fill a gap in current scholarship regarding notions of privacy and the private within the well-established research on European court culture and also to supply new impulses for the field of court studies. While scholars may be hesitant to use the terms ‘privacy’ and the ‘private’,

100 Kane and Williamson (eds.), *Women, Agency, and the Law*, 2. The editors (Kane and Williamson) reference K. Canning, *Gender History in Practice: Historical Perspectives on Bodies, Class, and Citizenship* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 77.

the chapters here offer various perspectives and approaches that can help expand the study of historical privacy and can provide a foundation from which 'privacy' can become more accepted in the study of early modern courts and court culture.

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Grand, extravagant, magnificent, scandalous, corrupt, political, personal, fractious; these are terms often associated with medieval and early modern courts. Moreover, the court constituted a forceful social nexus that was central to the legitimacy and authority of rulership. Consequently, courts shaped European politics and culture; architecture, art, fashion, patronage, and cultural exchanges were integral to the spectacle of European courts. Researchers have convincingly emphasised the public nature of courtly events, procedures, and ceremonies. Nevertheless, court life also involved pockets of privacy, which have yet to be systematically analysed. This edited collection addresses this lacuna and offers interpretations that urge scholars to reassess the public nature of European courts. Thus, the contributions in this edited volume provide the foundation for a discussion of the past and future of court studies and for a reconsideration of the current understanding of privacy as a stable and uncontested notion.

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