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PATTERNS IN THE HISTORY OF POLYCENTRIC GOVERNANCE IN EUROPEAN CITIES

FROM ANTIQUITY TO THE 21ST CENTURY

*Edited by Cédric Brélaz, Thomas Lau,
Hans-Joachim Schmidt, and Siegfried Weichlein*

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Cover image: Mosaic from St Mark's Basilica, Venice, showing the angels protecting the seven churches of Asia according to the Book of Revelation, with the following instruction from the apostle in Latin: "Every thing that I am announcing rightly, you will order to keep in its place". Francesco Zuccato, 1570. Photo by Thomas Lau.

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The idea of studying the dynamics of local autonomy throughout European history in a diachronic and comparative perspective emerged from the common interests of the editors of this volume, and was prompted by the frequent conversations we have had on this issue since 2016 in the Department of History at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland. It soon became clear to us that the best way to address the topic would be to invite experts of different periods to contribute to a collected volume whose purpose would be to explore local autonomy through case studies that used the concept of polycentric governance, borrowed from policy studies, as a heuristic device. Each editor was responsible for organising one of the four sections of this volume according to his own field of expertise: Cédric Brélaz for Antiquity, Hans-Joachim Schmidt for the Middle Ages, Thomas Lau for the Early Modern period, and Siegfried Weichlein for the contemporary period. This project and the publication of this volume were made possible thanks to financial support and generous grants from the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Fribourg, from the Department of History at the University of Fribourg, and from the Swiss National Science Foundation. We thank Dr. Hannah Mason, Julie Python BA, and Xavier Maillard BA for their help in the preparation and editing of the manuscript. Finally, our acknowledgements go to Dr. Julia Brauch and Verena Deutsch from De Gruyter Oldenbourg for taking care of the publication of the book in the best possible way.

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Cédric Brélaz and Thomas Lau

Introduction

Polycentric governance: A theoretical approach

Cities are closely interrelated with their environment; they interact with other cities, villages, neighbours, partners, and authorities. Their borders are often unclear, and their inner structures are complex.¹ Since the nineteenth century, sociologists have stressed the impact of an urban economy and the development of an urban mindset on a city's surrounding regions. Urbanisation was regarded as being central to the process of modernisation.² This master narrative has been reproduced in numerous studies and it had considerable political impact on the debate about administrative reforms in twentieth-century Europe and America. The incongruence of the legal borderlines of a town and its economic, demographic, and cultural sphere of influence became an issue discussed intensively in this period of time.³ The political fragmentation of what was identified as metropolitan areas was increasingly regarded as dysfunctional and outdated.⁴ In regard to this, Berlin's political structure was completely reshaped and put under the government of a strong mayor in 1920. Hamburg followed in 1937, and London in 1963.⁵ It was hoped that centralised management of public goods would minimise administrative costs by avoiding the "duplication of functions" and "overlapping jurisdictions." Nevertheless, not everywhere was the call for a powerful Leviathan met with enthusiasm.⁶ In 1961, Vincent Ostrom, Charles M. Tiebout and Robert Warren published a famous and ground-breaking article on alternative forms of organising the administration and distribution of public goods. The authors drew attention to the fact that the entities forming a metropolitan area have interacted and cooperated long before the establishment of a centralised government – government they maliciously called "Gargantua" (the name of Rabelais' unsatisfiable giant):⁷

1 Albach et al., *European Cities*; Sonkajärvi, "From German-Speaking Catholics to French Carpenters."

2 Fouquet, "Landesgeschichte." Cf. debate on the agency of the city: De Munck, "Re-Assembling Actor-Network Theory"; Brantz, "Assembling the Multitude"; Lewis, "Comments on Urban Agency."

3 Lehmann, "Leipzigs Stellung."

4 Durand, "Council Government," 426; Couperus, "Research in Urban History."

5 Heinelt and Vetter, *Lokale Politikforschung heute*, 138.

6 Ostrom, "Polycentric Approach."

7 Cf. Field, "Charitable Giving."

The traditional pattern of government in a metropolitan area with its multiplicity of political jurisdictions may more appropriately be conceived as a “polycentric political system.” “Polycentric” connotes many centers of decision-making which are formally independent of each other. Whether they actually function independently, or instead constitute an interdependent system of relations, is an empirical question in particular cases.⁸

Metropolitan areas that had not been centralised yet, Ostrom and his co-authors explained, were anything but incapable of administrating the distribution of rare public goods. Quite the contrary: they had succeeded in creating efficient informal networks of cooperation fulfilling their task as successfully as central government did or even better.⁹ In later years, Vincent and Elinor Ostrom restated these observations in numerous case studies, and step-by-step, developed a theory of what they now called “polycentric governance.”¹⁰

Governance is what is done by governments, but not by governments alone. It is responsible for the establishment of norms guiding and limiting the decision-making process of individuals and collective actors. Governance is what keeps companies, religious communities, sports associations, families, neighbourhoods, or states alive.¹¹ A crucial task all these communities deal with is the distribution of public goods. According to John Dewey,¹² to whose arguments Vincent Ostrom and his co-authors frequently referred,

the line between private and public is to be drawn on the basis of the extent and scope of the consequences of acts which are so important as to need control whether by inhibition or by promotion.¹³

This definition implies a broad scale of goods – from the public water supply to “fire and police protection, or the abatement of air pollution.”¹⁴ The distribution of public as well as private goods is facilitated by institutions. “Institutions,” Elinor Ostrom explained, “can be defined as the sets of working rules that are used to determine who is eligible to make decisions in some arena, what actions are allowed or constrained, what aggregation rules will be used, what procedures

⁸ Ostrom, Tiebout and Warren, “The Organization of Government in Metropolitan Areas,” 831.

⁹ Aligica and Tarko, “Polycentricity”; Koinova et al., “It’s Ordered Chaos.”

¹⁰ Stephan, Marshall and McGinnis, “Introduction to Polycentricity and Governance.” Carlisle and Gruby, “Polycentric Systems of Governance.”

¹¹ Bryant, “Government versus Governance”; Fasenfest, “Government”; Gunn, “Governance, Citizenship, and Municipal Provision.”

¹² McGinnis, “Costs and Challenges of Polycentric Governance,” 7.

¹³ Dewey, *The Later Works*.

¹⁴ Ostrom, Tiebout, and Warren, “The Organization of Government in Metropolitan Areas,” 833.

must be followed, what information must or must not be provided, and what pay-offs will be assigned to individuals dependent on their actions.”¹⁵

Achieving this objective is possible in more than one way. A great variety of institutions are in principle capable of distributing public goods. Not all of them are supposed to be “successful.” “By ‘successful’ I mean institutions that enable individuals to achieve productive outcomes in situations where temptations of free-ride and shirk are prevented.”¹⁶ From this point of view, all institutions are successful that create rules for all and that are able to keep rule breakers in line. Her anthropological attitude thus is almost Hobbesian. Man does not act altruistically by nature. Quite the contrary: “rational, self-interested individuals will not act to achieve their common or group interest.”¹⁷ He takes what he can, he ruthlessly exploits public goods, he manipulates common rules and disregards the interest of others – because he considers that others will probably do the same.¹⁸

When she started on her intellectual journey, Elinor Ostrom explained in her Nobel Prize Lecture in 2009, political scientists and economists generally pointed to two different institutions that were able to create working structures and to keep man in line – the free market and the state.¹⁹ Most experts suggested privatising as many goods as possible and only those that could not be made exclusive – peace, security or fire protection – remained public goods and were to be administered by a strong government. The Ostroms refused this intellectual framework. They regarded it as being insufficient to explain the complexities of social life and to solve its problems. A strong state is possibly quite useful when it comes to the administration of public security. However, there are other resources that can be distributed more efficiently in different ways. Rivers and forests, for instance, supply individuals with goods (wood, energy, fish) from which it is difficult to exclude any potential beneficiary. The privatisation of these goods would cause considerable social unrest. One could, as a matter of course, turn to the state. But one could also create a cooperative society. In this case, the question about to whom the “common pool resources” are assigned is not decided by a central administration but by a multitude of individuals. The Common Pool resource Institutions (CPI) act autonomously but are not insulated from other actors. They are embedded in superstructures, in hierarchies influencing decision-making processes.²⁰

15 Ostrom, *Governing the Commons*, 51.

16 Ostrom, *Governing the Commons*, 15.

17 Ostrom, *Governing the Commons*, 6; Refers to: Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action*, 2.

18 Ostrom, *Governing the Commons*, 38–39; Ostrom, “Behavioral Approach.”

19 Ostrom, “Beyond Markets and States.”

20 Ostrom, *Understanding Institutional Diversity*, 24.

CPIs possess flexible structures. They observe and evaluate the behaviour of their participants and consequently they permanently change their constitutional and operational rules.²¹ These institutions, Elinor Ostrom insisted, do have the capacity to learn; they develop a variety of different rule sets, and they are fragile – they can fail.²² At first sight, these institutions are anything but effective. Their slow decision-making processes and overlapping competencies are time-consuming and often cause undesired consequences. They are, nonetheless, ready to adjust their operational rules quite rapidly under changing circumstances. Before a decision can be made inside these nested multilayer structures, diverse autonomous entities on different levels have to be consulted.²³

All rules are nested in another set of rules that define how the first set of rules can be changed. The nesting of rules within rules at several levels is similar to the nesting of computer languages at several levels. What can be done at a higher level will depend on the capabilities and limits of the rules at that level and at a deeper level.²⁴

The diverse sub-centres concurring and cooperating with each other are able to react rapidly to changes of their environment.²⁵ The rule-setting of these polycentric systems may take longer and often seems to waste resources – but in the long run it is less prone to error.

Political scientists and economists have taken great interest in these arguments.²⁶ The Ostroms certainly changed our understanding of good governance.²⁷ Nevertheless, the theory of polycentric governance, Elinor Ostrom made clear, was embedded into greater concept she developed – the Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework. The IAD is not at all intended to provide political scientists with a universal model to understand human behaviour, but rather with a universal framework to study it, a framework that combines institutional economics and game theory.²⁸ It is based on a new understanding of how individuals make decisions about problems. Individuals may act rationally, but

21 Ostrom, *Governing the Commons*, 53.

22 Ostrom, *Governing the Commons*, 190, 193–181.

23 Ostrom, *Understanding Institutional Diversity*, 11.

24 Ostrom, *Understanding Institutional Diversity*, 58.

25 Nooteboom, “Marketing, Reciprocity and Ethics.”

26 Malik, *Polycentricity, Islam, and Development*; Frimpong Boamah, “Polycentricity of Urban Watershed Governance.”

27 Dool et al., *The Quest for Good Urban Governance*; Eichenberger and Frey, “Functional, Overlapping and Competing Jurisdictions (FOCJ)”; Gupta et al., *Geographies of Urban Governance*, 2; Harrison et al., “Governing Polycentric Urban Regions.”

28 Ostrom, *Governing the Commons*, 7; Higgott, Woo and Legrand, “The Demand for IPE and Public Policy,” 456.

what is rational depends on their knowledge, on their physiological capabilities and on a network of formal and informal rules and norms that surrounds them.²⁹

The concept of polycentric governance and historical studies

This very theory that has transformed political economics has inevitably had considerable impact on the work of historians. Numerous studies dealing with the history of water supply, the distribution of public goods and the establishment of trading networks or communication processes in modern cities have referred to the work of the Ostroms.³⁰ In more recent years Jos Raadschelders and Georg Jochum pointed to their relevance regarding the analysis of state-building processes, while Brian Leveck turned to Elinor Ostrom's theory on trust to explain the operating modes of early modern institutions.³¹ So, what are the historian's benefits in making use of the IAD?

First of all, it should be emphasised once again that the Ostrom approach does not provide historians with a universal model explaining the way human societies have developed. It is not dealing with the so-called modernisation processes; it does not predict the course of human history. Like Niclas Luhmann's system theory or the Actor Network Theory it is intended to facilitate analysis of the complexities of social interaction. It provides scholars with the means to reveal interdependencies and draws attention to interactions that had formerly remained undetected.

Cultural questions do play a crucial role in the Ostroms' theoretical framework. They strongly emphasised the importance of communication, of rituals, of sounds, of emotions (and how they were formed). The value of goods is not only measured by anthropological necessities or by the simple mechanisms of supply and demand. Value is created and formed by society, as are the demands and the choices of man – sometimes it is done collectively, sometimes by authorities, sometimes by influence groups.³² Systems, Elinor Ostrom pointed out, are living structures. Their

²⁹ Ostrom, "Beyond Markets and States," 414.

³⁰ Bosbach, Engels and Watson, *Umwelt und Geschichte*; Majo, "Understanding the Southern Italian Commons."

³¹ Leveck, *Distrust of Institutions*; Polanyi, *The Logic of Liberty*; Jochum, "Plus Ultra"; Raadschelders, *Public Administration*.

³² Ostrom, *Governing the Commons*, 89, 166; Ostrom, *Understanding Institutional Diversity*, 5, 74, 106, 126, 252.

very existence is inextricably linked to their capability to establish a collective memory.³³ Only by comparing present situations with former failures can they learn and change those rules that have been proven counterproductive. Today's decisions and rules, from this point of view, can only be understood by considering the past. Successful systems usually establish firm and durable links reaching beyond their original purpose. The IAD theory not only deals with the interaction of groups, centres, and individuals, but also with the dynamics of this interaction and the development of a vast array of structures mirroring different decisions made by different groups under different circumstances. Success and stability are, according to Elinor Ostrom's verdict, anything but inevitable. Decision-making networks, especially polycentric systems, are fragile; their future is unclear.³⁴

The theory does not ignore political history. Those who bear crowns and issue decrees and those who sit in judgement or supervise local administrations are considered to be important elements of complex political cultures. Nevertheless, the representatives of a central government are primarily seen as important parts of multilayer networks.³⁵ The IAD approach is thus not focused on analysis of the formation of states and their institutions. It deals with processes that create institutions and systems that are setting rules in general.³⁶ Specific attention is paid to networks that are organised in neither a top-down nor a bottom-up structure.³⁷ This strong emphasis on nested multilayer structures meets the interests and needs of urban historians – especially those who are interested in premodern times.³⁸

The autonomy granted to local communities (towns, municipalities, city-states) by larger, central powers (empires, kings, lords, central states) is a structural and recurrent feature of European history over time, from Antiquity to the contemporary period. From the beginning of Rome's expansion in Italy and then the creation of the first provinces outside the peninsula in the second part of the third century BCE, Roman imperial hegemony relied to a large extent on the existence of multilateral relationships with local communities.³⁹ On the contrary, the encroachment on local privileges and freedoms because of the strengthening and centralising imperial power during Late Antiquity significantly changed the role that had previous

33 Cf. Buchanan, "The Meaning of Democracy."

34 Ostrom, *Governing the Commons*, 173–179.

35 Cf. De Boodt, "How One Shall Govern a City."

36 Cf. Latham, "From Oligarchy to a 'Rate Payer's Democracy'."

37 Schröder, "The Lens of Polycentricity."

38 Salter and Young, "Polycentric Sovereignty."

39 Millar, *Emperor in the Roman World*; Brélaz, "Motifs et circonstances de l'ingérence des autorités romaines."

been played by cities in the governance of the Roman Empire.⁴⁰ In the West, the weakening of cities as local communities in the later Roman period and then the disintegration of Roman imperial power led to a large-scale reconfiguration of political entities during the Early Middle Ages.⁴¹ From the eleventh century, the acquisition of franchise by cities was one of the major aspects of tension between local communities and seigniorial powers. Expanding communal freedoms led in the Early Modern period to the appearance in some parts of Europe (e.g. Northern Italy, Holy Roman Empire) of city-states enjoying near-independence from the political authorities that in theory had sovereignty over them.⁴² The integration of local communities into larger, centralised political entities and the scope of their powers were also a crucial issue for the state-building process in the modern period. Local autonomy as such is still a present issue nowadays with regard to the decentralising policies of many states in Europe, as well as the discussion on the relevance of the federal model for the governance of the European Union.⁴³

Historians have been focused on the relationship between princes and towns since the nineteenth century. Alongside the principle of centralised government, the delegation of power stimulated the development of multi-level governmental structures.⁴⁴ Unlike villages, cities do consist of numerous overlapping communities: guilds, neighbourhoods, parishes, family networks, fraternities, societies etc.⁴⁵ And unlike villages, they need various meeting points and decision-making centres to organise the establishment of rules in these communities and between these communities.⁴⁶ The very fact that they are integrated into trans-urban networks and multilayer systems makes their situation even more complex. Flexible networks of power and alliances between regional and central, urban and princely power centres turned the cities into multifaceted societies. The recurrent conflicts between towns and princes were as a matter of fact only a part of much a more complicated network of interdependency and communication into which they were integrated. Moreover, both conflicting entities – the princely court as much as the towns – were anything but homogenous bodies with clear-cut borders. Recent

40 Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall of the Roman City*; Lepelley, “Le nivellement juridique du monde romain”; Laniado, *Recherches sur les notables municipaux*; Rapp and Drake, *The City in the Classical and Post-Classical World*.

41 Schulz, *Die Freiheit des Bürgers*; Scott, *The City-State*; La Rocca and Majocchi, *Urban Identities*; Prak, *Citizens without Nations*; Brélaz and Rose, *Civic Identity and Civic Participation*.

42 Schlögl, “Vergesellschaftung unter Anwesenden”; Blicke, *Kommunalismus*.

43 Bieling and Lerch, *Theorien der Europäischen Integration*; Geroge, “Multi-Level Governance”; Grzeszczak and Karolewski, *The Multi-level and Polycentric European Union*.

44 Härter, “Cultural Diversity.”

45 Nevola, “Introduction”; Rose-Redwood and Tantner, “Introduction.”

46 Conlin, “Vauxhall on the Boulevard”; Chisholm, *Queer Constellations*.

publications have emphasised the importance of neighbourhoods and other suburban spaces for the organisation of efficient decision-making processes.⁴⁷ Together, these semi-autonomous political bodies have been responsible not only for organising and distributing public goods, but also for conflict management, defence and other governmental activities. Although city councils have claimed priority and authority over these semi-autonomous entities, in fact they have primarily served as coordinating committees orchestrating a complex sphere of communication. Not unlike the princely court, towns were and still are unstable spatial structures with unclear borders, consisting of numerous communities that are nested in multilayer networks.

The IAD provides historians with a framework to analyse and reconstruct these networks and to make sense of seemingly chaotic structures. It allows us to compare decision-making processes diachronically and to address the question of how knowledge on the structures of rule setting was transferred in the course of time.⁴⁸

Aim of the volume

The present volume is intended to stimulate the debate on the use of this approach in urban history. Its contributions are not written with the books of the Ostroms on the knees of their authors. Instead, experts of ancient, medieval, early modern and contemporary history were asked to discern polycentric structures in cities and city networks in their field of interest. They were especially asked to focus on four major aspects that were of obvious interest for a diachronic intellectual exchange and that represent the main issues addressed by this volume:

(1) Cooperation, competition, and conflict: a structural analysis of polycentric governance

This approach addresses the multilayer systems into which cities are integrated (territories, regions, states, empires, etc.) and deals with the implications of the co-existence of different political structures and legal systems on the definition of urban order and on the delimitation of local autonomy. It focuses on the tensions

⁴⁷ Krischer, “Sociological and Cultural Approaches”; Schlögl, “Vergesellschaftung unter Anwesen”; Hecht, *Patriziatsbildung als kommunikativer Prozess*.

⁴⁸ DiGaetano, “The Birth of Modern Urban Governance”; Denis, Milliot and Lucrezio Monticelli, “Introduction”; Crook, “Accommodating the Outcast”; Mitchell, “Supplying the Masses”; Lee, “The Bureaucracy of Plans.”

existing between centralised and decentralised (local or regional) political structures and explores the relationship, the cooperation, and in some cases the competition and conflict between these different entities and their own prerogatives. In particular, this approach compares how polycentric systems – on both sides – generated legal norms to ensure order, how these norms were enforced, and how central governmental institutions (kings, emperors, lords, courts, parliaments) dealt with the existence of these norms allowing a good deal of autonomy to local structures.

(2) Networks and horizontal relationships within polycentric governance

Next to the vertical relationship between central and local structures, horizontal relationships arose among local entities, which were all dependent on central government in some way. Thus, this approach examines the other kinds of relationships which were made possible by polycentric systems and discusses how these relationships developed, how they were formalised as networks, what the powers of these networks were, what kind of interactions they promoted, and to what extent they were accepted and acknowledged by central powers. It focuses on the diplomatic, economic and demographic implications of the existence of these networks within polycentric systems and addresses the issue of whether such networks should be seen as entities counterbalancing central powers.

(3) Individuals and social groups as actors of polycentric systems

The overlapping and moving structures of polycentric systems imply the existence of constant relationships between central and local entities. This approach addresses the role played by individuals and social groups in this process and how they served as an essential link of polycentric governance. It examines how these individuals/groups were chosen (by both central and local entities), what their expertise was, and to what extent they were embedded in strategies implying private, corporate, and official interests at the same time. This approach also explores the exchange of knowledge which was made possible through these contacts and relationships between central and local powers and which served the polycentric system as its intellectual backbone and basis for self-definition.

(4) Self-representation and cultural claims of polycentric governance

Polycentric systems are not to be reduced to a mere mechanism of political and administrative efficiency; they were also semiotic systems, creating their own patterns of communication and providing participants with means of self-definition, self-reflection and self-representation. Therefore, this approach addresses the cultural aspects of the coexistence and overlapping of different forms of governance. It explores how discourses legitimising polycentric governance arose in both central and local powers and how they helped foster collective identities in both sides. All possible evidence (such as written texts, oral performances, visual arts,

coins, monumental inscriptions, architecture, social practices, etc.) can in principle be considered for this purpose. This approach emphasises the significance of these symbolic and ideological discourses for the stability of the whole system of polycentric governance.

Polycentric governance in European history: Structures, dynamics, and discourse

Beyond the specific contexts of the various case studies under consideration, multi-layer political systems are emphasised by the different chapters of the volume as one of the major patterns through European history. The coexistence, and to some extent the cooperation, of different political entities was in many cases a structural feature. The Roman Empire, in particular, was not a monolithic entity using exclusively top-down implementation processes, but, as Pont argues, actually “relied on a dual-level governance system, engaging both levels – the cities and the Roman state.” Such interactions between central power and local communities, implying an active participation of multiple subordinated actors, especially cities, can be observed for most part of European history and is characteristic of the medieval and early modern periods. The chapters by Boytsov about the multiple collective identities of medieval cities in their relationship towards seigneurial or royal power, by Close about “cross-status alliances” between different political entities in the Holy Roman Empire in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as well as by Félicité about the “multi-layered connections” of Hanseatic cities in the European diplomatic game in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, exemplify this phenomenon in many ways. As Sander-Faes reminds us, “centralised decision-making, direct rule, and uniformity of state actions did not emerge before the late eighteenth century.” Even if, as Bernhardt notes, cities in the nineteenth century “lost a good part of their autonomy as developed in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period and were increasingly integrated and subordinated under the institutional regime of the states,” the rise of the nation-state, interestingly, did not entirely eliminate local initiatives. Paradoxically, “the expansion of state authority before 1848 was predicated on implementation by non-state actors” (Sander-Faes), and the growing complexity of administrative structures as well as the multiplying of different economic interests led to the unexpected consequence that local and regional actors, including informal ones, were gradually integrated into decision-making processes in the twentieth century, in what is currently called “Multi-level Governance” in policy studies. This is shown by the chapters by McTominey on the management of water supply in early twentieth-century Leeds with the involvement of local news-

papers, and by Bernhardt on water management on a regional scale along the Upper Rhine from the late nineteenth century to the late twentieth century, as well as by Andersen and Pfundheller on contemporary city partnerships including the participation of civil society and NGOs.

In pre-modern states, the need for the central power to rely on local communities was due to its inability, or material impossibility, “to monopolise and exercise authority throughout the entire expanse of its territory” (Sander-Faes). This largely accounts for the autonomy granted to local communities or acknowledged by the central power. Such a delegation of power, and the participation of cities in government at the local level, were critical in the case of a worldwide empire like Rome which used cities as “tools,” in the words of Pont, to rule the provinces. This empirical division of tasks is called “subsidiarity” by Hurllet. There was, however, also a cultural reason for Rome’s favourable policy towards local communities: Rome itself, before becoming an empire, had been a city, and local autonomy, chiefly in the Eastern part of the Empire, was a pre-existing condition which was preserved and even expanded by imperial authorities. Therefore, in this case local autonomy can justifiably be considered an “imperial norm,” as argued by Pont. In the cases where, on the contrary, cities had to progressively gain autonomy from the central power, more formalised actions were required in order for local communities to have their privileges acknowledged by the ruler, such as the issuance of charters or the taking of oaths, like in the medieval cities examined by Boytsov. Also in the cases where local autonomy was not directly perceived by central authorities as beneficial to them and where central power was not willing to make concessions, crisis situations or economic necessity could also lead to the *de facto* acceptance of the relevance of polycentric decision-making processes, as shown by McTominey in his discussion of the water shortage experienced by the city of Leeds in the 1920s and 1930s, and by Bernhardt with the example of the regional planning associations involved in water management along the Upper Rhine from the 1950s to the 1970s.

Polycentric systems were certainly “highly flexible and dynamic hybrid formations” (Sander-Faes), constantly driven by the tensions between central power and cities, between normativity and autonomy. This does not include only competition and conflict, opposition and resistance, but also “interdependencies” (Close, *Félicité*), “compromise” (Bernhardt) and cooperation. Despite the asymmetric nature of the relationship between local communities and the central power, and beyond the competition between these two actors, local autonomy implied the existence of a space of negotiation between political entities which led to the reduction of the vertical and hierarchical link between them. Mutual recognition by each of the different “partners” (Kuhn), formally acknowledged or not, was therefore a prerequisite in order to achieve a minimal level of consensus which was fundamental to the preservation of political and social order (Hurllet). In medieval cities, sophisticated

political rituals, such as the entry ceremonies including the mutual taking of oaths examined by Boytsov, were performed with a view towards making the agreements between the cities and the rulers visible and effective. Privileges had to be continuously confirmed and renewed. Although cities – apart from the category of cities which were said to be “free” in the Roman Empire as well as in the Holy Roman Empire – were not independent and lacked many features of sovereignty, the constant relationship between the two actors gave the illusion of a peer-polity interaction. Diplomacy was pervasive and instrumental in the maintenance of polycentric governance. As shown by Félicité, diplomatic activity was crucial for Hanseatic cities to have their existence as political actors acknowledged both at the regional and the international level, and their efforts were rewarded with their participation in the peace congress of Westphalia. Interestingly, “urban diplomacy” re-emerged in the twentieth century in the context of the city partnerships mentioned by Andersen and Pfundheller, and it was used by cities to gain competencies in an area, international relations, which nation-states had monopolised since the nineteenth century. Polycentric governance does not only rely on legal frameworks and regulations, but also to a large degree on the agency and practice of multi-level relationships between public (and in some cases also private) actors, including in informal settings. The importance of personal relationships and the role of individual actors in diplomatic activity have been pointed out in several chapters, in particular by Perret in her study of the career of the Venetian ambassador Ermolao Barbaro. This was true of the people representing imperial authorities, such as the Roman governors touring their provinces and developing personal connections with the local aristocrats from whom civic ambassadors were drawn (Hurllet), or even those embodying the central power, such as the kings personally visiting medieval cities (Boytsov), but it was also true of the representatives of local communities, including minor officials such as the secretaries of the city council of seventeenth-century Lübeck who, as Félicité demonstrates, were often part of a network of personal relationships at the European level.

The central power’s decision to grant some degree of autonomy to local communities allowed, within a polycentric system, for the emergence of horizontal relationships between the latter. These could take very different forms depending on the context: regional organisations at a provincial or sub-provincial level analogous to a “federal system” in the Roman Empire (Vitale); military alliances relying on a treaty between Swiss cities and rural communities (Schmid); cross-status alliances, that is, “cooperative legal associations formed among authorities of differing stature for their collective benefit” within the Holy Roman Empire (Close); the “loose and flexible alliance” between cities of the Hanseatic League (Félicité); local, regional, and even transnational cooperation in the context of economic

management in the general context of the nation-states (Bernhardt); contemporary city partnerships (Andersen and Pfundheller). Although they were “no official institutional part of the Roman provincial administration” (Vitale), federal organisations were officially recognised by imperial power. In the case of the Holy Roman Empire, “imperial law protected the right of Estates to form federations among themselves” (Close). Such alliances were even encouraged insofar as they did not breach imperial regulations, and since, in some cases, they even “supplement[ed] imperial institutions” (Close) and promoted imperial values, as demonstrated by the worship of the imperial cult by provincial organisations in the Roman Empire (Vitale). Horizontal relationships, however, could also induce conflicts. As Kuhn emphasises, competition between cities was sometimes fuelled by the central power in order to undermine unified opposition: “inter-city strife (. . .) was a highly effective instrument of polycentric governance: it was, after all, a convenient means of channelling the cities’ agonistic energies towards one another rather than against the ruling power.” Another example of the manipulation of horizontal relationships by the central power is, as Andersen and Pfundheller describe, the current attempts of some states to “instrumentalise the Urban Diplomacy of municipalities as an element of national foreign policy.” By the same token, the characteristics we have just emphasised with regard to horizontal relationships within polycentric systems could also be analysed within cities themselves, and the chapters by Perret on late medieval Venice and by Kümin on “urban landscape” point out the internal diversity of local actors.

In polycentric systems, discourse and social performances asserting collective identities and supporting the claims of different partners play a major role. Several chapters have explored the “symbolic communication” (Kümin) through which local communities and central power represented themselves *at the same time*. All kinds of messages and actions were used for this purpose: coins, public buildings, religious processions, political rituals, popular entertainment, etc. Both Boytsov and Kümin examine the urban landscape of medieval and early modern cities and show the monuments, the images, but also the sounds (bells, shouts, music) – which are usually difficult to restore in historical research – which were used to display and enhance civic identity towards their ruler as well as themselves. Elaborate strategies involving discourse and performances were used by Greek cities (Kuhn) as well as medieval cities (Boytsov) to negotiate their autonomy under imperial or royal rule. For instance, Greek cities could simultaneously mint some coins showing the portrait head of the emperor and decide not to depict him on others; medieval Germanic cities which were directly subordinate to the Empire, for their part, staged a ceremony consisting of transmitting the keys of the town to the king when he visited them, expecting however that the king would return the keys as a sign of the autonomy enjoyed by the city. These and

similar examples of “communicative action” (Hurlet) were part of a process of legitimisation of both partners, the cities and the emperor. Narratives about real or alleged origins were similarly promoted in the context of horizontal relationships in order to justify military alliances (Schmid) and regional identities were deliberately celebrated (Vitale, Close). In many instances, the common interest, or the “common good” like in the arguments of the late nineteenth-century German cities advocating regional collaboration in the area of water management (Bernhardt), was invoked as a justification for polycentric governance. Also, in a time of crisis such as early twentieth-century Leeds suffering from drought, “the narrative of citizenship was used to encourage residents to save water,” as noted by McTominey, and this discourse eventually became part of governance itself.

On the whole, this volume shows that the polycentric system is characteristic of most periods of European history. Counter-examples such as the Byzantine Empire or the Ottoman Empire should dissuade us from considering polycentric governance as a natural and systematic method of implementing public policies. As early as the sixth century CE, because of the decline of civic identity and because of the centralisation of the state-apparatus, cities were no longer considered to be autonomous political entities in the Byzantine Empire and they were replaced by state-appointed officials who would be responsible for the administration of local communities at a regional level.⁴⁹ In the same manner, although guilds and occupational associations could in some cases speak on behalf of local communities in the Ottoman Empire, they were not acknowledged as official representatives of towns until the creation of municipalities, according to the Western model, in the second half of the nineteenth century, such as in Jerusalem, Beyruth, Damas or Tunis.⁵⁰ To some extent, the willingness of central powers to grant some autonomy to local communities – whether in the Roman Empire, in the medieval and early modern periods, or even within nation-states from the early nineteenth century – might be seen as a specificity of European history, although we are not arguing here that this was unique to Europe and although there was no continuum in this regard from Antiquity to the nineteenth century. At the very least, we can say that for extended periods of time throughout European history, local autonomy, and hence polycentric governance, has played a pivotal role for the organisation and distribution of political powers.

49 Andriollo, *Constantinople et les provinces d’Asie Mineure*.

50 Faroqhi, “Coping with the Central State”; Lafi, *Esprit civique et organisation citadine*.

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I Rome and Her Cities – The Polycentric Empire

Anne-Valérie Pont

The Dynamics of Dual-level Governance in the Roman Empire, First–Third Centuries CE: Incremental Permeation and Occasional Intrusions of Roman Normativity in Local Life

The question of the autonomy of the more than 2,000 cities forming the territorial basis of the Roman Empire is a traditional subject in the studies on the Roman imperial institutions. Deprived of freedom of action in foreign affairs,¹ the cities could, in the words of Rome, ‘use their own laws,’ *suis legibus utere*, a capacity labeled *autonomia* in the Greek-speaking part of the empire. Every single city had a strong identity, comprised of peculiar cults and local myths, and a sense of common history and pride. Their life was articulated, on a daily basis, by shared rituals and decisions taken by several institutional bodies. Local magistrates, elected annually by the assembly of local citizens, governed the cities, with the assistance of a Council, comprised of a few dozen to a few hundred members.

In addition to permitting cities their autonomy as a cultural favour, the central power had an interest in, rather than an aversion to, maintaining local autonomy, as well as precise expectations regarding it. As a matter of fact, cities did not only take care of their own administration: they also acted as “tools” for the empire by fulfilling a number of tasks devised and entrusted to them by the central power in the judicial, fiscal, or security domains, as well as for the maintenance of roads (*vehiculatio*), a series of crucial capabilities for which the Roman state had only a very light bureaucratic structure. These tasks, called *munera* (in Latin) or *leitourgiai* (in Greek), were required by the central power, but a latitude existed regarding the way cities organised them internally in order to fulfil them. In

1 Plutarch, *Precepts of Statecraft* 805B: “Nowadays, then, when the affairs of the cities no longer include leadership in wars, nor the overthrowing of tyrannies, nor acts of alliances . . .”

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that sense, the Roman Empire relied on a dual-level governance system, engaging both levels – the cities and the Roman state – in an exchange of demands and responses, in an empire where intermediary institutions, such as the regional assemblies of cities, had few real powers.²

Recently, a series of studies has delineated the sharing of powers between cities and the Roman administration in the most significant areas of local autonomy, namely, the local administration of justice, finances and the maintenance of local order, as well as the recovery of taxes.³ In addition, scholarship on the process by which Roman legal norms were diffused throughout the empire have come to reveal a double-sided situation: in the High Empire the appeal for Roman normativity was a bottom-up movement at least as much as a top-down one, thus adding a lot of complexity to what was once believed to be a deliberate and sustained infringement of the center on the periphery.⁴ Regarding the local communities and their organisation, the emperor's ruling was requested for "every significant aspect of the civilisation and communal life of the cities,"⁵ including economic, religious or cultural aspects of local life. Roman normativity, which I would define as a legal Roman authority (external to the cities), judging, or not, according to Roman law, was thus, on a regular basis, locally sought on subjects that were debated in the cities, or that normally had to be judged in local courts. On their side, the Roman power and its legal experts and advisors regularly protected local jurisdiction, and also local law when a judgment was enacted on matters regarding a "peregrine" city (a city which had not received a Roman charter, unlike *municipia*, which were communities preexisting the conferment of a Roman statute, and *coloniae*, which were *stricto sensu* founded by a Roman magistrate). This principle in judicial administration is sometimes called "subsidiarity."⁶ It is a clear effect of the interest of the Roman state in local autonomy,⁷ while any other policy

2 On regional assemblies of cities, see the chapter by Marco Vitale in this volume.

3 Merola, *Autonomia locale*; Burton, "Roman Imperial State"; Brélaz, *La sécurité publique*; Fournier, *Entre tutelle romaine et autonomie civique*. Syntheses: Brélaz, "Motifs et circonstances" and Brélaz, "Maintaining Order." These studies treat the subject mainly from the epigraphical sources emanating from the Greek cities of the Roman Empire, as the sources are more numerous than in the Western communities and because the problem is apparently more stringent in these communities with their own multi-secular constitutions, and which proclaim their attachment to their self-government.

4 More recently: Ando, "Pluralisme juridique"; Czajkowski, Benedikt and Strothmann, *Law in the Roman Provinces*.

5 Millar, *The Emperor*, 447. On the growing legal role of the emperor, Tuori, *The Emperor of Law*.

6 Hurllet, "Justice."

7 Interest in local law: Fronto, *Correspondence, Ad Marcum Caesarem* 1.6; Pliny the Younger, *Letters* 10.92–93.

would have been a useless effort, also contrary to the widely shared ideal that every city should be administered according to its own constitution.

The points I want to make in this chapter pertain to the dynamics and chronology of the evolution of “autonomy,” during the High Empire, with respect to the vast majority of the cities in the empire.⁸ Whatever the principles and discourses praising local autonomy, this imperial dual-level governance was per se unstable: on the one hand, from the very beginning, the obvious precedence of the Roman state over the cities occasionally prompted the deliberate diminution of local autonomy, although this kind of event found few avenues of expression in the epigraphical sources; on the other hand, the local solicitation of decisions from the Roman power about the many facets of local life progressively shrunk the space available for local initiatives regarding the organisation of local life – although “autonomy” obviously never disappeared.⁹ Once the Roman power had been solicited about a matter and had given an answer – for example, how many teachers could be paid by a city – a rule theoretically existed for all cities. It would then set a precedent for any future decision.¹⁰ The second, related point is that there was continuity, rather than disruption, in the Roman view and administration of the cities up to – and including – the time of Diocletian (285–305): the precedence of the Roman state was an ancient and permanent principle concerning any city, while the recurring recourse to Roman normativity (be it, e.g., the request of a privilege or a charter from an emperor, or an appeal to a governor about a nomination) made its impact only by means of a long-term coagulation in the cities. In the next section, the case study of local careers offers an approach to this long-term permeation and coagulation of a normativity external to the cities on a matter all the more compelling in that it is closely related to self-government. It is followed by an examination of the way that, from the Augustan period, the central power regularly intervened at the request of sub-groups in an “infringing,” but not sustained, and only poorly recognised, manner. In conclusion, it is shown that the rhetorical tone of most sources relevant to the relationship between cities and central power is accompanied by a common understanding that the central power could deal with cities as it saw fit, regardless of their status and statutes, and that it supported an incremental pro-

⁸ The case of Aphrodisias, a “free” city defined as being outside of the empire from a legal point of view, which paid no tax to Rome and whose authorisation was required to receive a Roman governor on its territory, is certainly exceptional. Even in its case though, recent discoveries have shown the presence of Roman officers in the third century (Chaniotis, “Roman Army”). Curators (see below) were also nominated.

⁹ E.g., Humfress, “Thinking Through Legal Pluralism.”

¹⁰ Administrative memory: Nicolet et al., *La mémoire perdue*; on archives: Ando, *Imperial Ideology*, 80–96.

cess, never fully completed and mostly not felt to be harmful, of the permeation of Roman normativity in local life.

Local careers and Roman normativity

Local careers were organised by functions of different natures, and obtained in different ways. Elected magistracies and some priesthoods, on the one side, were the most honorific functions, endowed with a share of local power, either civil or religious. Magistrates had a leading role in their communities and the glory, or *dignitas*, according to Roman conceptions, associated with it.¹¹ Recent studies confirm the importance of the local electoral process. For example, the *lex Troesmensium* (municipal law of Troesmis, in Moesia inferior) shows that the popular vote was still a prerequisite under Marcus Aurelius (161–180) in the Danubian provinces, and was protected from infractions.

At the same time, a process operating slowly and inconspicuously in the life of the cities in the High Empire was the growing importance of the tasks, or ‘duties’ (*munera/leitourgiai*) in communal life. Their function in the operation of the empire was evoked in preamble. Some of them were also designed for the working of institutions inside the cities (such as the gymnasium). Liturgical offices were distributed among the inhabitants of the cities, primarily by local authorities, following considerations of wealth or personal capacity, and a rotation of service, *per vices ab omnibus quos id munus contigit*,¹² rather than through an electoral process. In consequence, whereas they could sometimes confer prestige and power,¹³ they usually were much less political in the sense that they implied more a routine allotment than a reward for personal ambition or collective choice. The balance between magistracies and “duties” and the evolution of that balance therefore constitute a good test case for the institutional and political dynamics at play within the cities. Four main points appear:

¹¹ Callistratus (1 *cogn.*), *Digest* 50.4.14.pr.

¹² Pseudo-Ulpianus (2 *opin.*), *Digest* 50.4.3.13, on *hospitium* (the duty to give hospitality to Roman officials): “in turn, those on whom the burden falls.”

¹³ Especially in the case of embassies: *AE* 1916, 42 (Volubilis, Mauretania). In exceptional circumstances this *munus* could be attributed to volunteers, without following a rotation of service: Table A, *lex Troesmensium* (Eck, “Die *lex Troesmensium*”) and Marcianus (12 *inst.*), *Digest* 50.7.5, Hadrian to the Clazomenians (in western Asia Minor). In some Greek cities, ambassadors could be elected: Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists*, 536.

(1) The increase in the number of “services” during the High Empire

In the Flavian municipal law from Spain, which was a charter given to the “peregrine” cities by the central power at the end of the first century so as to organise them into *municipia*, very few services were mentioned (embassies, and maintenance of roads and buildings).¹⁴ But in the treatise by Arcadius Charisius, maybe in the 280s, the number of *munera* about which a regulation existed had dramatically increased. Some of the functions that the inhabitants of Greek cities defined as magistracies, with elections by the people, could then be considered duties by the representatives of Roman power.¹⁵ In Egypt, too, the same observation of an increase in the number of services can be made, based on another type of documentation.¹⁶ The *agoranomos* in the East and the *aedilis* in the West, for example, were normally magistrates responsible for supplying grain to their city, but this task was assigned as a *munus* at the end of the third century. The supervision of public funds was also defined as a duty rather than a magistracy by Arcadius Charisius. There was still variability from city to city in the number, naming, and delineation of the different services – some of them, in the Greek world, being designated with a suffix in *-archês*, because they included a ‘leading’ function.¹⁷ From the Roman point of view, the most important aspect was that, in the cities, a set of individuals could swiftly be nominated to fulfil these many functions for objective reasons, if needed, with no mediation by an electoral procedure.

Moreover, bureaucratic functions essential to the daily working of the cities were also defined as services at the time of Diocletian, such as the ones pertaining to the archives or to the scribes. Previously, the scribes, at least, were paid by the civic treasuries.¹⁸ The definition of these functions as services was certainly not valid for all the cities; but in my opinion, their pervasiveness does correspond to an imperial Roman imprint on communal life, facilitating the meeting of demands placed upon the cities by the Roman state.

(2) The role of Roman administration in the designation of the holders of liturgies
The issue of appointment to these local “duties” is therefore crucial for understanding local autonomy. The case is oblique, and scholars’ attention was long drawn to the question of the “curators,” who were officials directly nominated in

¹⁴ *Lex Irnitana*, ch. F-H and 83 (González and Crawford, “The *Lex Irnitana*”; to be completed with Crawford, “The Text of the *Lex Irnitana*”).

¹⁵ Such is the case of *limenarchia* (a function associated with harbors), *agoranomia* (supervision of markets), and even priesthoods (*Digest* 50.4.18.10; 50.4.2; *Code of Justinian* 10.42.8). On quaestorship, Felici, “Riflessioni.”

¹⁶ Lewis, *Compulsory Public Services*.

¹⁷ Pont, *La fin de la cité*, 280.

¹⁸ David, “Les *apparitores*.”

the cities by the emperor or the governor. Codes make it clear that the governor or the emperor had the power to designate only a few of these agents.¹⁹ The discussion has been renewed, without substantially altering the existing evaluation of the overall paucity of these officials, by the publication of lead weights from Nicomedia, with the interesting case of the association of the functions of governor and curator. Finally, the supposedly systematic nomination of such officials remains uncertain even at the end of the period, when Diocletian implemented his administrative reforms.²⁰

Although emanating initially from the cities themselves, the designation of the holders of “duties” may have frequently been superseded by an external judgment. Because of the personal involvement and sometimes personal expenses they implied, they were often legally disputed in the court of the governor. The expansion of the rules about excuses that could be used to evade such a designation is described by François Jacques as characteristic of the third century. The selection of those responsible for these services in the end included, in an explicit and realistic manner, the possibility of an appeal to the governor.²¹ The stream of appeals to the governor increased in the third century for another reason, too. The redaction of the treatise of Herennius Modestinus, a jurist from the East, probably for the inhabitants of Asia Minor, was linked to the expansion of Roman citizenship in the Greek world in 212, which, for example, provoked the appointment of a number of guardians for orphans according to Roman law. An explanation was needed to determine who could be excused from this kind of function.²²

Considering the increase of duties accomplished in service of one’s city and the empire over time, and the propensity to litigate one’s appointment to these in front of the governor, this kind of function appears to have been an important and growing medium for Roman normativity to penetrate the distribution of these less politicised, and yet vital functions in the cities.

19 Jacques, *Le privilège de liberté*; Brélaz, “Aelius Aristide,” 604–605, n. 5. The main pieces of evidence are Ulpianus (2 *off. proc.*), *Digest* 1.16.7.1 (*curatores operum*, in charge of the construction of buildings); Papirius (2 *de const.*), *Digest* 50.8.12.4 (*curatores kalendarii*, in charge of the collection of the interests of the public credits, see Jacques, *Le privilège de liberté*, 263; Pont, *La fin de la cité*, 280); Aelius Aristides, *Orations* 50.72 (eirenarchs, in charge of local security); and the *praefecti* nominated in lieu of *duumviri* (main magistrates of the cities), as noted by Brélaz.

20 Nicomedia: curators: *SEG* XLIV 1008 (the same in LV 1376); LV 1371; curator and governor, *SEG* LV 1382; LXIV 1269. Under Diocletian: Pont, *La fin de la cité*, 305–311.

21 *Code of Justinian* 10.32.2 (Diocletian and Maximian). Compare to Table A of the *lex Troesmenisium*: the rules about the notice that must be given to a nominated person are developed too, but in order to make sure that a nominee for an embassy would be ready to leave within five days.

22 Méléze-Modrzejewski, “Grégoire le Thaumaturge”; Chevreau, “L’évolution de la tutelle romaine.”

(3) Magistracies and the notions of gradation and proportionality: the diffusion of Roman *mores*

In Roman cities (*municipia, coloniae*) a *cursus honorum* articulated the succession of magistracies in one's career: they were generally to be held in a precise order, at a certain age, with a lapse of time between two functions. Such a notion did not exist in cities of Greek heritage, in the Eastern part of the empire.²³ Beyond the Roman discourse about the best way of demonstrating one's political virtues in a lifetime, the concept of the *cursus* also provided the authorities with a convenient classification of the local elites. A series of imperial constitutions insisted on these notions of progression and proportionality. Yet, as the cities with Roman charters obviously had this kind of internal organisation, it can be confidently assumed that these sets of rules were particularly convenient for a governor asked to produce a decision about a contentious election of a magistrate in a "peregrine" city, providing him with principles to guide his judgment. These Roman laws used vocabulary such as *gradatim* ('in due order'), *a minoribus ad maiores* ('from the lesser to the greater'), *aequaliter* ('fairly'), *per vices* ('in turn'), *secundum aetates et dignitates* ('according to age and rank').²⁴

None of these terms were routinely used in the Greek cities: but when needed the governor acted according to these values, which were assuredly just and sound, but did not reflect internal and autonomous political transactions of power. In addition, in all cities, either of Roman constitution or not, the intervention of the governor, for the holders of magistracies and duties, represented an external authority intervening in internal, and unresolved, political affairs. A constitution dating from the time of Diocletian also seems to illustrate a problem regarding the lack of candidates to hold magistracies, a problem which may have been felt more palpably in some provinces than in others (Africa, for example, was certainly less affected). The emperors wished to avoid the same individuals being solicited repeatedly, following a principle of the Roman government that the affluence of local elites and the good health of civic communities were mutually dependent on one another.²⁵

²³ Plutarch, *Precepts of Statecraft* 813D: "it is right that men who are adorned with the highest offices should in turn adorn the lesser." The case-study by Kirbihler, "Un *cursus honorum* à Éphèse?" confirms that point.

²⁴ *Digest* 50.4.11.pr.; 50.14.5; 50.4.3.15; *Code of Justinian* 10.43.2. On the role of fiction in the extension of Roman law to aliens (*peregrini*), see Ando, *Law, Language and Empire*, chapter 1.

²⁵ Pseudo-Ulpianus (2 *opin.*), *Digest* 50.4.3.15. On the principle of sparing the wealth of local notables: Trajan in Pliny the Younger, *Letters* 10.111.

(4) The references to local laws in the legal codes and judicial imperial activity

In a manner typical of the Roman Empire, which truly demonstrates a tension between autonomy and administration, most of the references to *leges municipales* in the corpora of Roman law are linked to the distribution of “services” in the cities, and they recommend taking into account local specificities, when they exist. The *leges municipales* referred to in the codes were not a general municipal law enacted by Rome, but corresponded to local norms established in the cities, either peregrine or those which had received their laws from Rome.²⁶

The bulk of the evidence mentioning *leges municipales* concerns the distribution of official positions in cities, but other specificities are known.²⁷ As Georgy Kantor puts it, “it is natural to assume that as long as the traditional polis offices continued to exist, local custom would, to some extent, be accepted in the system of appointment to those and in the distribution of financial burden among the local elites.”²⁸ The visibility of this subject in the codes is apparently paradoxical: it proves both that the Roman governor was often asked to judge these problems, and that he had to take into account local laws, when they existed – which was, as Clifford Ando emphasises, a natural way of thinking for most of the Roman circles of power. (It should be noted though that this preference was not universally shared among the senatorial elite: for example Pliny, when he was the governor of Bithynia-Pontus, wondered if he could use Roman religious law in peregrine cities, an idea which Trajan firmly opposed.)²⁹ An example of how a Roman judge could intervene on this subject even in a free and peregrine city is found in a long letter of Marcus Aurelius to the Athenians: among other subjects, he decided that a candidate, whose election had been contested in court by his opponents, could not hold a local priesthood, because he did not meet the criteria defined in Athenian laws. The emperor carefully noted that he did not want “to upset the (local) traditions” in this matter.³⁰ This is typical of how local “auton-

26 On *lex municipalis* see Crawford, “How to Create a *Municipium*,” App. 2 (to which some references are added in the following note).

27 An asterisk marks constitutions or judgments from the Tetrarchic time (including Licinius): 1) Specific privileges of the cities: *Digest* 42.5.37; 50.1.17.5; 50.1.1.2; 50.4.18.25*; *Code of Justinian* 10.40.6*; 2) Particularities of local law, that have to be enforced, a) about official positions in the cities: Pliny the Younger, *Letters* 10.112–113; Fronto, *Correspondence, Ad amicos* 2.7.4; Follet, “Lettre de Marc Aurèle,” §2; *Digest* 3.4.6; 49.1.12*; 50.1.25; 50.2.10; 50.2.11; 50.3.1.pr; 50.4.1.2*; 50.4.3.1; 50.4.14.3; 50.4.18.27*; 50.5.8.3; 50.6.6.1; 50.16.214; *Theodosian Code* 12.15*; b) other cases: *Digest* 2.12.4; 3.4.3; 43.24.3.4; 50.1.21.7; 50.8.2.1; 50.9.6; *Code of Justinian* 7.9.1; 8.48.1*; 11.30.4*; 3) Harmonisation of local law by Roman law: *Digest* 50.4.11.1; 50.9.3; 4) Local law not to be enforced: *Digest* 47.12.3.5.

28 Kantor, “Greek Law,” 18.

29 Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, 10, 49–50 and 68–9.

30 Follet, “Lettre de Marc Aurèle.”

omy” could be protected by an external, Roman judge. The process nevertheless let political rivalry expand beyond the limits of the city, signaling the weakness of the internal processes of control, and was clearly contrary to the recommendations of Plutarch, at the beginning of the second century, whose reflection is all the more valuable as it was based on his own experience, as a friend of the Romans and magistrate in his own city of Chaeronea:³¹

However, the statesman, while making his native State readily obedient to its sovereigns, must not further humble it; nor, when the leg has been fettered, go on and subject the neck to the yoke, as some do who, by referring everything, great or small, to the sovereigns, bring the reproach of slavery upon their country, or rather wholly destroy its constitutional government, making it dazed, timid, and powerless in everything.

But, in a practical way, how could a judge consider both local and Roman law? Normally a Roman judge (either the governor or the emperor) had to check that local laws had not previously been dismissed in a similar case, according to Ulpian.³² In addition, in anticipation of judicial litigation about the conferral of offices,³³ the local elites would be apt to regulate local careers, or some aspects of them, in a Roman way. Regarding the statement by Trajan that local law should be enforced in the matter of an entrance-fee to local senates, Alan K. Bowman wrote thus: it is “an excellent example of legal provision being subject to gradual *de facto* change.”³⁴ Moreover, as Modestinus eloquently puts it in a chapter of the *Digest* pertaining to the *munera* and offices:³⁵

It is laid down by edict that offices (*honores*) should be conferred in due order and, in a letter of the deified Pius [Antoninus Pius, 138–161] to Titianus, that one should move from the lesser to the greater. This is true if it is prescribed in the *lex municipalis* that men of a certain status should be preferred for offices; it must, however, be realised that this provision is to be observed if the men are suitable (*idonei*); and this is what is contained in a rescript of the deified Marcus.

François Jacques pointed out that this passage showed the persistence of the criteria of *dignitas* in elections in Roman cities, superseding that of affluence. To take a different, but complementary, line of interpretation, I would insist on the fact that Marcus Aurelius stated that a local law about the conferral of magistracies had to abide by the Roman law about the definition of *idonei*. This notion certainly in-

31 Plutarch, *Precepts of Statecraft* 814F.

32 Ulpianus (4 *off. proc.*), *Digest* 1.3.34.

33 Ando, “Pluralisme juridique” and Pont, *La fin de la cité*, 265–271.

34 *P.Oxy.* 44, p. 123.

35 Modestinus (11 *pand.*), *Digest* 50.4.11.pr.–1. For other aspects, Jacques, *Le privilège de liberté*, 335–336.

cluded the idea of sufficient wealth, but, more generally, too, of any general condition relating to the capacity of acting as magistrate, according to Roman political culture (for example, the question of age, which is also raised in a passage of the *lex Troesmensium*).³⁶ Finally, an opinion of Callistratus, a jurist originating from a Greek-speaking region at the beginning of the third century, interestingly seems to classify the order in which criteria were to be taken into account for the conferral of magistracies, when a Roman judge was to hear such a case: character (*persona*), link to the city – whether one’s fatherland or not (*origo*) –, affluence (*facultates*), ‘law under which anyone is to perform *munera*’ (*lex secundum quam muneribus quisque fungi debeat*).³⁷ It is an astute mix of interpersonal appreciation (*persona*) and Roman criteria (*origo* and *facultates*), with a zest of local autonomy. The mention of municipal laws is also noticeable in the Tetrarchic time: contrary to what is often assumed, this period, in my opinion, applied, rather than breached, previous rules of government pertaining to the cities.³⁸

The cities and their constitutional variety – a variety that was nevertheless reduced when it came to *municipia* and colonies which received the main corpora of their laws from Rome, with some latitude regarding, e.g., their religious life – were constituent of the fabric of the empire. A discourse and a practice of supporting this variety existed, both at the local and at the imperial level. But over time, from Augustus to Diocletian, by solving problems on the organisation of self-government, the central regulation focusing on the local organisation of services or on the fulfillment of magistracies only increased, without any emperor having reversed the previous policies in a more centralised way.

Beginning with Augustus: The strength of civic rhetoric, the permeability of the civic level

What is being investigated here evinces the same complex articulation as in the preceding section. It delineates the capacity of the Roman power to consider the cities not in a diplomatic, but in a purely administrative way, and to occasionally intervene in the intimacy of their life – in their territory, or upon the requests of some of their components – and against the will of the cities themselves. Evidence

³⁶ See e.g. *idoneus* in Pseudo-Ulpianus (2 *opin.*), *Digest* 50.4.3.2; Ulpianus (57 *ad ed.*) 50.16.42.

³⁷ Callistratus (1 *cogn.*), *Digest* 50.4.14.3.

³⁸ For a detailed assessment of the question, Pont, *La fin de la cité*, chapter 4. Constantine did not treat the *consuetudines* of the African cities in the same manner: their popular assemblies might well live on but would not have any impact on the decisions (*Theodosian Code* 12.5.1).

shows that these separate “encroachments” existed from the time of Augustus and did not develop dramatically, up to and including the time of Diocletian. They continuously coexisted with diplomatic approaches and displays of respect for civic laws by the Roman power.

(1) Action regardless of statute and status

Very few texts attest explicitly to “edicts,” imperial orders addressed to the cities of the empire in general.³⁹ Fergus Millar accounted for their rarity and gave a series of examples. The edict of Claudius (41–54) about *vehiculatio*, found in Achaia (Greece), touched *et colonias et municipia non solum Italiae verum etiam provinciarum item civitatum cuiusque provinciae*, “colonies, as well as *municipia* not only in Italy but also in the provinces, as well as the cities of each province.”⁴⁰ The same enumeration of the whole series of statutes can be found in a document from the same time, cited by Flavius Josephus: an edict about the Jews was enacted by Claudius after violent riots in Alexandria. Its provisions for its publication were worded almost in the same way as the law about *vehiculatio*.⁴¹ Later on, only abridged versions of such a list are known: “for all the cities” or in “each city.”⁴² Only logical from the point of view of the empire, this kind of non-diplomatic style, which certainly accounts for so few generalised texts being engraved, is no less significant for the working of the empire than the rhetorical tone of embassies or one-to-one imperial diplomacy. Other expressions of general validity were found in the legal codes, extending principles throughout the whole empire, with adverbs such as *generaliter*.⁴³

Another administrative method of classifying the cities of the empire was to do so according to their size. This pragmatic approach was impervious to the individual rights or characteristics of any city, which at least in the Greek world was an important idea. Cities could thus be classified as *civitates minores, maiores, maximae*⁴⁴ (“smaller, bigger, biggest”); the payment to gladiators was arranged by Marcus Aurelius⁴⁵ according to a repartition of the cities into three categories,

³⁹ See Millar, *The Emperor*, 255–257. Add Ando, “The Rites of Others,” 265–267.

⁴⁰ *CIL* III 7251 (Tegea, in Greece).

⁴¹ Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 19, 287–291 (the omission of the *civitates* is probably related to an omission in the transmission of the text to Flavius Josephus).

⁴² *P.Fay.* 20 (Severus Alexander); Marcianus (12 *inst.*), *Digest* 50.7.5.6.

⁴³ About adverbs such as *generaliter, plenissime*, Brunt, “*Lex de imperio Vespasiani*,” 111.

⁴⁴ Modestinus (2 *excus.*), *Digest* 27.1.6.2.

⁴⁵ *FIRA*² I 49, §11.

which could be determined by the Roman official in the region. The idea is found later in a papyrus written by a teacher claiming personal rights.⁴⁶

The criterion of the size of a city elaborated by the Roman power, although wise from an administrative point of view, did not account for the way that cities, especially in the Greek world, still claimed to see themselves: as unique and incomparable. A similar trend of administrative rationality is to be observed when the jurist Paulus recommends that if an appropriate person could not be found in a city to be chosen as a guardian for children from this same city, the governor was to look for one in neighbouring cities.⁴⁷ The classification of cities by the imperial power deserves further study: as for the individuals, the notion of proportionality for the cities, or of neighborhoods creating obligations of duties, which could be appreciated only from a panoptic perspective, was contrary to the idea of diplomacy within the empire and permitted criteria alien to the idea of autonomy to seep into their constitutions.⁴⁸

(2) Sub-groups⁴⁹

Lastly, the intervention of an authority within the territory of a supposedly autonomous entity deserves some attention. It seems that it was mere routine, beginning from the Republican period and ongoing in Augustan times. The intervention in “cities and villages,” which means in cities and in the villages within their territory, is visible first through the regulation of *vehiculatio*. As early as the reign of Tiberius, the governor of Galatia would organise the duties of cities and their villages to avoid problems, thus eliminating a function which could have been left in the hands of the local magistrates. This change was for the sake of the cities and the intention was certainly good: the governor acted in an effort to give remedy to the illicit demands of Roman officials travelling through Anatolia.⁵⁰ In similar circumstances, Hadrian in 129 CE again reiterated this interest in “cities and villages [in their territory].”⁵¹ Later, the provisions for the application of Diocletian’s fiscal reforms stipulated that the imperial edict on the subject should be sent, in Egypt, by the magistrates of the cities to any village or place in their territory.⁵²

Sub-groups could also argue that their interests diverged from those of the city they belonged to. To cite only a few examples: in the cities listed by Flavius Josephus, the associations of Jews requested that the governor allow them to prac-

46 *P.Oxy.* 47, 3366 (Parsons, “Petitions and a Letter”).

47 Paulus (9 *resp.*), *Digest* 26.5.24; Callistratus (4 *cogn.*), 27.1.17.1 for an exemption.

48 See, too, in Ulpianus (2 *off. proc.*), *Digest* 1.16.7.1, the notion that the governor should encourage building operations in the cities “in proportion of their capacity.”

49 Eilers, “Inscribed Documents,” clearly delineates the issue.

50 *SEG* XXVI 1392.

51 *SEG* LIX 1365.

52 *P.Cair.Isid.* 1, l. 14–18.

tice their religion according to their customs (which meant authorisation for being absent from official occasions on Shabbat days, or having a special place of worship in the urban space); in Miletus, a family of priests of the sanctuary of the Cabiri asked the governor to confirm, in opposition to the city, their priesthood of this civic sanctuary;⁵³ in Sardis, a village secured the right to create a market, whose privileges were denied by the local senate.⁵⁴ In all of these cases, there is a distortion in the documentation: epigraphic evidence of these can only persist if it finds methods of expression in, or in spite of, the positive wording found in the epigraphical documents emanating from the civic world. These requests also account for the maturity and growing confidence of local sub-groups in the Roman administration. But these processes could also be likened to an infringement on the autonomy of the cities, for a series of internal questions for which the civic institutional bodies had expressed different resolutions.

Conclusion

In the Roman Empire, autonomy was not only an ideal, but also a practice, and an imperial norm, as I hope to have shown; but, as François Jacques puts it, “l’idée de l’Etat l’emporte sur l’idée de cité.”⁵⁵ Local autonomy could be promptly diminished, if needed, and was also altered over time by the permeation of Roman normativity in local life. From the very beginning, the nature of the empire in regards to local autonomy was clear to perceptive observers, too. After describing the constitution of the Cretan cities, Strabo (10.4.22), who completed his *Geography* under Tiberius (14–37), noted:

I have assumed that the constitution of the Cretans is worthy of description both on account of its peculiar character and on account of its fame. Not many, however, of these institutions endure, but the administration of affairs is carried on mostly by means of the decrees of the Romans, as is also the case in the other provinces.

It is worth comparing this passage to the one by Menander Rhetor, from Laodicea in Asia, at the end of the third century, the historiographic fortunes of which

⁵³ *IMilet* 1, 360; *ILabraunda* 61 could pertain to the same type of context.

⁵⁴ *AE* 1994, 1645.

⁵⁵ Jacques, *Le privilège de liberté*, 347.

have been much greater. This passage is used to demonstrate the situation of the Greek cities either after the edict of Caracalla, or during the reign of Diocletian.⁵⁶

Nowadays, however, the topic of laws is of no use, since we conduct public affairs by the common laws of the Romans. Customs however vary from city to city, and form an appropriate basis for encomium.

In my mind, both passages actually account for the “dual-level governance” system, with great insight: local customs existed (and they did well after 212), but Roman norms might be used, and would supersede local laws, in any domain. Everything was in place as early as the Augustan era. Lastly, another witness, Tacitus (*ca.* 56–120), as a member of the senatorial elite, precisely described an “arcane” feature of the empire. When the Roman Senate had to review the rights of the sanctuaries of the greatest cities of Asia, the embassies of the cities were received, and: *Factaque senatus consulta quis multo cum honore modus tamen praescribatur*. The senate passed a number of resolutions, scrupulously complimentary, but still imposing a limit.⁵⁷

Once in a while, what was “prescribed” could be qualified as an “infringement.” But the concern on the “encroachment” of local rights sometimes appears more as an ideological one, shared by some Greco-Roman intellectuals, or by contemporary historians. Considering the *local* interest in *Roman* normativity, and the *Roman* interest in *local* constitutions seen as subservient to the good functioning of the whole system, I would emphasise that the dynamics of the evolution of autonomy were identical from the beginning of the empire, worked as a result of the accumulation of precedents, and would progressively and in unplanned ways alter political transactions in the cities. As they mainly resulted from an administrative routine which, as a whole, did not offend local people, was often locally sought, and was not overtly antagonistic to local norms, they also went largely unnoticed, acting in the background, but in the end changing the reality of civic “autonomy.”

⁵⁶ Menander Rhetor I, 363, l. 11–14. See Ando, “Pluralisme juridique”; Lepelley, “Le nivellement juridique.”

⁵⁷ Tacitus, *Annals*, 3.63.

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Frédéric Hurllet

The Actors of the Roman Imperial System and Their Mobility: Personal Relationships and Official Communication in the Early Empire

The Roman Empire continues to fascinate, but no longer for the same reasons. For modern-day leaders, it is less frequently seen as a precedent to invoke by any means possible in asserting continuity or justifying domination; with regard to historians, it no longer represents the model of reference *par excellence*, but an imperial experience among so many others, one that was all the more distinctive due to its genuinely exceptional quality.¹ What draws attention today is its long duration that spanned at least seven centuries if we begin with Polybius (second century BCE) and take his judgment at face value regarding the “global” domination exercised by Rome from his time onward.² The Roman Empire was, along with the Chinese Empire, the longest lasting on the scale of world history, which raises questions regarding its highly remarkable longevity: how did Rome rule so many different peoples for so long across such an extended space? What elements explain why such a varied world experienced a common fate under the authority of Rome, and ultimately accepted it for centuries without fundamentally challenging it? It is at this stage of reflection that the notion of polycentric government and governance assume their true value. It is clear that the Roman imperial system could not have functioned solely through Roman military force and administrative organisation. The Roman army did not have the means to control such a vast territory due to its numerical weakness, numbering approximately half a million men under the Early Empire. Consequently, it was for the most part limited to the empire’s borders, in areas where its presence was deemed necessary depending on the situation. With respect to Roman administration, it was also undermanned in terms of the number of dignitaries and personnel allocated to such functions, and at least under the Early Empire did not take the form of a bureaucratised structure,³ which is one of the main differences from the Chinese Empire and prevented the Roman imperial power from closely monitoring the entire

1 Guerber and Hurllet, “L’Empire romain”; Hurllet, “(Re)penser l’Empire romain.”

2 See Polybius, *The Histories* 3.4.3.

3 Jacques and Scheid, *Rome et l’intégration de l’Empire*; Eich, *Zur Metamorphose des politischen Systems*; Eich, “Bürokratie in Rom?”

space subject to its authority. Given these conditions, the only way for the Romans to operate the imperial structure was to associate the governed within the government of the empire in one way or another.

Historians studying how the Roman Empire functioned brought about a major shift a few decades ago by emphasising the reductive quality of seeing the imperial structure as a purely predatory system, a form of domination founded solely on interactions within a Roman administration, or what served as one. The work of François Jacques served as a landmark, focusing its historical examination on what the French scholar called “the integration of the empire,” a formula that served as the title for a reference work on the Early Empire. The objective was to show that

the most original aspect of the Roman spirit, after the stage of eliminating resistance – and often true from this period onward – was knowing how to promote not only a self-interested collaboration with local elites, but also genuine support for the system.⁴

The decentering of the focus that resulted from studying the history of the Roman Empire from perspective of provincial societies within the broader system of domination – and no longer exclusively from the perspective of the central power – prompted Jacques to emphasise the fundamental autonomy of cities, and to study the connection between this autonomy and the initiatives of Roman power. This was the outline that he clearly presented in the introduction to his *magnum opus* devoted to the cities of the Roman West between 161 and 244:

The city can be seen only as being integrated within the empire, as a constituent element of a larger whole; any study must recognise this situation, which implies a pre-existing dependence. Autonomy was not a reality in itself, but was relative; it was defined solely in relation to the central power.⁵

Clifford Ando later studied the functioning of the Roman Empire through the loyalty demonstrated by provincials, by placing the notion of consensus and efforts to achieve it at the heart of a dynamic dialogue between the centre of Roman power (Rome and the emperor) and its numerous peripheries.⁶ I have contributed to this debate by pointing out that the consensus invoked by the emperor to seize and maintain power encompassed not only various Roman actors (the army, the Senate, the people) but also provincials, local aristocracies chief among them.⁷

⁴ Jacques and Scheid, *Rome et l'intégration de l'Empire*, VI.

⁵ Jacques, *Le privilège de liberté*, XV; see also Eck, *Lokale Autonomie*.

⁶ Ando, *Imperial Ideology*.

⁷ Hurlet, “Le consensus,” 170–173; see also Flaig, *Den Kaiser herausfordern*, 39.

Consensus is a central notion that helps define the Roman Empire's operating method as well as the long duration of this structure of domination, on the condition of remembering that it was never attained once and for all, and that on the contrary it was permanently under threat and had to constantly be maintained through deeds in order to continue being effective. This is why it is inseparable from the various actors that made it a reality, and without whose support Roman power would not have endured for centuries. The theory of "communicative action," which was developed by Habermas and applied to the Roman Empire's method of operation by Ando,⁸ is a rich concept only if we fully assess the conditions in which information circulated in an ancient setting: communication between the centre and peripheries concretely occurred through men whose mobility was at the time the only way of bringing actors into dialogue with one another and transmitting messages in both directions – in short, of ensuring the (proper) functioning of the living organisation that was the Roman Empire. The history of this empire and its administration is first and foremost the history of this mobility.

For practical reasons, this analysis will be limited to the imperial period. This does not entail that the Roman Empire began with Augustus' creation of the so-called imperial system, commonly known as the principate, for we know that this structure appeared during the Roman Republican period in connection with the conquest of non-Italian territories, primarily beginning in the third century BCE.⁹ However, the implementation of a new political system of an indisputably monarchical nature profoundly transformed the relationship between Romans and provincials as well as the empire's method of government, with the chronological division being determined by the provincial reform of January 27 BCE, which divided the empire into two types of provinces (public and imperial).¹⁰

Mobility for internal use only: Roman administration on the move

The Roman Empire was a highly hierarchical space of domination atop which sat the Roman emperor. The mobility of Roman imperial power varied depending on the reign and followed no fixed rules. For certain emperors travelling trans-

⁸ Ando, "Empire."

⁹ See on this topic Barrandon and Kirbihler, *Administrer les provinces*; Barrandon and Kirbihler, *Les gouverneurs et les provinciaux*.

¹⁰ This is the subject of the imperial monarchy's impact: see Millar, "State and Subject"; Lintott, *Imperium Romanum*.

formed into a government practice that allowed them to visit their empire and meet provincial populations, although the Roman Empire was so large that even a tireless voyager such as Hadrian (117–138) could not personally visit the entire imperial space, let alone govern or control it. As a result, from Augustus onward a form of government was implemented that relied on delegating authority to different members of the administration (senators, knights, freedmen, and imperial slaves), and whose base unit was the *provincia*.¹¹ This level of responsibility emerged during the Republican period, and originally referred to an area of authority, although it gradually became territorialised with the formation of a territorial empire that came to a close with Augustus.¹² The reform of January 27 BCE was a landmark in this regard, for it established a fixed list of provinces that would henceforth be permanently governed by a Roman dignitary, whereas previously the list of provinces was identified each year by the Senate, and varied.¹³ The Roman Empire was divided on this occasion into two types of provinces, public and imperial: the former were governed by proconsuls drawn by lots in the Senate from senators who had previously held at least one higher position in the magistracy in Rome (consulship or praetorship); the latter were governed by legates chosen by the emperor from among senators who had generally held a position in the higher magistracies or among knights bearing the title of prefect or *procurator*, depending on the province. This statutory distinction strictly speaking had no impact on the government of a province. These dignitaries performed all of the duties of a “governor” – a generic term that appeared later, in the third century at the earliest – and became relays for decisions made by the emperor and the Senate.¹⁴ They received instructions from the emperor in the form of *mandata* (‘instructions’) given to them upon their departure – a practice that began at an undetermined time, in all likelihood dating back to Augustus for all types of governors – and wrote to him directly to obtain rescripts, defined as imperial responses to the points of law submitted to him.¹⁵ They also informed provincials about the contents of imperial edicts and *senatus consulta* by displaying them in one form or another, and by then applying these resolutions in practice. In short, they were a direct link to the central power, which is to say to Rome and the emperor, thanks to the instrument of official correspondence transmitted via messengers. The primary instrument of communication between the centre and

11 See Baroni, *Amministrare un impero*.

12 On *provincia* during the Roman Republic, see Díaz Fernández, *Provincia et imperium*.

13 See Hurlet, *Le proconsul*, 25–35; Richardson, *The Language of Empire*, 17–25, 135–145.

14 Millar, “The Emperor, the Senate and the Provinces.”

15 On *mandata*, see Burton, “The Issuing of *mandata*”; Marotta, *Mandata principum*; Marotta, “Liturgia del potere”; Hurlet, *Le proconsul*, 199–201, 223–233; Dalla Rosa, *Cura et tutela*, 146–168.

the periphery was the imperial postal system known as the *vehiculatio*, which was perfected by Augustus and based on an infrastructure consisting of postal relays that in practice enabled a single messenger to transmit information to any part of the empire, as long as this information was official.¹⁶

Before becoming members of the imperial administration, governors were senators and knights who belonged to the first two orders of Roman society and competed with one another for the highest status within a hierarchy of honours. They thus pursued a career by completing various stages and seeking provincial governments in particular, which were generally obtained at the end of one's career after serving in Rome at least as a praetor, the first of the higher magistracies. As aristocrats they cultivated a proud spirit of independence, and enjoyed great autonomy in each of their provinces, with it being understood that they ultimately owed their nomination to the emperor and were required to follow imperial instructions. They therefore saw themselves, and were seen as, Roman dignitaries, an extension of practices from the Republican period rather than simple cogs within an administrative machine. This reality has prompted defences of the notion that the empire's government was also based on personal ties that the governors maintained with members of their administration and the governed, as well as with the emperor, as demonstrated by the correspondence between the governor of the province of Pontus-Bithynia, Pliny the Younger, and the emperor Trajan (98–117).

Governors did not limit their presence to the city in which they generally resided.¹⁷ Each year they completed an inspection tour that prompted them to make each of the most important cities in their province into the seat of a *conventus*, in which they stopped chiefly to render justice. They consequently made the Roman presence more concrete on provincial soil by performing one of the most emblematic duties in the exercise of power during antiquity, namely that of judge. Despite intense activity on the ground, given the circumstances they were unable to criss-cross the entire territory entrusted to them, and it is clear that they were most often no more than a name and a symbol of authority for the majority of provincials, who did not even have the opportunity to see them, let alone deal with them. They partly compensated for the governor's absence and inevitable lack of visibility through the on-site intervention of their administration, consisting of other senators early in their career in addition to knights, freedmen and slaves. The principle was the same as that which prevailed in the relationship between the central power and provincial governments, namely a delegation of authority. Governors were directly assisted by legates, who repre-

¹⁶ Crogiez-Pétrequin and Nélis-Clément, “La circulation des hommes.”

¹⁷ Haensch, *Capita provinciarum*.

sented them in particular by rendering justice in places where they could not go, which varied depending on the province;¹⁸ in public provinces, proconsuls were assisted by quaestors, of which there was one per province (perhaps two in Sicily).¹⁹ Provincials also had to reckon with provincial procurators, freedmen and especially knights, who managed the province's finances and oversaw the payment of taxes by cities, including in public provinces beginning in the first century CE. Freedmen and slaves were called on for low-ranking tasks.

Without going into detail regarding the duties performed by this provincial administration, it is clear that it was not a bureaucratic system, which would have required the use of a large number of men. However, while there is currently a debate regarding the strictly quantitative aspects of the governor's *officium*, with specialists being divided between maximalists and minimalists,²⁰ they all recognise that Roman administration was numerically undermanned in comparison to figures from Chinese Empires or from our modern-day administrations. Yet it successfully accomplished what it had been created for and allowed the Roman Empire to operate for a number of centuries. This success can only be explained if we imagine that the central power found relays in each province that could implement the actions it deemed necessary on the ground. The governor was a central rung on the provincial level, whose primary function was to represent the centre in the periphery, to echo the title of a recent work by Rubén Olmo López on this topic.²¹ Yet governors were far from the only actor. They had to find relays, who were now provincials, to carry out what the Romans were unable to do or would have performed less well.

18 Béranger, "Le gouverneur de province," for the provincial level.

19 Jacques and Scheid, *Rome et l'intégration de l'Empire*, 169–170.

20 The issue of the number of men in the governor's *officium* during the High Empire is a fundamental fact about the nature of Roman administration. For the imperial provinces, the number of officials is estimated to be around fifty men for provinces without legions, at least two hundred individuals for provinces with two or more legions, and around one hundred individuals for provinces with one legion (cf. Rankov, "The Governor's Men," 23–25; Rossignol, "Entre le glaive et le stylet," 84–85 and Béranger, *Le métier de gouverneur*, 116–118 and 127–128). For the public provinces, the figures are heavily debated because of the gaps in our documentation on this issue, but the maximum figure for the proconsul's *officium* in Asia is around 150–200 persons.

21 Olmo López, *El centro en la periferia*, regarding *Hispania*.

From peripheries toward the centre: Provincial societies and the government of the Empire

We have until now only told part of the story. The functioning of the Roman administration was of course not limited to its internal mobility alone. In order to endure, it required the participation of actors who strictly speaking were not members of the administrative machine, some of whom were not even Roman citizens. Another primary actor was the collective structure of the city (*civitas, res publica* or *polis*), which was established during the imperial period as a model for living in a community and was broadly diffused in the empire's regions where this form of political organisation had not yet taken hold, especially in the Roman West. Cities were in principle autonomous.²² As such, they ordinarily did not receive injunctions from the central power and were not subject to any form of direct or close monitoring. However, under pressure exerted by Rome in a variety of ways, they accepted their role as a local relay, across the vast provincial territory, of the influence of Roman authorities, who given these conditions could be content that the tasks entrusted to cities were carried out well. The active principle in the division of these tasks was that of subsidiarity,²³ in the sense that cities handled complex operations that the central power delegated to them, ones that they could complete with greater effectiveness given their direct relation with and close proximity to the governed. The authority entrusted by the Roman administration to civic authorities included areas as important as justice, taxation and law enforcement. Cities continued to conduct civic tribunals that in the first instance adjudicated in civil law cases, leaving to the governor the task of handing down decisions for more important civil cases involving larger sums of money – specific to each city and varying according to size – as well as for all criminal cases.²⁴ They also collected direct taxes and thereby served as a framework for the periodic administration of the census, based on which the receipts

²² See on this topic Jacques, *Le privilège de liberté*.

²³ For an application of the principle of subsidiarity in the Roman Empire, see the illuminating remarks by J.-L. Ferrary in an interview published in *Figaro Histoire*, April–May 2017: “Une dernière remarque sur ces cités grecques dans l’Empire, c’est leur formidable capacité à résoudre sur place, en interne, ce qui peut l’être avant d’interpeller une instance supérieure, le gouverneur de la province. Une sorte de principe de subsidiarité qui est valable, cependant, pour tout l’Empire.”

²⁴ See on this topic Fournier, *Entre tutelle romaine et autonomie civique*, for Asia and Achaia; see also Hurlet, “Justice, *res publica* and Empire.”

from direct taxation were submitted to Roman authorities.²⁵ Finally, they ensured relative tranquillity within their territory by training militias to keep the peace or by calling on Roman soldiers under the orders of the governor, or Roman legions in the event of more serious threats that they could not address themselves.²⁶ These were among the many indispensable tasks that Roman authorities spared themselves from performing by having other actors carry them out, thereby freeing time and energy to devote to other activities considered to be priorities.²⁷

The city ultimately emerged as the Roman Empire's basic unit, without which it would be unable to function or endure.²⁸ Given these circumstances, we understand why Roman emperors worked so hard to diffuse the model of the city throughout the empire, beginning with the creation of the imperial system. This is for instance what happened to the Gauls from 27 BCE onwards in connection with the first provincial-level census, conceived by Augustus as the first phase in organising the region's civic infrastructure.²⁹ The effectiveness of Roman administration under the High Empire was therefore based not so much on the number of its agents, which at any rate was limited at the time, but rather on the interdependence of their actions and those of the empire's cities. The Roman power chose to increase the number of cities during the first two centuries CE, such that they numbered approximately two thousand. It could thus govern a vast empire without having to maintain a bloated, costly and no doubt unpopular administration at all costs.

The city was a purely abstract collective structure that had legal reality only as a fiction and relied chiefly on the individuals entrusted with representing it.³⁰ These included local aristocracies who were the concrete actors that gave daily life to the many interactions between Roman power and cities. The overall system was therefore based firstly on individuals who met one another and developed personal ties, as part of a system of values that would gradually become more

25 Merola, *Autonomia*, for Asia Minor; for Roman West, see France, "Remarques sur les *tributa*," and France, "*Tributum et stipendium*."

26 Brélaz, *La sécurité publique*, discusses the issue of policing in Asia Minor; he reminds us, through a comparison with the case of the other provinces of the Roman East, that municipal autonomy may have been less developed and the Roman military presence more pronounced in provinces such as Syria, Judea-Palestine and Egypt, depending on the period (pp. 326–330). Thus, it is necessary to analyse each on a case-by-case basis, but this relativity does not call into question the fact that the city remained the first level in the organisation of empire-wide policing.

27 Brélaz, "Motifs et circonstances," 142–143.

28 See Hurlet, "Introduction. Gouverner l'Empire"; Flaig, *Den Kaiser herausfordern*, 39.

29 Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 53.22.5.

30 Concerning the way Roman jurists viewed the city and the place Roman law gave to this type of community, see Thomas, "Les juristes de l'Empire."

uniform and common across the empire. Aristocrats from cities were in constant relationship with Roman authorities in a variety of ways, for they were mobile, and this mobility was encouraged and facilitated by Roman authorities even as it was kept under their control. The creation of this imperial system by Augustus made the emperor into the figure of reference, who was justly seen as the very heart of power and inevitably became a centre of attraction. This explains, for example, why a couple named Eubolos and Tryphera, two citizens from Knidos (city located in southwestern Asia Minor) accused of homicide – clearly involuntary – in their own city, where they risked capital punishment, preferred to travel thousands of kilometres to Rome to seek out Augustus and be judged by him, for they were convinced they would find a more impartial atmosphere and decision.³¹ This was of course an exceptional case that ended to the detriment of the city, but it says a great deal about how long-distance journeys were fostered by the very existence of the imperial structure. The development of imperial justice, whether in the first instance of a legal case or as part of the appeal procedure, prompted the governed and individuals subject to trial to go to Rome or to wherever the princeps happened to be, as Paul of Tarsus did,³² and many others both before and after him. We can moreover see the extent to which the emperor was seen by provincials not only as the holder of supreme power, but also as an arbitrator whose intervention could disrupt power relations within a city – for example by granting Roman citizenship to one individual rather than another or by rendering a particular judgment – including between cities when they were in conflict and arguing about privileges.³³ The same is true for the governor and members of his provincial administration, in accordance with their recognised authority. While Roman authorities were sought out because they represented the highest power, the case of Eubolos and Tryphera is a reminder that Roman intervention could also be used by provincial actors for their own interest, in order that their point of view might prevail in a local and potentially competitive setting.³⁴ This involved playing one authority off against another, with Roman au-

31 This inscription was the subject of a useful publication in *RDGE*, 341–345, no. 67 (with an exhaustive bibliography for the period); see also Ehrenberg and Jones, *Documents*, 312 and, more recently, Oliver, *Greek Constitutions*, 34–39, no. 6; *IKnidos* I 34, 34–37 and Wankel, *Appello ad Principem*, 3–4.

32 See Brélaz, “The Provincial Contexts.”

33 For the fact that Rome and the imperial power were arbitrator and regulator of conflicts, see Burton, “The Resolution”; Heller, “*Les bêtises des Grecs*,” 361–363; see also Guerber, *Les cités grecques*, 115–116, 423–425.

34 In the same line, see Bryen, “Judging Empire”; Czajkowski, Eckhardt and Strothmann, *Law in the Roman Provinces*.

thorities being all the more willing to be activated given that their decisions took precedence.

Local tensions were not the only reason that provincials travelled, and thereby brought the provincial world into dialogue with the Romans and their authorities, in both Rome and large provincial cities. A number of examples bear mentioning. It is firstly important to point out the development throughout the Early Empire of sociocultural interaction between Roman and Greek aristocrats within the topographical context of the city of Rome, which had become an attractive site. Furthermore, the empire's process of integration prompted provincials pursuing a Roman career – which would make them part of the equestrian or senatorial order – to go to Rome or the other locations to which they were sent by the Senate and imperial authorities. On such occasions they rubbed shoulders with other aristocratic families that were already settled in Rome and Italy, and in turn purchased real estate – an obligation from the second century onward – and joined together through marriage alliances.³⁵

As emphasised earlier, aristocrats from cities used the instrument of mobility within the empire firstly for their own interests: to defend themselves in a legal context, obtain individual privileges or live in the centres of the empire such as Rome with a view to developing personal relationships with high-ranking Romans that could be of use later. However, defending their individual interests was not their only objective. They could also use their contacts with Romans or the superior status they had acquired to their city's advantage, defending the interests of their civic community by pleading its case. These two ends were closely complementary and far from being incompatible. The aristocratic mentality was constructed in such a way in antiquity that an aristocrat increased his prestige and strengthened his personal position by taking charge of the public affairs of his *polis* or *res publica*.

Institutional mobility: The case of civic embassy

Up to this point I have discussed the trips made within the empire by aristocratic members of cities for personal reasons, as well as the extensive relationships and different orders that these journeys created or strengthened. Mobility from the empire's cities toward Rome and Roman authorities could also be of an institu-

³⁵ See on this topic Burnand, *Primores Galliarum*, for Gauls and Des Boscqs-Plateaux, *Un parti hispanique*, for Hispania; more to come from Fr. Kirbihler on process and modalities of the integration into the Senate of aristocrats from Asia Minor.

tional order as part of a civic embassy, which was an extension and projection of the city, at a time when it had renounced being independent in a world dominated by a single city, Rome.³⁶ The imperial period coincided with the spread of a practice that occurred at an unprecedented rate. The primary link for transmitting different types of information between the centre and the periphery in both directions was undoubtedly a constant flow: cities would set out to meet Roman authorities and communicate via their ambassadors (*legati*) the content of decrees that honoured the imperial family in one way or another,³⁷ or appealed to them for a decision in their favour, for instance to obtain a privilege or a request for arbitration in a conflict with a neighbouring city; Roman authorities responded to these requests both positively and negatively, and took advantage of the return of ambassadors to their cities to communicate the information they wanted to convey.³⁸ This system of circulating information from the periphery toward the centre and from the centre toward the periphery became so central to the functioning of the empire that it led to the installation of *stationes* in Rome, which were made available to ambassadors according to methods for which we lack a detailed understanding.³⁹

The documentation for the most part informs us of the embassies sent to the emperor. What we call the *legatio Urbica* in reference to the city of Rome, considered as the primary location for Roman imperial power, does not, for all that, represent the category to which cities most often made recourse. It is more likely that being received by the emperor in person conferred prestige onto ambassadors and the city from which they came, such that the memory of this civic action was worthy of preservation through the engraving of an inscription, on the condition, of course, that it had met with success. The most common civic embassies were also those that left the fewest traces in the sources, namely those that were addressed to provincial authorities and that were easier to organise due to the shorter distance to travel. The impact of this type of embassy should not be neglected in such a system.⁴⁰ For some provincials and provincial cities, it was often the only way to establish contact with the representative of Roman power and to

³⁶ Habicht, “Zum Gesandtschaftsverkehr”; Hurlet, “Les ambassadeurs.”

³⁷ See *CIL* XI 1421 = *ILS* 140 = *InscrIt* VII, 1, 7 = *AE* 1991, 21 (decree of Pisa, 4 CE); *AE* 1915, 1 = *IGR* IV 1756 = Ehrenberg and Jones, *Documents*, 99 = *I.Sardis* I 8 (decree from Sardis, 5 BCE); Pliny the Younger, *Letters* 10.43–44.

³⁸ *Tabula Siarensis*, frg. IIb, l. 21–27 (for the edition, Crawford, *Roman Statutes*, I, n° 37–38, 507–548). Found in *Siarum* (Baetica), the *Tabula Siarensis* was a *senatus consultum* (decree of the Roman senate) of 19 CE on the funerary honours to be given to the memory of Germanicus. On this passage, see Hurlet, “Les modalités,” 55–57.

³⁹ Nelis-Clément, “Les *stationes*,” 271–273; France and Nelis-Clément, “Tout en bas de l’empire.”

⁴⁰ Eck, “Diplomacy.”

request intervention in their favour. The governor and members of his administration could not visit all of the cities in their province during their annual tour, regardless of its size; they compensated for this inaccessibility by paying great attention to messages that were communicated exclusively via individuals sent by cities. The position of ambassador was defined in these conditions as a *munus* or a civic liturgy (a compulsory office, a duty), carried out in the service of the city, and highlighted as such.

While embassies were part of an institutionalised system, they nevertheless emphasised mechanisms based on personal relationships between individuals. They chiefly relied on individuals: those sent by cities and those who received them in the Roman administration. This is why cities chose ambassadors with the utmost care. Municipal laws – such as those of Urso (a Roman colony in Baetica), Irni (a Latin *municipium* in Baetica) and Troesmis (a Latin *municipium* in Moesia Inferior) – and imperial constitutions reveal that these often complex rules limited the number of ambassadors⁴¹ and through the drawing of lots extended their recruitment to all members of the municipal council, *ordo* or *boulē*, in an effort to establish a rotation among them.⁴² For a long time, we deduced from the contents of these legal documents that beginning in the first century CE, the position of ambassador quickly lost its attractiveness for local aristocracies, to the point that it became a heavy burden that they sought to avoid.⁴³ This overview clearly calls for nuancing. Limiting the number of ambassadors was an imperial measure that sought to lighten the financial burdens of cities, with the understanding that compensation would be paid by the city in the form of a *viaticum* to each ambassador, aside from the rare cases in which they financed their travel themselves (this was known as the *legatio gratuita*). The principle of rotation was instituted not because members of the municipal council were disinterested in this *munus*, but more fundamentally because the number of embassies increased so much that it was deemed necessary to broaden the pool of ambassadors as much as possible, which is to say to include all members of municipal councils.⁴⁴ The rules provided for a departure from selecting ambassadors through the drawing of lots if a qualified majority of two-thirds of municipal council members decided to *choose* their ambassadors among those individuals possessing the highest social status or ora-

41 Marcianus (12 *inst.*), *Digest* 50.7.5.6.

42 *AE* 1986, 333, §44–47 for the *lex Irnitana*. We have taken the text from the edition of Lamberti, *Tabulae Irnitanae*. For the *lex Troesmis*, see *AE* 2015, 1252 (see also Eck, “Die *lex Troesmensium*”).

43 See Lamberti, *Tabulae Irnitanae*, 131–132 and Eck, “Diplomacy,” 200–201.

44 Hurlet, “Les ambassadeurs,” 122–125.

torical talent,⁴⁵ for instance with cases involving a *legatio Urbica* sent to the *princeps* to convince him of the merits of a particular request.

Conclusion

The government of the empire relied on the active participation of its provincial societies and the relationships they had with Roman authorities, within a system based on different and strictly hierarchical levels of power, each with its own specific function: first came the imperial power, whose decisions claimed to be indisputable; next came the provincial administration headed by the governor, which applied Rome's domination on the ground, as well as the Roman army; below that was the world of 2,000 cities, which the Romans considered to be numerous relays for their domination on the local level and which they entrusted with carrying out a series of essential operations to their advantage, thereby unburdening them of complex and unpopular tasks (collecting taxes, exercising justice); finally, the base level was members of local aristocracies, who represented and embodied their cities in their multifaceted relations with Roman authorities. As part of such a highly structured pyramidal system, Roman imperial power soon faced a central challenge that resulted from its attractiveness, namely the risk of congestion raised by the mass of requests from the provincial world. In order to regulate the situation, it created a filter between itself and the cities by making the intermediary level of the provincial governor a mediating authority tasked with differentiating between those cases that should be handled on the provincial level and those that were authorised to reach the level of the emperor. This is what took place on the jurisdictional level when it was provided, under Claudius (41–54) at the latest, that requests for an appeal judgment presented by provincials would be transmitted to the *princeps* only after earlier examination of the case by the governor, and with his agreement.⁴⁶ Later, Roman imperial power also tried to impose the same procedure for embassies when the emperor Antoninus (138–161) established the principle that ambassadors required the governor's authorisation to appear before the princeps.⁴⁷ This measure, which was very difficult to imple-

⁴⁵ *Lex Irnitana*, Rubr. 45, l. 28–30; Marcianus (12 *inst.*), *Digest* 50.7.5.5; *AE* 2003, 1559a, l. 25–29, 32–35, 40–46 = *SEG* LIII 659 = *I.Thrake Aeg.* 180 (decree of Maroneia from Samothrace, 41–54 CE).

⁴⁶ *I.Cos Segre* 43 = *IG* XII.4 261 (letter of the proconsul of Asia Cn. Domitius Corbulo to the city of Cos, 52/3 CE?).

⁴⁷ *IAM* II 307, l. 27–28 (decree of Sala, Mauretania Tingitana, 144 CE); cf. Williams, “Antoninus Pius.”

ment on a concrete level, does not appear to have survived the emperor who put it in place. More generally, it was impossible to make the governor into an airtight filter for all requests, for sometimes in practice cities and their aristocrats circumvented the provincial level. Here we see the operational limitations of an administrative system that could not exert tight control over the governed due to the small number of its representatives.

In his landmark work on the emperor in the Roman world, Fergus Millar defended the notion of a Roman central power that was entirely reactive, in the sense that it responded to the countless requests of the governed rather than taking the initiative.⁴⁸ This argument, which made much of civic embassies, has drawn a great deal of commentary since its presentation. It has been criticised and nuanced, especially because an analysis of the Roman emperor's activities and authority show that he could on occasion be more "proactive" and take the initiative, for example by sending instructions (*mandata*) to governors.⁴⁹ It has also been pointed out that the image of a more passive than active power was inevitable considering the great imbalance between the large number of governed and the limited number of members in Roman administration, such that it was also the norm in non-bureaucratic imperial structures, as was the case for empires from pre-industrial times.⁵⁰ The considerations developed in this synthetic study suggest that we must henceforth move beyond this assessment and approach the problem in a different manner. The central question that this study of the Roman Empire's government has sought to explore is not to determine the emperor's degree of passivity or reactivity, but rather to understand the extent and manner in which this supposed passivity or reactivity was complementary to the participation of cities in the imperial system. What emerges more specifically is that such a connection between these two poles of power was the central characteristic of the government of the Roman Empire and a key strength that helped the system function effectively.

For all that, we must not paint an idealised and idyllic portrait of relations between governors and the governed. The principle of subsidiarity as it has been defined went hand in hand with another principle, that of hierarchy: Roman primacy could not be challenged and their directives had to be executed under pain of punishment. This meant that when it came to their cities, provincials had to pay the assigned taxes, adhere to Roman justice, conform to norms for assigning jurisdictions as defined by the Romans, provide soldiers and keep the peace.

⁴⁸ Millar, *Emperor in the Roman World*.

⁴⁹ Bleicken, "Zum Regierungsstil des römischen Kaisers," 185, n. 3 and 195; Hurlet, *Le proconsul*, 199–201.

⁵⁰ Eich, "Centre and Periphery."

There were times when the governed fought back against the Roman order, and many revolts broke out throughout the Early Empire to challenge the census, tax, cadastral, and legal framework imposed by Rome. These were natural reactions to a system of exploitation and were always both local and in reaction to an occasional decision made by the Romans.⁵¹ By contrast, cities never challenged the function left to them by Roman central power, and that made them an essential cog in the government of the empire. We could speak of “soft power,” but on the express condition of remembering that this form of government was not in keeping with a weak ideology, but was instead embodied by individuals who were not one-dimensional actors, and who defended their own interests. The system lasted as long as these interests were shared by the different actors, both Roman and provincial. It was only during the second half of the third century that the Roman model as it had functioned up to that point transformed under military pressure, with the provincial reforms of Diocletian (284–305) being a central and decisive moment. This does not mean that the Roman Empire entered a stage of decline, but that it transformed so profoundly that it became something else: it was still Roman, but it was henceforth in keeping with another model that flourished during late antiquity.⁵²

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⁵¹ Hurllet, “Rejeter le contrôle de Rome”; see also France, “L’impôt provincial,” 168–180.

⁵² Eich, “Die Normierung imperialen Raums.”

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Marco Vitale

Bilateral Relations, Federal Organisations, and Peer-Polity Interaction Within the Provinces of the Roman Empire

The whole history of the Greek and Eastern Mediterranean from the Classical to the Roman period was characterised by the continuous establishment of autonomous unions of city states. Under Roman rule, the formal *mise en place* of such federal organisations conformed to the new territorial framework of administration, the provinces. Thus, representatives from the major provincial communities formed so-called *koiná*, “commonalities,” in the form of city-leagues. In the Latin West similar confederacies were introduced later and explicitly called *concilium provinciae*, ‘assembly of the province.’ This empire-wide phenomenon of federal organisations raises several questions: (1) What caused the emergence of province-related confederacies and who initiated this development? (2) What were the political, legal and cultural functions of such organisations? (3) How was membership structured, what were the similarities/differences between the Greek Eastern and Latin Western models of provincial confederacies? (4) How did member-communities interact with each other? (5) To what extent did this federal system favour or inhibit the autonomy of the single member communities?

Classical traditions of city leagues and first federal assemblies under Roman rule

Federal organisations already existed in the Greek world prior to the administrative integration of the whole Mediterranean into the Roman Empire. The process of Roman provincialisation took place only gradually and slowly between the late third and the middle of the first century BCE. Sicily formally became the very first Roman province in 227 BCE at the latest. In Late Archaic and Classical Sicily, most communities in Eastern and Central Sicily succeeded under the leadership of Syracuse in forming short-lived city leagues, formally military alliances (*symmachia*), against the Carthaginians which controlled the Western part of the island.¹ These provided the optimal federal pre-structures for the organisation of adequate politi-

1 Sartori, “Il commune Siciliae”; Vitale, “Städtebünde auf Sizilien.”

cal representation for the provincial populace under Roman rule, namely, through the creation of a provincial council/assembly.² However, we have only sparse attestation of this province-wide organisation: (1) The Roman historiographer Livy mentions some meetings of the ‘council of the Sicilian cities’ (*concilium civitatum Siculorum*) in the year 200 BCE. (2) In the year 70 BCE, the famous Roman orator and senator Cicero initiated the legal proceedings (as *patronus*) on behalf of the ‘commonality of (the province of) Sicily,’ *commune Siciliae*, in the context of the corruption and extortion trial of Gaius Verres, the former governor of Sicilia.³ (3) The unnamed “cities of the province of Sicilia,” most probably on behalf of the provincial assembly, dedicated an honorary inscription to the governor C. Plautius Rufus for his many benefactions during and after the devastation of the volcanic eruption of 32 BCE.⁴ We can assume that the *commune provinciae* in Greek Sicily was first organised by the representatives of the major cities soon after the Roman’s administrative and territorial structuring of the new province.

On the basis of our epigraphic and numismatic documentation, we are well informed about the creation of the provincial city-league in the first Roman province of the Eastern Mediterranean, the *provincia Asia*: in 133 BCE the Romans became legal successors of the Attalids whose empire encompassed most of western Asia Minor. The earliest explicit attestations of a province-wide confederacy in the province of Asia go back to two inscriptions from the middle of the first century BCE, which both mention the “commonality of the *Hellenes* in Asia” as recipient of a governor’s letter and dedicator of an honorary decree.⁵ “*Koinón* of the Hellenes in Asia” must have been the original designation of the province’s council which became later known by the wording “*koinón* of (the province of) Asia.” The specification “Hellenes” points to the fact that in the Anatolian-Greek environment of Western Asia Minor most of the Greek city-states had already been constituted in federal organisations. Like in Greek Sicily in Western Asia Minor too, city-leagues, created for various purposes, were not a novelty: Herodotus (1.142) states in the fifth century BCE that the Ionians formed a religious-cultic confederacy of twelve (since the mid-seventh century BCE), later thirteen cities in Asia, the so-called Ionian League,⁶ which lasted until the fourth century CE. Most of these city-states were integrated into the Attalid Kingdom of Pergamon and subsequently into the Roman province of Asia. In southwestern Asia Minor too,

2 On Classical and Hellenistic Greek federalism, see Beck and Funke, *Federalism in Greek Antiquity*.

3 Cicero, *The Verrine Orations* 2.2.103; 114; 145–146; cf. Livy, *History of Rome* 31.29.7–9.

4 *CIL IX* 5834; Manganaro, “La Sicilia,” 15; Vitale, “Städtebünde auf Sizilien,” 39–46.

5 Merola, *Autonomia locale governo imperiale*, 145–149.

6 Herrmann, “Das κοινὸν τῶν Ἴώνων,” 223–224.

sometime during the fourth century BCE, the so-called Lycian League was formed, mainly for military purposes. This confederation, which minted its own federal coins,⁷ was composed of more than 20 member cities and still acted as a provincial assembly after Lycia's annexation in 43 CE – in some instances we can observe an almost direct continuation of federal organisations from the Hellenistic to the Roman period. A crucial moment for the empire-wide development of assemblies representing their province was the deification and cultic worship of Roman emperors both during their lifetime and after their death. This cultic practice was based on a long tradition of ruler cult that had already been common among Hellenistic kings in most regions of the Greek East before the establishment of Roman provinces.

The 'invention' of imperial cults

It is not surprising that the initiative to establish a similar federal cult for the Roman rulers is first attested on the west coast of Asia Minor. The third-century Greek historian and Roman senator Cassius Dio reported the defining moment of its genesis in his history of Rome.⁸ Reviewing the period from the late Republic to the rise of Augustus, Cassius Dio points out that the crucial year was 29 BCE, when Octavian (named *Augustus* from 27 BCE), approached by embassies from Asia and Bithynia, permitted the consecration of sacred precincts in both provinces, instructing the Roman residents to worship the goddess *Roma* and his father Caesar, the so-called "hero Julius," in Ephesus and Nikaia. In addition to this, he gave permission to the foreigners, the non-Roman provincials (*peregrini*) whom he called "Hellenes," to establish areas sacred to himself in Pergamon and Nikomedeia. This custom was maintained with respect to subsequent emperors and spread from Asia Minor to other parts of the empire – especially in the west. Dio's passage deals with the province-wide institution of the imperial cult. This cult existed on at least two levels, the civic and the federal.⁹ The emergence of particular city titles in most of the Eastern provinces, such as *metropolis*, and, foremost, "first (city) of the province" and *neokóros*, 'temple-warden,' point to

⁷ Troxell, *Coinage of the Lycian League*.

⁸ Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 51.20.6–8; on this passage, see Vitale, "Hellenische Poleis," 167–169; on the origins of the *koiná* in Asia and Bithynia see Heller, "Hellenisme et primauté," 215–220.

⁹ Price, *Rituals and Power*, 64–73; for the Latin West, see Hemelrijk, "Local Empresses," 318–349; for a summary, see McIntyre, *Imperial Cult*. For provincial *concilia* in the literature of Roman jurists, see most recently Trisciuglio, "Osservazioni sui *concilia* provinciali," 449–474.

city hierarchies and underline the distinction between a local civic level and a federal provincial level of imperial cult. At the same time as the provincial assembly of Asia dedicated temples to the deified Octavian in 29/28 BCE, it also created “sacred” festivals, the so-called ‘common/federal games of Asia’ (*koinos agón Asias*), which first took place in Pergamon, the former seat of the Attalid kings.

Certainly, *koiná* had various origins. During Imperial times we encounter different forms of locally established *koiná* which were created primarily for cultic purposes, most of them pre-dating Roman rule.¹⁰ For example, there existed numerous “(inter-)regional” cultic communities such as the federally organised city-league of coastal Ionia,¹¹ or smaller cultic associations that were mainly composed of groups of villages and small cities such as the *koinón* of the *Lalasseis* and *Ken-natai* in Southeastern Anatolia,¹² or the *sýstema Chrysaoréon* consecrated to the local god Zeus Chrysaoreus in the Southwest-Anatolian region of Caria.¹³ Even an empire-wide “mixed” organisation of member-states, both Greek *koiná* and single city-states, is attested: the so-called *Panhellenion* was founded by the emperor Hadrian in 131/132 CE for inter-regional religious and ceremonial activities.¹⁴

However, such local/(inter-)regional federal organisations were widely unrelated to the specific pattern of Roman territorial administration politically, for they did not correspond to Roman (sub-)provinces territorially and their councils did not act as the juridical representatives of the (sub-)provinces’ inhabitants (see below). There have been methodological flaws with most recent attempts in modern scholarship to prove that no substantial structural differences existed between, on the one hand, local/(inter-)regional *koiná* without any formal (territorial and juridical/political) connection to the Roman governmental system, and on the other hand, the *koiná* that officially and legally represented Roman administrative (sub-)districts (*provinciae!*).¹⁵ A prime example of our understanding of province-related federal organisations is the self-designation “the radiant city-league of the *eparchy* of the Thracians” on second-century inscriptions from Southern Bulgaria:¹⁶

¹⁰ See e.g. Herz, “Der Kaiserkult,” *passim*.

¹¹ On the so-called Ionian League, see e.g. Herrmann, “Das κοινὸν τῶν Ἰώνων,” 223–240; for the archaic and Classical precedents of this federation see Tausend, *Amphiktyonie und Symmachie*, 90–94.

¹² Staffieri, *La monetazione di Olba*, 25–28, nos. 48; 53; 60; 22–23, nos. 36; 38; see the discussion on local *koiná* by Marek, *Geschichte Kleinasiens*, 517–525; Vitale, *Eparchie und Koinon*, 29–30.

¹³ E.g. described by Strabo, *Geography* 14.2.25; cf. Magie, *Roman Rule*, 1031–1032; Fabiani, “Strabone e la Caria,” 373–400.

¹⁴ On the *Panhellenion*, see e.g. Follet and Peppas-Delmousou, “Le décret de Thyatire.”

¹⁵ E.g. contra Lozano Gomez, “Emperor Worship.”

¹⁶ *IGBulg* 3.1 882; cf. *SEG* LV 1379, 1383; on the Thracian *koinon* see Sharankov, “The Thracian κοινόν.”

eparcheia was the usual Greek translation of the Roman technical term *provincia*, referring to a magistrate's sphere of authority. It is crucial for our argument that the terms *eparcheiai* in Greek and *provinciae* in Latin were applied not only to the *provincia* of a high-ranking senatorial/equestrian governor (e.g. Syria), but also to sub-provinces within a gubernatorial *provincia* (e.g. Iudaea or Phoenice within the province of Syria).¹⁷

Different organisational forms of federal assemblies in the Greek Eastern (*koinón*) and Latin Western (*concilium provinciae*) provinces

The provincial imperial cult in the Eastern provinces was institutionalised on the basis of city-leagues, so-called *koiná*, represented by assemblies (*koinoboullion*, *synhedrion*) which were composed of all delegates from the member communities of a province. Normally, such “semi-autonomous” institutions were promoted, or at least acknowledged, by the Roman authorities, but they were no official institutional part of the Roman provincial administration.¹⁸ In this context “semi-autonomous” means, in particular: territorial congruence of (sub-)provinces and *koiná* (the Romans frequently formed their provinces such that they corresponded with the territorial extent of existing city-leagues and former kingdoms); no imperial/senatorial interference in the internal electoral systems and decision making processes of city-leagues; juridical representation of the province's inhabitants by the institutions of such city-leagues before senate and emperor; sometimes collection of the Roman provincial taxes by high magistrates of the *koinón*. Because these *koiná* correlated territorially with sub-provinces within the whole territory administered by one governor, several parallel provincial assemblies representing their eparchy could coexist in the same gubernatorial province.¹⁹

¹⁷ On this relevant distinction, see Vitale, *Eparchie und Koinon*, 13–27.

¹⁸ The Lycian league in particular (Behrwald, *Der lykische Bund*, 170–173), but also the *koiná* of Asia, Bithynia, Galatia and Macedonia (cf. Deininger, *Die Provinziallandtage*, 137), Cilicia (Ziegler, *Städtisches Prestige*, 84–85) and Pamphylia (*I.Perge* 294, 321; İplikçiöğlü, Çelgin, and Çelgin, *Epigraphische Forschungen*, 69–70, No. 13; Vitale, *Eparchie und Koinon*, 272–277) were each sometimes referred to as *étnos* (orig. meaning “ethnic group”) in imperial inscriptions, as an alternative to the more common terms *koinón* or *eparcheia*.

¹⁹ In some few cases different assemblies had been merged to form one single federal organisation (such as the assemblies in the provinces of Cilicia and Syria), at least for the celebration of common festivals.

The picture is different in the Latin West, where the provincial imperial cult was introduced some decades later than in the Eastern provinces and officially practiced in the *concilium provinciae*. This “provincial council” was an assembly of towns and tribes/peoples under the formal leadership of priests, the *sacerdotes* and *flamines Romae et Augusti/orum*.²⁰ In some cases the *concilium* represented the province of one single governor.²¹ In other cases, provinces of more than one governor were united into a single *concilium*.²² In the 1960s, J. Deininger classified all Eastern and Western federal organisations, without any distinction, as *Provinziallandtage*, ‘provincial commonalities’,²³ suggesting that confederacies were just parliaments made of representatives of local communities. The word “Provinziallandtag” turns out to be problematic, since it is an anachronistic adaptation of a concept familiar in the nineteenth century to designate the German regional parliaments under the hegemony of the Prussian Kingdom regularly convened by the king. The organisation of ancient provincial confederations was not a matter of imperial participation and structurally more complex: only a limited number of Greek federal organisations can be linked to the modern designation “Provinziallandtage,” because almost every eparchy in the sense of a sub-province organised its own *koinón* in the first years following its incorporation into a Roman province.²⁴ For example, the organisation of the provincial imperial cult in the gubernatorial provinces of *Lycia et Pamphylia* and *Pontus et Bithynia* was based on two adjoining *koiná*, because each of these city-leagues encompassed the geographical extent and political representation of one of the two eparchies that formed the “double province.” Since we are not dealing here with *concilia provinciarum* in the proper meaning of assemblies representing the whole gubernato-

20 Fishwick, *Imperial Cult*, 294–295.

21 E.g. *Concilium p(rovinciae) H(ispaniae) c(iterioris)* CIL II 4127, 4230, 4246; cf. as well the *concilium provinciae Baeticae*: CIL 2².7 291, 293, 295; see on this Fishwick, *Imperial Cult*, 215–247; *concilium provinciae Africae*: CIL VIII 17899; Fishwick, *Imperial Cult*, 187–209; *concilium provinciae Mauretaniae Caesariensis*: ILS 6871; Fishwick, *Imperial Cult*, 205–206; *concilium provinciae Narbonensis*: CIL XII 6038; Fishwick, *Imperial Cult*, 155–185.

22 The *concilium Galliarum* represented the provinces of Aquitania, Belgica, Lugdunensis; cf. Fishwick, *Imperial Cult*, 55–59; Deininger, *Die Provinziallandtage*, 99–104. The *concilium provinciarum Daciae III* represented the provinces of Porolissensis, Apulensis, Malvenensis; Fishwick, *Imperial Cult*, 173–177.

23 Deininger, *Die Provinziallandtage*, 1–6; see the discussion by Marek, *Geschichte Kleinasiens*, 517–525; Vitale, *Eparchie und Koinon*, 31–38.

24 See Marek, *Geschichte Kleinasiens*, 449–453 on the Black Sea region; Ziegler, “Das Koinon,” 137–153 on the South-Eastern provinces; Vitale, *Eparchie und Koinon, passim* on all provinces of Asia Minor; Sartre “Les manifestations du culte impérial”; Bru, *Le pouvoir impérial*; Vitale, *Koinon Syrias*, on the Levant.

rial “province” (or more of them), we need more suitable terminology that distinguishes these *koiná* from the Latin Western *conclia*: e.g. by adopting the heuristically crucial term *eparchy*, it would be better to speak of “eparchy-*koinón*” or “eparchy-assembly.”²⁵ Evidently, both the Eastern and the Western systems of provincial federal organisation corresponded to Roman administrative structures in certain territorial aspects, but without having to claim the still generally accepted thesis of a “formale Einheitlichkeit der Institution in allen Teilen des Reiches,” as incorrectly suggested by the Prussian historicist J. Marquardt at the end of the nineteenth century and J. Deininger in the second half of the twentieth century.²⁶

What about the emergence of new provincial identities? Of course, the use of the terms *provincia* or *eparcheia* by local communities themselves to refer to their own federal organisations tells us something about their perception of the autonomy they had under Roman provincial administration. In a few cases we have quite eloquent epigraphic and numismatic attestations that these communities shaped a collective identity based on actual administrative realities (see below, e.g. the personifications of eparchies in the coinage of Tarsus). Self-identification of the provincials with their newly created federal system was sometimes reflected in official texts and images. In particular, the oldest eparchy-*koiná* typically represented itself in federal coinages. Some specimens show the Greek version KOINOY ΑΣΙΑΣ or KOINOY ΒΕΙΘΥΝΙΑΣ, ‘(coinage) of the *koinón* of Asia/Bithynia’). Other coins present the abbreviations COM ASI/COM BIT: the Latin translation of *koinón* reads *commune*.²⁷

Legal/political representation of the province’s inhabitants

The main political and juridical functions of Eastern provincial *koiná* and Western *conclia* concerned the meetings of the respective federal assembly and the political and juridical representation of the province’s inhabitants to the senate and emperor, for example through appeals directed against former high-ranking Roman

²⁵ Vitale, *Eparchie und Koinon*, 38–40.

²⁶ Deininger, *Die Provinziallandtage*, 6, following Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, 503–516.

²⁷ E.g. Waddington, Babelon, and Reinach, *Recueil général des monnaies grecques*, 239–240, No. 29–32; cf. Metcalf, *The Cistophori of Hadrian*, 137–143; Corsten, *Katalog der bithynischen Münzen*; Burrell, Neokoroi, 148–152.

provincial officials and tax collectors' companies (*societates publicanorum*). Such episodes are not only transmitted in literature, e.g. in Cicero's speeches (against Verres) and by later Roman authors,²⁸ but also in several inscriptions that celebrate the successful conclusion of legal proceedings. This suggests that such organisations were formally recognised by the central power as (1) legally competent bodies and (2) legitimate representatives of their member communities: in particular, the *koiná* of Asia and Bithynia appear as main addressees of imperial rescripts from the second/early third century in at least three instances quoted in the *Digest* and on legal papyri.²⁹

Organisational structures and federal finances

In a few late Republican inscriptions from the Greek East, the constitutive member communities of the provincial council are listed as separate categories, e.g., in hierarchical order *poleis* ('cities'), *ethne* ('tribes') and *demoi* (here in the sense of 'villages').³⁰ Unlike some Hellenistic confederacies, e.g. in Epirus and Macedonia, in imperial times, membership (i.e. the right to vote/franchise) in the Greek Eastern provincial confederacies seems to have been restricted to urban communities. Tribal/rural communities participated only indirectly in the eparchy-assemblies insofar as each of them politically belonged to the territory of a city-state. Here we have an interesting parallelised system of Roman/Latin and Greek federal organisations at the level of provincial assemblies. In this context the question arises whether *municipia*/colonies on the Roman model were likewise members of provincial *koiná* in other, more Eastern Greek-speaking provinces (because since 27 BCE, Roman citizens in the provinces were – at least theoretically – only allowed to worship the goddess Roma and the deceased members of the imperial family; see Cassius Dio above). If we look at the constitution of provincial confederacies in Asia Minor and the Levant, in fact, we see that "original" *coloniae*, in terms of Roman veteran settlements, were not necessarily involved as member-cities in the prov-

28 A compilation of the sources in Deininger, *Die Provinziallandtage*, 62–63; 156–169.

29 *Digest* 1.16.4.5; 27.1.6.2; 49.1.25; cf. *P.Oxy.* 17, 2104.

30 *Syll.*³ 760. In the same way, the so-called customs law of Ephesus (*lex portoria Asiae*), containing successive complements of custom duties' regulations for the whole province of Asia from the time of the republic up to the final draft in 62 CE under emperor Nero, mentions *poleis* ('cities'), *ethne* ('tribes') and *demoi* ('villages') as the constituting elements of the 'assize districts' (*conventus iuridici*) for the governors' jurisdiction; *SEG XXXIX* 1180, ll. 88–90; Engelmann and Knibbe, "Das Zollgesetz," 46–54.

ince-wide *koiná*. However, few so-called “honorary”³¹ or (less commonly) “real/original” Roman citizens’ colonies participated prominently in the organisation of the province-wide imperial cult even as cultic centres (*metropoleis*).³²

In contrast to this, from the Latin-speaking West we have only a few epigraphic and literary attestations of the internal structure of provincial confederacies. Urban communities seem to have played a less important role as federal members than in the Eastern provincial *koiná* (this may be due to the fact that *civitates* – in the sense of tribal groups – remained the most common type of local communities, at least in Gaul and Germania inferior, as opposed to *municipia* and colonies, e.g. in Spain). Lugdunum (modern Lyon) was the central meeting place of the the *concilium (trium provinciarum) Galliarum*, representing the provinces of Gallia Aquitania, Gallia Belgica and Gallia Lugdunensis.³³ According to the account of the first-century BCE Greek geographer Strabo, 60 Celtic tribes (the names of which were inscribed on a “noteworthy altar”) dedicated the so-called *ara trium Galliarum*, ‘altar of the three Gallic provinces’, to the goddess *Roma* and the emperor Augustus. This provincial sanctuary was instituted by Drusus, stepson of Augustus and governor of the *tres Gallia*, in response to the outbreak of a rebellion (of the “Sugambri and their allies”).³⁴ In addition, Cassius Dio (54.32,1) reports that Drusus sent for the most prominent Celtic aristocrats “on the pretext of the festival which they celebrate even now around the altar of Augustus at Lugdunum.” Archaeological remains of the monumental altar are almost completely missing, but Roman imperial coins minted in Lugdunum between 12 and 14 CE show at least a schematic depiction of the cultic precinct.³⁵

Lacking epigraphical attestations from the subsequent period, we cannot take for granted that membership within provincial assemblies in the Latin West was always determined by the traditional framework of tribal divisions. Moreover, if we take a look at another category of administrative documents, our question still remains unresolved: so-called *formulae provinciarum*, official lists of a province’s communities most likely compiled for jurisdictional and fiscal purposes,³⁶ which

31 It was an honorific title usually and (since the reign of Septimius Severus) regularly granted to existing peregrine (provincial, non-Roman) city-states as a reward for their political loyalty without a settlement of Roman veterans but creating a legal juxtaposition of these newly privileged cities with the “original” colonies.

32 See on this Vitale, *Eparchie und Koinon*, 131–132.

33 Fishwick, *Imperial Cult*, 55–59; Deininger, *Die Provinziallandtage*, 99–104.

34 Strabo, *Geography* 4.3.2; Deininger, *Die Provinziallandtage*, 20–24; Mellor, “The Goddess Roma,” 986–987; Fishwick, *Imperial Cult*, 9–21.

35 E.g. *RIC* 1, 245 (12–14 CE) Obverse: TI CAESAR AVGVST F IMPERAT VII; Reverse: ROM ET AVG.

36 Similarly, Christol, “Pline l’Ancien,” 57.

are mentioned in detail for some provinces (e.g. by Pliny),³⁷ suggest a governmental structure according to the legal status of the communities composing a province: these *formulae* register, in hierarchical order, *coloniae* and *municipia civium Romanorum*, *oppida Latina*, *civitates stipendiariae*, *oppida ignobilia*, *populi* (i.e. tribes), and *civitates adtributae*, the latter are tribal/rural communities newly added to the territory of a *colonia* or *municipium*. Thus, the preferred criterion, at least for the governmental structure, seems to have been the “civic” character of local communities. Whether this classification system was also used to define the membership of all provincial assemblies in the Latin West, we are still unable to estimate. Other imaginable classification systems (such as size of population, size of territory, religion or ethnicity) seem not to have been significant.

Strabo’s reference (14.3.3) to a short note of the early first-century BCE Ephesian geographer Artemidorus provides exemplary insight into the hierarchical constitution of the Lycian League for the period from late Hellenistic to Roman times:

There are twenty-three cities that share in the vote. They come together from each city to a general congress (*synhedrion*), after choosing whatever city they approve of. The largest of the cities control three votes each, the medium-sized two, and the rest one. In the same proportion, also, they make contributions and discharge other liturgies. (. . .) At the congress they first choose a “Lyciarch,” and then other officials of the League; and general courts of justice are designated. (. . .) Likewise, judges and magistrates are elected from the several cities in the same proportion (to the voting power).

The possibility that membership in Western provincial assemblies was also based on some form of proportional representation is, as yet, not supported by epigraphic evidence.

Priestly officials and provincial presidency

Which federal officials were specifically concerned with the organisation of the imperial cult, the legal and political representation of the provincials and the presidency of the provincial assembly? Even though the organisation of the imperial cult in the Greek East was based on the traditional system of Hellenistic ruler-worship, it was also clearly marked by its tight correlation with the new administrative system, namely the *provinciae*, in Greek *eparchiai*: the titles of the high offi-

³⁷ On the *formulae provinciarum* in Pliny and Livy, see esp. Nicolet, “Documents fiscaux,” 169–170; Christol, “Pline l’Ancien,” 45–63; Vitale, *Das Imperium*, 166–181.

cials of the provincial imperial cult refer to provinces such as *Asia*, *Bithynia* or *Cappadocia*. Modestinus, the Greco-Roman jurist of the mid-third century CE, records, by way of example, the *Asi-arch*, *Bithyni-arch* and *Cappadoc-arch* as office holders, literally ‘chief/president of (the province of) Asia/Bithynia/Cappadocia’. Their function is explicitly termed the “priesthood of a province (*ethnos*).”³⁸

At the same time, the provincial priesthood was seen as an *arche*, a “presidency” in the Eastern *koiná*.³⁹ By comparison, the chairman of the provincial council of the *tres provinciae Galliae* was typically also the leading provincial high priest, *flamen divorum Augustorum*.⁴⁰ In most cases, functions of both the provincial priesthood and the presidency over the federal assembly were performed by the same person. A building inscription from the adjoining semi-province of Pamphylia (Perge) describes the presidency of the assembly and its external representation in even greater detail by naming the donor, Aur(elius) Silanus Neonianus Stasias, in his function as *archon* (= *Pamphylia-arch*), speaker (*pro-ēgoros*) and *synagogeus* (i.e. ‘the assembly’s convener’) of the radiant *ethnos* of the Pamphylians.⁴¹ Beyond the duties of the “*archon* and speaker and *synagogeus* of the provincial assembly,” there is no easy answer to the general question of what the exact functions of the office holders were. One of the few exceptions is the famous Augustan list of the annual priests of the provincial imperial cult inscribed on the front face of the northern facade of the *Sebasteion* in Ankyra.⁴² It provides a detailed report of the regular benefactions of at least twenty-one of “those among the Galatians who served as priests for the god Augustus and the goddess Rome” within the Galatian community. These included giving public feasts, holding hecatombs, shows and hunts, providing oil for periods of several months, distributing corn, and dedicating statues of the imperial family.

38 Modestinus (2 *excus.*), *Digest* 27.1.6.14: “The priesthood of a province such as the Asiarchy, the Bithyniarchy or the Cappadocarchy relieves the holder of taking on guardianships during his term of office.”

39 There is a debate among scholars about the identification of the two offices (president and high priest): on the identity of *Asiarches* and “*Archiereus* of Asia” see the state of research in Vitale, *Eparchie und Koinon*, 191–195. On *kilikarchia* see most recently Borgia, “The *kilikarchia* in the Roman province of Cilicia.”

40 Fishwick, *Imperial Cult*, 136.

41 *I.Perge* 294, 321; a similar office title appears in another building inscription from Pamphylia Attaleia (*OGIS* 567, ll. 12–13; 2nd century CE). For the *syndikos* cf. Fournier, “Les *syndikoi*.”

42 *IGR* III 157 = *I.Ancyra* 2 (between 5/4 BCE and 17 CE).

Cooperation and rivalries within *koiná* were the order of the day

Besides the joint participation at court actions against Roman officials, common festivals and honorary dedications to emperors, some inscriptions testify about other specific forms of cooperation between member communities of the provincial confederacies. At least for the province of Lycia we have evidence of a federal system of tax collection: particularly interesting for the levy of the province's tax payment in Lycia and in the field of law enforcement is the office of the so-called 'arch-guardian' (*archiphylax*).⁴³ The incumbent annually gave the cities an advance of the necessary amount of money to be transferred to the Lycian *koinón* and passed on to the Roman fiscal authorities. Finally, an *archiphylax* reimbursed himself by exacting what he could from the tax-paying communities. In a similar way, the provincial assembly of the three Gallic provinces (*tres Galliae*), which also possessed its own federal treasury, appointed various federal office holders: besides the highest ranking priestly *sacerdos*, we have epigraphical evidence for legal and financial assistants, *iudex arcae Galliarum* and *allectus arcae Galliarum*, both of them exercising general supervision of the federal chest and conducting preliminary verification of all complaints from the member communities against Roman officials,⁴⁴ a so-called *inquisitor Galliarum* attested by several inscriptions but of uncertain competence,⁴⁵ and an archivist and accountant, *tabularius Galliarum*.⁴⁶

Unanimity, so-called *homonoia* in Greek or *concordia* in Latin, was not the norm within federal organisations. On the contrary, in many Eastern *koiná* a self-institutionalised system of internal competition was established which usually required (and always obtained) the permission of the central power in Rome. Particularly in the province of Asia, the region where the imperial cult originated, we find a strict ranking order for the member cities of the *koinón*, for example for the 3rd century CE: on coins, Nysa and Magnesia, both cities on the Meander (Büyük Menderes River), proudly bragged about their sixth and seventh position within the ranking order.⁴⁷ At the same time, Ephesus, Pergamon and Smyrna all claimed the leading position, *proteia*, among all the province's cities. According to a famous speech by the first-century CE orator Dio Chrysostom (the "golden-

43 Cf. Brélaz, *La sécurité publique*, 213–225.

44 *CIL* XIII 1686; 1707, 8.

45 *CIL* XIII 1690, 1695, 1697, 1703, 3528; *AE* 1972, 352.

46 *CIL* XIII 1688, 1709.

47 Nysa: Robert, "Documents d'Asie mineure," 64–69; Magnesia: Cabinet des Médailles Paris, 1529; Guerber, *Les cités grecques*.

mouthed”), the rivalry between Smyrna and Ephesus was so “ridiculous” in public opinion that it even became proverbial. In the second century, many of these ongoing hierarchical disputes caused other notable orators to issue general admonishments (frequently on imperial request): during a meeting of the provincial assembly in Pergamon, Aelius Aristides exhorted all delegates from the *koinón*’s member cities to behave more reasonably.

In some instances, competition could also degenerate into civil wars between rival cities, as in the cases of Antioch (modern Antakya) versus Laodicea (today’s Latakia) and Nicaea (modern İzmit) versus Nicomedia (modern İzmit). Two of these cities, Antioch and Nicaea, which always held important positions within their own eparchy-*koinón*, had been severely punished for having sided with (ultimately) unsuccessful claimants to Roman emperorship. Such episodes happened frequently in the period after the death of Commodus during the so-called year of the five emperors, 193/194 CE, when there were five pretenders to the title of Roman emperor. Antioch on the Orontes, one of the most highly populated city-states of the empire, had always been the major centre of the Syrian assembly (that comprised four eparchies) and permanent seat of the Roman provincial authorities in Syria since the creation of the province (first attested as *metropolis* in 64/63 BCE). But it had allied itself with Pescennius Niger, governor of the Syrian province, whom the eastern legions had even proclaimed emperor in his governmental capital, Antioch. In contrast, Laodicea *ad mare*, the chief port of Northern Syria, supported Septimius Severus. In reward for its loyalty to the victorious claimant, Laodicea was granted several privileges relating to its position within the hierarchy of provincial member cities, taking Antioch’s place.⁴⁸ Laodicea became the new “rightful *metropolis*” of Syria and centre of the province-wide imperial cult,⁴⁹ but in return, Antioch was deprived even of its city status for some years (until 201/202 CE at the latest), making it a tributary village of Laodicea and forcing it to pay taxes to the new *metropolis* – temporary marginalisation and humiliation for the entire population of Antioch.⁵⁰

From the cities’ point of view, such honorific titles and city-rankings within the province were of vital importance: created by the provincials themselves, these titles were regularly approved by the Roman senate and the emperor himself who frequently had to play – willy-nilly – the role of arbitrators by commis-

48 The full title reads *colonia Laodicea metropolis IIII provinciarum* (‘the colony Laodicea, metropolis of the four provinces’), and appears abbreviated as METR IIII PROV – METROPOL IIII PR; see the full discussion by Vitale, *Koinon Syrias*, 105–110.

49 John Malalas, *Chronicle* 293,4–294, 2; on this, cf. Meyer, “Die Bronzeprägung,” 58–60; Sartre, *D’Alexandre à Zénobie*, 614–617.

50 Herodian, *History of the Empire* 3.3,3–5; 3.6,9; on this, cf. Ziegler, “Antiochia,” 494–496.

sioning, for example, professional orators to mediate the disputes between rival cities in the context of provincial assemblies. In many cases, the award of titles included economic benefits or even the personal dedication of the emperor. This remarkable system of reciprocal gift exchange – imperial gifts and protection in return for cultic worship and political loyalty – was a routine well established in Greece, Asia Minor and Syria since the time of the Diadochi, the self-appointed successors of Alexander the Great. Especially by instituting province-wide federal organisations under Roman rule, this system (not imposed on the provincial communities by imperial or senatorial rule!) developed its own dynamics, firing the ambitions of hundreds of city-states and intensifying the general competitive situation.

Self-praising cities

One of the most telling testimonies of the cities' understanding of polycentric governance and hierarchical city networks within the province-wide federal organisations are inscriptions that show explicit and detailed self-congratulations for the cities' own achievements and privileges – self-praise was a recurrent phenomenon in the third century in particular. For example, on an architrave block of a triumphal arch in Syrian Caesarea Maritima, self-encomiastic words appear in the vocative case: “Glory to you, *metropolis!*”⁵¹. Caesarea, the former capital of the province of Judaea, was one of the main centres of the provincial *koinón* in Syria Palaestina in competition with Neapolis (modern Nablus), the only polis of the province to claim the title of *neokóros*.⁵² However, Caesarea outdid its rival's important title in this way by proclaiming itself “*metropolis* of Syria Palaestina” on coins from the time of Severus Alexander until Volusian (222–253 CE).⁵³ For the regnal year 275/276 CE of emperor Tacitus, this kind of self-related laudation is also recorded in several inscriptions from Perge, the important port city and, at that time, newly designated *metropolis* of the *koinón* of the eparchy of Pamphylia in Southwestern Asia Minor: alongside its rival-cities Side, Aspendus and Attaleia, Perge had always been the preferred place of Pamphylia's federal assembly and the main seat of Roman governors.⁵⁴ The relevant epigraphic text is introduced in

51 *I.Caesarea Maritima* 61; cf. *ibid.*, 84–85, no. 60 and 45–47, no. 10–11.

52 Burrell, *Neokoroi*, 260–265.

53 Cf. Kadman, *Coins of Caesarea Maritima*, 114–142, nos. 87–230; cf. *BMC Palestine*, 40–41, nos. 208, 215, 222.

54 Vitale, *Eparchie und Koinon*, 277–282.

an encomiastic fashion by the acclamation “Long live, Perge!”⁵⁵ According to the chronological listing of privileges received from Rome, as the first among Pamphylian cities, Perge had already been given the privilege of *neokóros* status under Vespasian and, a few lines below, “now [i.e. two centuries later] they call me *metropolis*.” With close regard to the general logic of internal competition within city-leagues, the self-praise of Perge not only provides historical documentation of the city’s achievements and an insight into the main criteria of being “better than my rival cities,” but in this specific case the inscriptions served as an official response to the provocative and insistent proclamations from the eternal rival-city of Side, which also held the title of *metropolis*, and additionally the record for the whole empire in hosting province-wide imperial cult precincts by claiming six neokorate titles – Perge was only able to claim four of them.

Conclusion

The widespread institutionalisation of independently created and mostly self-organised federal systems – after Augustus’ rise to power in particular –, first in the Greek Eastern and then in the Latin Western provinces of the Roman Empire, was largely recognised by the Roman central power from the beginning. Moreover, the establishment of an empire-wide “federal” coordination of the provinces had profound effects on the hierarchical relationships between the provincial communities and the Roman authorities, providing mutual benefits for both parties. Not least, this federal system favoured, to a certain extent, the development of a semi-autonomous, province-related self-governance: each province or sub-province had its own city league (federal/provincial assembly), which acted as a legally competent body within the wide limits conceded by the Roman institutions. On the one hand, the main political functions of such provincial assemblies concerned the juridical representation of the province’s inhabitants to the central government in Rome, e.g. through appeals directed against Roman provincial officials or Roman tax collectors. On the other hand, the federal assembly’s main cultural and political concern was the organisation of the province-wide imperial cult, functioning also for the benefit of imperial legitimacy. This task was carried out by the highest priestly officials, whose function was to preside over the assembly and to finance the “federal games” and other celebrations in honour of the emperors. Because of the financial burden, usually the richest citizens were elected to such duties “by decree of the assembly,”

55 Kaygusuz, “Perge,” 1–4, Plate 1; *I.Perge* 331; Roueché, “*Floreat Perge*,” 206–228; Vitale, *Eparchie und Koinon*, 275–280.

without Roman interference. However, the assembly's member communities did not only cooperate with each other. The system of federal organisation also created a situation of fierce competition: province-related honorific city titles such as *metropolis* and *neokoros*, for instance, were officially awarded by the Roman senate/the emperor himself and usually included economic benefits. This process points to an ambivalent system of gift-exchanging reciprocity which fired the communities' ambition, but could sometimes limit their degree of autonomy in certain ways. In particular, Rome's dominant position – often arbitrating, sometimes arbitrary – was reinforced (seemingly involuntary) by the fact that local communities got stuck into a self-created competitive system of *who's best at worshipping the imperial family*, and therefore constantly struggled for their ranking positions within the provinces' city-leagues. Due to the sparse and ambiguous documentation of ancient sources regarding our problem of “polycentric governance,” several general questions arise: might federal systems in the Roman period have been a challenge both for provincial communities and for the Roman government? Or did federal systems even act as a counterbalance to senatorial/imperial rule? Was their position rather something between self-initiative and self-inflicted dependency on imperial goodwill? Under which aspects are modern concepts of polycentric systems of government at all applicable to Hellenistic and Roman forms of federalism? At any rate, we can't hide the fact that our discourse on ancient federal organisations is marked by the frequent use of the quite telling prefix “self-.”

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Christina T. Kuhn

The Self-presentation of the Greek Cities in Roman Imperial Asia Minor

The establishment of Roman hegemony in the Mediterranean world was a long and complex process. Conquered territory was gradually organised by the Romans as *provinciae*, which were henceforth governed by the Senate and the People at Rome. In Asia Minor, Roman provincialisation started with the formation of the province of *Asia* after the death of the last Pergamene king, Attalos III, in 133 BCE.¹ Over the following two centuries the remaining regions of the Anatolian peninsula were gradually integrated into the Roman Empire as the provinces of *Cilicia*, *Pontus-Bithynia*, *Galatia*, *Lycia-Pamphylia*, and *Cappadocia*. It is noteworthy that from the beginning polycentricity was a central feature of Roman governance in Asia Minor. Despite their subjugation to Roman rule, the Greek *poleis* remained semi-autonomous units, with their own political institutions, and, consequently, their own decision-making bodies.² The Romans in fact showed a remarkable “willingness to decentralize”³ by granting the provincial cities and their elites a considerable degree of self-governance. It is not, however, the complex division of power between Rome and the Greek cities which this chapter will focus on. Rather, I shall discuss how these semi-autonomous *poleis* presented themselves to the outside world through the means of public discourse, inscriptions, coins, and architecture. The analysis of their self-presentation offers interesting insights into how the Greek cities perceived themselves, how they wanted to be seen, and how they adapted their public image to the expectations of others, above all the Roman ruling power.

In 1984 Peter Herrmann set out to study the “Selbstdarstellung” of the Greek cities in the Hellenistic period.⁴ In his article, which exclusively focussed on the epigraphic evidence, Herrmann explicitly noted the preliminary character of his

1 For a history of Asia Minor under Roman rule see in particular the studies by Magie, *Roman Rule*; Macro, “Cities of Asia Minor,” 663–667; Mitchell, *Anatolia*; Marek, *Thousand Gods*.

2 On the organisation of civic government under Roman rule: Liebenam, *Städteverwaltung*; Abbott and Johnson, *Municipal Administration*; Jones, *Greek City*; Nörr, *Imperium und Polis*; Dmitriev, *City Government*; Schuler, “Local Elites,” 252–260.

3 Macro, “Cities of Asia Minor,” 661.

4 Herrmann, “Selbstdarstellung.”

Note: I would like to thank Cédric Bréaz and Marcus Chin for their helpful comments and suggestions.

study and stressed the need for a more comprehensive, systematic analysis of the material. However, just as a comprehensive study still remains a desideratum for the Hellenistic period, so, too, an analysis for the imperial period is still lacking. Against this background the purpose of this chapter is to begin filling the latter gap and to explore patterns of self-presentation among the Greek cities of Asia Minor during the first and second centuries CE. Why did a *polis* choose to present itself in a distinctive way? What audience did a city present itself to, and how far did its self-presentation differ from the realities of its civic life? Furthermore, what significance did a particular form of self-presentation have for the stability of polycentric governance?

The historian who sets out to study the self-presentation of a Greek city under Rome soon finds that the image of the *polis*, as a collective entity representing the civic community, comes to the fore in a variety of public media, whether this be inscriptions, civic coins or urban architecture. The analysis of this rich material, however, is anything but straightforward, since various caveats need to be taken into consideration. First, it is worth pointing out that the public media which form the basis of this analysis were by and large under the control of local elites. Local aristocracies were responsible for commissioning and financing public building works; they were in charge of drafting and setting up public inscriptions, and oversaw the minting of civic coins. Decisions were made predominantly in the city council (*boule*), which had gradually developed into a quasi-hereditary institution dominated by the prosperous families of the city.⁵ Even if the public assembly (*ekklesia*) still had the formal right to discuss and approve decisions, its scope of action was limited when compared to the glorious days of classical democracy.⁶ We must therefore be conscious of the fact that the self-presentation which we will study with reference to the extant evidence is not necessarily that of the *whole* community, but often that created by a *small* group. It is, more or less, the public image created for the *polis* by its ruling class.⁷

Secondly, public images are seldom static or fixed, but change over time. After all, politics and image cultivation are inextricably linked with one other. A city may highlight a particular aspect of its civic identity in its self-presentation to improve

5 On the development of the city council (*boule*) and the formation of a *bouleutic* class see esp. Quass, *Honoratiorenschicht*, 384–394; Pleket, “Political Culture”; Zuiderhoek, “Political Sociology,” 429–431; Heller, “Cit  grecque”; Heller, “*Boul *.”

6 On the Greek popular assemblies in the imperial period: Quass, *Honoratiorenschicht*; Lewin, *Assemblee popolari*; Fernoux, “Institution populaire”; Fernoux, *Demos* (with Br laz, “Vie d mocratique”).

7 Note the cautious remarks on the use of the epigraphic evidence by Schuler, “Local Elites,” 269.

its standing in a specific political or economic situation.⁸ In the majority of cases it is not possible, however, to gain a full diachronic picture of the historical circumstances that shaped a city's public image or to trace the process of identity-formation underlying it. The ancient historian must be content with snapshots of what was usually a far more complex process.

Finally, we must also recall that our sources do not present just *one* form of self-presentation. Regional idiosyncrasies and local micro-identities existed in the Hellenistic and imperial periods.⁹ Not only did the Greek cities enjoy different legal statuses (i.e. as a subject or free city, or a Roman colony) which could affect their self-understanding and local identity-formation; they also had their own local histories, city gods and goddesses, festivals and urban landscapes, which made them distinct from one another. Yet, despite this complexity and diversity, it appears possible to recognise some *common* features and patterns underlying the self-presentation of the Greek cities under Roman rule. The exploration of these “trends” will be the focus of the following analysis. To what extent did they contribute to stabilising or destabilising polycentric governance? In my discussion of these issues, I will focus on three key aspects of the cities' self-presentation: (1) their political self-fashioning; (2) their cultural claims relating to the past, and (3) their public display of concord.

Political self-fashioning: between sovereignty and dependence

Political life in the imperial Greek *poleis* was still characterised by a considerable degree of vitality within the contexts of their key political institutions, the council and assembly.¹⁰ Just as in the Classical and Hellenistic periods, the political institutions of the *polis* continued to meet, publishing decrees after the conclusion of their deliberation process, often in the most prominent places such as the theatre

⁸ We know, for example, that the city of Smyrna chose to make Alexander the Great – in association with the city goddess, the double Nemesis – part of her self-presentation when realising that she could gain the Roman emperor's attention by priding herself with this historical figure as her founder. Cf. Kuhn, “Alexander the Great.” On Smyrna under Roman rule see Cadoux, *Ancient Smyrna*; Kuhn, “Mythos und Historie.”

⁹ See Stephan, *Honoratioren, Griechen, Polisbürger*.

¹⁰ See esp. Quass, *Honoratiorenschicht*, 355–423; Salmeri, “Dio, Rome and Civic Life,” 69–75; Ma, “Public Speech and Community”; Chaniotis, “Macht und Volk”; Fernoux, “Institution populaire”; van Nijf and Alston, “Political Culture”; Kuhn, “Emotionality”; Brélaz, “Democracy and Civic Participation.”

or the agora. These documents, which have come down to us in relatively large numbers, provide important evidence for a city's political self-presentation. First of all, it is noteworthy that these civic decisions are still introduced by the traditional formula, "the *boule* and the *demos* honoured/decided," which stresses the continued significance of the two institutions as quasi-sovereign decision-makers. In many decrees, the council and the assembly are proudly referred to with additional epithets such as the "most splendid" or "most powerful."¹¹ But Rome was not absent from this form of public image cultivation either. We often come across self-descriptions of the civic institutions which are meant to highlight the city's good and friendly relationship with Rome such as the designation *philosebastos* ('emperor-loving').¹² In Ephesian inscriptions, for example, both the *boule* and the *demos* are frequently designated as *philosebastos boule* and *philosebastos demos*. In the same vein, the title *philokaisar* emerges at around the same time as *philosebastos*; it is, for example, on record in Prusias ad Hypium, where the *boule* is referred to by the *demos* with this epithet.¹³

Such public display of friendship and loyalty to Rome in official documents is certainly not surprising. Roman power was omnipresent in most Greek cities, where, for instance, Roman architecture formed a constitutive element in civic landscapes. Edicts and letters of Roman emperors or governors were published on stone throughout many cities,¹⁴ statues for members of the imperial family were erected in public places, and benefactors dedicated buildings to the emperor and his family. For the purpose of this analysis it is sufficient to note that the combination of two modes of self-presentation seem to have played a major role: on the one hand, the proud presentation of the city's civic institutions as quasi-sovereign entities, and, on the other hand, the self-styling of these institutions as friends of the emperor and Rome.

At this point we must wonder whether the few "free cities" of Asia Minor also pursued this practice.¹⁵ In the Republican period several Greek cities had gained the status of a "free city" – in most cases for the simple reason that they had supported the "right" side in the civil war. Within this policy, as A.M.H. Jones has

¹¹ See Marek, *Thousand Gods*, 424.

¹² Veligianni, "Philos und *philos*-Komposita"; des Gagniers et al., *Laodicée du Lycos*, 281–289; Buraselis, *Kos between Hellenism and Rome*, 104, n. 175.

¹³ It must, however, be noted that this title is comparatively rare for civic institutions. On the semantic difference between *philokaisar* and *philosebastos* see Buraselis, *Kos between Hellenism and Rome*, 103.

¹⁴ For a collection of these letters by Roman emperors see Oliver, *Greek Constitutions*.

¹⁵ "Free cities" under Rome: Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 4.7–8; 5.124; see also Jones, "Civitates liberae"; Bernhardt, *Imperium und Eleutheria*, 177–240; Macro, "Cities of Asia Minor," 676.

shown, Rome had actually adopted the “royal concept of freedom” of the Hellenistic kings. However, freedom did not mean genuine independence. Rather, it implied a privileged status under the suzerainty of Rome. The exact content of this status of “being free” is difficult to define and has been the subject of much debate. Jones believed that its essential feature was “exemption from the authority of the provincial governors,”¹⁶ i.e. exemption from the physical presence of the governor in the city. Other privileges were regularly added such as the exemption from taxation (*ateleia*) and, most importantly, the validity of one’s own ancestral laws (*autonomia*). In the imperial period the status of a “free city” became a *beneficium Caesaris* – an ‘imperial favour’, which had to be reaffirmed at the accession of a new emperor. However, we must be wary of assuming that these free cities were Greek “enclaves” untouched by Roman power and influence. The “free city” of Aphrodisias is a case in point. Here the impact of Roman rule was manifest throughout the city – for example through the impressive Sebasteion for the imperial cult, which dates from the Julio-Claudian period, or the many honours and statues set up for Roman representatives.¹⁷ But despite these obvious proofs of loyalty to Rome, Aphrodisias also presented herself proudly as a free and autonomous *polis*. Aphrodisian coins show the personified *Demos* on the obverse, while using the slogan ‘Freedom of the Aphrodisians’ (*eleutheria Aphrodisieon*) on the reverse.¹⁸ Likewise, the so-called “Archive Wall,” which is located in the side entrance to the city’s theatre, was a public demonstration of Aphrodisias’ special status and privileges.¹⁹ This epigraphic monument mainly consisted of letters and subscripts of Roman rulers dating from the triumviral period to the reign of Gordian III. They were inscribed as a dossier around 230 CE to commemorate the city’s freedom and autonomy, which it had enjoyed since the time of the late Republican triumvirs.²⁰ The layout of the documents was carefully planned to highlight the key message: that Aphrodisias was an exceptional city that had been granted special rights by the Romans for good reasons.²¹ But there were also less monumental ways for a city to celebrate its free status in this period. The Pisidian city of Termessus Maior, for instance, exclusively minted coins *without*

16 Jones “*Civitates liberae*,” 112.

17 Chaniotis, “Perception of Imperial Power.”

18 *RPC online* III 2249: <https://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/coins/3/2249>

19 On the documents of the so-called “Archive Wall” see Reynolds, *Aphrodisias and Rome*.

20 On Aphrodisias in the third century CE: Pont, “Aphrodisias.”

21 Kokkinia, “Design of the ‘Archive Wall’.”

the portrait head of the emperor, and it has been argued that this phenomenon must be read against the context of its special status as a free city.²²

The latter observation leads us to the complex problem of so-called pseudo-autonomous coins, which have come down to us in strikingly large numbers from both subject cities and free cities in the eastern Mediterranean.²³ These provincial coins are special in so far as they do not carry the portrait head of the emperor on the obverse but present images of the *boule*, *demos* or a city god/goddess instead.²⁴ It seems that it was a city's choice to mint such coins – or to abstain entirely from doing so, as Ephesus did. To what extent should these coins be regarded as a proud public demonstration of local autonomy? It has been argued that a city's desire to distinguish her low denomination coins from the larger ones may be the actual reason for the production of these pseudo-autonomous coins. While this theory may appear attractive at first sight, it is disproved by the evidence in many cases.²⁵ Another aspect of this phenomenon should thus be given more consideration: namely, that the minting of these coins was a convenient device for some cities to reassure themselves of their remaining political sovereignty under Rome. Certainly, we should not go so far as to read into this practice an expression of “defiance” or “revolt.” After all, it has rightly been pointed out that many cities minted both coins *with* the portrait head of the emperor and coins *without* the image of the emperor at the same time, and often under the same magistrate.²⁶ It is therefore reasonable to assume that, just like in the case of public decrees, expressions of loyalty to Rome (as represented by coins with the portrait head of the emperor) and expressions of civic pride in one's own institutions (as represented by coins featuring depictions of the *polis* and its civic institutions) were not mutually exclusive in this period and could exist alongside each other unproblematically. They both belonged to the complex language of a city's self-presentation under Roman rule. Rome was obviously pragmatic enough to allow the Greek cities to employ this complex language at their convenience. It might be argued that in making this concession to the cities' needs and priorities around self-presentation Roman government was able to consolidate its rule in the long run: it helped the cities and their elites to keep face in a polycentric system.

22 Bennett, “Pseudo-autonomous' Coins,” 198–199. Note, however, the epigraphic evidence from Termessus (*TAM* III 106, with Bréaz, “L'adieu aux armes,” 191–193), which presents Termessians as ‘allies’ (*symmachoi*) of Rome.

23 Bennett, “Pseudo-autonomous' Coins,” 192–193.

24 On pseudo-autonomous coins see the classical study by Johnston, “Pseudo-autonomous' Greek Imperials,” with Bennett, “Pseudo-autonomous' Coins.”

25 Bennett, “Pseudo-autonomous' Coins,” 194–195.

26 Bennett, “Pseudo-autonomous' Coins,” 193–194.

Parading myth and history

Another striking feature of the cities' self-presentation in this period is their strong fixation on myth and history. This deep interest in the past manifested itself most prominently in the cultural movement of the so-called Second Sophistic, which reached its peak in the second century CE.²⁷ In his *Lives of the Sophists*, Philostratus depicts the sophists as extravagant members of the elite, who taught the art of rhetoric and toured the cities of the Greek east, entertaining large audiences with their theatrical declamations. In their speeches they adopted the personas of heroes of the classical past, such as Demosthenes or Pericles, and declaimed, in impeccable Attic Greek, on fictitious themes which were set in the courtrooms or assemblies of classical Athens. As Ewen Bowie has shown, the preferred topic of these sophists was the classical past of the fifth and fourth century BCE – i.e. a time when Greece was at the height of her power and glory and when independence and freedom were not empty words.²⁸

Besides their focus on events of the classical period of Greek history, the cities showed a particularly strong interest in their own local foundation stories and mythical and historical founders (*ktistai*). It has been argued by Peter Weiss that this interest gained considerable momentum in the first and second centuries CE.²⁹ A range of public media bears witness to this trend: local city founders are constantly referred to in public speeches and appear on civic coins and reliefs, statues of them were set up in prominent places, and their images were carried at festivals in public processions. To illustrate this phenomenon, it is useful to take a closer look at two *poleis* on the western coast of Asia Minor. The city of Smyrna, for example, prided herself on having a series of founders: an Amazon, Theseus and Pelops, and Alexander the Great and the double Nemesis. It is in the imperial period that these founders start featuring in the public media of the city.³⁰ Coins from the reign of Domitian show the double Nemesis, and in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, and later Gordian III, they display the Smyrnaean foundation story in full on the reverse, with the double Nemesis appearing to Alexander the Great as he slept under a tree, telling him to found the city at the place of his rest.³¹ The second-century orator Aelius Aristides, who had declared Smyrna his beloved hometown,

27 On the Second Sophistic and its representatives: Bowersock, *Greek Sophists*; Macro, "Cities of Asia Minor," 693–694; Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*.

28 Bowie, "Greeks and their Past."

29 Weiss, "Lebendiger Mythos." On the importance of foundation myths in this period see also Scheer, *Mythische Vorväter* and Lindner, *Mythos und Identität*.

30 Kuhn, "Mythos und Historie."

31 *RPC online* VII.1, 310: <https://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/coins/7.1/310>

referred extensively to the city's multiple foundations when he attempted to secure the emperors' help after the city was devastated by an earthquake in 178 CE.³² Local historiography similarly attests to this special interest in the local and regional past. The city had its own local historian, Hermogenes, who is said to have written a history of Smyrna since the city's foundation.³³ But Smyrna was no exception in this respect. Smyrna's neighbour, Ephesos, likewise made her founders Androklos and Lysimachos the focal point of her self-presentation at that time.³⁴ It is in the imperial period that, for the first time, Androklos appears on the reverse of coins (from Hadrian until Gallienus) and that reliefs and statues of him were prominently set up in public buildings, such as the Temple of Hadrian, the nymphaeum Traiani or the nymphaeum of C. Laecanius Bassus.³⁵ Likewise, statues of both Androklos and Lysimachos were donated by the Ephesian benefactor C. Vibius Salutaris, and were henceforth regularly carried in processions through the city at the annual festival of the Artemisia.³⁶

Certainly, we can only speculate about the reasons for the dominance of foundation stories in the self-presentation of the cities in the imperial period. Peter Weiss has argued that this phenomenon was caused by the growing need of the cities to reassure themselves of their own Greek and/or local identity in an increasingly "Romanized" world. He has suggested that it was the restricted sphere of influence which Roman rule afforded to the cities which caused them to harken back to their Greek past.³⁷ For our analysis, his interpretation, if correct, is interesting in so far as it establishes a direct nexus between the self-representation of the cities and polycentric governance: being restricted in their room for manoeuvre under Roman rule, the Greek elites escaped into the past to regain pride and confidence. But it is also clear that it was not simply an elite phenomenon. The enormous popularity of the sophists in the imperial period suggests that with their choice of topics they seem to have been responding to a wide-spread emotional sensibility in society: a nostalgia for the good old days.³⁸ Nostalgic movements are usually maintained by a mixture of diffuse emotions:

32 See e.g. Aelius Aristides, *Orations* 21.3–4.

33 *I.Smyrna* 536; *FGrH* 579 F1.

34 On Androklos see esp. Rathmayr, "Ktistes Androklos"; on Lysimachos: cf. Kuhn, "Mythos und Historie," 22–23.

35 Rathmayr, "Ktistes Androklos," 25.

36 *I.Ephesos* 27, with Rogers, *Sacred Identity of Ephesos*.

37 Weiss, "Lebendiger Mythos," 194. On the phenomenon of "Romanization" in the East and the issue of identity see in particular the classical study by Woolf, "Becoming Roman"; cf. also Madsen, "Romanization of the Greek Elite"; Madsen, *Eager to be Roman*.

38 On nostalgia in this period see Bowie, "Greeks and their Past"; Macro, "Cities of Asia Minor," 694–695; Kuhn, "Mythos und Historie," 107–108.

dissatisfaction with political, social and economic conditions of the present time, a longing for an earlier period in which the world was still in order, and a feeling of being lost in a changing world order. Resorting to their past allowed the Greeks to regain control and confidence to a certain extent.

We should, however, be wary of assuming that the Greeks' nostalgia was a form of active "opposition" to Roman rule. We must note that both a city's relishing in the past and its acceptance of Roman power were not mutually exclusive in this period. On the contrary, we find that Greek elites often employed their local past as a form of political argument in their dealings with Rome. The cities were, for example, willing to celebrate extraordinary *Roman* benefactors as new founders (*ktistai*) of the city, thus integrating them into their own local history.³⁹ Likewise, statues of local *ktistai* were set up alongside statues of the Roman imperial family, thus emphatically highlighting the alignment of the Greek past and Roman present.

Interestingly, this kind of historical self-presentation was concomitant with the intensification of inter-city strife. The cities competed with each other for glory based on their history, on the principle that the older a foundation story, the greater the city's status and prestige. Remarkably, the Roman government responded to the Greeks' obsession with their past by creating and maintaining an honour-system that bestowed prestige and rank on the cities based on their past.⁴⁰ From the Roman point of view, inter-city strife, if kept within reasonable bounds, was a highly effective instrument of polycentric governance: it was, after all, a convenient means of channelling the cities' agonistic energies towards one another rather than against the ruling power. Hence, Rome only seems to have intervened when inter-city competition endangered the stability of the province, and thus of Roman rule. Dio Chrysostom, a sharp observer of the day-to-day politics in his Bithynian hometown, Prusa, recognised this problem and warned his fellow Greek citizens of the loss of power which the useless pursuit of vain honorific titles brought about.⁴¹ Yet, despite his warnings, inter-city rivalries would not be brought to an end, and would continue to shape public discourse throughout the imperial period.

³⁹ Emperors as new *ktistai*: Aelius Aristides, *Orations* 19.4; 20.5, with Kuhn, "Mythos und Historie," 105–107. On the granting of the title *ktistes* to Roman emperors see Leschhorn, *Gründer der Stadt*, 289–292; Follet, "Hadrien ktistès kai oikistès"; Winter, *Baupolitik und Baufürsorge*, 139–147; Pont, "Empereur fondateur."

⁴⁰ See e.g. Tacitus, *Annals* 4.55. Also, the establishment of the Panhellenion under Hadrian, in which Hellenic origin was made a key criterion for membership, is a case in point.

⁴¹ Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 38.37–38. On such privileges and titles see Guerber, *Privilèges et titres des cités*.

Displaying concord (*homonoia*) and public order

In light of the immediately preceding observations on civic rivalries in this period, it is certainly baffling that it was the concept of concord (*homonoia*) that came to dominate the public self-presentation of the Greek cities in the first and second centuries CE.⁴² In many *poleis* public media fostered the idea of a truly harmonious city. Inscriptions avoid reference to conflict and strife within the city, and instead overwhelmingly present civic institutions as existing in a harmonious relationship with each other. Civic coinage likewise celebrates the co-operative relationship between the council and the assembly, which is encapsulated, for instance, in images of the *boule* and the *demos* shaking hands with each other.⁴³ What emerges from our sources is the overwhelming eagerness with which the local elites tried to spread this message of civic concord to a wider audience.⁴⁴

Any historian of the imperial Greek *polis* should be conscious that this imagery of *homonoia* presents an extremely idealised view of civic politics. The civic orations of Dio Chrysostom clearly tell a different story: they present us with a Greek city in which political discourse is characterised by infighting and strong tensions between the council and assembly, which at times resulted in serious violence and unrest in the city.⁴⁵ Dio's persistent exhortations of his fellow citizens to establish *homonoia* attest to the unstable, hostile situation in Prusa. They also show that he was aware that these tensions were detrimental to the city's relations with Rome, convinced that urban unrest provoked the interference of the Roman government and thus the complete loss of what remained of the Greek cities' former autonomy. Dio seems to have seen himself as a protector and preserver of civic autonomy,⁴⁶ and he was strongly convinced that the immediate es-

42 On inter-city rivalries in this period: Robert, "Titulature de Nicée et Nicomédie"; Merkelbach, "Rangstreit der Städte Asiens"; Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 203–205; Ziegler, "Polis"; Heller, "*Les bêtises des Grecs*"; Kuhn, "Rangstreit der Städte." On *homonoia* in civic life see Sheppard, "Homonoia"; Jones, *Dio Chrysostom*, 83–94; Lotz, *Ignatius and Concord*.

43 On these coins see e.g. Martin, "Demos und Boule auf Münzen phrygischer Städte" and Martin, *Demos, Boule, Gerousia*.

44 It is worth mentioning that in some places statue-groups were set up for the *boule* and the *demos* as equal partners in order to emphasise the harmonious and equipollent co-operation of these institutions.

45 On Dio Chrysostom's civic orations see esp. Jones, *Dio Chrysostom*; Bekker-Nielsen, *Small World of Dio Chrysostom*.

46 From Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 40.13 it appears that Dio had undertaken an embassy to Trajan to obtain the privilege of *eleutheria* for his hometown Prusa, though in vain. See Jones, *Dio Chrysostom*, 109; Salmeri, "Dio, Rome and Civic Life," 68.

establishment of concord was the best way to achieve his aim. It is noteworthy that his admonitions were in line with the empire-wide *Roman* ideology of concord, which formed a key concept in imperial ideology.⁴⁷ Against this background, it may not be surprising that a *polis* not only highlighted to its Greek and Roman audiences the existence of concord within the boundaries of the city itself, but in addition prominently advertised the harmonious relations it entertained with neighbouring *poleis*. Once again, it is instructive to turn to coinage at this point. Our evidence for coins celebrating *homonoia* between neighbouring cities is extremely rich in the first and second centuries CE, and even increases in the third century CE.⁴⁸ The reason, however, for the striking of *homonoia* coins defies ready explanation:⁴⁹ did these coins commemorate the conclusion of a particular conflict, or did they celebrate a general, continuing state of friendship and good relations? Or were these coins issued after a city's status had been elevated by Rome? Ambiguity abounds. But perhaps this ambiguity was intentional. What counted was the overall message of a present state of urban peace and harmony, and not so much the circumstances or means by which these were established.

One might naturally ask what repercussions this strategy of self-presentation may have had for the *poleis*. The picture that emerges is complex. Some scholars argue that such a strategy served as a bulwark against more frequent intervention by Rome. In this way the remaining rights and privileges of civic institutions could be preserved under Roman rule. On the other hand, it has been pointed out that, in the long run, this strategy of displaying concord was detrimental to the *poleis*. Sheppard has suggested that the undue focus on concord in public discourse resulted in a certain apathy towards civic politics in this period.⁵⁰ by constantly conjuring up a state of *homonoia*, the *poleis* increasingly stifled free speech and debate, and Greek political institutions were gradually weakened of their own accord.

47 Lotz, *Ignatius and Concord*.

48 See e.g. Franke and Nollé, *Homonoia-Münzen*; Kampmann, *Homonoia-Verbindungen*; Kampmann, "Homonoia Politics."

49 Kampmann, *Homonoia-Verbindungen*.

50 Sheppard, "Homonoia," 246.

Conclusion

In his analysis of the *Hellenistic* period, Herrmann had concluded that three themes dominated the self-presentation of the Greek cities: politics, history and concord.⁵¹ My analysis of the *imperial* period has shown that continuity is observable in this regard: the same themes – *mutatis mutandis* – come to the fore in the public self-presentation of the Greek cities under Roman rule. What is so striking, however, is the extent to which these themes increased in intensity during the imperial period. This may be explained by the heightened need of the Greeks to reassure themselves of their Greek identity in an increasingly “Romanized” world, and to protect the limited amount of civic autonomy that they enjoyed under Roman hegemony. There seems to have been a desire to present themselves as serious political partners, and to avoid any form of conflict with Rome by stressing – and claiming – a state of concord. In the field of politics, the Greeks’ pride in the continuing existence and work of their political institutions resonates resoundingly in public media. In epigraphic and numismatic evidence we undoubtedly encounter proud and self-conscious Greek cities, whose elites are fully aware of their glorious history, identity and the political worthiness of the citizens. But we also find Greek *poleis* whose elites do not hesitate to display emphatically their loyalty and friendship with Rome. It is self-evident that any act of self-presentation pre-supposes an audience, and the Greek cities undoubtedly shaped their self-presentation with a view to a variety of audiences – the Roman emperor or governor, who visited the province and the city from time to time, citizens living in the town or its hinterland, or Greek, Roman or foreign visitors attending a festival or staying as travellers in the city on their way through the province. It is this variety of “target groups” and of communicative situations which must be borne in mind when we try to account for the complexity of the messages employed by the Greek cities in their self-presentation. It could be argued that, in the long run, this complexity was a key factor for the acceptance and stability of polycentric government in the imperial period.

⁵¹ Herrmann, “Selbstdarstellung” (see above).

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II Intersections of Polycentricity – The Medieval Towns

Mikhail A. Boytsov

Performative Self-representation of City Governments

Cities as individuals

Every medieval city was unique and individual. Neither its ruling groups, nor its common inhabitants would have ever accepted that so many books in history, written mostly in the 19th and 20th centuries, were concentrated on such absolutely abstract – in reality, non-existent – notions, as “the medieval cities” or “the medieval Bürgertum.” It is remarkable that these historians found only extreme overgeneralised concepts (or “ideal types,” as Max Weber would have said) instead of real and very active historical actors, even if, for example, Frankfurt had nothing in common with Salzburg or Pisa, just as Zürich was fully alien to Lyon or Ghent. With the possible exception of royal legists and university lawyers, contemporaries must have seen in each of their cities nothing similar to any other city, neighbouring or distant. If any sort of solidarity could emerge among civic communities, it was normally the result of a momentary political calculation and not an idea of shared participation in any sort of a common group or social stratum, in opposition to other groups—such as “feudal lords,” “clergy” or “peasants.”

Perhaps a spirit of a certain solidarity could arise, sometimes spontaneously and momentarily, within the framework of diverse political assemblies (*cortes*, *états*, *Landtags* and *Reichstags*), or in joint political measures taken by the military and political cities’ alliances. However, even such mostly inconsequential manifestations of solidarity among the “burghers” generally took place within certain limited regions, such as the northern parts of Italy or Germany, as well as Swabia, Wetterau, Rheinland and around the Lake Constance. Moreover, the “imperial cities,” proud of their privileges, were not particularly inclined to find their equals in cities of a lower legal status. And if a city enjoyed a high level of autonomy, controlled significant territories or important trade routes, or possessed other solid resources, all these things further strengthened the view of its inhabitants that their city was a completely unique, self-sufficient corpuscle—an autonomous political individual. In the context of medieval communities, we are always

Note: This work is also part of the project *Constructing Identities in the Medieval Cultures*, included in the Basic Research Program at the National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE University) for 2023.

dealing with very different corpuscles, a long way from being graded, ranked and stripped of their individuality by the leveling energy of the modern national states.

It was around this central idea of uniqueness and exclusivity that the political self-representation of every urban community – both the highly autonomous as well as the less privileged – was constructed. For the ruling groups, which controlled all forms of public representation, expressing the brilliant individuality of their city meant simultaneously strengthening their own leading positions in the community and legitimising the existing social and political orders.

The medieval “political technologists” had many means at their disposal to publicly express the predominant idea of the uniqueness and high dignity of their city. One of the main roles must have been played here by all sorts of representative buildings—starting with city fortifications, continuing with the cathedral and other important churches, and ending with seat of the city government. Programmatic political images could also be relevant, such as those created by the inhabitants of Worms, who one century after another insisted on their freedom from the local bishop, claiming for themselves the status of imperial city. On the Rhine Gate – the main entrance to the city – the Wormser once placed a gigantic image of Emperor Henry IV in commemoration of his union with their city in 1073.¹ Much later, in 1493, they took the same line of visual propaganda again, having painted on the wall of the *Neuer Münze* a huge portrait of Emperor Frederick III, along with all his insignia.² Both these images were accompanied by monumental programmatic inscriptions, stressing the idea that a quite special kind of relations connected Worms and the Empire. Many other German cities “formulated” their political identity while also claiming their participation in the imperial glory. But if this method of self-legitimation was rather typical, each of the cities using it insisted on its own, atypical and fully individual, even intimate, relationship with the imperial power. For example, comparing the emperors’ images in Worms with the statues of the king flanked by six princes-electors from the *Graushaus* in Aachen,³ one can observe how different (i.e. individual) the concepts of proximity to the Empire were, even as they are immanent to each of these two manifestations of the cities’ political identities.

1 Fuchs, “*Sacri Romani*.”

2 Fuchs, “*Sacri Romani*,” 190–191.

3 Saele, “*Grashaus* in Aachen.”

Communities expressing their individuality

We will leave completely unattended here the acoustic means of expressing the identity of a medieval city, which historians mostly used to totally ignore: the trumpeters performed the city's own unique musical motto, and the main city bell had a special voice, well-recognised by every citizen from his or her childhood. A bit more attention can be given to sacred relics: owning them could become a matter of special pride. A local patron saint, represented by his or her relics, could play a very active part in civic ceremonies. Thus Charlemagne, embodied since the mid-fourteenth century in his own "portrait" reliquary, used to walk solemnly out of the city gates of Aachen to greet every arriving new King of Rome and to "lead" him in solemn procession into the city to the church of St. Virgin Mary, where the new king was to be crowned. The entire identity of Venice was built upon its unique sacral foundation – the figure of Apostle Marc.⁴ It was direct from his hands that the Venetian doges received their authority, a fact also demonstrated by the image on the Venetian ducats, where Saint Mark invested a kneeling Doge with his banner. When a prince at the city gate piously kissed the shrine of the local saint, he kissed the heavenly patron of the city, but also the most respected and mighty of its burghers, and gave therefore his *osculum pacis* to all members of the community.

In the thirteenth century in France, the practice was invented of systematically displaying the sacred relics for the public, as the main treasure and pride of a city and concentration of its identity. In German lands, this new type of ceremony, not only religious but also in some important respects secular, was introduced at first in Aachen in 1312, followed by Vienna, Cologne, Regensburg, Würzburg and other cities. The case of Nuremberg is maybe the most significant here, due to the happy acquisition of the "imperial relics" by the city in 1424. The "Charlemagne's Crown," the "Holy Lance" and other artefacts from this collection allowed the city to demonstrate its inextricable links with the Empire in the most effective way. As scholars have formulated already, through organising the public veneration of relics, the Church and secular city authorities in fact ultimately honoured themselves. The imperial relics also used to be publicly displayed in Nuremberg during a completely different type of civil ritual: at funeral services for the deceased Roman kings and emperors. This type of mourning ceremony provided a good opportunity in other cities as well to express publicly their identity as indispensable members of the Empire. They lacked, of course, such valuable tools for expressing it as the Nurembergers possessed, but nevertheless used other effective means. In Florence, public

⁴ Among many other titles, see: Crouzet-Pavan, "Pouvoir et politique."

funerals for significant persons also created an idealised image of the communal power.⁵

Not only funerary processions but also processions of various other types, held many times a year, were among the most important means of representing urban self-consciousness. They could be either regular or extraordinary, caused by some special set of circumstances – often those threatening the well-being of the city. If religious processions were the prerogative of the church, the others, especially extraordinary ones, were often organised by the civic authorities – either alone or in cooperation with the church.⁶ The large civic festivals, such as the feast of St. John in Florence, naturally turned into a massive propagandistic manifestation of the unique virtues of the city.⁷ And even such originally popular entertainments as carnival were successfully brought under the control of the civic authorities, as was the case in Venice, in order to ensure that it also spread the politically “correct” ideas.⁸ But maybe the most extravagant type of civic rituals, organised by the magistrates of diverse cities, big and small, autonomous and otherwise, in order to demonstrate the unique identity of their city, were the greeting ceremonies that awaited every emperor, king, secular prince or bishop when they visited the city, especially if this visit was their first.

On the part of any urban community, its meeting with the king must have pursued two quite different goals at the same time. In the course of a complex symbolic dialogue with the prince, it was necessary for the city to express obedience to him on the one hand, but on the other to avoid any diminution of honour.⁹ This meant preserving the existing rights and privileges of the community first of all, and if possible, even extending them.¹⁰ The medieval *adventus* ceremonies were intended not so much to express the submission of the receiving party to the entrant, but rather to come to an agreement that mutually recognised the status of both parties, and to publicise it. This is true even for Paris, where from the late fourteenth century, the *adventus* gradually became dominated by the glorification of the arriving king. The inherently contractual character of the princely entry ceremony had already been clearly expressed in the twelfth-century evidence from Flanders. There, before letting the sovereign within the limits of the city walls, the townspeople forced him to take a solemn oath that he would not violate the city’s freedoms.

5 Strocchia, *Death and Ritual*, 82.

6 Signori, “Ritual und Ereignis.”

7 Gori, *Le feste fiorentine*; Trexler, *Public Life*, 240–263.

8 Muir, *Civic Ritual*, 156–159.

9 See Bernwieser, *Honor civitatis*.

10 Thus in 1429, numerous Champagne towns gained extensive new liberties from Charles VII on such an occasion for recognising him as king: Murphy, *Ceremonial Entries*, 54.

And similarly, in the fifteenth century in a number of Rhine cities, “first entries” were allowed to the local bishops only after they had agreed in great detail on the nature of the contract regulating their future relationships with the city communities.

It is obvious that such forms of self-representation of the community were addressed not to the prince and his entourage alone, but also to the citizens. Indeed, a successfully organised *adventus* strengthened the existing orders: it displayed the hierarchy of civic authorities, confirmed their legitimacy, and even strengthened it by demonstrating their – physical and symbolic – closeness to the person of the prince. During the ceremony, both sides of the ruling elite, those around the king and those controlling the city, exchanged their symbolic capital, mutually strengthening each other’s legitimacy. Emphasising its own specialness and uniqueness, each city developed its local tradition for greeting the visiting princes, modifying it from one case to another. However, most of these unique traditions were based on several more or less typical models of the city’s self-representation that were reproduced with a range of variations.

The city as Jerusalem and as the Virgin

The first of these typical identification models represented the community symbolically as the *Holy City of Jerusalem*. By greeting a prince at their gates, the inhabitants of many cities offered him in fact a sort of metaphorical exchange: we recognise in you the image of Christ, if you recognise in us the image of Jerusalem. Of course, we do not find explicit self-identification with Jerusalem in the city *ordines* prescribing how the visiting princes should be welcomed, but it can be inferred from some eloquent details of the welcoming ceremonies themselves. Thus, along with other townspeople who walked out of the gates of Dortmund to greet the emperor Charles IV in 1377, there were also school pupils. Each boy held in his hand a “green branch as a triumphal palm branch.”¹¹ This salutation was not a local invention, but rather the standard for many regions and many centuries, beginning at least with the reception of Charlemagne outside the gate of

¹¹ *Chronik des Dietrich Westhoff*, 231: “Ein ider mit einem wolrukenden gronen kranze sin hoefft verzijrt und einen gronen twijch in gestalt eins victoriosen palmrises in iren handen dregende vrolich singende . . .” This detail is not mentioned in a work devoted specifically to the visit of Charles IV in Dortmund: Hohenberg, “*Carolus 4.*”

Rome in 774,¹² that in turn was itself merely a continuation of an already old tradition. The “boys with branches” were sent to greet the arriving princes by the authorities of many medieval cities, big and small. For example, in Lucca in 1432, all boys between ten and twelve years waited for the emperor outside the city, wearing white robes and carrying olive branches in their hands.¹³ About five hundred “young boys,” under sixteen years of age, gathered in Bern to meet King Sigismund in 1414.¹⁴ Twice as many *innocentes pueri* were engaged in Lyon for the reception of King Charles VI in 1389.¹⁵ Also in the cities of Provence, since at least the thirteenth century, the magistrates would send their boys, or perhaps teenagers, out of the city walls to welcome the approaching princes.¹⁶ Being familiar with this custom alone, one can understand one particular instruction from Cologne, whose unknown author proposed sending children “in the field” to take part in the welcoming ceremonies when Emperor Frederick III in 1473 visited Cologne.¹⁷

The inclusion of children bearing “palms” in the ceremony of king’s *adventus* was an obvious allusion to the welcoming of Jesus at the gate of Jerusalem. Although the canonical Gospels make no mention of *children* waving palms in this scene, the pilgrims to Jerusalem were confident in the authenticity of this detail from as early as the first half of the fourth century.¹⁸ Medieval Europe inherited this confidence. The scene of welcoming the prince by the “Jewish boys” is no less ambivalent than the whole *adventus* ceremony: at the first glance it looks like an expression of the city’s humility, its willing obedience, but on a deeper look it reveals a claim to the high dignity of the city. In fact, by welcoming the prince in such a way the community reproduced essential elements of the Palm Sunday procession, when the entire city population turned into inhabitants of Jerusalem. And the “Jewish boys” were present on such occasions as well.¹⁹ However, the

12 *Liber pontificalis*, 497: “Et dum adpropinquasset fere unius miliario a Romana urbe, direxit universas scolas militiae una cum patronis simulque et pueris qui ad didicendas litteras pergebant, deportantes omnes ramos palmarum adque olivarum [. . .] sicut mos est exarchum aut patricium suscipiendum.”

13 Favreau-Lilie, “Vom Kriegsgeschrei zu Tanzmusik,” 215.

14 Justinger, *Die Berner-Chronik*, 217 (360): “Da waren geordnet bi fünfhundert junger knaben under sechszeihen jaren . . .”

15 Guenée and Lehoux, *Les entrées royales françaises*, 143–144.

16 Noël Coulet, “Les entrées solennelles en Provence,” 71–72.

17 Schenk, *Zeremoniell und Politik*, 529: “Die burgere ind burgers kyndere zo bidden, sich zo beyden, dem keyser mit zwen burgermeisterten, rentmeisteren ind x unser herren onder ougen int velde zo rijden ind zo ontfangen.”

18 *Itinerarium Burdigalense*, 23: “A parte uero dextra est arbor palmae, de qua infantes ramos tulerunt et ueniente Christo substrauerunt.”

19 See an example from twelfth-century Orléans: Fassler, “*Adventus*,” 32.

original meaning of the symbolic figure of the “Jewish boys” seem to transform noticeably over time, because the liturgical interpretation began to give way to secular motives. With increasing frequency, the “boys” now held flags or pennons with coats of arms of their city and arriving prince instead of “palms.” It was in this way, that the “boys” from the city of Bern waited for the emperor Sigismund in 1414. (This scene was featured in a 1485 miniature in Diebold Schilling’s *Berner chronicle*.) In 1454, also in Bern, four or five hundred boys aged ten to twelve preceded Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, in a procession, everyone carrying a banner with the ducal arms and loudly shouting “Long live Burgundy!”²⁰ The same scene could be witnessed at the king’s arrival in Tournai in 1464.²¹ It therefore becomes clear why, when Frederick III entered Nuremberg in 1471, it was schoolchildren who were ordered to hold hundreds of flags decorated with his emblems.²²

The very use of the image of Jerusalem could change over time and even turn from a symbol into a quasi-political programme. Thus in 1515 one of the guilds in the city of Bruges welcomed the future emperor Charles V as the future liberator of earthly Jerusalem. Obviously, they saw in him not (only) a christomimetic ruler, but a commander capable of leading the united army of Christian monarchs in the Holy Land.²³ In the context of *adventus* ceremonies, the metaphorical model which compared the host city to Jerusalem was clearly compatible with another metaphor as well: “our city is a chaste virgin,” “a bride,” yearning for the coming prince. The eschatological context of this biblical metaphor seems to have mostly already faded by the late Middle Ages.²⁴ However, the image of the city-

²⁰ *RTA* ÄR, Bd. 19, Hälfte 1, Nr. 19 b 2 c., 172 (an excerpt from the *Chronicle* of Matthieu d’Ecouchy): “A son entrée firent aler au devant de lui avec eulx de 4 à 5 cens enfans en dessoubz de 10 à 12 ans, chascun portant une banière armoyé des armes dudit duc, criant à haulte voix: ‘Vive Bourgoingne!’”

²¹ Guenée and Lehoux, *Les entrées royales*, 185: “Item que dehors la ville [. . .] seront grant nombre de petis enfans, vestus de toille blanche, ayant cappeaulx vers et portans petites vergues blanches, ou ait escuchons a armes de France, lesquelz, quant le roy passera, toute a une voix criront a haulte voix: ‘Noel et Vive le roy [. . .].’”

²² *Die Chroniken der fränkischen Städte*, Bd. 5, 458: “Item darnach was bestellt von allen schulern ir iedem ein panerlein in sein hant der lant des kaisers wappen daran gemalt.” *Die Chroniken der fränkischen Städte*, Bd. 4, 326: [. . .] und man gieng im mit allen schulern, heten venlein leiht 800 in den henden [. . .].”

²³ de Puys, *La tryumphant et solemnelle entrée*, fol. LIir–LIiv.

²⁴ Indeed, the Bible instills the comparison of the city to a bride with distinct eschatological associations—due primarily to two passages from the Book of Revelation, which discuss “the bride” Jerusalem in the context of the drama of the apocalypse (Revelation 21.2): “And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband”; “And there came to me one of the seven angels [. . .] and talked with me, saying,

maiden waiting for the bridegroom was constantly used in the ceremonies of the welcoming of emperors, kings and bishops. One notable example comes from Florence: each new bishop entering the city had to solemnly exchange rings with the abbess of San Pier Maggiore, who was viewed as “the representative of the Florentine people.”²⁵ Florence was far from alone having turned the *adventus domini* ceremony into a sort of a mystical marriage: in fact, this was one of the most ancient and universal metaphors concerning the meeting of the “female” community with its “male” ruler. As the city of Tournai welcomed king Louis XI in 1464, by means of a special mechanism, the most beautiful girl of the city descended before him “as if from clouds.” Greeting the king, she unfastened her dress at her breast and took out from her bosom a magnificently manufactured heart with a very elegant and precious *fleur de lis* made of gold. This very flower the girl presented to the king on behalf of the city, saying “Just as I am a virgin, so too my city is a virgin.” And she explained this claim, elucidating that Tournai had never opposed any king of France and every citizen there bore a royal lily in his (or her) heart.²⁶ Three years later, the townspeople of Mechelen also presented their community to Duke Charles the Bold of Burgundy as a beautiful girl (*La Pucelle de Malines*) with a sceptre and seven golden keys to the city’s gate. In the same way as previously in Tournai, the girl descended from a cloud, upon which she had been sitting majestically, in order to hand the keys to the duke.²⁷ Welcoming the French King Charles VIII in 1484, the citizens of Troyes staged a series of allegorical *tableaux vivants* for him.²⁸ One of them presented the king

Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife [. . .] and showed me that great city, holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.”

25 Miller, “Bishop of Florence”; Miller, “The Route of the Bishop’s Entry,” 238 and 242. The famous Venetian ritual of the doge’s betrothal to the sea is not discussed here, since it does not express the relationship of the ruler with his city, but rather the expansionist aspirations of the Serenissima. See Muir, *Civic Ritual*, 127 and 134.

26 Guenée and Lehoux, *Les entrées royales*, 194 : “[. . .] après ce, une tres belle fille, et la plus belle de la ville, par engin qu’on avoit fait, descendit comme de nues et vint saluer le roy, et ouvrit sa robe sur sa poitrine ou y avoit ung coeur bien fait, lequel coeur ce fendit, et en issit une moult noble fleur de lys d’or, qui valloit grand avoir; laquelle elle donna au roy de par la ville, et lui dit que comme elle estoit puchelle, qu’aussi estoit la ville puchelle, et qu’oncques n’avoit esté prinse, ni estee ny tournee contre les roys de Franche mais avoient ceulx de la ville chacun en leur coeur une fleur de lys.”

27 Hurlbut, “Les joyeuses entrées françaises,” 133; Hurlbut, “Noise in Burgundian Ceremonial Entries,” 136–137.

28 For an examination of the use of “living pictures,” at the entries of princes, see Blanchard, “Le spectacle du rite.” For more on the organisation of these mini-performances, see also de Merindol, “Entrées royales et princières,” 42–45. Regarding similar phenomena in Italy, see Helas,

himself, played by a young “very handsome and lovely” actor, and the city of Troyes as a girl offering him her heart.²⁹

The Parisians used to create sophisticated artistic representations of their own style. In 1431, the eleven-year-old Anglo-French King Henry VI was welcomed into the city by a “very ornately adorned” “goddess named Glory.” As the caparison of her horse was decorated with emblems of Paris, the identity of the goddess as a personification of the city was obvious.³⁰ Thirty years later, Louis XI was welcomed into his capital by five female riders, who were regally adorned in gold-braided attire. Their horses were also covered with gold-braided caparisons that reached almost to the ground. Each woman held a scroll inscribed with the name of the virtue that they represented: “Peace,” “Love,” “Prudence,” “Merriness,” and “Dependability.” The first letters of the virtues (in French) formed the word PARIS, indicating clearly that all these virtues were present in this very community. To dispel all possible doubts, these female personifications followed a herald bearing the coat of arms of Paris.³¹ At the time of his visit to Paris Henry VI was still a child, a fact that perhaps sufficiently explains why the witnesses did not mention any “erotic” connotations in the self-representation of the city. But these very connotations could be particularly emphasised in situations when the ceremony was intended to put an end to a protracted confrontation between the city and its lord. Thus in 1392, Londoners squandered no opportunity to suggest a simple idea to Richard II, who had finally visited the city: that he was a groom on the way to his bride’s chamber. His *sponsa*, the city of London, had once rejected her betrothed, but was now dreaming about him, hoping that he would return to her, not subjugating her by force, but showing mercy.³² When Ghent offered Duke Philip the Good (who not long before had defeated the army of Ghent in a bloody battle) a magnificent reception in 1458, the victor was met by (among other sym-

Lebende Bilder, especially 59–102. For an analysis of the scenes presented during princely entries into Bruges, see Ramakers, “The Tableaux Vivants,”; Perret, “From *Tableaux* to Theatre.”

29 Königson, “La Cité et le Prince,” 66.

30 Guinée and Lehoux, *Les entrées royales*, 64 : “Et tantost après [. . .] en approchant la dicte bonne ville de Paris, vint au devant dudit seigneur une deesse nommee Fama, moult richement aourné, monté sur une coursier couvert des armes de la dicte ville de Paris.”

31 Guinée and Lehoux, *Les entrées royales*, 87 : “Après eulx [i.e., the representatives of the monastic brotherhoods], femmes, toutes vestues de drap d’or, a maniere de royne, ayans sur leur bras leurs nons, selonc les lettres de Paris: la premiere portoit P, qui segnefie Paix; la seconde A, par quoy est entendu Amour; la tierche portoit R, par quoy est entendu Rayson; la quarte portoit I, par quoy est entendu Joye, et le chinquimme portoit S, par quoy est entendu Seureté. Et estoient toutez richement montees a cheval, vestues de drap d’or jusques au piés; et, devant elles, ung hiraus ayans cote d’armes semet du blason de Paris.”

32 Kipling, *Enter the King*, 18.

bolic figures) a very young, beautiful girl with a pale blue hat covering flowing hair and in a wedding dress, kneeling beneath the coats of arms both of the Duke and the community of Ghent subscribed with golden letters with a verse from the Song of Songs (3.4): “I found him whom my soul loveth.”³³

The symbolic distance between a beautiful virgin representing the city and *the* Virgin could not have been too great. This opened the way for presenting the Virgin Mary as the patroness and representative of the city—even in the cases where her cult did not prevail over other cults in the city. The model was set in the first Christian capital, Constantinople, whose heavenly patron was declared the Mother of God. At that time this could have been, firstly, a tribute to the common interpretation of every city as a female (as “complement” to the male ruler), and secondly, a Christian transformation of the “pagan” iconographic personification of Constantinople, a female figure modelled after the personification of the City of Rome. A meaningful example where the Holy Virgin was reinterpreted as the proper representative of the city took place in March 1486, as the city of York anxiously awaited the new king Henry VII Tudor after his triumph over Richard III, whom the people of York had always actively supported. In the course of the welcoming ceremonies, Henry was met by an entire slate of figures representing legendary, historical and biblical personages, the last of which (and hence the most significant) was the Virgin Mary. It was she who uttered an impassioned speech in defence of the community of York, announcing to the new Tudor monarch that Christ was filled with faith in this city, and promising the king that she would intercede with her son on his behalf (judging by the context, however, only in exchange for the favourable disposition of the king towards the city).³⁴ The half-heartedness of the “constitutive” images presented by the citizens of York contrasts starkly with the complexity of the representations offered by their contemporaries in Florence. In spite of the fact that the Florentines considered St. John the Baptist to be their primary heavenly patron, in preparing for the 1494 entry of the French king Charles VIII, they decided to identify their community with the Virgin Mary. But they did not do so in a straightforward manner: the

33 *Kronyk van Vlaenderen*, 217: “[. . .] an ’t welke hinc de wapene van minen vorseiden gheduchden heere ende de wapene van der steede, ende rechts onder de wapene van der steede stont ghescreven met guldenen letteren: *Inveni quem diligit anima mea. Cant. canticor.* 3^o. In dit priel knielde eene schoene jonghe maght van omtrent x. jaren oudt, ghecleedt met eenen witten sydenen keurse, ende met eenen witten sydenen mantle al van lakenen van damast, met schoenen hanghenden hare ghelijc eenre bruyt, ende met eene vincorde hoede up haer hoeft [. . .]” For an analysis of this welcoming ceremony, see Smith, “*Venit nobis*,” 261 and 265 (on Ghent personified by a girl) as well as Arnade, *Realms of Ritual*, especially 136.

34 Attreed, “The Politics of Welcome,” 222.

symbolism employed in their reception was constructed around the scene of the Annunciation, which was presented to the king twice: first as a *tableau vivant*, and, after a few days, in the form of a miracle play.³⁵ This allegory had a clear interpretation: Florence was compared to the Virgin Mary, obediently accepting God in her womb, as is written in the Gospel: “I am the Lord’s servant, may it be to me as you have said” (Luke 1.38). The matrimonial theme was also continued by other less allegorical elements of the reception, in which Charles was represented as a bridegroom about to enter into marriage with his bride, Florence.³⁶ Another sophisticated combination of the motif of sacred marriage alongside the association of the city with the Virgin Mary can be possibly recognised in the scenery prepared in 1529 by the Genoese for emperor Charles V. One of the programmatic *tableaux vivants* depicted the emperor placing a crown with both hands on the head of Genoa (who must have been personified by a humble but beautiful maiden). This composition was an obvious allusion on the iconography of the coronation of Mary.³⁷

Order and beauty

One of the most significant messages conveyed by the welcoming rituals in medieval cities could be perceived in every procession or parade not only in the Antiquity or the Middle Ages, but also up to the present day. Already present in the *Book of Ceremonies* of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (written about 956–959), it was denoted by the term *taxis*, meaning the highly organised order of the universe, with the social world as one significant part. The harmony of political pageantry stood metaphorically for the high orderliness of the social world, achieved under the firm and wise rulership of the current leader and his authorities. The same can be observed also at the level of individual cities. Not only was it necessary for the city council to carefully organise the procession and other welcoming rituals, but the managerial skill of the government was even better demonstrated by the extent to which it was able to bring order to the tumultuous crowds of “passive” spectators (who were in fact anything but passive). As an example of a rather simple arrangement, in 1377 in Dortmund, it was prescribed that all men should stand in their best clothes on one side of the street along which emperor Charles IV and his entourage moved in their entry procession, whereas all women should take places

³⁵ Mitchell, *The Majesty*, 64.

³⁶ Mitchell, *The Majesty*, 65.

³⁷ Gorse, “Republic and Empire”: “E l’Imperadore con ambe le mani incoronava Genova.”

on the opposite side.³⁸ Organisational effort often needed to be expended on presenting the high-ranking city officials or different groups of officials in some sort of “uniform.”³⁹ But many more resources needed to be spent when the magistrates decided to arrange for each of the various categories of the urban population (corporations of artisans and merchants, brotherhoods, as well as foreigners and others) to wear unified clothes of a certain style.⁴⁰ In the same way as in Ancient Rome, the medieval regulations dividing the inhabitants of a city into certain ranks for ceremonial purposes allow a modern historian insight into the reflections of civic authorities about their own society. The cleavages they emphasised by differences in dress, as well as in the functions of the participants’ groups within the pageantry, testify to the “sociological” imagination of the organisers.

The more complex and varied the scenario of such a feast was, the more it expressed the idea that the city government was effective – of course, only if the performance took place more or less in accordance with the planned scenario. If you take the word of city chronicles, you have to admit that political performances went without a hitch: the authors of such official texts, as a rule, were inclined to draw the reader’s attention to everything but the inevitable failures and even less likely to call attention to episodes that were politically problematic.⁴¹ Even the weather was allegedly always perfect, and not only in Italy, but in Holland and England as well . . . There are some records (mostly private) where one occa-

38 *Chronik des Dietrich Westhoff*, 232: “Die burger und burgerschen stonden ordentlich in iren besten und zijrlichsten kledern langs den Oestenhelweg bis an Sanct Reinolts kerkhof, de mans an einer, als neemlich der rechter, sijt und de vrouwen an der ander, als de luchter und nartsiden der straten [. . .].”

39 Thus, when in 1488 the community of Cologne greeted its new bishop, and a delegation of eight highest magistrates was sent to meet him, they all were dressed alike (*Feierlicher Eintritt des Erzbischofs Hermann IV.*, 187): “Item diese vurgenanten geschickte herren hatten mallich einen brunen rock an mit mardern gefodert, und hatten mit sich ryden ire burgere in einer kleidongen alsamen bruyn gekleidt, wail und rustich gezughet mit harnesch und perden [. . .].” In Frankfurt in 1474, the chief magistrates were dressed more colorfully (*Frankfurter Chroniken*, 199): “[. . .] uns mit einander glich gekleidet hasen wammes und kogeln: die linke sitte roit und die rechte sitte swarze und wiße geviert geteilt und uber das harnesß fiolfarwe morginsrocke.”

40 To give just one example from many, Jean le Bon entered Paris to such a welcome in 1350 (Guenée and Lehoux, *Les entrées royales*, 48): “Et toutes manieres de gens de mestier estoient vestus chascun mestier d’unes robes pareilles; et les bourgeois de la dite ville d’unes autres robes pareille. Et les Lombars qui en la dite ville demouroient furent tous vestus d’unes robes parties de deux tartares de soie; et avoient chascun sur sa teste chapeaux haulz aguz my partiz de meismes leurs robes.”

41 Thus, in its official accounts, the city council of Constance preferred not to mention any substantial deviations from the custom when bishop Nikolaus von Riesenbourg entered the city in 1384: Bihrer, “Einzug, Weihe und erste Messe,” 81.

sionally comes across episodes that challenge this trend, such as in January 1474, when Frederick III entered Frankfurt. Because it was snowing and a strong wind was blowing, the emperor refused to leave his carriage. The welcoming clerics also decided to bring only one shrine from the church with them into the snow, but indeed it was a shrine with the most precious relic that the city possessed: the head of the Apostle Bartholomew. The emperor got out of the carriage to kiss the reliquary, and, after listening to the chant *Advenisti desiderabilis* and the following two responsorials and antiphon, took refuge back in his carriage. Thus he must have deeply disappointed the multitude of people who had gathered, despite the terrible weather, to look at his majesty. Under the canopy ready for him, the emperor agreed to walk only from the carriage to the church entrance and then back. In the same way other arrangements prepared by the city authorities must have had little effect upon the crowned guest, as well as upon the public.⁴²

But the magistrates of Worms failed even more in their efforts to arrange a decent welcoming for Maximilian I and Bianca Maria Sforza in 1494. This ceremony did not go well from the very beginning, and almost every stage of it was full of mistakes and inconsistencies.⁴³ In the eyes of contemporaries, the whole spectacle must have looked anything but impressive, in terms of not only politics but also aesthetics. After all, it was common for contemporaries to describe their impressions of the political pageantries in terms that were aesthetically colourful. The usual brief description could often be as short as a single word: “beautiful.” This “beauty,” of which we read so often in medieval accounts, was a topical word used for complex feelings including political loyalty. No less political must have been that special inner mood of the spectators which was meant implicitly, namely “the joy,” that should certainly prevail in the entire city every time that any “constitutional” political pageantry took place.⁴⁴ Even those sick residents of

42 *Frankfurter Chroniken*, 198–199: “[. . .] so was es den ganzen dag also fuechte unstede wetter vom regen snehe und wind durch einander, das sie das vergulte heubt alleine trogen, und bleben mit disser procession uf dem platze bi sant Maderns kirchen stehende umb des gedrenges willen des folkes. und do der keiser darbie kom, steig er uß dem wagen und köste das heubt und steig do widder uf den wagen [. . .] aber der keiser bleib in dem wagen umb des fuchten wetters willen, das sie des tuoches uber em nit bedorften tragen den von dem phareisen biß in die pharkirche und widder biß uf den wagen.” See also *Frankfurter Chroniken*, 23: “[. . .] tunc temporis portabatur solum caput sancti Bartholomei, quia aura fuit valde turbida ac pluviosa.” A short description of this case can be seen in Drabek, *Reisen und Reisezeremoniell*, 15–17.

43 Schenk, “Zähmung der Widerspenstigen?”

44 Just one example, from Tournai in 1464, reads (Guenée and Lehoux, *Les entrées royales*, 189) : “Item sera commandé que, le jour que le roy sera arivé, les habitans, en demonstrent exhaltation de joye, fachtent feux parmy la ville et aultres esbattemens de joye et de liesse, le plus grand qu’ilz pourront, pour l’onneur et reverence du roy, leur prince et seigneur neturel.”

a hospital, who might hardly see the “beautiful” train of the entering prince with their own eyes, had to be “happy” as it passed by – so it was at least presumed by our sources.⁴⁵

Admittedly, the city authorities were able to organise a demonstration of the opposite kind, for example, to let the burghers hold complete silence, as in Bruges in 1301 on the occasion of the entry of King Philip IV the Fair. The king may not only have been “surprised” by such a greeting, as noted by the chronicler: he must have also understood its political message.⁴⁶ Today’s historian has every right to be sceptical of his sources, asking whether such emotionally invariable communities – totally joyful or, on the contrary, totally silent, expressing no emotions at all – could have existed in reality, or whether our informants, loyal to their civic governments, were rather inclined to “create” such homogenous communities in their writings.⁴⁷

Exchanging symbolic capital

If any feast controlled by the city authorities ultimately served to confirm their legitimacy, the solemn greetings of emperor, kings, bishops and other princes are especially interesting as complex systems of creating or confirming not only symbolic but also legal relations between two different (and sometimes latently opposed) holders of power – the civic community and the high-ranked visitor. Both parties were equally interested in the ceremony being impressive and “beautiful,” because they both profited from it, borrowing for their own benefit the legitimacy of their counterpart and thereby reinforcing their own legitimacy. In this kind of exchange, the symbolic capital of both parties only grew. In the scene, for example, where the best people of the city carried a canopy over the head of the entering emperor, he benefited from being honoured by the most authoritative officials in this particular local community, but they, in turn, benefited no less from demonstrating their proximity to the person of the emperor.

The “beautiful” pageantry and the universal “joy” both demonstrated not only the efficiency of the city government but also the loyalty of the entire community

45 Seemüller, “Friedrichs III,” 650 (the entry into the city of Fribourg): “Vnnd yederman freyat sych, die krannckhen in dem spital, vnd kruchen her fur, vnnd triben freyt jung vnd alt [. . .]”

46 *Annales Gandenses*, 14: “Et hoc igitur communitas offensa in occursu regis stetit quasi muta, ita quod rex de hoc, ut dicitur, mirabatur.” See also Blockmans and Donckers, “Self-Representation of Court and City,” 88.

47 On the notion of “emotional communities”, see Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*.

to the entering prince as well as the city government. Nevertheless, the relationships between the main counterparts of these ceremonies were typically complex, because the idea of the loyalty of a city to its lord was always accompanied by another idea: the proclamation that the community was a self-sufficient political subject, submitting only voluntarily and by its own consent, within certain limits, to the newly arrived ruler.⁴⁸ However, this latent conflict normally did not come to the surface. As usual in political rituals, each party was satisfied, “reading” from the polysemantic ceremony only those meanings that were convenient to itself. Therefore, there is no contradiction, for example, when some chronicles, describing how Philippe le Bon visited the cities of Flanders in 1419, wrote that he had subjugated the burghers, while others believed that he swore an oath to them to observe their freedoms.⁴⁹ After all, it was this very polysemy which provided to political rituals such a high level of communicative force, allowing its participants to interact successfully, in spite of their different, sometimes opposing, interests. The very readiness of all parties to assume their prescribed roles within a political scene supposed their consent to constructive interaction with each other. If a king or a prince was seriously angry with a city, he did not allow himself to be solemnly welcomed at all, no matter how servile the gestures of submission were that the citizens were ready to demonstrate towards him.

The reverse was also true: city governments were anything but eager to play their role in the spectacle of power if they were not convinced beforehand that their interests would not be infringed upon by the arriving prince. Thus it was common in the Rhenish cities that the magistrate refused to solemnly receive their local bishop (in other words, refused to participate with him in a joint ceremony), before the “constitutional” agreement between the bishop and the community about mutual rights and privileges was concluded. In 1461, the bishop of Speyer, along with his entourage, was blocked in the street between two gates right in the middle of his solemn entry into the city. The bishop was not allowed out of the trap, until he presented his charter with a full list of city privileges to the burghers and swore hand on breast to observe these privileges.⁵⁰ Some bishops had to await their *adventus* for months or even years until they reached an agreement with the city council regarding the conditions under which they could be admitted by the city.

That princely entry ceremonies were inherently contractual was expressed frankly even from the twelfth century in the earliest evidence of *adventus* in Flan-

48 This ambiguity was demonstrated on the episodes from the later period in Brady, “Rites.”

49 Nadia Mosselmans, “Les villes face au prince,” 542–543.

50 Mone, “Einzug des Bischofs Johannes II,” 521–522.

ders and France. There, the burghers, before letting their lord into the city walls, forced him to take a solemn oath that he would not violate the city's freedoms.⁵¹ About 450 years later, the same practice could still be seen in some cities: the *adventus* ceremony could begin only after the lord had sworn to respect the freedoms of the community.⁵² But this was far from the universal rule. For a number of late medieval cities, it was characteristic for the burghers to demand that the prince present a document confirming his status. Thus, at the first visits of the Archbishop of Trier to Oberwesel, the town of his own principality, he had to humbly present his subjects with an official instrument attesting that he had been elected with the consent of the entire chapter. And when, one day in 1503, a newly elected Jacob II was not accompanied by such a letter, the bishop had to postpone his entry into the town and even the swearing-in ceremony.⁵³ At the imperial level, with exactly the same logic, the burgomasters of Aachen demanded in 1485 that King Maximilian, who had arrived at their gate for his coronation, show a letter (*offen Brieue*) with seals certifying his successful election in Frankfurt.⁵⁴

Of course, in both cases the burghers were well aware of the status of the princes visiting them. However, by arranging such a symbolic examination, the city authorities added a very important feature to their political image. They presented themselves to their lords as responsible subjects, devoted not to this or that powerful individual, but above all to common institutional interests.⁵⁵

51 See for example the account on the entry of the count of Flanders in Bruges in 1127: Murray, "Liturgy," 137.

52 One example from Cologne (*Feierlicher Eintritt des Erzbischofs Hermann IV.*, 187): "[. . .] und der Burgermeister [. . .] fraigde sin gnade, off sin gnade in der meynongen were inzuryden, wulde dan sin gnade der Stat ire alde priuilegia, so wie sie die von sinen vurfaren Ertzbischouen hetten, na alder gewoinheit bestedigen, so wulden sie sich zu dem inrijden gutwillig bewiesen. Daruff sin gnade antworten ja, und dede inen von stunt an ouermitz siner gnaden Canzler die confirmation besiegelt geuen und ouerleuereu, und sin gnade lachte die handt uff die burst und geloidfe der Stat ire priuilegia zu halten in aller maissen, wie dat in dem brieff der cfrmatation geschreueu was."

53 More to this case in Boytsov, "Archbishop of Trier," 338–341.

54 *RTA MR*, Bd. 1, Nr. 918; see also Müller, *Heiligen Römischen Reichs*, 32: "[. . .] mit ihrem offen Brieue und anhangend Insigeln des Decrets der Election vor die Pfort des Gamyllen [correct Bannmylen – M.B.] kommen haben Ihr Mai. die Burgermeister der Statt Aach empfangen."

55 See the justification of the burghers from Oberwesel (Koblenz, Landesarchiv, Bestand 701 (Handschriften), fol. 92v): "Aber syne gnade sullte es in gnaden von inen versteen, sie hetten eyne gewonheide / by inen, wanne eine inkummender Ertzbischoff / ghen Wesel queme, huldonge zuentfahen, so were / es vonn noeden, das derselbe Ertzbischoff, ader / bestetigter schriftlich kunntschaft by ime hette, das / er durch das Capittel zu Trier eynhellig vffgenomen were, / damit nit irronge entstoende, der huldonge halber"; see Boytsov, "Archbishop of Trier," 338, n. 72.

One of the most important and, moreover, widespread public gestures of the city government was handing over the keys to the city gates to the prince (usually these were real keys, not just symbolic substitutes). In transmitting their keys to the prince, the burghers recognised him for their lord; and he, in accepting them, took the city under his protection in turn. Therefore, in German lands this custom extended only to the cities, subordinate to the Empire directly, in other words, to the Emperor or the King of the Romans. He had to be vigilant not to accept the keys from townspeople not of imperial cities and towns. The burghers might be in conflict with their lord, and were eager to liberate themselves by any means, even symbolical ones. Taking their keys would be seen as the king voluntarily allowing himself, contrary to the law and tradition, to turn the princely city into an imperial one and encroach on subjects who were not his own.⁵⁶

In German lands, returning the keys back to those who had presented them was almost obligatory: exceptions were very rare. With this gesture, the prince demonstrated his grace and trust to the townsmen in a public way. Before returning the keys, the king often shook them in the air, and while handing them back, said words such as: “Keep my town with the same diligence as you have been accustomed to do until now.”⁵⁷ The same formula also seems to have usually been pronounced in such cases in Italy,⁵⁸ as well as in France.⁵⁹ Despite this strong tradition, the magistrates of Frankfurt, for example, considered it necessary to make a special request to the king to return their keys to them, as if they did not realise that this gesture was in fact almost compulsory.⁶⁰ In contrast to German emperors and kings, the French kings throughout the fifteenth century used to retain the keys and entrusted them to one of their officials for the time the king remained within the city walls.⁶¹ Cases where the burghers received the keys back immediately, as was common in Germany, were rare in the French kingdom. What caused such deviations, as, for example, in Tournai in 1463, is not easy to explain.⁶² Neil Murphey assumes that the king deliberately decided to step away from the usual

⁵⁶ Drabek, *Reisen und Reisezeremoniell*, 26–27.

⁵⁷ See examples in Schenk, *Zeremoniell und Politik*, 347–348.

⁵⁸ *Cronaca senese di Tommaso Fecini*, 844 (King Sigismund in Siena in 1432): “E in quel tanto e’ gonfalonieri li derono la chiavi e esso le prese e baciolle e poi le rendè a’ signori e disse: ‘Siate voi propii guardia della vostra città senese.’”

⁵⁹ Murphy, *Ceremonial Entries*, 57.

⁶⁰ Drabek, *Reisen und Reisezeremoniell*, 27.

⁶¹ Murphy, *Ceremonial Entries*, 57–58.

⁶² Guenéé and Lehoux, *Les entrées royales*, 191–192: “[. . .] et lui presenterent les clefz des portes de ladite ville qu’ilz avoient fait apporter sur ung coursier, ricement mises et atachees sur ung abitacle de bois qui estoit sur la selle dudit cheval, desquelles choses le roy fut tres content et prinst lesdites remonstrances en grant gré, delaisant lesdites clefs a ceulx de ladite ville, disant

“French” ceremonial style here, wanting to emphasise his special trust in the city because it was situated close to the border of his realm. However, the local version of the scene with the keys in Tournai can also be interpreted in a very different way: it might have been influenced by the neighbouring ceremonial tradition of the imperial cities. The distance between these two possible answers is significant, and not only has a casual but also a general meaning for the nature of relationships between the king and the cities. If the first is correct, then the king controlled and regulated these relations at his own will. But if the second one, then he, on the contrary, had to respect local norms to such an extent that he had to deviate significantly from the usual form of self-representation.

Swearing oaths and pardoning convicts

However, the most important scene, in which the civic authorities could express their own political dignity especially clearly, was the swearing of the oath of allegiance. Of course, this action was the culmination of only the first entry of a new prince into the city. This solemn procedure could be repeated later only if the lord acquired a new legal capacity. Thus, the burghers would take an oath of allegiance to the new emperor, even if they had already sworn to him before – but at that time “only” in his capacity as the king of Rome. Like so many other practices in the broad field of political rituals, the procedure of citizens taking oaths seems, at the first glance, to be almost identical in all cities. However, a closer examination reveals that, on the contrary, each such scene had its own nuances, often expressing important peculiarities of how the city authorities saw their community and how they interpreted their relationship with the lord. The multiplicity of such variants is hardly noticeable to historians who only study princely entrances into large cities located at great distances from each other. Fascinated by the splendour of medieval metropolises, such as Florence,⁶³ Venice,⁶⁴ Paris or Ghent,⁶⁵ historians have paid almost no attention to acts of political symbolism in small towns and modest boroughs under the rule of local princes. Meanwhile, the first attempt to study this issue, through the example of the cities and towns of the archbishops of Trier welcoming their rulers and swearing allegiance to them, allowed significant observa-

que toujours l'avoient bien gardé et que encoires feroient, comme bien se confioit; et lors fut cryé: 'Noel.'”

⁶³ Trexler, *Public Life*.

⁶⁴ Muir, *Civic Ritual*.

⁶⁵ Bryant, *King*; Arnade, *Realms of Ritual*.

tions.⁶⁶ First of all, the neighbouring communities, concentrated within a modest territory belonging to this principality, did not establish any sort of standard procedure for welcoming the new prince and taking the oath to him. In each city or town, the reception differed in certain details, sometimes significantly, from everything awaiting the prince in any other neighbouring place. The leaders of one community could force the bishop to swear “to preserve all liberties of the town” first, while in the next community, on the contrary, their colleagues had nothing against swearing their oath of allegiance earlier than the bishop. Some demanded explicitly that he swear his oath with his hand on his chest, while others did not attach any importance to this gesture. Often there were special demands that the new bishop should swear exactly as his predecessor had sworn. Another point, on which the citizens could insist, was that the bishop’s oral oath alone was not enough – and they immediately drew up a notarial instrument to bind all his promises. In one place it was enough for the bishop to shake hands with the head of the local community alone, but in numerous other places he had to do so with everyone who took the oath. But what is more important for us than this diversity, is the fact that most local authorities, even in small boroughs, instrumentalised the welcoming ceremony to publicly demonstrate the pride and dignity of their community and the fact that they would obey the prince only according to strictly negotiated terms. In the eyes of a modern historian, these attempts look ridiculous, since such towns had no noticeable resources to oppose their mighty lords. Nevertheless, they persistently sought symbolic gestures from every new archbishop, proving that they were not simply obeying him, but exchanging their loyalty to him for his reciprocal loyalty towards them.

A particularly striking example was that of Oberwesel, mentioned above, where the oath to the archbishop paradoxically expressed the dream of the civic authorities to return to their former status of imperial city, i.e. make themselves independent from the same archbishop. On the micro-level of provincial towns one can discern the symbolic strategies of self-representation in many types of urban communities, large or small, free or subordinate to their lords.

One further important form of symbolic interaction between the princes and their cities has enjoyed a great deal of attention from scholars, primarily in German medieval studies. In many European cities, from Flanders in the west to Silesia and Livonia in the east, from Saxony in the north and sometimes even to Tuscany in the south, throughout the late Middle Ages and into the Early Modern period, the secular and ecclesiastical princes, in the course of their solemn entries, brought exiles with them inside the city walls, who had been previously convicted by city

66 The following is based on the article Boytsov, “Archbishop of Trier.”

courts for certain crimes. In fact, these people were not only forbidden to return to the city, but also to approach it at a distance of a certain number of miles for a certain number of years, or even forever. Now they returned before everyone's eyes, in a solemn procession, often clinging to the prince's horse, holding on to his clothing, stirrup, saddle, demonstrating thereby a completely material, physical attachment to his personality. In this way, for example, King Frederick III brought eleven criminals with him to Zurich in 1442⁶⁷ and even thirty-seven on his entry into Basel in 1473.⁶⁸

Of the many scholarly interpretations of numerous episodes of this kind, two have been the most popular. Firstly, historians saw here a manifestation of a special quality of the ruler, his charisma, or some kind of sacrality, which supposedly exempted those who managed to physically touch the sacred person from responsibility for the crime they had committed. The roots of this exotic custom must have originated in the law-books of the thirteenth century, the *Sachsenspiegel* and the *Schwabenspiegel*, going as far back as to Roman law and/or even to the hypothetical legal traditions of the ancient Germanic tribes, whose chieftains allegedly possessed a specific sort of sacrality.⁶⁹ Another hypothesis (related to the first one as well as to the idea that the custom had imperial Roman origins) assumes that the emperor, by reintroducing criminals to a city, demonstrated the superiority of his legal dominance over the civic authorities, with imperial justice overriding any local court. By his own will, he could cancel the earlier verdicts and mercifully pardon the convicted and restore their rights.⁷⁰ A careful reading of the sources leads to the conclusion that both of these hypotheses, still popular among specialists, do not really have any serious basis. The situation described in the *Saxon Mirror* has, upon closer examination, little in common with the custom under discussion, whereas all attempts to connect it with some kind of "sacrality" of the ancient Germanic tribal leaders seem to be nothing more than ideological fantasies. The strange custom in German lands seems rather to have been adopted from France, and no earlier than in the late thirteenth century.⁷¹

67 Peyer, "Empfang des Königs," 220–221.

68 Schuster, *Der gelobte Frieden*, 125, corrected in Schenk, *Zeremoniell und Politik*, 353, n. 532.

69 Grimm, *Deutsche Rechtsalterthümer*, vol. 1, 368–369; vol. 2, 341; His, *Das Strafrecht*, 391–392; Peyer, "Empfang des Königs," 228; Drabek, *Reisen und Reisezeremoniell*, 35–36; Niederstätter, "Königseinritt und -gastung," 496; Schubert, *König und Reich*, 52; Treppe, "Könige," 31; Tenfelde, "Adventus," 52 and 54; Dotzauer, "Die Ankunft des Herrschers," 262.

70 For this point of view, see for example Schenk, *Zeremoniell und Politik*, 358. Against it: Garnier, *Die Kultur der Bitte*, 324–338.

71 See the argument in Boytsov, "The Healing Touch." The following is based on this article.

More important here, however, is the fact that the allegedly voluntary decision of the ruler to cancel the verdict of the city court, turns out on closer examination to be an amnesty carried out by the city authorities. Any attempts to ignore their will run into the most resolute resistance of the citizens. Maybe the most significant case that should be remembered here was the attempt of the papal legate Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa in 1451 to bring with him into Magdeburg “many prisoners and exiles.” In spite of the fact that he was already moving with them in the solemn procession to the city gates, the authorities of the bishop and the city refused to admit the legate (also a great philosopher), who had to turn back when already halfway to the gates.⁷² This case was, of course, scandalous. Far more often, the citizens allowed their unwanted guests to remain within the city walls for some time, but no longer than the prince himself stayed there.⁷³ The city government of Strasbourg in 1400 did not allow King Ruprecht to bring any criminals with him into the city at all.⁷⁴ Even a short-term and conditional amnesty usually also required the prior approval of the city magistrates. As for those cases when the exiles received complete forgiveness, it is difficult to believe that the candidates for this mercy were not agreed upon in advance in negotiations between the prince and the magistrates. Admittedly, we hear about such negotiations only indirectly and mostly in a different context, when, under obvious pressure from the townspeople, the prince has to give up his original intention to bring city convicts pleading for his help into the city with him. So King Sigismund in 1414 had to address a group of exiles from Bern seeking his intercession with words reminiscent of a quote from the Gospel: “Depart from me now! You will not find mercy with us!”⁷⁵ No one apart from the authorities of Bern could reveal to the king the full measure of the atrocities committed by these very people . . . Thus it turns out that the decision about whom to forgive and whom not to forgive was made by the city authorities, and not by Sigismund. This case is far from being unique: there are numerous similar ones. Thus, the public remission of the criminals by the ruler only outwardly looked like acts of his own representation as a merciful ruler, as the *rex pacificus*. In fact, in most cases these were at least

⁷² *Magdeburger Schöppenchronik*, 399–400; *Gesta archiepiscoporum Magdeburgensium*, 469.

⁷³ So in Aachen in 1442 (*RTA ÄR*, Bd. 16, Nr. 100, 173): “Auch wann ain Römisch kung gen Ach komen ist [. . .] und verpannt lewt einkomen, als in andern stetten gewonhait ist, diselben leut mugen des kungs kunft nicht lenger geniessen, wann alslang er zu Ach ist, wann die von Ach des freihait haben.”

⁷⁴ *Fortsetzungen des Königshofen*, 259: “[. . .] kain ächter mit dem kunig oder mit der kunigin in die stat kamen solt, noch in noch iren pferden oder wagen anhangen [. . .]”

⁷⁵ Justinger, *Die Berner-Chronik*, 219 (363): “Get hin bald! Ir solt nicht gnade an uns vinden!” Compare with: “Depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matt. 7.23) or: “Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity” (Luke 13.27).

joint actions, co-organised by the city councils as much as by the king's advisers. And such scenes served to demonstrate the *miser cordia* of the city government no less than that of the king.

Legitimising political individuality

In these few pages the language of political ceremonies, systematically used and developed by city governments to present themselves to external view, as well to their own burghers, could be demonstrated only in its basic forms. The rich cities could afford not to be limited to these basics when staging sophisticated symbolic dialogues with their powerful and sometimes dangerous guests, from time to time arriving from outside into the small world of a particular urban community.⁷⁶ However, two characteristic features seem to be common to the most varied urban symbolic expressions, the simplest as well as the most elaborate. The first consisted in asserting the *subjectivity* of the urban community, its political self-sufficiency – no matter if the city itself was big or small, free or dependent. This was also an assertion of the legitimacy of the government, addressed not only to the outside, but also, no less, to all members of the city community itself. The city always presented itself as an absolutely unique and perfectly organised social individual. But to express this idea, each city seems to have resorted primarily to rather standard images, the same as those used by others. So, every city could present itself as the Holy City Jerusalem, or the Chaste Virgin. The technical ways in which these images were embodied were also fairly similar in different cities. In some cases, the agents of one city sent reports home, describing the ceremonies with which the king was welcomed in another city. The purpose of this was probably to allow their own government to take into account the “positive experience” of their neighbours, when preparing to welcome the king into their own walls in the near future. However, even the most standard technical solutions could not be reproduced in one city in exactly the same way as in another: each specific implementation of any general idea or image could not but differ in one city from how they were implemented in another. So, it turned out that the image of the city as a unique individual was formed from a set of standard general ideas, which, however, were inevitably interpreted by every city government in its own unique ceremonial way.

⁷⁶ See for example: Smith, “*Venit nobis.*”

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Regula Schmid

Securing Troops and Organising War by and between Communal States in the Swiss Confederation, 1350–1550

The Swiss Confederation emerged from a cluster of alliances of towns and rural communes in the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth century. It became a clearly delineated entity around 1500.¹ From a modern perspective, the numerous alliances shaping the relationships between these communities may seem to be the pre-history of the Swiss federal state of the nineteenth century. From a medievalist's perspective, however, the communities themselves are in the foreground, and alliances feature as a highly dynamic political means of furthering local and personal interests.² This emphasis on the communal (i.e. urban territorial or rural) state as creator of alliances will be at the centre of this chapter.

Alliances were political instruments used in the Middle Ages by all powers, secular and ecclesiastical, urban and noble.³ They had a range of goals, but most generally, they aimed at securing peace in a prescribed area, facilitating commerce, or providing legal and military support. Towns embraced them readily and (as they themselves were *universitates*,⁴ communities based on a mutual oath) imbued these treaties of mutual obligation with their own specific understanding and language. The towns and rural communities that emerged in large numbers between the Alps and the Jura mountain range from the twelfth century

1 For overviews in English, see: Schmid, "Swiss Confederation"; Sablonier, "Swiss Confederation," 645–670. Church and Head, *History of Switzerland*, 29, outlines the development of fourteenth-century Swiss communal states as "network of semi-autonomous corporate communities linked by alliances that regulated regional policy, while each ally managed its own internal affairs." In German, see the chapters in Maissen, *Geschichte der Schweiz* and Kreis, *Die Geschichte der Schweiz*. An excellent introduction to the peculiarities of the Swiss states is Peyer, *Verfassungsgeschichte*.

2 This approach is pursued in the volume Schmid et al., *Bündnisdynamik* and the introductory chapter by Schmid, "Prolegomena".

3 The literature is accordingly abundant. For an overview of the literature on communal alliances see Schmid, *Bündnisdynamik*. Three important recent contributions reflect the renewed interest in the topic and major shifts in the methodological approach and appraisal of the phenomenon: Speich, *Burgrecht*; Hardy, *Associative Political Culture*; Baumbach, and Horst, *Landfrieden–epochenübergreifend*.

4 Michaud-Quantin, *Universitas*.

on were no exception in using this particular political instrument to further their interests, both with or against their overlords.⁵

There are, however, a number of particularities to the alliances in this region. First of all, alliances with military goals were by far the most prevalent type of contract between power holders, communities and nobles alike.⁶ Secondly, alliances soon became the primary means of political networking and eventually dominated political communication. Thirdly, by the mid-fifteenth century, the highly autonomous rural and urban communities had firmly asserted themselves as the main powerholders in the region. They had extended their rule to the detriment of the local nobility. On a larger scale, they had assumed lordship over territories formerly ruled by the houses of Habsburg (in the east, after 1415), Savoy (in the west, after 1474/78, and permanently in 1536) and the Visconti and Sforza families as dukes of Milan (in the south). And fourthly, in 1481, the numerous alliances between two or more partners were integrated in an inclusive treaty (the so-called *Stanser Verkommnis*, ‘Stans covenant’).⁷ By 1500, the Confederation was regarded by foreign powers as a clearly distinct polity within the European political landscape.

The city-states and rural communities that formed this confederation also governed a number of subject dominions, either individually or jointly, in groups of two to twelve. The first of these was the Aargau, seized from the Habsburgs in 1415.⁸ Swiss constitutional history underlines the importance of this common governance arrangement for the long-term integration of the Confederation, in a way that included the principle of majority rule in decision making⁹ (this principle was tempered by a strong undercurrent of seniority). The common dominions were ruled in turn by each government for two years. In the first half of the fifteenth century, common meetings were mostly used to tally up and distribute the

5 Stercken, *Städte der Herrschaft*; Flückiger, *Gründungsstädte*; Ammann, “Schweizerische Städtewesen”; Peyer, “Schweizer Städte” and, for the later period Stercken, “Reichsstadt”; Scott, *City-State*. For the development of the rural communal states see the overviews: Peyer, *Verfassungsgeschichte* and Stadler, “Länderorte”; for the inner cantons: Sablonier, *Gründungszeit*. A number of recent cantonal histories treat the political-constitutional developments of the late middle ages in detail, for example: *Geschichte des Kantons Schwyz*; Stadler-Planzer, *Geschichte des Landes Uri*. See also the articles on the individual cantons in the *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz*: www.hls.ch.

6 A systematic collection of contracts is *Die Urkunden und Akten der oberdeutschen Städtebünde*.

7 Walder, *Stanser Verkommnis*.

8 Hesse, Schmid and Gerber, *Eroberung und Inbesitznahme*; Niederhäuser, *Krise, Krieg und Koexistenz* and a plethora of articles in the historical journal *Argovia*, published in 2015, as well as older literature.

9 Peyer, *Verfassungsgeschichte*; Holenstein, “Gemeine Herrschaften.”

income generated from these territories. After the Burgundian Wars, the meetings became more formalised, but never developed into anything like a central institution.¹⁰ The Confederate Diet (*Tagsatzung*) did not supplant bilateral meetings, and foreign powers were aware that in order to be successful they invariably had to deal with each of the “burgomasters, mayors, senators, consuls, citizens, countrymen and communes of Zurich, Berne, Lucerne, Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden, Zug, Glarus, Basel, Freiburg, Solothurn, Schaffhausen, and Appenzell, of the lands of the great upper German league.”¹¹

If there was little institutional cohesion within the league, which by 1513 was comprised of 13 cantons, its ideological cohesion was strong. By 1500, it was based on tales of common origins, a supposedly common enemy in the Habsburg overlord of old, and the real experience of war waged in common within territorial borders that contemporary humanists were able to delineate on the basis of their new understanding of antique texts and artifacts.¹²

War played a central role in the evolution of this ideological cohesion.¹³ The aggressive stance of the urban and rural territorial states in this south-western corner of the Empire was clearly enabled by their alliances. Organising and waging war together, and dealing with its aftermath, enhanced common action and helped integrate the populations of the allied states. Securing troops and organising war was a major task of the allies. Analyzing the steps communities took in order to call upon allied troops, and the methods used to actually assemble them, can thus be a fruitful path to understanding the “functioning” of each state and of the emerging Confederation itself.

In spite of common action, allies remained competitors that observed their partners’ movements with a good deal of suspicion, and all the people involved tended to draw their own lessons for future interaction with governments and among each other. By the end of the Middle Ages, and especially in the early Reformation period, the fine-tuned but complex bundle of alliances that had developed since the early thirteenth century was evolving from a once flexible political instrument towards one frozen in time, and which had actually become detrimen-

10 Würgler, *Tagsatzung der Eidgenossen*; Jucker, *Kommunikationsort Tagsatzung*; Würgler, “Tagsatzung.”

11 Thus the typical formal address of the Confederates in the early sixteenth century.

12 This is the main argument of: Schmid, “Swiss Confederation.” For the phenomena themselves see especially the works of Guy Marchal as collected in Marchal, *Schweizer Gebrauchsgeschichte*.

13 An overview on the events is provided by Schaufelberger, “Spätmittelalter”.

tal to finding smooth solutions in an age marked by increasing political tensions among the allied states.¹⁴

Mainly military alliances

Generally speaking, alliances are treaties between two or more partners who expect benefits from the contract. The partners are legally on par, but might (and often do) carry different political weight. Treaties might therefore cement or even reinforce pre-existing power differences by bringing a weaker partner under tighter control of its stronger counterpart. However, even the weaker partner might profit from such formalised ties, be it only by having chosen the lesser of two evils, or hoping for a brighter future under the ambit of a possible protector. Mutual dependencies and the fact that the typical treaty between communal powers in the Swiss lands regulated that dissent should be solved by arbitration, and if necessary, by military force, helped to rein in divergent aspirations and ambitions of the partners, at least to a certain extent.

Alliances laid a common ground for the organisation of war, while confirming hierarchical positions and inequalities of power between the allied partners. Such inequalities pertained above all to the right to call for support and the obligation of the partner to follow this call, and to the military costs:¹⁵ a majority of treaties established a geographical range within which partners had to help at their own expense (the so-called *Hilfskreis*), but if the campaign went further, the party wanting this extension had to pay, thus turning the troops of one ally into mercenaries of the other.¹⁶

The practical execution of this procedure followed a system that gave precedence to older or specifically designated contracts. This can be best shown by looking at the crucial *Zürcher Bund* of Zürich, Luzern, Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden of May 1, 1351.¹⁷ It was the model for further alliances of Zürich, Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden and Glarus (June 4, 1352), and of Zürich, Luzern, Zug, Uri, Schwyz, and Un-

14 Schmid, *Bündnisdynamik*; Speich, "Eidgenössische Bündnisgeflecht".

15 It took Appenzell about 100 years to rise in the hierarchy of allies from a land providing mercenaries to an equal opportunity state within the Swiss confederation, by an interplay of renegotiations of treaties and repeatedly proving the military worth of its men to the allied partners. Schmid and Sonderegger, *Der Weg des Landes Appenzell*. A short version in Sonderegger and Guggenheimer, *Appenzeller Bundesbrief*.

16 Schmid, "Vorbehalt" und 'Hilfskreis'."

17 Schudel, Meyer and Usteri, *Quellenwerk*. See: Schweizer, *Original des ewigen Bündnisses*; Nabholz, *Zürcher Bund*; *Zürich 650 Jahre eidgenössisch*.

terwalden (June 27, 1352),¹⁸ and was preceded by a 1332 alliance between Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden and Luzern. These contracts described in detail the geographical boundaries within which the allies had to render military aid to each other, at their own expense, if one or more of them was “attacked or damaged.” The matter is not as complicated as it might seem: in this cluster of alliances, Glarus and Zug were *not* allied with each other, and Glarus was, in contrast to Zug, not allied with Luzern. This meant simply that Glarus, and (to a lesser extent) Zug, were in an inferior position towards their allies. They were forbidden to make treaties on their own either with other powers or with each other.

When Bern entered an open-ended alliance with Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden on March 6, 1353,¹⁹ it was attached to this complex by three sub-contracts (*Beibriefe*) with Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden,²⁰ Zürich, and Luzern²¹ respectively that stipulated that if Bern asked Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden for help, they could call on Zürich and Luzern who, in turn, would be obligated to help Bern. (Zürich, Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden could for their part call upon Glarus, and Luzern could, in concert with these four, ask Zug for help.) Bern and the three new allies did not set geographical limits to their mutual support. For the other partners, the geographical range within which military aid should be unconditional was quite large, reflecting the individual interests that converged in the contract. If, for example, Zürich wanted the help of Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden north of the Rhine where its main (economic) interests lay, it had to pay for this help, and if the latter communities searched for military help of Zürich south of the Gotthard range (where their efforts were concentrated on the passes that led to the cattle market of Milan) they had to do the same.

Alliances are political contracts often resulting from long deliberations that reveal the interests of the partners which made them seek out this form of legally binding relationship. Negotiations undertaken with the goal of forming an alliance do not necessarily result in drafting and eventually sealing (and taking the

18 Segesser, *Eidgenössischen Abschiede*, 23.

19 Schwinges, “Bern.”

20 The closeness of Uri, Schwyz, Ob- and Nidwalden (= Unterwalden) was enhanced (if not created, to a certain extent) in 1309 when king Heinrich freed all three communities from courts outside their lands (with the exception of the *Hofgericht*) as long as they would be answerable to the royal representative responsible for the *Waldstätte*. This was the imperial administrative unit of the *Reichsvogtei Waldstätte* [“imperial bailiwick”] in 1309. See *RI* VI,4,1 n. 174: http://www.regesta-imperii.de/id/1309-06-03_4_0_6_4_1_216_174. This step affected the internal institutionalisation of the communities. See Sablonier, *Gründungszeit*, 182–183.

21 The contract in EA 1, Nr. 15, A, 285–288, the *Beibriefe* in EA 1, Nr. 25, B (Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden to Luzern), C (Zürich and Luzern to Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden), D (Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden to Bern), 289–290.

oath on) an agreement, but the negotiations might be a political goal in themselves.²² However, once agreed upon and sealed, these treaties established legal conditions and set norms of behavior that affected the future relationship of the allied partners.

Communal alliances implicated not just the elites who had concocted the contract, but every person bound to the respective political power. As the populace of these states would bear the brunt of an eventual war, it was crucial that the contracts were accepted by all members of the communities to which they applied. This was achieved by having the agreements confirmed by oath²³ or even by combining the oath sworn by the parties to an alliance with the oath sworn by new citizens, as was the case in the town of Luzern. Here, every new citizen vowed to adhere to the town's laws and to "always hold fast to all alliances that we and our confederates have together."²⁴ The interlacement of communal and supra-communal confederation made everyone, regardless of their social or legal standing, a participant in the leagues. As a matter of fact, a number of uprisings against urban governments in the fifteenth and early sixteenth century can be understood as a violent appropriation of the right to shape communal politics as expressed in the wording of political contracts and respective oaths.²⁵ On several occasions, non-privileged members of the communities demanded that they be allowed to have a say in political decisions by stating that they were "Confederates as well," therefore taking the norms expressed in alliance politics at face value.²⁶

How to wage war

The treaties quite clearly stated the procedure for obtaining, and giving, military support. The community that was under immediate threat would exhort its allies for help "with messengers or letters" that would address the council or the citi-

22 Kintzinger, "Strategien des Scheiterns."

23 On the oaths taken by the warriors of the Bern army in 1339, in the wake of the battle of Laupen, see Schmid. "Bezahlte Bürger–Gratissöldner," 91–114, esp. 106–107.

24 SSRQ LU I, 1, Nr. 120 (Eid der Neubürger, 1416 Juli 3–1423 Januar): https://www.ssrq-sds-fds.ch/online/LU_I_1/index.html#p_220.

25 For an overview see the list in Peyer, *Verfassungsgeschichte*, 139–141; Suter, "Protest und Widerstand." For a series of revolts directly linked to the towns' military politics see especially Rogger, *Geld*.

26 Schmid, "The Politics of History"; for the towns at the margins of the Swiss Confederation see Brady, *Turning Swiss*.

zens assembled in the town hall²⁷ or the ‘head’ (*Ammann*) of the rural communities and the assembly of the *Landleute*, either at their *Landsgemeinde* or in the churches. If the danger was imminent, the allies were supposed to bring help immediately and without excuse. If, however, the matter was not urgent (the wording suggests that this might also entail plans for non-provoked, aggressive war), the parties would meet in a prescribed meeting place to discuss the future course of action.

Practice followed this prescription. When, in 1476, Charles the Bold’s army approached the towns of Bern and Fribourg, Bern sent letters by messenger to its allies. When Luzern did not immediately react, the letters became more frequent and urgent.²⁸ Bern referred directly to the alliance and the duties it entailed, by reminding the allies of past common deeds, invoking the love of brothers that would die for each other, and asserting the mutuality of the relationship. When the desired response still failed to materialise, Bern sent two members of the government to deliver the message in person, all the while excusing the fact that it could not spare its most prominent councilmen in this time of crisis but had to send two members of the greater council. These men eventually secured “good answer” from all confederates, as Luzern, Zürich, Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden immediately sent out full troop contingents “with their banners to Bern and joined to them their life and property.”²⁹

By the late fifteenth century therefore, on the basis of the treaties and honed by repeated practice, the urban and rural communities had well-proven communicative links to the partners’ centers of decision making. The elites of each state knew each other well from meeting at the Diet, and from common diplomatic and military missions. By no means, however, did they have a say in the jealously guarded autonomous decision processes within their partners’ communities.

Having pledged military aid to partners that might be quite far away geographically, the urban and rural communities had to actually be capable of raising the necessary number of troops. In the last decades of the fifteenth century, the *Tagsatzung* allocated, on a case to case basis, specific numbers of troops to

²⁷ I am following the stipulations of the *Zürcher Bund* (and by extension a number of others). The text leaves room for interpretation, but the whole context leaves no doubt that the messengers were supposed to address the assembled political bodies of the respective community in the places where they usually assembled (town hall, *Landsgemeinde*, church).

²⁸ Luzern, Staatsarchiv, URK 242/3750, February 11, 1476 (with reference to a letter of February 10); URK 242/3751, February 12; URK 242/3752, February 13; URK 242/3753: February 14. On March 2, 1476, the Confederates met the army of Charles the Bold at Grandson. A second series of letters was sent in June, in the wake of the battle of Murten (June 22, 1476).

²⁹ Schilling, *Amtliche Berner Chronik*, Mss.h.h.I.3, f. 732.

each state. If towns marched to war “with full force,” they did so with about a third of their potential manpower. In times of crisis, additional troops would be sent out.³⁰ The numbers were impressive: A Zürich list of 1529 counts a total of 13,261 war-ready men, 923 of them from the town.³¹ However, the practicalities of raising troops were not as easy as this orderly list suggests, especially in the late fifteenth and the early decades of the sixteenth centuries when state-organised military competed firmly with an unfettered mercenary culture that saw thousands of men running into war against the wishes of their authorities.³² The topic cannot be expanded here; it will suffice to point out that challenges authorities faced within their communal states heavily influenced the politics aimed at their military allies.

On a more general level, it is obvious that allies were often reluctant to follow the call of their partners and to lend aid, because they had to protect their own interests as well. In hindsight, it is difficult to judge when the non- or late appearance of troops was the result of outright defiance, military misjudgment, a lack of coordination, or simply bad luck. A case in point might be the battle of Arbedo on June 30, 1422 that resulted in huge losses for the forces of Luzern, Uri, Unterwalden, and Zug.³³ Uri and Unterwalden had called their allies for help, but Schwyz and Zürich did not arrive in time or had not bothered to raise troops at all. This situation led to years of mutual recriminations, accusations, and legal battles that posed an obvious challenge for further common ventures.

Military leadership on the battlefields seems to have followed the loose pattern of allied political communication (Figure 1). The troops marched in distinct groups, and joined forces only shortly before battle. Strategic decisions were made first among the leaders of each communal group and then by the leaders standing together and negotiating. In a rare outside account, Philippe de Comynnes speaks of this procedure as “their ring” (he uses the German word, thus indicating even more clearly that this approach was considered a distinct “Swiss” practice).³⁴ The main issue seems to have been determining which army would

30 Häne, *Zum Wehr- und Kriegswesen*; von Elgger, *Kriegswesen*.

31 Zürich, Staatsarchiv, A 29.1: “Anno domini 1529 habend myn herren inn ir statt und landt ir manschafft zellen lassen.”

32 The life of Swiss warriors is described in colorful detail by Schaufelberger, *Der alte Schweizer und sein Krieg*. A historiographical overview on Swiss mercenaries can be found in Rogger, *Geld*.

33 Luzern lost 146 men (among them a third of the members of the town’s minor council, and a fifth of the members of the greater council), Uri about 40, Unterwalden about 90, and Zug 92. Schmid, “Geschichte im Bild”; see also the sources in von Liebenau, “Battaglia di Arbedo,” 1–9, 89–93, 131–138, 162–170, 191–199, 214–230, 254–269.

34 de Comynnes, *Mémoires*, 683: “Mais, la nuyt, les Suysses qui estoient en nostre ostz se misdrent en plusieurs conseilz, chascun avecques ceulx de son canton, et sonnerent leurs tabourins



Figure 1: The allied troops from Solothurn, Freiburg, Glarus, Schwyz, Unterwalden, Zürich, Bern, Luzern, Uri, Zug, Appenzell and Biel meet on the Ochsenfeld, a plain in the Sundgau. The soldiers form their “ring.” After marching in separate groups, these various allied troops had met by chance. By showing the central figure with an outstanding suit of armour and a large bush of ostrich feathers on the helmet, the anonymous chronicler from Zürich portrays a captain from Zürich as the leader of the now united army. Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, Ms A 77 (Copy / continuation by an Anonymus of the Chronicle by Gerold Edlibach), 1506–1507 [1566], fol.150r. <https://doi.org/10.7891/e-manuscripta-12645>.

et tindrent leur rin, qui est leur forme de conseil.” (‘But in the night, the Swiss who were in our army met in several councils, each with those of his canton, and they sounded their drums and held their ring which is their form of council.’)

have the honour of the first assault. In battle, each community and its units rallied behind its own banner and bannerets. Documents from the period of the Italian Wars (1494–1515) show that the power of the common man was a major issue among troops gathering in the battle fields of Italy. On numerous occasions the officers had to yield to the demands of the mob of fighters, or became helpless onlookers when their men ran into battle with barely any organisation except the one based on the social bonds of men fighting together.³⁵

As a general rule, and on the level of the allied partners, war waged in common was apt to both bolster cohesion and to disrupt established relationships. In war, the promises of the alliances were usually honoured. But, as each member used alliances to further its own interests, war and its results were a lingering threat to these relationships. It posed a number of structural dangers to the alliances themselves: disagreement over the behavior of the allied partner who had seemingly transgressed the agreed upon norms and stipulations could lead to dissent among the elites and large segments of the population alike, as was the case after the battle of Arbedo. Another problem was that the increasingly entangled but still individual contracts did not provide easy solutions to challenges faced by all of the partners involved.

The abundant riches captured by the Confederates in the camp of Charles the Bold near Grandson in 1476 as well as the demands of Bern and Zürich, the most powerful city-states among the confederates, that Fribourg and Solothurn be formally included in the established network, almost brought an end to the traditional web of alliances. The efforts to solve the issues at hand forced the communities involved to reformulate the corner points of their relationship, thus contributing to the emergence of an exclusive “confederate” political language.³⁶ The result of the protracted negotiations was the 1481 Covenant of Stans between eight urban and rural states and, on its basis, the acceptance of Fribourg and Solothurn as “new members” into the confederate fabric. This Covenant of Stans marks a distinct moment in the development of the Confederation. From now on, future allies would “enter” a league consisting of a definite number of members. In 1501, Basel and Schaffhausen, and Appenzell in 1513, were accepted within the ranks of Confederates, thus creating the “Confederation of the 13 cantons.”

³⁵ Usteri, *Marignano*; Gagliardi, *Novara und Dijon*.

³⁶ Schmid, “Liens forts.”

The case of the Swiss Confederation

War became the most basic factor contributing to the integration of the burgeoning Swiss Confederation in the fourteenth and fifteenth century – but also its most disruptive threat. The question remains: can the organisation of war within a system of alliances, and the obvious repercussions of alliance-based warfare on the political and institutional framework of both individual communes and the Confederation help us to understand the character of the Swiss Confederation in the fifteenth and early sixteenth century? James Madison famously wrote in the *Federalist Papers*:

The connection among the Swiss cantons scarcely amounts to a confederacy; though it is sometimes cited as an instance of the stability of such institutions. They have no common treasury; no common troops even in war; no common coin; no common judicatory; nor any other common mark of sovereignty. They are kept together by the peculiarity of their topographical position; by their individual weakness and insignificance; by the fear of powerful neighbours, to one of which they were formerly subject; by the few sources of contention among a people of such simple and homogeneous manners; by their joint interest in their dependent possessions; by the mutual aid they stand in need of, for suppressing insurrections and rebellions [. . .], and by the necessity of some regular and permanent provision for accommodating disputes among the cantons.³⁷

Madison used “the peculiarity of their case” to convince the American public not to follow the example of the Swiss Confederation, as it was obviously not capable of successfully dealing with major challenges. He understood the Confederation as a set of individual states thrown together by need.

Madison’s argument is persuasive, especially because his observations were derived from treaties that in turn reached back to the mid-sixteenth century topographical-historical *Swiss Chronicle* by Johannes Stumpf,³⁸ the first to describe the unique structural features of the Swiss Confederation to a European public. Indeed, by 1500 the Confederation distinguished itself within Europe by exclusive rituals and a specific political language based on notions of brotherly love and kinship, a notion of being God’s chosen people (victorious battles being proof of it), the notion of a very old shared history, and oaths. Yet each state jealously guarded its individual sovereignty to an extent visible even when assembling a common host of troops and managing war. And the common dominions were ruled in sequence, not jointly or simultaneously.

³⁷ Hamilton, Madison and Jay, *The Federalist Papers*, 93–94.

³⁸ Stumpf, *Chronik*.

In the last quarter of the fifteenth century, the Swiss Confederation had coalesced into an entangled cluster of individual states, forming a kind of Gordian knot. Even Napoleon, who in 1798 emulated Alexander the Great, could not cut it completely. His Helvetic Republic had, for the first time in Swiss history, a central government and a capital (in fact, three capitals in five years), but the weight of the individual states of the former Confederation which he had tried to reduce to administrative units of his central state was such that the centrifugal forces won and the Helvetic state crumbled in 1803. Still today, after the civil war of 1847/48 and the subsequent foundation of modern Switzerland, and a short century of what can only be described as willful nationalisation up to the end of the Second World War, the modern Swiss Federal State sports some peculiar legacies. The fact that one becomes a Swiss citizen only by first being acknowledged as citizen of one of the 2,202³⁹ separate *Gemeinden* of Switzerland is probably the most striking of them.

Conclusion

The urban and rural communal states between the Alps and the Jura mountain range used alliances to an important degree in order to secure troops and organise war. However, when it actually came to war, the alliances could also prove detrimental to their own goals: groups of men who risked their lives within the alliance but were excluded from political decision making in their home towns aggressively demanded that they be taken seriously. If conflict arose between allies, and the prescribed course of arbitration failed, some towns could be caught between conflicting loyalties. Even within the alliance, the security of individual partners depended ultimately on the willingness and ability of their allies to go to war with them.

Looking at the political culture of individual communities since the fourteenth century, rather than observing only the more mature eventual Confederation of the early sixteenth century, the war-oriented communal alliances in the Swiss lands appear more volatile than stabilising: although they opened up opportunities for the various partners and helped shape particular methods of communication and negotiation, the alliances also provoked conflict and restricted each

³⁹ As of January 1, 2020: Bundesamt für Statistik–Amtliches Gemeindeverzeichnis der Schweiz (www.bfs.admin.ch). Because of political mergers, this number has been rapidly shrinking, on January 1, 2019, there were 2,212, and on January 1, 2018, 2,222 “political” communal bodies—down from 3,205 in 1848. See “Gemeinde.”

partner's range of action to a sometimes unsustainable degree. When the Confederation emerged as a political entity that came, with its vast reservoir of men experienced in war, to the avid attention of mostly larger and more centralised rising European princely states, chroniclers in the towns and rural communities started to create a picture of unity spurred by alliances that had "served us well." In political reality, however, the alliances in the Swiss lands had long been at least a double-edged sword.

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Noëlle-Laetitia Perret

Political Governance and ‘Civil Concord’ in Venice: The Experience of the Humanist and Ambassador Ermolao Barbaro (1454–1492)

In the Italy of the *Quattrocento*, agitated by constant regime changes and violent factional struggles, Venice appeared as an island of institutional stability. The European nobility admired not only the ability of the Venetian patriciate to hold on to power, but also the civil concord that seemed to reign in a city that had never experienced a revolt. This social peace and the internal cohesion of the Venetian nobility, driven by a shared awareness of working for the common good and not for private interests, were admired. This false appearance nourished the “myth of Venice,”¹ whose first explicit formulation dates to the second half of the thirteenth century.² The different aspects of this Venetian myth, *frutto di un’abile operazione di mistificazione politica*,³ were widely shared and defended by a political elite in search of legitimacy and anxious to ensure its position and its ability to act in the government. The present chapter therefore aims to highlight, through the experience of Ermolao Barbaro (1454–1493), a key figure in Venetian cultural and political life in the fifteenth century, how the Venetian patriciate shared responsibility for the management of the state within a supposedly pacified political space.

The establishment of a seemingly united governmental elite

The Venetian nobility originated with the *tribuni* in the formerly Byzantine province. Towards the end of the eleventh century, they gave way to *magnates*. At the same time, a number of families became rich in trade. They occupied administra-

1 Crouzet-Pavan, “Immagini di un mito”; Gaeta, “L’idea di Venezia 565–641”; Muir, *Rituale civico*. See also Queller, *Il patriziato veneziano*.

2 Historians agree that Martino da Canal played a major role in the development of this myth in his work *Les estoires de Venise*, composed between 1265 and 1275. See the edition of this work by A. Limentani, *Martin da Canal, Les estoires de Venise*.

3 Caravale, “Istituzioni della Repubblica”, and in particular 302.

tive jobs and mixed with the old tribune families, claiming the quality of “noble.” Over time, the nobility and the merchant bourgeoisie became richer together, gradually creating a state of officials, closer to the Byzantine example than to the feudal model. In Venice, the ancient nobility was not made up, as elsewhere, of feudal lords or warrior-knights. The “noble” was one who held public positions and sat in the councils. Gradually, this noble group managed to transform its economic and social power into a legally recognised political status.

From the twelfth century onwards, a complex system of competencies and controls was imposed to prevent any concentration of power in the hands of a single person. Elected for life, the doge, who symbolised the unity and authority of the state, exerted real influence on the councils on which he sat. However, his power remained tightly controlled and subject to a number of prohibitions defined by legislative provisions, notably in the administration of diplomatic negotiations and in the reception of foreign ambassadors, whom he could receive only in the presence of his advisors.⁴ The purpose of these measures was to avoid any risk of conspiracy or *coup d'état* on the part of the man who officially remained the central figure in the Republic. The creation of councils, which interacted to enact laws and ensure the continuity of power, formalised the separation of a social group that had managed to impose itself on the rest of the *populus*. The Great Council gradually took shape in the twelfth century, succeeding the *Consilium Sapientium*, the body of the Venetian “Commune,”⁵ which had been composed initially of 35 and then of 100 councillors, appointed by three electors chosen by the *Concio* (the popular assembly or *Arengo*). The creation of the *Maggior Consiglio* formalised the strategies previously implemented to impose the social and political domination of a patrician elite.

Assured of its political and economic monopoly, the Venetian patriciate acquired a common ideology and ethics. Little by little, it developed the conditions

4 As early as 1260, the Great Council refused to allow the doge to receive any ambassador travelling to Venice without consulting the Council of Forty. From 1314, the doge also had to swear an oath that he would not give private audiences to foreign visitors without the presence of at least four of his councillors and two leaders of the Forty. *Tractatores* from different families had to belong to the Forty, and were hired to negotiate with the ambassadors visiting Venice. For the duration of their appointment, they were exempt from any other duties. The role of the doge in foreign policy was therefore limited. The ducal oath of 1462 specifically committed the doge not to discuss state affairs with foreigners and to grant audiences in his palace only in the presence of his advisers. The ban on receiving foreign representatives in one's own home affected all Venetian officials. Those who transgressed were fined up to 1,000 ducats, had their property confiscated, or were exiled. On this subject see Queller, *Early Venetian Legislation*, 51.

5 Like so many other Italian cities, Venice was a commune in the twelfth century. On the strength of this status, it negotiated its definitive independence from the Byzantine Empire.

for legitimising its own political sovereignty, cultivating social and cultural practices, a way of life and the production of discourses that justified its social and political superiority. This ideology was reinforced by the *Serrata del Maggior Consiglio* of 1297, which restricted access to the Great Council to those whose ancestors had already been members.⁶ This “closure” or “tightening” of the Great Council was based on an aristocracy that claimed to define, once and for all, and for the good of everyone, the “principal people of the land” providentially destined to govern the city. This nobility of function, constituted by the ancient aristocracy and the members of more recent notable families, thus consolidated its domination by adopting legislation that made membership of the patriciate hereditary, independent of economic status.⁷

Ermolao Barbaro belonged to this nobility of function, which shared responsibility for the management of the state, although not without strong rivalries. Although on an equal footing from a legal point of view, the nobility was nevertheless crossed by dividing lines according to seniority, fortune and influence. Among these distinctive elements, seniority was the determining factor. The main antagonism was between the *case vecchie*, the oldest Venetian noble houses, and the *case nuove*. Among the old families were the Contarini, Morosini, Badoer, Tiepolo, Michieli, Sanudo, Gradenigo, Memmo, Falier, Dandolo, Polani, Barozzi. These lineages considered themselves to be the most noble and emphasised their historical standing, which was maintained by political historiography and by the great festivals that celebrated Venetian grandeur. This ancient nobility, which claimed to have participated in the election of the first doge Anafasto in 697, enjoyed a widely recognised prestige. The *case nuove* – like the Marcellos, Malipieros and Gritti⁸ – could not claim the same historical prominence as the old families, “whose pride and claims to political superiority irritated.”⁹ These recent notables had obtained their title of nobility between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, earning merit in particular for their role in the repression of the Tiepolo-Querini conspiracy, a major crisis facing the Venetian rul-

6 Only members of families who had been members of the Council in the previous four years were considered eligible for the Grand Council, the supreme legislative body. See on this subject Chojnacki, “Nobiltà Serrata” as well as Gaeta, “Mythe de Venise”.

7 On the constitution of the Venetian ruling class see in particular Lane, “Council of Venice”; Cruzet-Pavan, *Espaces, pouvoir et société*, 383–386; Chojnacki, “Venetian Patriarcate”; Meroros, “Der grosse Rat”; Cracco, *Società e stato*.

8 Raines, “Maggior Consiglio”. The appendices to the latter article present lists of the families present in the Great Council for the period 1297–1797. See also Todesco, “Andamento demografico”.

9 Todesco, “Andamento demografico,” 180.

ing class in 1310.¹⁰ The Grisoni, Agadi, and Addoldo were among the fifteen or so families that had distinguished themselves against this conspiracy. In this context of defining institutions and social groups, the Barbaro lineage belongs more specifically to the *case novissime*, 31 in number; they had been admitted to the nobility because of their military and financial commitment to the war against Genoa in 1381.¹¹ These recent houses were marked by their considerable wealth. The Ermolao lineage exerted a particular influence through its reputation, wealth and high level of erudition. Among the two thousand men of the nobility gathered in the Great Council, the Barbaro belonged to the core, made up of about a hundred people (representing twenty or thirty families). This elite of the elite exercised a stranglehold on high governmental functions, causing great tension within Venetian society.

A Venetian patrician at the heart of power games

As a young man, Ermolao was prepared and called to serve the Republic. Not only did he have to adhere to the “idea” of Venice conveyed by the ideology, but he also took part in it to ensure the continuity of its power. This commitment to the service of the Republic was a public duty for which every young aristocrat felt historically destined. In Venetian society, the family played an essential role and presented itself as the ideological, political and social frame of reference. Relationships of support and trust were the norm, without which the individual could not succeed.

From an early age, Ermolao benefited from a vast network that had been established and strengthened as his forebears served the Republic and the arts. As a young man, he frequented the elite of the cultured society of his time. In Venice, more than anywhere else, culture and politics were fundamentally linked. The promoters of Venetian humanism (Francesco Barbaro, Ermolao’s grandfather, was one of the most emblematic representatives) were also in fact the chief protagonists of Venetian politics, i.e. the officials working at the highest level (ambassadors, gover-

¹⁰ The conspiracy of Baiamonte Tiepolo and Marco Querini in 1310 was one of the few Venetian attempts to gain power by a faction that rose up against the doge Pietro Gradenigo. As Fabien Faugeron points out, twenty-eight noble families of Venice took part in the conspiracy, i.e. one in five took part with at least one of their members. The experience left its mark on people’s minds and even became part of the Venetian civic consciousness: every year, a procession celebrated the memory of the repression. The conspiracy also led to the creation of the Council of Ten (*Consiglio dei Dieci*), which became the symbol of the power of the Venetian state: see Faugeron, “L’art du compromis politique.”

¹¹ Lazzarini, “Guerra di Chioggia.”

nors and captains, bishops, etc.). These men came from the great Venetian patrician families such as the Barbaros, but also the Trevisans, Zeno, Querini, Barbo, Contarini, Correr, Corner, Donà, Foscari and Bembo, among others.

Ermolao's reputation as a scholar certainly played a role in the early development of his career. The influence of his family, his wealth, the reputation of his actions in the service of the Republic, as well as the aura of his intellectual brilliance, probably dominated the process of his election and appointment as ambassador of the Serenissima to Milan. On January 6, 1488, Ermolao was appointed ambassador to the Milanese court of Ludovico Sforza. His father Zaccaria and his grandfather Francesco had preceded him in this position. Both had left a strong imprint, and Ermolao was expected to prove himself equally worthy. This appointment marked not only the beginning of his political and diplomatic career, but also his new obligation to align himself with the behaviour imposed on the patriciate, which had to commit itself to the service of the *res publica*.

The letters that Ermolao exchanged with his family bear witness, behind a feigned modesty, to his mixed feelings at the time of this election. He felt torn between his vocation for literature, his obligation to serve the Republic and his constant desire to honour his family. In a letter dated February 1, 1487, he opens up to his friend Giorgio Merula (1431–1494) in revealing terms:

(. . .) There is no lack of reasons, most learned Merula, why the embassy in Milan (. . . which, as God is my witness, fell to me without my having asked for it, without my having even thought about it, with the broadest approval of the senators, almost unanimously . . .), should be dearer to me than any other. Do I not go as an ambassador to princes who are no less attached to our Republic than we are to ourselves? Princes to whom our lineage is privately obliged, not since yesterday or the day before, but for many years, to an extent that cannot be set forth in a letter? Is there in all Italy a family, a house other than ours, from which three members, forefather, father and son, have been successively delegated in this capacity by the same Senate to the same princes? It is two years and more that I have been staying with you along with my father. Who has ever been welcomed in a more pleasant and honourable manner than I have been? (. . .) Venice, February 1, 1487.¹²

At the end of his Milanese embassy, the Serenissima was pleased with his good progress, despite a few blunders (committed during the events in Forlì) which the Venetian authorities did not hold against him.¹³ On his return to Venice in May 1489, Ermolao was appointed *ad continentem et bella praefectus*, i.e. *Savio di Terraferma*, one of the most important positions in the Venetian Republic. With this title, which

¹² Barbaro, *Epistolae*, 11–12 (own translation).

¹³ During the crisis of Forlì (April 14–June 10, 1488), Ermolao had clumsily revealed to the duke of Milan who the pope's supporters might have been in a possible attack on Forlì. On this conflict, see Pellegrini, *Congiure di Romagna*; Carocci, "Governo papale."

was reserved for Venetian high magistrates (specifically, five members of the College elected by the Senate for a period of six months), he was responsible for overseeing the Serenissima's property on the Italian "mainland," particularly in Lombardy, and for managing military affairs there. The esteem in which he was held was further demonstrated on March 11, 1490, when he was appointed *Avogador di Comun*¹⁴ and member of the Council of Ten. On the same day in March, he was appointed ambassador of the Serenissima to Rome.

The offices entrusted to Ermolao were among the most prestigious (along with those of senator, procurator of San Marco, or member of the Council of Ten). These important political offices were the object of jealousy between the different parties, family circles or even groups of leaders, giving rise to bitter clan struggles and attempts at commodification.¹⁵ Members of politically ambitious or economically needy families are inevitably drawn into competing family strategies and factional manoeuvres.¹⁶

In the Senate, as in the Grand Council, there were rivalries over obtaining positions, especially prestigious ones. Those who sought votes by pleading their cause risked heavy fines, exclusion and ineligibility. In 1457, the Council of Ten took measures to avoid trading favours and haggling: before any vote was taken in the Senate, fifteen senators were drawn by lot and questioned individually by the leaders of the Ten and the lawyers of the Commune, under oath, to ensure that they had not been lobbied beforehand. According to Donald Queller, in 1497 the situation was such that the Senate entrusted the election of many positions to the Great Council, "since all the lobbying that occurred prevented the senators from turning their attention to pressing public issues."¹⁷

In the allocation of offices, whether a lower magistracy or the prestigious post of ambassador, the subordination of particular interests to that of the state prevailed. Whoever was appointed to a task accepted and performed it. A man who

14 The *Avogador di Comun* (or *Avvogaria*) is a institution unique to the Venetian Republic. It was composed of three members elected for sixteen months by the Senate. The main role of the *Avogadori* ('Advocates General') was above all to carefully monitor compliance with the laws applied by the Councillors and the various organs of the Venetian State. They were therefore responsible for collecting and transcribing the legislative material of the Republic.

15 The ambitious and the wealthy simply bought the votes of their paupers. This practice was so widespread that those who sold their votes were called *Svizzeri*, or 'Swiss', after the Swiss mercenary troops who fought in the Italian wars. But these *Svizzeri* were sometimes able to organise themselves effectively enough to prevent the most influential statesmen from being elected if they were not paid. In the elections to the Great Council, the vote of the poorest aristocrat was indeed as valuable as that of the richest man in Venice. See: Chojnacki, "Famille des nobles," 189.

16 Finlay, *Politics in Renaissance Venice*.

17 Queller, *Early Venetian Legislation*, 66.

refused was heavily fined and refused any further office. Some jobs were profitable. Others, such as ambassadorship, could involve significant expense and a number of dangers. Therefore, although an embassy could be an opportunity to develop a network of contacts and to receive glowing letters of recommendation and probably favours, a patrician might be tempted to shy away from it. More often than not, the honour of the office did not outweigh its disadvantages. When Ermolao speaks of his passion for letters and his desire to be able to devote himself entirely to them, he was certainly seeking to escape from his diplomatic duties.

The recruitment of diplomatic representatives was problematic because of the effort that embassies required to develop and the dangers they could present. This difficulty was not new; it seems to have been a problem as early as the twelfth century, and was not specific to Venice. There, in order to deal with this lack of enthusiasm, new laws were established. For example, in 1441, one decreed that an ambassador should be appointed by voice inside his house, to prevent him from trying to flee. A senatorial decree of 1444 still required that those chosen for this task fulfil it, on pain of being excluded from all functions (and therefore any salary) for one year. As the sanction of exclusion proved insufficient, the Senate took new measures and, from 1483, imposed a forced loan of ten ducats, recorded in the registers kept by the *Seigneurie*. As long as the loan was not repaid, the nobleman could not be elected to any other position.¹⁸

Moreover, the election of an ambassador could be an opportunity to strike a blow at a personal enemy, especially when it came to appointing an ambassador for a mission deemed ruinous in advance. As Frederic C. Lane notes,

Troublesome politicians were often offered this kind of poisoned gift by their rivals. If they refused, they were not only fined, but their refusal to take responsibility also damaged their popularity. If they accepted, their opponents could always hope that they would fail.¹⁹

Sending a colleague on a mission also excluded him, at least for the time of his absence, from the political decisions taken in Venice.

The legislative arsenal that accompanied Venetian electoral procedures does not, however, seem to have prevented clientelism, exchanges of favours and vote bargaining.²⁰ Some patricians did not hesitate to lobby, conspire and bribe to increase their power and obtain the positions they desired. For Donald E. Queller,

¹⁸ Queller, *Early Venetian Legislation*, 50.

¹⁹ Lane, *Venise, une république maritime*, 352.

²⁰ Queller, *Early Venetian Legislation*, 69: "In spite of all the laws on the subject, some of which have been omitted here, the Ten complained in 1472 that many went from one elector to another and followed the ballot boxes asking for votes and making promises, and, what was much worse, threatened those who wished to follow their conscience."

these behaviours reflect the other side of the Venetian myth: “The Venetian patri- cians (. . .) were in no way uniquely selfless in their willingness to serve the state.”²¹

Ermolao’s appointment to the Patriarchate of Aquileia: A threat to “the peace and tranquillity of the State”

On March 6, 1491, in the presence of the cardinals, the Pope elevated Ermolao – *motu proprio* – to the vacant seat of the patriarchate of Aquileia.²² With this appointment, Innocent VIII entrusted him with an office that was prestigious and coveted within the Venetian patriciate.²³ The Senate viewed Ermolao’s appointment to the patriar- chal see with severity. The Venetian authorities reproached him for having accepted this papal decision. Ermolao defended himself as having expressed his refusal to In- nocent VIII, but in vain, as the Pope had threatened to excommunicate him if he did not obey. Venice considered the behaviour of its ambassador unforgivable, even a betrayal. Ermolao had dared to distinguish himself, to assert his private interest, in a Venetian society that had no concept of any form of individuality. For his actions, he and his family were severely punished. His father was threatened with exile and confiscation if he did not persuade his son to renounce the appointment within twenty days, on pain of a fine of a thousand ducats.

The Senate was intractable: it could not allow Ermolao to accept a dignity ob- tained without its approval. Ermolao had been hired as an ambassador of Venice, and this distinction by the Pope went against his imperative duty of obedience to the Republic. It was also contrary to the formal prohibition that banned represen- tatives of the Republic from receiving any emolument, benefit or dignity from the sovereigns to whom they were sent.²⁴ Ermolao had broken the “sacred” laws and thus threatened the peace and tranquillity of the state. Yet Ermolao could clearly benefit from the merits of the Republic: he was worthy of respect by the reputa- tion of his family, by the services they had rendered to the community, by his

21 Queller, *Early Venetian Legislation*, 118.

22 On this crucial episode in Ermolao’s life, see in particular Ferriguto, *Almorò Barbaro*, in partic- ular 444; Dalla Santa, “Ermolao Barbaro”; Banfi, “Ermolao Barbaro”; Paschini, *Tre illustri*.

23 This election was strategic for Venice as it also involved sovereignty disputes in a neighbour- ing and strategic region.

24 A first law was drafted in this sense and approved on June 17, 1403 by the Grand Council. This law was later clarified in 1487. See the text of the law quoted by Ferriguto, *Almorò Barbaro*, 447–448.

personal merit and his erudition. In the eyes of a majority of the Senate, he had betrayed his country. The situation then became dramatic: unable to oppose the papal will and threatened with excommunication, Ermolao was on March 11 dismissed as ambassador by the Senate and deprived of any public office.

Despite the stigma now attached to him and his father, Ermolao did not doubt for a moment that his accession to the patriarchate was an honour. At no time did he underestimate its value. He knew that his influential family would take great pride, prestige and political influence from it. In exile in Rome, he died of the plague in July 1493.

Conclusion

Ermolao's career and experience are exemplary evidence of the power games within the Venetian government elite, which was concerned with ensuring the balance and continuity of the political order. At the heart of the institutions that made up this Venetian political regime, patrician collegiality was an established and enduring principle. This ideology, widely shared by the Venetian ruling class, embodied values of uniformity, solidarity and absolute dedication of the individual to the state. Any individual initiative, any behaviour motivated by particular interests was formally forbidden: to distinguish oneself was considered a true provocation or even a betrayal. This political culture was based on the belief that strict compliance with the law guaranteed social stability and that any form of personal ambition was therefore to be avoided.

The reality of the exercise of power, masked by the Venetian "myth," was one of fierce competition. Within this nobility of public service, harmony existed only on the surface. Competing family strategies and factional manoeuvres punctuated the political life of the city, sometimes cruelly when "civic concord" was deemed to be threatened. The peace and tranquillity of the state, on the one hand, and political assassination, on the other, were the expression of a political society utterly assimilated with its ruling elite. The Venetian political system managed to integrate these rivalries and party games by representing and ritualising them, thus ensuring its own durability.

The management of public affairs in Venice, with its nobility of public service holding the reins, presents an original and elaborate model. This complex political life was the result of a complicated institutional edifice established over centuries. Numerous refinements were constantly instated to improve a system that had led to the existence of multiple councils, which shared power and also evinced an ongoing mistrust of the doge. In this shared responsibility for the man-

agement of the state, the position of the doge was indeed clearly defined by regulations developed over the years: he attended and presided over all councils, he could give his opinion and demand that a question be put to the vote, but he could not impose anything. In the end, he assumed only the role of a Great Sage. Through the multiple organs that constituted its political system, the Venetian governmental elite managed to ensure the continuity of its power and sovereignty, despite the deep divisions that ran through it.

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III The Polycentric Age – Early Modern Towns and the Patterns of Power

Beat Kümin

Beyond the Town Hall: Sites of Political Representation in Early Modern Europe

In line with our volume's conceptual approach, this chapter will engage with the multi-layered and polycentric character of urban governance between c. 1400–1800. The analysis centres on sites used for political interaction and representation right across premodern cityscapes. Looking at several regional settings in Central and Western Europe, the aim is to gauge their practical and symbolic significance within local government. This *tour d'horizon* will start with brief conceptual remarks on spatial approaches to the past, and the key site of town halls, proceed to closer examination of an imaginary case study, reflect on similarities / differences between self-governing urban and rural communities and finish with a recapitulation of the significance of the findings for our understanding of the relationship between self-representation and polycentric governance.

Recent theoretical work within the Humanities and Social Sciences stresses the relational constitution of space. Building on Lefebvre's social construction paradigm, Martina Löw conceptualised the respective roles of material goods (especially their arrangement or relative positioning), human agents and mental representations. In a summarising formulation, she argued that

[t]wo basic processes of space construction are to be distinguished. First, space is constituted by the situating of social goods and people [which she calls *spacing*] . . . Second, the constitution of space also requires *synthesis*, that is to say, goods and people are connected to form spaces through processes of perception, ideation, or recall.¹

More recent contributions have refined our understanding through emphasis on further factors such as gender differences² and the multi-layered quality of spatial configurations, from face-to-face meeting places via various combinations of man/long-distance media to the emergence of techniques of detached 'observation' within a more or less extensive public sphere, forging distinct kinds of sedimented, integrated and discursive communication systems.³

1 Lefebvre, *The Social Production of Space*; Löw, "The Constitution of Space", and fully elaborated in her German monograph *Raumsoziologie*.

2 For surveys of the field from a historical perspective see Kümin and Usborne, "At Home and in the Workplace"; Rau, *History, Space, and Place*.

3 Schlögl, *Anwesende und Abwesende*.

Examining political sites in the broadest sense of the term with particular attention to associated forms of (self-)representation, we can begin with the classic hubs of urban governance.⁴ From the Middle Ages, either shortly after their foundation or – particularly frequently – after the landmark event of formal incorporation,⁵ town halls emerged as physical meeting points for councillors, sites for multiple kinds of local political exchange and venues for diplomatic negotiation. While such buildings can be found in almost every part of the Continent, their dimensions, architectural styles and decoration naturally reflect regional peculiarities and the size and prosperity of particular communities (Figures 1–2).



Figures 1–2: The imposing fourteenth-century town hall with its tall tower on the market square at Tallinn (Estonia) contrasts with the modest single-storey building of 1699 in the tiny ‘rotten borough’ of Newtown on the Isle of Wight just off the English coast. Photos by the author.

On top of practical usages, however, town halls served as visual symbols of self-government and pillars of communal identities. In late medieval Italy, city states like Siena erected buildings fit to project their growing power, complete with *campanili* visible for miles around as well as interior decorations resplendent with allusion to Antiquity and allegories of good / bad government.⁶ Many had balconies for public announcements, adjacent squares for burgher assemblies and facilities for the shaming of offenders. At Augsburg, as apparent from an early sixteenth-century depiction,

⁴ For discussion of various kinds of urban and rural ‘political sites’ see the contributions in Kümin, *Political Space*, Part I.

⁵ This was the case for 31 out of 87 English towns receiving incorporation charters between 1500–1640: Tittler, *Architecture and Power*, esp. Table 5: ‘Incorporation and acquisition of town halls’.

⁶ Skinner, “Ambrogio Lorenzetti’s Buon Governo Frescoes”; for the wider context Meier, “Die Sicht- und Hörbarkeit der Macht”. On the opportunities and challenges of working with visual sources in general see Burke, *Eyewitnessing*.

there was a platform where convicts could be subjected to general ridicule; a surviving example of stocks can be found in the small Warwickshire town of Coleshill (Figure 3).⁷ Alongside, traders expected key items of commercial infrastructure (weights, measures, customs facilities), while courtyards and large halls doubled up as venues for theatrical performances. Town halls thus served as a kind of “shorthand reference to the authority of the governing bodies” as well as “doorways” into the political, economic and cultural lives of communities.⁸

Moving to perhaps less obvious but equally telling features of urban representation, let us embark on a virtual tour of an imaginary, composite European settlement, inspired by the apps now available for actual locations like Florence. There, a woolworker named Giovanni guides visitors to churches, taverns, shops and other notable sites lining the streets of the Tuscan capital in the year 1490.⁹ Like any pre-modern traveller would have done, we start our inspection upon arrival at a gate. As one of the few access points punctuating the walled fortifications, this entry point marked the boundary between the legally privileged space of the urban commune and the surrounding countryside, in other words between inclusion and exclusion and – at times – between freedom and servitude. A gate would have defensive features such as observation points / firing positions, chambers for guards and watchmen, a heavy door (to be closed daily at the time of the customary curfew), perhaps even a *portcullis* grid to deter potential attackers, alongside ornaments like crenelated towers or clocks as well as representational items ranging from town crests or religious imagery to inscriptions associated with founders and protectors (Figure 4).

Having crossed this physical as well as symbolic threshold, we find ourselves on one of the thoroughfares radiating out from the market square towards the town gates and beyond. These ‘streets’ acquired political meaning through the presence of a ‘public’ made up of the whole spectrum of period society and members of both sexes, ranging from elite or middling households right down to the deserving poor, masterless vagrants and other marginal groups. Here we might see signs of deference, e.g. the removing of hats before patricians, contrasting with challenges to the existing order, like burghers resisting arrest by town constables. Every so often, we would cross from one ward, quarter, neighbourhood or *vicinia* into another, becoming subtly aware of changes in atmosphere, differences in occupational profiles, and fresh markers of sub-urban identities like separate flags, patron saints or fountains,

7 Breu, “Monatsbild Oktober-November-Dezember.”

8 Tittler, *Town Hall*, 97, 155.

9 The free ‘Hidden Florence’ app was developed under the direction of Fabrizio Nevola in the context of a collaborative research project: <https://hiddenflorence.org/> (accessed July 27, 2021), “video guide”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YYs74K1zhe4> (accessed July 27, 2021).



Figure 3: Pillory with stocks for the shaming of offenders preserved at Coleshill in the English county of Warwickshire, where it originally stood in front of the market hall. Photo by the author.



Figure 4: A Renaissance-style 'imperial' *porta* served as the principal access point to the 'ideal city' of Sabbioneta (near Mantova in Italy) built by Vespasiano Gonzaga Colonna in the late sixteenth century. In the central axis of the gate, the duke's arms appear in the medallion above a dedication to his overlord, Emperor Rudolph II, on the rectangular panel. Picture Allain Rouiller 2010, released under a CC-2.0 license.

brewhouses and other facilities (with often fierce rivalries between *contrade*, as still perceptible today in Siena's Palio).¹⁰ The closer we get to the centre, the more impressive the houses and *palazzi* become, the higher the towers of rivalling families (nowhere more so than at San Gimignano in Tuscany), the denser the throng of bodies, the louder the soundscape. At busy corners, there might be peddlers advertising the latest batch of pamphlets or ballads, possibly alongside street musicians singing,

¹⁰ Caminiti, *La vicinia di S. Pancrazio a Bergamo*; Sutter, *Von guten und bösen Nachbarn*.

in sensationalist manner, about great military victories and the valour of local rulers, while poking fun at – depending on the confessional context – the pope, Protestants or popular superstitions.¹¹ Further contestants for attention and space might include confraternities processing along customary routes on their feast days, carrying images of saints or sacred objects, with regular members – publicly representing a specific craft, age group, devotion or topographical area – accompanied by chorists and priests in splendid vestments as well as lay officeholders in their livery.¹²

Many, although by no means all towns operated regimes with institutionalised participation by guilds. According to its 1485 constitution, the Imperial Free City of Strasbourg, for example, gave formal roles to patrician societies as well as no fewer than twenty craft associations. The latter ranged in size from just a few to several hundred masters and each had its own guild hall, effectively scaled-down versions of the main communal meeting place, again with assembly rooms, dedicated officials, specific regulations and idiosyncratic / ritual customs.¹³ Recent work on London's livery companies has emphasised the enduring importance of their banquets, feasts and mutual gift-giving in the pre- as well as post Reformation periods, with collective eating and drinking cementing fraternal bonds and the most impressive artefacts proudly displayed on the premises.¹⁴ Already at this point, therefore, our virtual city tour has led us past dozen of political sites.

As we move on, every so often our path would widen and lead to one of the many open spaces within the urban landscape. Here again, as on the streets, the economic, social, political and representational dimensions are difficult to disentangle. Most communes accommodated multiple markets, each at a customary location specialising in meat, fish, wine, grain (so important that, at least in the decentralised system of Venice, it had several selling places of its own) and other products, the precise spectrum depending on the town's economic profile and foreign trade policies at any one time. These would attract distinctive – rural, urban, (inter)national – clienteles on particular days of the week, month or season, be governed by special rules, ordinances and overseers, with larger and more general fairs stretching across the whole city on one or more occasions during the year. Like the main town square, every other *piazza* could also be used for

11 Würigler, *Unruhen und Öffentlichkeit*; Degl'Innocenti, Rospoche and Salzberg, *The Cantastorie in Renaissance Italy*.

12 Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*. For the multiple social, political and religious dimensions of fraternities see Rosser, *The Art of Solidarity in the Middle Ages*.

13 "The City Government of Strasbourg, 1485." A critical assessment of their social benefits and costs in Ogilvie, *The European Guilds*.

14 Kilburn-Toppin, "Discords Have Arisen and Brotherly Love Decreased"; Kilburn-Toppin, "Gifting Cultures."

assemblies, cultural events, public amenities (ornamental fountains), forms of punishment (see Figure 3) and social display (above all monuments / statues and decorations on the frontages of surrounding buildings). The political implications of such places increased further where ecclesiastical institutions – such as monasteries, friaries or cathedrals – operated independent of normal council control. The existence of special privileges and tax exemptions within their dedicated precincts was one of the chief causes of anticlerical feelings and city-church tensions in pre-modern towns.¹⁵ Alongside, depending on the constitutional position of the commune as a quasi-independent city or subject part of a larger polity, there might be bases or symbols of power like castles relating to original founders, feudal lords, emerging state institutions, princes or – as in the case of the *Burg* towering over Nuremberg – emperors. These would emit signals of pre-eminence through their location, size and / or elaboration.

Having walked a considerable distance by now, we would no doubt be looking for refreshment. For a quick drink, we might try the *Ratskeller*, a cellar tavern found in the basement of many German town halls, where visitors could sample wines from civic vineyards and mix with magistrates relaxing after a hard day's work on executive, legislative or jurisdictional business. Here, we might witness burghers discussing the issues of the day, forge friendships or advance personal / party interests.¹⁶ To meet travellers and distinguished visitors over a meal or catch a stagecoach, however, the first point of call would be the flagship inns located on thoroughfares or major squares, typically identified by a sign and consisting of a complex of catering, accommodation and service buildings arranged around a courtyard. Throughout Europe, public houses served purposes well beyond the provision of food and drink, including the dissemination of news, surveillance of strangers, generation of fiscal revenue (through high excise charges on alcoholic beverages) and organisation of protest, to name but some of the most obvious 'political' functions.¹⁷ Picking out a few examples, in the sixteenth century the city of Bern used the *Krone* on today's Postgasse (Figure 5) for the staging of state banquets and temporary residence of envoys from Swiss allies as well as foreign powers, who would be welcomed by members of the Small Council

15 Calabi, *The Market and the City*. For the various grain markets of Venice see Vertecchi, "Les *fondaci* de la farine". Anticlerical tensions in the English monastic towns of St Albans, Abingdon, Bury St Edmunds feature in Cohn, *Popular Protest*, 206.

16 Participation in local tavern cultures is identified as a key part of civic identity right across the social spectrum in Tlusty, *Bacchus and Civic Order*.

17 Kümin, *Drinking Matters*, 187.

with lavish hospitality and personal gifts of wine.¹⁸ Moving inside, patrons found constant reminders of both local and more distant authorities, be it through the display of police ordinances in guest lounges or the colourful glass panels with armorial crests donated by cantonal governments to major buildings (such as inns) of their confederates.¹⁹ Rather less deferential, but no less political, was the drink-fuelled articulation of dissent, recruitment of supporters and planning of risings with the active or passive support of sympathetic landlords, who were pre-disposed to positions of community brokers if not outright leadership due to their contacts, financial resources and social capital (Figure 6).²⁰



Figures 5–6: The seventeenth-century stone-carved sign and name over the entrance to the erstwhile Crown inn at Bern, a preferred calling-point for foreign dignitaries (left) and the present-day frontage of Würzburg's *Stachel* (spike), notorious as a conspirative centre in the Great German Peasants' War of 1525. Photos by the author.

Progressing out again from the centre towards other areas of the town, our itinerary quickly reveals further hubs of civic representation. Parish churches are well-known as focal points for (sub-)urban identities, chiefly through the distinctive sound of their bells but also the height/style of spires and the huge sums invested by locals in building and embellishment work over centuries, not to speak of the funerary monuments of prominent individuals and families.²¹ In Hanseatic cities

¹⁸ See the respective entries in the council minutes: Haller, *Bern in seinen Rathsmannalen*, appearing e.g. under the years 1557 and 1563.

¹⁹ Giesicke and Ruoss, "In Honor of Friendship".

²⁰ Pfister, "Politischer Klientelismus," 36.

²¹ Spicer, *Parish Churches*.

like Stralsund, gigantic brick gothic constructions stand out against the horizon, dwarfing anything else – including town halls – as the most notable landmark visible for miles around (Figure 7). In the absence of suitably large secular premises, furthermore, churches hosted civic assemblies (as at S. Pietro or S. Sisto in medieval Piacenza), gatherings of ecclesiastical dignitaries (the third session of the Council of Trent in 1562–1563 was held at S. Maria Maggiore) or key rituals such as the swearing of burgher oaths (as at St Peter’s chapel in the Swiss city of Lucerne in the early sixteenth century).²² The display of coats of arms in church interiors and frequent provision of dedicated pews for municipal officials underline the entanglement of secular and sacred space. Yet, parishes constituted political entities in their own right, too. Territorial demarcations were scrupulously recorded in order to clarify tithe obligations and sacramental rights, with collective memory of the respective extents reinforced through periodic ‘beatings of the bounds’ and other processions (Figure 8). London alone was divided into over one hundred parochial communities, each with their own officers and administrative structures. As elsewhere in Europe, independent fabric funds started to emerge from the late Middle Ages. To administer them, lay representatives – known as churchwardens, *Kirchenpfleger*, *marguilliers*, *vitrici*, *custodes* etc. – were elected by their peers in some customary way, usually at an annual assembly of all male householders, the so-called vestry. They typically came from the middling sort of residents, just like their equivalents in minor municipal posts (many, in fact, serving in both capacities, occasionally at



Figures 7–8: St Nikolai, here pictured from the vantage point of another church, towers over the cityscape and represents the community to anyone approaching Stralsund by land or sea. Picture: Klugschnacker 2013, released under CC 3–0 (left). Cosimo Rosselli, ‘Parish Procession’, a 1486 fresco at S. Ambrogio in Florence. Photo by the author.

²² At Piacenza in 1250, so many people attended a communal council in the church of San Pietro that the gathering had to be moved to San Sisto: Dean, *The Towns of Italy*, 159. An illustration of St Peter’s chapel in Diebold Schilling’s 1513 chronicle shows the men of Lucerne with raised hands facing a large crucifix and numerous images of saints, highlighting the religious dimensions of their civic commitment: Steiner, “Gemeinde.”

the same time). Acting in a collective capacity, parishioners made decisions on fundraising / expenditure, communal by-laws and the increase of divine service, in other words they engaged in political activities like elections, legislation and resource allocation. If necessary, wardens and vestries also embarked on legal proceedings, commissioned public works, petitioned higher authorities and took responsibility for the relief of the poor; in England, in particular, parishes became the kingdom's principal local administrative agencies from the sixteenth century, providing one of the most tangible examples of polycentric governance.²³

Having crossed the entire width of our imaginary city, we eventually arrive at another gate opening unto a highway suitable for the onward journey. Who knows, this fortified structure might just contain some space for a final form of urban political representation to be highlighted here, namely the storage of civic records. Many cities originally kept these just in dedicated chests, cellars or rooms in the town hall or similar storage facilities in towers overlooking the walls (at Frankfurt am Main in 1395, for example, the city scribe moved old books and writings to the *Leonhardsturm* on the river shore).²⁴ There has been much recent interest in early modern archives as repositories of not just texts but also power, as institutions mirroring shifts in government structures (such as the rise of the modern state) and – for historians – as prime windows into the evolving techniques of information management, knowledge preservation and self-representation in the past.²⁵ Beyond the official site earmarked for the preservation of municipal memory, however, multiple mini-archives existed in many places right across the Holy Roman Empire and this brings us back to parish churches. For on top of hundreds of spires, *Turmkuugeln* (tower spheres or orbs) contained documents and objects placed there on the occasion of major repairs. Usually consisting of brief notes relating to builders, officeholders and commodity prices, the deposits could extend to full-size chronicles, various types of manuscript sources and printed materials, alongside coins and – in Catholic areas – devotional objects and relics.²⁶ Now and then, for these collections were added to by subsequent generations, the documents reveal tensions, contrasting viewpoints and outright community conflicts, in other words period 'politics.' Perhaps the most spectacular case comes from Leipzig. Following a period of religious unrest, Saxony embarked on a major

²³ Thematic and regional approaches to premodern parish culture can be found in Ferrari and Kümin, *Pfarreien in der Vormoderne*.

²⁴ See the tab "Geschichte" on the website of the Institut für Stadtgeschichte, Frankfurt am Main: <https://www.stadtgeschichte-ffm.de/de/info-und-service/historie-des-instituts/geschichte-des-instituts> (accessed July 26, 2021).

²⁵ Peters, Walsham and Corens, *Archives and Information*; Head, *Making Archives*.

²⁶ For Austria see e.g. Haider, "Kirchturmkunden vornehmlich aus Oberösterreich"; from a comparative perspective see Kümin, "Nachrichten für die Nachwelt".

clampdown against Calvinists in 1592. One target was St Nicholas church, where the *Turmkugel* (which had only just been renovated) had to be taken down again, as the regime suspected that it contained evidence of nonconformist intrigues. Alas, nothing suspicious turned up and the golden ornament returned to its lofty location overlooking the city.

Well, having passed through the town gate suspecting that a different topographical or chronological setting would have familiarised us with yet other aspects of political representation, ranging from civic cemeteries (typically moved to the periphery in the early modern period) via – from the late seventeenth century – coffee houses (where the newly-established periodical press facilitated informed reasoning) to means of ‘state’ transport (at Venice famously the splendid *Bucentaur* ship Doges used for their annual ‘marriage to the sea’ ceremonies),²⁷ we must leave our imaginary community behind. Recapitulating and abstracting from local peculiarities, it became clear that the typical European city contained a plethora of political sites sending a multitude of signals through a wide range of media at the distinct – yet interwoven – levels of household, street, neighbourhood, parish, guild, commune, manor, state and empire in a more or less institutionalised fashion. This rich and complex picture directly reflects the specific varieties of decentralised and polycentric government systems which operated at the time.

Now, as we continue our journey overland, through forests, across bridges and passing the odd rural settlement along the way, we may perhaps use the time to reflect on a rather fundamental point: how distinctive were towns and cities compared to villages in pre-modern Europe? No one doubts that there was a chasm between a metropolis like Paris and a secluded hamlet without any representational features;²⁸ but what about the middle ground, if we juxtapose, say, a small imperial free city – like Isny in Upper Swabia – to a sizeable rural community with an extensive degree of local autonomy? As examples of the latter, let us take a brief look at Gersau (on Lake Lucerne in present-day Switzerland) and Gochsheim (near Schweinfurt in what is now Bavaria), two ‘imperial villages’ subject only to the (distant) *Kaiser* in Vienna. Lacking an intermediate territorial overlord, they occupied the same constitutional position as Isny. Going through a mental check list of sites and features encountered on the preceding city tour, we could tick off a surprising number of items. To start with Gochsheim, these include several village gates, a multi-storey timber-framed village hall (rebuilt at great cost in the 1580s), a parish church surrounded by a walled precinct (with inscriptions relating to political bodies) and a public house on the main square

27 Chisholm, “Bucentaur.”

28 E.g. with regard to education: Houston, *Literacy in Early Modern Europe*.

(Figures 9–10).²⁹ At Gersau, in turn, the secular *Land* – which probably grew out of the coterminous parish community after the purchase of political freedom in 1390 – used its own seal (featuring Marcellus, the church’s patron saint) from the 1430s (just like incorporated towns), commissioned paintings of ‘good government’ for the council chamber in its eighteenth-century village hall (as we have seen for Renaissance Siena) and, following the lead of the surrounding Swiss cantons (to which it was linked in a defence alliance), gradually drifted out of the confines of the Holy Roman Empire to project itself as a sovereign rural republic, a process accompanied by the sudden adoption of classical symbols such as the Phrygian freedom hat by the late 1700s. What is more, Gersau operated a communal assembly (summoned twice each year), a council under a presiding mayor (*Landammann*), a masters’ guild (from 1730, with its own meeting place) and an elaborate parochial government set up with separate officers, all with their own resources. What seems to be missing in both Gochsheim and Gersau, however, are institutionalised markets, i.e. primarily economic markers of urban identity.³⁰



Figures 9–10: The *Schwebheimer Tor*, one of once five gates erected in 1739 (left), alongside the representative hall, parish church and principal inn on a big square all give the imperial village of Gochsheim a deceptively ‘urban’ character. Photos by the author.

Constitutional, political and representative affinities like these, first observed during a cycle tour through Upper Germany, prompted Peter Blickle to analyze towns

²⁹ This paragraph draws on the evidence surveyed in Kümin, *Imperial Villages*.

³⁰ Kümin, *Imperial Villages*, Figs. 29 A–B; on the freedom hat see Maissen, “Der Freiheitshut.”

and villages under the same conceptual umbrella of ‘communalism.’³¹ Even though urban historians generally “agree . . . that towns . . . create and use space differently than rural settlements do,” given that the actual difference “is difficult to put into words,”³² would it be unreasonable to suggest that Europe’s polycentric governance reflected overarching – collective, corporate and communal – traditions of political organisation, within which urban settlements emerge as particularly well-developed – rather than exceptional or unique – manifestations?

Recapitulating how this highly fragmented and decentralised system was represented by its constituent parts, we have noted the prominent role of symbolic communication through architectural, artistic and ritual means.³³ It has become clear that scholars of political culture need to look beyond obvious hubs like town halls and castles, paying due attention to churches, guild halls, public houses, markets, fortifications, squares, streets, monuments, inscriptions, sculptures, seals and paintings right through the cityscape, considering variables such as location, size, patronage and ornamentation. Apart from physical markers, furthermore, polycentric governance expressed itself through concurrent layers of ceremonies (such as processions of civic, guild and parochial bodies) and rituals (like the swearing of oaths at multiple levels). Given generally low and only gradually increasing levels of literacy in the population at large, signals sent via sounds, gestures and images remained – relatively speaking – more important than those recorded in script and print, a balance that would shift towards the latter as societies moved towards the modern period. The same applies to the growing physical and symbolic presence of nation and state. Future research may aspire to a more systematic understanding of urban self-representation, ideally through interdisciplinary engagement with historical concepts like *lieux de mémoire*, sociological approaches such as the emergence of a political public sphere and literary models like self-fashioning.³⁴ Last but not least, given comparable political agency and representation in many rural communities, the genuinely distinctive characteristics of towns and cities require further clarification.

31 Blickle, *Communal Reformation*, ch. 1.

32 Szende, “Post Face(s),” unpaginated digital edition, section ‘Topographic Aspects’.

33 See also Hornícková’s introduction to *ibid.* and Johaneček, *Bild und Wahrnehmung der Stadt*.

34 Apart from the respective works by Nora, Habermas and Greenblatt see also the introduction and contributions to Rau and Schwerhoff, *Öffentliche Räume*.

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Indravati Félicité

Polycentric Diplomacy? Actors and Levels of Foreign Policy in the Hanseatic Cities (Seventeenth–Eighteenth Centuries)

Throughout the early modern period, the Hansa, a loose and flexible alliance between cities that originated in a medieval association of merchants from Northern European towns willing to share the risks of long-distance trade, not only still existed, but was also present on the diplomatic stage.¹ With the philosophical-political debates about sovereignty becoming even more vigorous,² the diplomatic activity of these cities, which were not independent but belonged to the Holy Roman Empire, raised many questions: Were they genuine diplomatic actors? Did their envoys have the right to sign treaties with representatives of kings and princes? Was the Hansa actually more than a group of merchants who had united in order to better defend their interests in long-distance trade? The fact that non-aristocratic urban governments had the opportunity to participate in the diplomatic game was an infringement of the hierarchies and values that dominated in the ‘Society of Princes,’ as contemporaries often characterised international relations at the time.³ Between the middle of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth century, envoys and ambassadors therefore accused the Hanseatic cities of usurping a noble political identity.⁴ This period was also crucial both for the definition of “statehood” and for the shaping of what would, a century later, be referred to as “diplomacy.”⁵

This essay proposes to build on these questions and remarks in order to better understand how several different urban authorities – mainly the cities of Lübeck, Hamburg and Bremen – that were part of a multi-layered government⁶ within the Holy Roman Empire, successfully conducted their own foreign policy. Since Lübeck was the “Head of the Hansa” (*Haupt der Hanse*) since the Middle

1 See Félicité, *Négociier pour exister*.

2 McClure, *Sun Spots*.

3 Bély, *Société des princes*.

4 For example, the active diplomat and theorist Abraham de Wicquefort in his 1682 treaty *L’Ambassadeur et ses fonctions*, accused the Hansa of usurping the identity of a sovereign. See Félicité, *Négociier pour exister*, Introduction.

5 The word “diplomacy” appears in its modern meaning during the French Revolution. See Martin, “Du noble ambassadeur au fonctionnaire public.”

6 For an overview of the debates and literature concerning this issue in the constitution of the Early Modern Holy Empire, see Härter, “Heilige Römische Reich”.

Ages, its city council was responsible for corresponding with the Hanseatic agent in Paris. As a consequence of the very early concern for archival preservation of politically relevant documentation that characterises the cities of the North, the letters exchanged between the Hanseatic diplomats and the city council can be found without interruption from the middle of the seventeenth century until Lübeck lost its urban autonomy in 1937. The three cities of Lübeck, Bremen and Hamburg thus provide a very convenient case study for examining the creation of institutions from an actor-centred point of view. One may indeed observe a kind of “foreign office” emerge through the issues raised in this correspondence between diplomats and city councillors. Moreover, one may better understand why seventeenth-century political bodies felt the need for entrusting individuals abroad with an institutional character.

In order to better understand the way this polycentric system of Hanseatic diplomacy worked, this essay will focus on three aspects: First, the urban decision-makers and the negotiators who conducted this Hanseatic diplomacy will be presented. Second, the chapter will focus on how the “polycentric diplomacy” of these actors contributed to the creation of order at different levels. Finally, the interactions between local and central actors will be examined through the relationship between the urban decision-makers and the Emperor.

Multi-layered connections and interdependences: Hanseatic decision-makers and diplomats in a system of polycentric governance

Why did the Hanseatic cities participate in diplomacy? Above all, the Hanseatic merchants were dependent on the international environment for the protection of trade and the respect of commercial treaties and privileges. The Hanseatic cities had to consider several different levels of authority and governance with regard to their foreign policy. First, they had to cope with the macro-level of the European state system. Then came the regional level (mainly consisting in the Northern powers, that is, Sweden and Denmark, and, from the seventeenth century onward, the United Provinces and Russia). Third, these cities were also embedded in the Imperial system and the Hanseatic League, and, finally, the decisions they made were discussed in the inner political, economic and social context of “merchant republics”⁷ that required negotiations with both guilds and individual merchants. In that

⁷ Lindemann, *The Merchant Republics*.

respect, their mode of governance corresponds exactly with Elinor Ostrom's definition of a "system" of polycentric governance.⁸

However, one should not consider this analytical framework too rigidly. The Hanseatic Cities should not be reduced to their urban governments ("Rat" or "Magistrat" in German) where members of a small number of rich and influential families in the process of 'aristocratisation' had a seat. As a matter of fact, council members were not the exclusive source of authority and political action in these cities: many guilds whose members were not eligible for the municipal council frequently asserted their right to participate in the government of the city. This was especially true in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a period of intense, and often violent, contestation over the power of full council members over city policy, based on accusations of corruption and bad governance made by 'the burghers' (*Bürgerschaft*).⁹ Neither were the councils always united. To sum it up, the greatest threat to the power of the *Ratsherren* and *Bürgermeister* ('Mayors'), who were full council members, often came from within the urban community and even from the urban assembly itself.¹⁰

A second (maybe even more important) objection to the multi-level-based approach is that it essentialises each level. For example, in such an approach the diplomatic stage is understood as an institutionalised, rigid framework with established rules and roles. However, such institutionalised diplomacy did not exist in early modern Europe. A major critique of the "old-fashioned" diplomatic history is precisely its implicit embrace of modern Western categories ("sovereign state," "institutions"), that presume that the state and its officially-delegated representatives had a monopoly on diplomatic activity. But this approach proves inadequate to understanding the world before modern state-formation. The new diplomatic history, however, aims to be more representative by dealing with complex connections and making room for the strategies of individual actors, sometimes irrespective of institutional structures. Moreover, although diplomats were not always affiliated with "national" superstructures, they were still personally involved in the results of the negotiations they conducted, raising important questions about how to study political history from an actor-centred point of view.

8 Ostrom, "Beyond markets," 643: "To the extent that they take each other into account in competitive relationships, enter into various contractual and cooperative undertakings or have recourse to central mechanisms to resolve conflicts, the various political jurisdictions in a metropolitan area may function in a coherent manner with consistent and predictable patterns of interacting behaviour. To the extent that this is so, they may be said to function as a 'system'."

9 On the antagonism between council and burghers in seventeenth-century Lübeck, see Asch, *Rat und Bürgerschaft*.

10 Lau, *Bürgerunruhen*; Lau, *Unruhige Städte*.

The various categories of “negotiators” and decision-makers involved in Hanseatic diplomacy are therefore characteristic of this polymorphic reality of early modern European relations.

Until the eighteenth century, individuals involved in diplomacy were mainly called “negotiators.” The most powerful and important among them were given the title “ambassadors.” But this terminology hides a huge diversity of actors and one can identify at least three categories of “diplomats”: the accredited residents and envoys; the informal agents (spies, private agents, brokers . . .); and other kinds of go-betweens related to more or less transnational networks such as the Republic of Letters.

The institutionalisation of Hanseatic diplomacy

From 1652 on, the “Hanseatic Agency” in Paris was entrusted to a permanent agent, Johann Beck. Since the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, the three Hanseatic cities had been looking for a suitable representative – without success. The council of Lübeck therefore suggested that they rely on the network of the protestant Imperial cities, many of those cities having some experience in diplomatic representation at the court of powerful monarchs. The Mayor of Strasbourg, Hans Reinhardt Woltz von Altemar, warmly recommended Beck,¹¹ who was especially trustworthy because he was “a German” and had served for many years as the representative of Strasbourg and the duchy of Brunswick-Luneburg in France. Trust played a major role in the recruitment process. The Hanseatic councillors needed reliable advice since they would not be able to control their agent directly because of the distance between them and France and this dimension was far more important than the candidate’s resume or his academic ability.

Beck was the first official “Hanseatic agent” in France, serving the cities there from 1652 to 1679. He was accorded the privilege of presenting his credentials to Louis XIV in person,¹² a sign of the proximity that had traditionally linked the Hansa to the French kings since the Middle Ages.¹³ After he left, the agency was not occupied for ten years. There was no major political reason for this lack of an agent in Paris, since Louis XIV had made peace with the Emperor and the Empire in February 1679 in Nijmegen, where, furthermore, the Hanseatic envoys had

¹¹ AHL, No. 312 (February 6th 1652).

¹² On Beck’s mission and the creation of the Hanseatic agency in 1652 see Félicité, *Négociier pour exister*, 73–75. The instructions and credentials of Beck are preserved in AHL, No. 312.

¹³ Schmidt and Richefort, eds., *Relations entre la France et les villes hanséatiques*.

been admitted to the negotiations at the peace congress.¹⁴ This long vacancy and the manner in which Johann Beck was recruited show how much the Franco-Hanseatic relationship depended on the personality and availability of a suitable agent. As a representative of Duke August of Wolfenbüttel, whose famous library quickly became a cultural centre of European importance, Beck occupied a relatively high position in the hierarchy of diplomats. He stood at the intersection of several networks: he purchased books in Paris for the ducal library thanks to his contacts with book printers and intellectual circles. As a matter of fact, he had contacts with the Republic of Letters in Paris and the European book market, and he was connected with the ducal House of Brunswick, one of the Northern German dynasties with whom Louis XIV wanted to enter into an alliance, in order to create a “Third Party” opposed to the Emperor.¹⁵ Thanks to the interconnection of his multi-layered contacts, Beck was the ideal agent for merchant cities like Lübeck, Bremen and Hamburg. His good status at the French court also stemmed from his position as an official representative of an aristocratic member of the “Society of Princes,” the Duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg. This accumulation of titles can explain why the French king granted him audiences in person, while the Hanseatic agents after him – who did not represent other princes – held credentials only for ministers, generally the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Secretary of State for the Marine.

New institutionalisation of the Hansa

Another category of correspondence related to foreign policy is preserved in the Archive of Lübeck: the letters exchanged by the councils of the three cities of Lübeck, Bremen and Hamburg in their capacity as “delegated administrators” of the Hansa, a form of entrustment that had been established in 1629 by a few Northern German cities. They wanted to make sure that, when the war was over, they would possess an institution that would be heard/audible on the international stage.¹⁶ Consequently, the councillors of the three cities established regular and frequent epistolary exchange in order to conduct a united diplomacy under the “official” name of the “Hansa.” That, too, led to a form of institutionalisation of the Hansa at a time when, ironically, the powerful medieval urban alliance had lost much of its past significance. In their correspondence, the three cities dis-

¹⁴ Grassmann, “Lübeck.”

¹⁵ Fayard, “Tentatives de constitution.”

¹⁶ On this delegation see Postel, “Treuhänder und Erben.”

cussed at length their common interests in foreign policy and felt compelled to make collective decisions. The city council of Lübeck was the coordinator of this cooperative decision-making process. The main difference from the “old” Hansa consisted in it being recognised as a diplomatic partner by the great powers represented at the peace congress of Westphalia – France and Sweden. That led to the mention of them in the peace treaty concluded in 1648.¹⁷

It is worth considering the way the city council of Lübeck functioned in the seventeenth century: an actor-centred perspective on this assembly shows that it was an incubator of polycentric influences. The council employed secretaries who played a major role in the deliberations. The office of secretary had been established gradually since the thirteenth century. They were paid from the sixteenth century on, and had to be jurists. These secretaries were not full members of the council and did not have the right to vote, a fact that has led some to underestimate their importance so far. But it is worth paying attention to their active role in the deliberations of the council, particularly as these deliberations were inaccessible to non-council members. Their function consisted of keeping the records of the council’s deliberations,¹⁸ strategic documents that were closely-held secret. The secretaries were learned jurists who mastered the writing practices in use in early modern European chancelleries and in diplomatic circles. In 1678, the city records were kept by two secretaries: Christoff Sirckes¹⁹ and Joachim Friedrich Carstens.²⁰ An important issue during that year was the way the Hansa should negotiate with European powers at the peace congress of Nijmegen, that was intended to put an end to the Franco-Dutch War. The council entrusted Sirckes, who already had considerable diplomatic experience, with corresponding with the Hanseatic envoy at Nijmegen Heinrich Balemann. As a matter of fact, Sirckes, who had studied law in two famous protestant universities of the Holy Empire, possessed a broad knowledge on both the law of nations and, maybe even more importantly, the diplomatic practices one should observe while negotiating with foreign powers. In 1659, he had served as secretary in a delegation sent by Lübeck to the court of Denmark. One year later, he was Lübeck’s envoy at the Swedish court. During the 1660s, he was entrusted with three diplomatic missions to Copenhagen. Between 1670 and 1673, Adolph John I., Count Palatine of Kleeburg, hired him as his private secretary and offered to advance his career as his private counsellor in 1674. Adolph John,

17 Postel, “Hansische Politik.”

18 Bruns, “Die Lübecker Syndiker und Ratssekretäre.”

19 AHL, Ratsprotokolle bis 1813, Serie I, Christoff Sirckes 1678. On Sirckes, see Bruns, “Die Lübecker Syndiker und Ratssekretäre,” 154–155.

20 AHL, Ratsprotokolle, Serie II, Joachim Friedrich Carstens 1678. On Carstens, see Bruns, “Die Lübecker Syndiker und Ratssekretäre,” 154.

who was the son of the Swedish princess Catherine Wasa, was well placed in the line of succession to the Swedish king Charles XI.²¹ Sirckes declined Adolph John's offer and preferred to go back to Lübeck, where he was offered the position of *Protonotar*, that is, chief secretary of the council.²² This choice shows that a position as a council secretary was more attractive than one as a private counsellor of a royal prince, an instructive fact with respect to the significance of urban entities in the hierarchy within the "Society of Princes." Moreover, the career path of Christoff Sirckes demonstrates that the urban decision-making-process relied on individuals who had experienced and rubbed elbows with both urban and princely power circles. The agents of urban diplomacy stood at the intersection of various functions: they were legal consultants for the councillors, as well as, at least partly, decision-makers who sometimes acted as diplomats. They were present at both levels of diplomatic action: on the larger European level, through their interaction with monarchs and princes, and on the local level, due to their key position inside the urban administration.

The results of this polycentric activity

This deep knowledge of European practices brought success to the Hansards. During the period concerned, the Hansa was included in one of the treaties of Westphalia in 1648, namely the peace treaty of Osnabrück, and then, in 1659, in the peace and guaranty treaty of Westminster between France and England as well as in the Franco-Spanish Treaty of the Pyrenees, in that same year. The Hansa was also mentioned in the peace treaty of Utrecht, which put an end to the Spanish War of Succession in 1713. Furthermore, the "Cities and merchants of the German Hansa" were able to convince France to enter into bilateral commercial treaties with them, first in 1655 and then in 1716. These official agreements with Louis XIV, who claimed to be *le plus grand roi du monde*, was undeniable proof of distinction within the international community and, as such, a source of prestige for the Hansa.

This process was a direct consequence of the polycentric nature of the Holy Roman Empire. In this composite monarchy, foreign policy was not considered a monopoly of the Emperor. Consequently, diplomacy could be – and traditionally was – conducted by the immediate imperial estates, the so-called "*Reichsstände*," in their capacity as vassals of the Emperor – "immediate" meaning here that

21 Huberty, Giraud et al., *L'Allemagne dynastique*, 144–145.

22 Bei der Wieden, "Lübecker Rangverhältnisse."

there was no intermediate power between them and the Emperor. This meant that they were endowed with a portion of the power to represent the Empire in its relationships with foreign powers. In 1648 the peace treaty of Westphalia officialised this prerogative of the Imperial estates: the famous article VIII, paragraph 2, established their right to conduct a distinctive diplomacy, to forge alliances with alien potentates and German estates, under the sole condition that these alliances were not directed against the Emperor and the Empire.²³

For the Hanseatic cities, who were, furthermore, explicitly mentioned in the peace treaty of Osnabrück²⁴ (in article XVII on the precautions necessary to ensure the treaty's validity), this meant that they could continue, in their capacity as Hanseatic cities, to send envoys to foreign powers such as France, Spain and England, a practice that had been common since the medieval period.

Seventeenth-century criticism of Hanseatic diplomacy

The fact that the Peace of Westphalia now officially allowed the cities to participate in the diplomatic game did not only help to consolidate and legitimate old diplomatic practices such as negotiation between great powers and Hanseatic diets. As a matter of fact, since it occurred in a context of formalisation of the political framework of international relations in Europe, it also created a need for a more precise definition of what the Hansa was, and whether this association of cities was a legitimate member of the whole system.

Not only did the rules progressively change, but the question of whether the Hansa should be included in the game or excluded from it became one of the stakes, allowing other players to use it as an indicator of their own position in the game. The following statement of Abraham de Wicquefort in his treaty *L'Ambassadeur et ses fonctions*, published in 1682, is instructive.²⁵ Wicquefort wrote this

23 On the *Jus foederis* and its consequences on the constitution of the Holy Roman Empire, see Böckenförde, "Der Westfälische Frieden"; Malettke, "Traité de paix"; Schmidt, "Der Westfälische Friede."

24 Postel, "Hansische Politik."

25 de Wicquefort, *L'Ambassadeur*, 27: Et certes il y a de quoi s'estonner de ce qu'aujourd'hui, on peut encore avoir quelque considération pour la Hanse Teutonique, laquelle estant autrefois composée de plus de soixante-dix villes, ne subsiste aujourd'hui que dans l'imagination. Il n'y en a plus que trois, ainsi que je viens de dire, & encore de ces trois celles de Breme ne fait que prester son nom: celle de Lubec contribue peu ou point, & celle de Hambourg fait seule toute la dépense de ces deputations. [. . .] Pour dire ce qui est, la Hanse Teutonique n'a jamais fait un Estat,

book in order to explain to his fellow diplomats, but also to young people who aspired to become diplomats, what it meant to be an “ambassador,” that is, to represent a sovereign prince. In one of the first chapters, he dealt with the question “Who has the right to send ambassadors?” This question stood at the intersection of two major concerns of the seventeenth century. Ever since the French lawyer Jean Bodin had published his *Six Books on the Commonwealth* in 1576, the European jurists had commented on it, especially with regard to the German constitution. After Bodin, the sovereignty of the German state resided in the Diet because this assembly had the power to impose laws on the Imperial estates (princes and cities) “to the exclusion of the Emperor” and could also “place Cities and Princes under the Imperial ban.”²⁶ That meant that neither the Emperor nor the Imperial estates were sovereigns. The question had been raised again by Leibniz during the peace congress of Nijmegen. He claimed that the Imperial princes and cities should be admitted to the negotiations like all European powers. But Wicquefort made a clear distinction between princes and cities, particularly as the Hanseatic cities claimed to have the double legitimacy of Imperial cities and of the historical tradition of the Hansa. The Hanseatic league had in fact been powerful in the Middle Ages, but in the seventeenth century, Wicquefort considered it “an entity that doesn’t exist anymore.” The line of reasoning underlying his definition of sovereignty consisted of two arguments: on the one hand, the German cities were not powerful enough to pretend to be sovereign; on the other hand, commoners (“une société de marchands”) did not have the required quality that would give them access to the “Society of Princes.” In the eighteenth century, the *Reichspublizistik*, that is, the legal literature on the Empire’s constitution, considered the intersection of the Imperial constitution and the law of nations a crucial aspect of the status of the German estates. The famous jurist Johann Jacob Moser insisted on this particularity of the “Imperial system:” according to him, the constitution of each Imperial estate (principalities and cities) and its relationship with the Imperial centre was such that it was impossible to strictly separate the Imperial constitution from the law of nations. These theories were vividly discussed within

ny une Republique; mais seulement une société pour la seureté de la navigation & du commerce. Ce qui estant incontestable, je ne puis comprendre, comment on admet dans les Cours des Princes et des Potentars de l’Europe, & comment on y considere autrement, que comme de simples Deputés, les Ministres d’un Corps qui ne subsiste plus; & qui, lorsqu’il subsistoit encore, ne pouvoit estre considéré, que comme une société de marchands, ou tout au plus comme les Compagnies, qui se sont formées pour les deux Indes dans les Provinces Unies, qui n’agissent que sous le nom de l’Estat qui les protege. Ce qui est d’autant plus evident, que, lorsque la Hanse Teutonique estoit encore quelque chose, & que ses forces estoient encore considerables, elle ne formoit pas une Republique particuliere, ni un Estat Souverain en la Chrestienté.”

26 Bodin, *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, 71–72.

the Empire.²⁷ But one should not confound the discourse on law with the concrete behaviour of individual actors during negotiations.

In this respect, a close look at the motivations of individuals (princes, ministers, active diplomats, theorists – the latter often being the same) is useful because it illuminates how far the different actors – monarchs, ministers, Hanseatic councillors, jurists, diplomats – were still willing to “play” the diplomatic game with the Hansa. Many of them pleaded for an exclusion of urban entities in order to monopolise the undisputable quality of “states” for princely actors who were weaker than the great monarchies. Wicquefort’s employer, the Duke of Brunswick-Luneburg-Celle, was in such a situation: his position and power in the European hierarchy gradually diminished, which could have threatened his position within his duchy. This decline also affected the position of the duchy’s servants who, like Wicquefort, were members of the “diplomatic corps.” In order to stop this evolution, Wicquefort enhanced the duke’s rank in the Society of Princes in his writings, asserting that belonging to this group was a distinction. Wicquefort also cited a concrete example: in 1655, the envoys of the Hansa to the French court had been welcomed like “genuine ambassadors” and the French ministers had called them “ambassadors” because their credentials mentioned the word. According to Wicquefort, this was a usurpation. As a consequence of the selective nature of the Society of Princes, access to the state system had to be restricted, according to Wicquefort, to a few members who could demonstrate their genuine quality as “sovereigns,” and diplomatic interaction was a strong marker of this quality.

How did the actors of Hanseatic diplomacy react to these attacks? They did not intervene openly in the debate on sovereignty, but nevertheless continued to send representatives to foreign courts and peace congresses. One should add that the expression “une société de marchands” actually came from the Hansards themselves: they had made use of this argument in the fifteenth century with England, in order to diminish their responsibility in a conflict between the English court and some merchants who claimed to be members of the Hansa.²⁸ By arguing that the Hansa was only an association of private traders, they hoped to restrict their duty of solidarity with individual members of the association. In the seventeenth century, diplomacy increasingly became a social configuration steadily recomposed through mechanisms of inclusion in, and exclusion from, the “European state system.”

To a certain extent, the Hanseatic diplomats were successful because they continued to participate in the diplomatic game until the end of the nineteenth cen-

²⁷ Wendehorst and Moser, “Reichspublizist.”

²⁸ *Hansisches Urkundenbuch*, vol. 9, No. 584, 463–464.

ture. As has already been pointed out, the Hansa was included in most of the peace treaties of the time and was admitted to peace congresses as well as in several European courts. Even Louis XIV granted them a special relationship with the French crown. However, the actors were conscious that the increasingly legalistic framework of European affairs reduced their room to manoeuvre on the diplomatic stage. As a consequence, the writing style of the instructions and credentials were adapted to the new standards. While the credentials of the 1655 Hanseatic delegation to France contained the words “our ambassador-deputies,” the credentials given to the 1714 delegation no longer mentioned the word “ambassador.” This was a direct result of Wicquefort’s statement – the proof of this being that a handwritten copy of his book, and in particular, the passages on Hanseatic diplomacy, can be found in the Archives of Lübeck among the diplomatic correspondence with the agents in France.²⁹

The decision made by the city council of Lübeck to comply with the new rules shows that the cities could not afford to participate in diplomatic negotiations illegitimately, and didn’t want to, even if these new rules were not yet formally established: first, this would have caused conflicts not only with the Emperor, but also with other German princes who considered themselves as the guarantors of the Imperial constitution; second, it would have been useless because the treaties and privileges obtained in this way would have been unconstitutional and of no effect. Therefore, they chose an external strategy of collaboration with the other European powers and sought internal support from the Imperial centre of power.

The limits of “polycentric governance”?

The relationship between “local” (city councils) and “central” (Emperor) authorities

Though the Hansards obtained official recognition from the Society of Princes, one should not, indeed, overestimate the independence of those cities, or their desire for independence. They did not negotiate with foreign powers to oppose the Emperor’s policy, but rather with his approval. In this last part of my chapter, I would like to illuminate the employed modes of this dual diplomacy by focusing on the relationship between the city council of Hamburg and the Emperor.

My first argument is that the internal, local administration of diplomatic affairs was entrusted to individuals who stood close to the Imperial power. In order to

²⁹ Félicité, *Négocier pour exister*, 272.

make common decisions, the Hanseatic city councils did not only correspond with each other; they also organised actual conferences that one can compare with the traditional Hanseatic Diets. These assemblies were, of course, not as crowded as the ancient diets, where dozens of council envoys held consultations on all kinds of issues, and one should not overestimate the institutional character of these assemblies.³⁰ But with regard to the individual actors, they are very instructive. In 1714, the cities organised meeting of this sort, that recalled the former Hanseatic diets in Bergedorf, a few miles away from Hamburg.³¹ However, only the three cities were represented. The purpose of this meeting was to decide on the question of whether cities should – or should not – send an official embassy to France to obtain trade privileges. The deputies to this meeting were syndics (*Syndikus* in German), that is, council members in the position of legal advisors but without voting rights.³² One has to set this formal Hanseatic activity in the context of the quite complex urban diplomacy that had to represent the interests of each individual city, to negotiate internally with the informal representatives of influential families and guilds. Especially interesting in this respect is that, like the secretaries, the syndics had completed the study of law in one of the several protestant German universities, and had also worked for German princes, among whom were the powerful Elector of Brandenburg and King of Prussia. Moreover, they stood close to the Imperial court: two of these syndics, Johann Georg Gutzmer³³ and Nicolaus Mindemann,³⁴ had been ennobled by the Emperor a few years back. The Imperial network thus both nourished and overlapped the urban, Hanseatic network: due to this familiarity and proximity, strategies of collaboration dominated over competition.

Of course, the collaboration between both levels, imperial and urban, as required by the Imperial constitution, did not always function well. The Hansa claim to the status of “neutral power,”³⁵ for example, illustrates the difficulties of this collaboration well. The seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries have been characterised by German historians as a time of intense “bellicosity” (a possible translation of the German neologism “*Bellizität*”), that is, a period with a high density of warfare.³⁶ In this context, the Hanseatic merchants aimed to be allowed to continue their com-

30 Dollinger, *Die Hanse*, 119, depicts the Hanseatic Diets as very irregular institutions: 70 cities participated in these meetings during the Middle Ages. The last official Diet was held in Cologne in 1669. Nine cities sent representatives.

31 For a detailed overview of this meeting, see Félicité, *Négociier pour exister*, 243–247.

32 On the role of syndics in Hanseatic diplomacy, see Félicité, *Négociier pour exister*, 242–247.

33 Dittmer, *Genealogische und biographische Nachrichten*, 38–39.

34 Cassel, *Lebensgeschichte*, 187.

35 Lau, “Neutralité et appartenance à l’Empire,” especially 109–111.

36 Burkhardt, “Friedlosigkeit.”

merce, regardless of the political situation and the inconsistent war alliances. This was, they argued, a vital condition for the security of their business. Their envoys to the European courts defended their position in wartime. The city councils corresponded with the aulic council in Vienna and negotiated with the Emperor's resident in Hamburg. Additionally, extensive memoranda on these matters were sent to the Imperial Diet (*Reichstag*), the assembly of the Imperial estates that, since 1663, convened permanently in Ratisbon and in which Jean Bodin saw the genuine sovereignty of the Empire. Whenever the city council of Lübeck entered into negotiation with the French government in the name of the Hansa, questions arose among the three cities whether it was necessary to inform the Imperial resident in Hamburg. The cities considered these Imperial institutions an important source of support in their quest for neutrality. But there were also tensions at the Imperial level about the issue of Hanseatic neutrality in periods of so-called "Imperial wars" (*Reichskrieg*). Imperial wars were conflicts involving the whole Holy Roman Empire against a common, official enemy (*Reichsfeind*, 'enemy of the Empire'). Such wars were solemnly declared by the Imperial Diet, imposing on each Imperial estate the duty of obedience. A printed decree called *Mandata Avocatoria* was sent to all Imperial Circles, in which the Emperor prohibited all his subjects from any kind of relationship with the enemy. Trade, as well as any kind of communication with people from the enemy country, were consequently illegal, and their violators declared enemies of the Empire and rebels against the Emperor. At the beginning of the Nine Years' War, in April 1689, the *Reichskrieg* was declared against France, and Emperor Leopold I sent his *Mandata Avocatoria* to the Circle of Low Saxony, to which the Hanseatic cities belonged.³⁷ The Emperor required that the city council of Hamburg expel a French resident, Bidal. The councillors argued that they had to preserve good relations with France in order to protect the interests of their merchants. They added that Hanseatic trade was of vital importance to the prosperity of the whole Empire. Leopold showed patience until October. He then sent a severe warning to the council of Hamburg: if Bidal stayed in the city, the council would have to pay a fine of 50,000 *Reichsthaler*.³⁸ A few weeks later, nothing had happened and the fine was doubled. Bidal was finally expelled. But his departure did not interrupt relations with France: his brother, his wife and his secretary had been able to remain in the city and had found alternative postal routes in order to maintain correspondence with France and to make sure that French subsidies to Sweden were funded by investors located in Hamburg.³⁹ Nonetheless, this proscription represented an interruption of commer-

³⁷ Bog, *Reichsmerkantilismus*.

³⁸ Kellenbenz, "Erste bewaffnete Neutralität," 38.

³⁹ Kellenbenz, "Hamburgs Beziehungen," 256–257.

cial relations with France for many years. This episode shows the flexibility of the actors and the expense of the Hanseatic connections. But it also demonstrates that the Emperor had the power to interfere in the diplomacy of the Hansa in a definitive way. As a matter of fact, it was more important to the council of Hamburg to show ostensible obedience toward the Emperor, who granted the city's status as an Imperial estate, than to act as an independent neutral power at the European level. Here one sees the interest of two groups converge, namely those of the Imperial government and those of the councillors, in German *Ratsherren*. The councillors were members of the executive board of the city. In order to stay in power with the support of the Emperor, they were ready to sacrifice the interests of the merchants. Two reasons explain this. First, the representatives of the merchants did not always belong to the group of the *Ratsherren* and thus played only a consultative role in the city council. Second, even if some merchants were *Ratsherren*, and thus full council members, they were more interested in preserving their political and social position in the council than in asserting Hamburg's right to participate, as an institutional actor, in new trade routes and markets. They were therefore ready to obey the Emperor even if it seemed to run counter to the interest of the city as a "merchant republic." Recent research has shown that this republican ideology should not be misunderstood or overestimated:⁴⁰ when it came to concrete decisions, the council considered the particular interests of its individual members. The urban assembly was not a rigid institution building on immutable principles but a group that had to cope with the conciliation of various actors and parameters.

The same patterns can be observed a few decades later, in 1731, when Hamburg tried to take advantage of the abolition of the East India Company of Ostend, based in the Austrian Netherlands and provided with an Imperial monopoly privilege for the Asian trade.⁴¹ Emperor Charles VI had agreed to put an end to the very successful Company of Ostend under the joint diplomatic pressure of England and the United Provinces, whose own East India companies were directly endangered by the Austrian newcomer. In exchange, the English king officially accepted the law on succession of the Pragmatic Sanction and promised to recognise the Austrian princess Maria Theresa as legitimate successor of her father, Emperor Charles VI, when he died.⁴² In 1731, the shareholders of the former Company of Ostend decided to continue their commerce with China by substituting the ensign of their ships (it then became Prussian) and the destination port in Europe: instead of Os-

⁴⁰ Lindemann, *The Merchant Republics*.

⁴¹ Eberstein, *Hamburg-Kanton 1731*.

⁴² Laude, *La Compagnie d'Ostende*, 190–193.

tend, the East Asia trade could be redirected to Hamburg.⁴³ Shareholders were close to the Imperial government in Vienna and had, at the beginning, the implicit support of the Emperor. But when the first ship of the former Ostend Company, coming from China, entered the port of Hamburg, the English and Dutch residents in the city demanded the sequestration of the ship. The city councillors wrote to the Emperor to explain that the ban on East Asian trade did not concern the merchants of Hamburg and that free trade was fundamental to the economy and prosperity of the city. The Emperor first supported this argument. But when it became clear that England and the United Provinces would not accept the relocation of the East Asia Company to another city dependent on the Empire, Charles VI abandoned the city. He also gave an edict that prevented any port of the Holy Empire from engaging in direct trade with Asia. This was a manifest case of polycentric governance disturbed by the tendency of one actor to move toward “monocentricity:” the interests of the Habsburg dynasty were set up as the fundamental principle of Imperial policy – at least for the moment. This choice disturbed the working mode of the polycentric Imperial system but it was not new and one should not overestimate the evolutionary character of the Imperial attitude. The arguments developed on each side are important for understanding the mechanisms of the polycentric system. Since the Middle Ages, Hamburg had followed the tactic of increasing its claims upon portions of regions surrounding the city that were important for its trade, beginning with the Elbe, with the Emperor’s consent. This *long durée* strategy,⁴⁴ that reveals the opportunistic approach of the actors, is also visible in their approach to diplomatic issues.

On the one hand, the individuals involved in the Company of Ostend and the merchants of Hamburg, that is, local actors, wanted to participate in the very lucrative East India Trade and needed institutional legitimation in order to be allowed to do so, a legitimation only the Emperor could provide. On the other hand, the Emperor and his government were also interested in this trade but the supreme interest of the Austrian succession outweighed economic issues. The Emperor, his ministers, and his entourage therefore made a unilateral decision that put an end to the illusion of polycentric governance regarding the international relations of Hamburg: the city had to obey Charles VI’s order to stop any direct commercial relationship with Asian ports. Once they understood that the Emperor would not help Hamburg integrate the East Asian trade in its capacity as an Imperial city, Hamburg merchants, ship-owners, and investors looked for other ways to achieve this goal. They invested in the newly created Swedish East India

⁴³ Ramcke, *Beziehungen zwischen Hamburg und Österreich*, 114.

⁴⁴ Rohmann, “The Making of Connectivity.”

Company, while they had already financed the ventures of the companies that already existed; their influence in the Danish Company, for instance, was substantial. Although banned from this trade, Hamburg could still continue to participate, not directly with its infrastructure, but at least through the European flow of capital – in other words, by creating another centre of governance that obeyed its own rules beyond the constitutional and legal framework of the Empire and of European diplomacy.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the polycentric diplomacy of the Hanseatic cities brings new insights into at least two historiographic topics. First it enriches our perception of early modern European diplomacy by stressing the fact that foreign affairs were not only a question of power but also the result of complex negotiations. The polycentric decision-making process of the Hanseatic cities in diplomatic matters shows that historians of international relations have to nuance their traditional view of an international system that was dominated by centralised monarchies – the so called “great powers” of the Pentarchy. The example of Hanseatic diplomatic personnel shows that there was room in this system for other kinds of political entities scarcely considered as states (German cities, the Hansa); these entities had a specific role to play in the main concert of early modern European diplomacy and were consequently identified as an integrated part of it. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, their presence was nonetheless challenged by the increasingly legalistic framework of European diplomacy and they therefore had to find alternative ways to participate in international relations.

The second point is correlated with the first: the almost-independent diplomacy of the cities that did not, actually, aim to become independent, enlightens our understanding of the polycentric governance of the Holy Roman Empire. Besides the fact that the Empire was grounded in various institutions located in different places, the activity of the northern German cities shows that the dual government of the Holy Roman Empire had a considerable impact in allowing the whole empire to be present on the diplomatic stage. Strong ties between the three cities and Imperial power underline the dual dimension of urban diplomacy. A lesser-known function of diplomacy thus appears: international politics and interactions created order in the political hierarchy of the Holy Roman Empire.⁴⁵ The

⁴⁵ On the importance of diplomacy within the Empire with respect to the Imperial constitution, see Lau, “Reich der Diplomaten.”

diplomatic actors were indeed familiar with all levels of Imperial political culture: they had studied at German universities, served German princes, and stood close to the Imperial court:⁴⁶ they were loyal advocates of an Imperial stance with regard to the constitution of the Empire, and some were even ennobled by the German emperors. Many of these jurists had also worked as diplomats at the court of foreign monarchs. All these remarks are an invitation to nuance the divide between a “republican” and a “princely” ideology during the early modern era. Indeed, the cities accepted becoming vassals of the Emperor and, in exchange, they were allowed to display their status as immediate Imperial cities in order to participate in negotiations with foreign powers, an opportunity that, in return, was not only profitable to their local economy but also to the prosperity of the whole Empire, because Hamburg was the major international port in Germany from the end of the seventeenth century on. When the Emperor could not assume his position as a guarantor of Hamburg’s status as a participant in international relations, the city looked for alternate ways.

The urban contribution to polycentric governance therefore emerges as an integral part of early modern political evolution.

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⁴⁶ One could also include in this category the representatives of the cities at the Aulic Council in Vienna. See Ehrenpreis, “Navigatoren des Imperiums.”

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Christopher W. Close

Cities, Princes, and the Politics of Alliance in the Early Modern Holy Roman Empire

For most scholars of state formation in the Holy Roman Empire, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries represent a crucial moment when the territorial princely state emerged as the dominant form of political organisation. This traditional historiography depicts this period as an era of urban decline where cities became incapable of counteracting territorial princes. Many historians attribute these developments to the rising costs of war, which they claim marginalised city-states in favor of larger territories that could marshal greater resources.¹ This line of thinking holds up territorial states as the supposed “winners” of early modern state formation, despite the fact that dozens of city-states survived within the Empire until the early nineteenth century. Hendrik Spruyt has even gone so far as to declare city-states “institutional dead ends” for state development.² With a few notable exceptions, the view that princes triumphed over cities has become so firmly entrenched in understandings of state formation in the Empire that many scholars accept the decreasing importance of cities almost without question.³ This assumption continues to hold sway despite a strong revisionist movement that emphasises the Empire’s overall effectiveness and flexibility.⁴

Such conclusions belie the political complexity of the Empire in the early modern period and struggle to explain why many city-states not only survived, but even thrived during this time. The comparative study of cross-status alliances, which included both princely and urban members, offers an ideal tool for reassessing how princely states and cities interacted within the Empire’s framework. Cross-status alliances represented cooperative legal associations formed among authorities of differing stature for their collective benefit. Such leagues included a diverse array of members, since only by building a broad coalition could a league claim representative authority for its actions. The structure of these federations brought cities into direct interaction with princely territories, creating dependencies between cities and princes that opened new opportunities for all

1 See, among others, Spruyt, *Sovereign State*, 153–180; Stasavage, *States*; Tilly, *Coercion*.

2 Spruyt, *Sovereign State*, 5.

3 See, among others, Dilcher, “Rechtsgeschichte”; Press, “Reichsstadt”; Schmidt, *Reichsstädte*; Schilling, “Stadt.” For revisionist accounts of the political importance of German cities, see Close, “City-States”; Hoffman-Rehnitz, “Discontinuities”; Lau, *Unruhige Städte*.

4 See, among others, Whaley, *Germany*; Wilson, *Heart of Europe*.

involved.⁵ An examination of the politics of alliance in the Empire therefore sheds light not only on how cross-status leagues shaped urban and princely relations in the German lands. It also illuminates the importance of urban power centers for the wider history of European polycentric governance.

Cross-status leagues offered advantages – like the maintenance of peace, the pooling of military resources, or the protection of religious ideas – that their cooperative structure achieved more effectively than individual institutions or states could. By binding states of differing stature together, cross-status leagues gave territorial princes access to additional financial resources while creating new leadership positions that could elevate their prestige. At the same time, each league's collective policy-making process gave increased political agency to smaller actors such as cities, which often brought substantial funds to alliances. The politics of alliance therefore could empower cities to block controversial princely actions and helped to ensure the survival of smaller states in the Empire. The history of cross-status alliances shows that early modern German cities and princes needed each other to achieve many of their goals. Their mutual commitment to the Empire led princes and cities to depend on each other long after traditional state formation histories suggest that cities were marginalised as political non-factors. The ability of states large and small to influence each other through alliances marked a core aspect of polycentric governance in the Holy Roman Empire throughout the early modern era.

The Holy Roman Empire and cross-status alliances

Located at the heart of central Europe, the Holy Roman Empire encompassed hundreds of semi-autonomous territories united in pledges of fealty to the emperor. The Empire's members, called Imperial Estates, covered the political spectrum, from the seven electors who selected the emperor to territorial princes to self-governing city-states to many other types of territories. Within this structure, the emperor represented the highest political authority with the right to convene the Empire's legislative assembly, the Imperial Diet. The Diet sought to coordinate policies among Estates, but it only convened when the emperor called it to meet at a specific time and place. Accordingly, Estates often did not know when the next Diet would occur, and several years could pass without a Diet. Cross-status alliances marked one strategy that Estates used to overcome these challenges to crafting common policies. Through their operation, alliances sought to translate

⁵ See the chapter by Indravati Félicité in this volume.

the Empire's governing ideals into everyday political practice, and imperial law protected the right of Estates to form federations among themselves. The 1495 Imperial Diet of Worms, for example, empowered Estates to ally with each other as long as the resulting leagues did not "damage, disadvantage, or work against the Empire."⁶ These stipulations enshrined two key principles of cross-status leagues in the Empire's political culture: alliances should serve the greater good of the Empire, and they should include different kinds of Estates in order to maximum their effectiveness.

The heyday of the Empire's cross-status alliances began in 1488 with the founding of the Swabian League, which included a wide variety of members: knights and monasteries like Wilhelm Truchsess and the Abbey of Weingarten; self-governing cities like Augsburg and Ulm; and larger princely states like the Duchy of Bavaria and the Landgraviate of Hesse.⁷ From the Swabian League's inception until the 1635 Peace of Prague – an unsuccessful attempt to end the Thirty Years War negotiated between Emperor Ferdinand II and Elector Johann Georg of Saxony – at least one major cross-status alliance operated in the Empire in all but fourteen of one hundred forty-seven years. For much of this time, multiple cross-status leagues existed simultaneously, forming an ubiquitous part of the Empire's polycentric political system. For their members, leagues served several purposes. First, they unified disparate Estates around a common goal that could supplement imperial institutions. Second, they provided a vehicle for maintaining public peace and ensuring mutual protection. As such, alliances served as forums for conflict resolution among members and as military blocs that could defend allies against outside attack. Third, cross-status alliances empowered their participants to pursue specific visions for the Empire's future. An examination of each factor reveals how princes and cities benefitted from allying with each other, as well as how cross-status alliances enshrined principles of polycentric governance in the everyday political life of the Empire.

Alliances as unifiers

At their core, cross-status alliances united Estates of differing stature around a common interest such as preservation of regional peace or the protection of religious ideas. They established interdependencies that, for their participants, em-

⁶ Böckenförde. "Der Westfälische Frieden". See also the chapter by Indravati Félicité in this volume.

⁷ For the League's membership in 1525, see Sea, "Swabian League," 268–271.

bodied the Empire's proper functioning. Alliance members often viewed leagues as supplements to the imperial organs of government that could either enforce or resist policies enacted by the Imperial Diet or the Imperial Chamber Court, the Empire's highest legal court. The Swabian League, for example, positioned itself as the enforcer of the public peace, a regulation prohibiting warfare among Estates that the Diet issued in the late fifteenth century. Several decades later, the League of Landsberg established itself as a vehicle for realizing the 1555 Religious Peace of Augsburg. This treaty, also concluded at an Imperial Diet, established a system of bi-confessional co-existence in the Empire that allowed individual rulers to choose either Lutheranism or Catholicism as the religion for their territory. It became a bedrock of the Empire's constitution that all Estates valued, and the League of Landsberg pledged to ensure its members' ability to enact the Peace as they saw fit. Even alliances that came into being to protest decisions of imperial institutions, such as the Protestant Schmalkaldic League in 1531 or the Protestant Union in 1608, claimed to serve the Empire's best interests. In the words of the Union's founding treaty, its members did not wish "the collapse of the Holy Empire's constitution, but rather much more to strengthen the same and to better preserve peace and unity in the Empire."⁸

Similar statements appear in almost every sixteenth- and seventeenth-century league charter. In order to "strengthen" the imperial system, leagues needed both large and small Estates, since such diversity created a representative cross-section of the Empire that could justify alliance actions as truly serving the Empire's good. Accordingly, each league included a process of collaborative policy-making where a majority of Estates had to approve a proposal for it to become alliance policy, at least in theory. Since cities frequently formed one of the largest blocs in alliances, they often exercised greater influence in cross-status alliances than in the imperial system as a whole. In some leagues such as the Protestant Union, cities were even in the numerical majority. Cross-status alliances, therefore, offered urban officials one of their most important venues for exerting political influence outside their own territories, but league membership was not without its dangers. For urban magistrates, leagues created a powerful tool to advocate for collective urban interests, and most cities coveted the military protection that alliances provided. These dynamics could make cities dependent on allied princes, who often commanded any given federation's military forces. This situation opened the door for the potential financial exploitation of cities through princely demands for urban money to fund military operations. Princes could also try to pressure cities to agree to policies that primarily benefited league princes. As Nuremberg's magistrates opined in

⁸ *Unionsakte von Auhausen*, 352.

1609, “if we simply follow the majority of princes every time, we will make ourselves subject and subservient to them.”⁹ When participating in cross-status alliances, cities had to walk a tightrope, using their combined numerical and financial strength to advocate for favorable policies while not alienating their princely allies and thereby forfeiting an alliance’s military protection.

Despite these tensions, the ability of alliances to place disparate Estates on a somewhat level playing field marked one of their most important contributions to polycentric governance. The Swabian League, for example, established a balance of power among its members that existed nowhere else in the Empire’s political system, which led some urban magistrates to lionise the alliance as the “proper form of the German nation.”¹⁰ Similar tendencies appeared in the Schmalkaldic League during the 1530s. Responding to urban concerns about the alliance’s chairman Elector Johann Friedrich of Saxony, one of the elector’s aides assured his urban allies that Johann Friedrich “is no head, but simply a limb just like every other alliance member, albeit the foremost limb.”¹¹ This bodily metaphor encapsulated the leveling effect that cross-status alliances could exert on Estates of disparate rank. It also pointed toward potential conflict if princes chafed at the restrictions that alliances placed on their actions. For some princes, the fact that cross-status alliances empowered smaller Estates made them a political tool to avoid, since joining a federation meant trading freedom of action for financial support from inferior Estates. As Duke Christoph of Württemberg argued in the 1550s in response to overtures to join a new version of the Swabian League, “the Swabian League was no company of princes. Rather, the cities . . . pursued their own interests through it.”¹² Accordingly, “a pious prince would have to help hunt down his most beloved friend if it pleased the weaver in Augsburg.”¹³ Christoph’s concerns highlight a core dynamic of cross-status alliance: the ceding of aspects of individual sovereignty to a corporate entity that exercised authority over all its members. No league could function without this willingness to cede sovereignty in order to ally with Estates of differing stature, a demand that proved too onerous for some princes like Christoph.

Duke Christoph’s statements raise the question of why princes joined cross-status alliances at all if some of them felt disadvantaged within their structures. Despite their concerns, many princes believed that the Empire’s history showed that cross-status leagues offered an effective way to maintain productive relations

9 StA N, Rep. 23, Rchst. Nbg., Evangelische Unionsakten (EUA), Nr. 10, fol. 72.

10 Quoted in Carl, *Der Schwäbische Bund*, 501.

11 Quoted in Haug-Moritz, *Der Schmalkaldische Bund*, 322.

12 Druffel, *Beiträge*, 18.

13 Ernst, *Briefwechsel*, 75–76.

among Estates.¹⁴ Cross-status alliances also gave princes access to financial resources they could not assemble on their own while creating new leadership roles that could elevate their status. In the 1530s, for example, Landgrave Philipp of Hesse served as one of the chairmen of the Schmalkaldic League. League membership granted him a leadership position among Protestants that he would have struggled to claim on rank alone, but his elevated stature depended on support from the alliance's cities.¹⁵ Similar interdependencies marked numerous leagues. The Catholic Liga, which lasted from 1609–1635, offers another example of a cross-status alliance elevating an individual prince. The Liga's chairman, Duke Maximilian of Bavaria, used the alliance to establish himself as the leader of the Catholic cause in the Empire, but his achievements were only possible because of the participation of numerous smaller Estates in the Liga. His skillful chairmanship allowed the duke to achieve long-held dynastic goals, such as procuring one of the Empire's electorships, which he gained through the Liga's military defeat of Elector Friedrich V of the Palatinate in the early stages of the Thirty Years War. The electorship attained by Maximilian through the Liga's actions remained in his house's possession until the Empire's dissolution.

To achieve any goal, princes needed resources. Because of their composition, cross-status alliances made resources available that individual princes did not possess and could not easily assemble on their own. In particular, the wealth that cities brought to the table proved indispensable. As Philipp of Hesse argued in 1529 during negotiations to create the Schmalkaldic League, an alliance without the cities of "Strasbourg and Ulm would mean we could accomplish little."¹⁶ He made a similar point in 1534 when he emphasised the need "to maintain the help and support of the Upper German cities," since losing access to urban resources would cripple the ability of League princes to act.¹⁷ Two decades later, Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria highlighted similar advantages to cross-status alliance. While he conceded that princes had to cede some authority, the financial advantages of allying with "well-off cities" made participating in leagues worth it.¹⁸ The Imperial chancellor Johann Zasius concurred, pointing out that even though some cities "had limited financial means . . . where many small water ways flow together, they ultimately form a large stream."¹⁹ For cash-strapped princes with ambitious plans, cross-status alliances offered a ready source of money that otherwise

14 Druffel, *Beiträge*, 147.

15 Haug-Moritz, *Der Schmalkaldische Bund*, 340–353.

16 Steglich, *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 126–127.

17 Quoted in Lies, *Zwischen Krieg und Frieden*, 196 n. 320.

18 Bay HStA, KÄA 1873, fol. 311; Bay HStA, KÄA 2032, fol. 110–111.

19 Druffel, *Beiträge*, 246.

would have been inaccessible. Here lay the great tradeoff for princes in joining alliances: empowering smaller Estates in exchange for new leadership roles and access to urban wealth.

This dynamic also marked a tradeoff for cities. In exchange for expanded agency and protection, cities were expected to pay large sums of money to underwrite alliances, especially in times of war. The Schmalkaldic League in the 1530s and 1540s and the Protestant Union in the early seventeenth century offer good examples. Each member paid dues to an alliance that were often negotiated in advance of each Estate's admission and usually housed in a central treasury for easy access in case of emergency. While dues were nominally based on what Estates paid in imperial taxes, princes often insisted that cities contribute funds beyond their imperial obligations. Cities therefore paid a disproportionate share of dues in many leagues. In 1546, for example, urban members paid 50.5% of the Schmalkaldic League's budget, a figure over 20% higher than what they paid in imperial tax assessments. By themselves, the cities of Augsburg, Strasbourg, and Ulm paid a combined 30,000 Gulden, which surpassed the contribution of any princely member.²⁰ In the Union, cities paid about 37% of the alliance's dues. Since cities were some of the few Union members to pay their dues regularly, however, their contributions took on greater significance than their face value. Moreover, similar to the Schmalkaldic League, the combined dues of the Union's three largest cities Nuremberg, Strasbourg, and Ulm outstripped what any individual prince contributed.²¹ The financial stability of most leagues relied on urban funds. This gave princes a ready source of cash to fund actions in an alliance's name, but it also gave cities a negotiating tool to pursue their own agenda.

Alliances and the maintenance of peace

The importance of money points to another function of cross-status leagues that cities and princes valued: the ability to maintain regional peace by creating new dependencies among Estates and by threatening military action against anyone who attacked an alliance member. Since princes usually commanded any forces raised by a league, the military politics of cross-status alliances afforded them leadership positions and placed expanded resources at their disposal. For cities, membership in a cross-status alliance could neutralise the danger that allied princes might molest urban territories while ensuring military aid from princes

²⁰ Brady, *Protestant Politics*; Haug-Moritz, *Der Schmalkaldische Bund*, 393–484.

²¹ Anderson, *On the Verge of War*, 10; Ritter, *Briefe*, 100, n. 1.

should a member city come under assault. The military component of alliances proved one of their most important areas of operation. The Swabian League, for example, undertook numerous military actions aimed at maintaining the public peace, the most famous being the 1519 expulsion of Duke Ulrich of Württemberg from his territory and the suppression of rebel armies during the 1525 Peasants' War. Later alliances such as the League of Landsberg also proved adept at protecting members from attack. Some cross-status alliances, such as the Franconian Union of the 1550s or the Schmalkaldic League in the 1530s, even came into being because of a perceived military threat against a group of territories sharing a common foe. The most spectacular example of the military capabilities of cross-status leagues might be the Catholic Liga, which maintained a standing army from 1619–1635 that became one of the most dominant fighting forces in the Thirty Years War. As successful as most alliances were at protecting their members, however, military activity could spark tensions within leagues, especially when one group of allies believed another group sought to exploit an alliance's military for personal gain rather than the benefit of the entire league.

Cross-status leagues also possessed non-martial means for enforcing the peace. Most importantly, alliances served as venues for conflict resolution among their members. They proved especially adept at mediating conflicts between princely and urban Estates. The Swabian League even established its own court that operated alongside imperial legal institutions. A majority of cases considered by the League Court involved disputes between members of differing stature. In 1506, for example, the League heard a case involving the city of Nuremberg and the Margrave of Brandenburg-Ansbach-Kulmbach. Ten years later, it arbitrated a suit between the city of Augsburg and the local prince-bishop concerning control of a rural mill.²² These two cases represent a larger pattern where alliance members sought to resolve disputes through League mediation rather than through imperial institutions or extrajudicial violence.²³ By providing a forum for arbitration outside institutions like the Chamber Court, the Swabian League simultaneously supported imperial regulations while sapping jurisdiction away from an imperial institution meant to police those regulations. In the case of the Swabian League, members of all ranks found it effective as a forum for mediation because it provided a stable environment where each side could expect a fair and expeditious hearing. Its structure facilitated this activity by binding Estates of differing status together, placing them on an equal footing that imbued arbitration with

²² Carl, *Der Schwäbische Bund*, 402–406.

²³ Hardy, *Associative Political Culture*, 123–140.

added weight. The leveling effect and collective identity promoted by alliances proved crucial for their effectiveness as arbiters.

Conflict resolution remained a key component of leagues throughout the Reformation era. The League of Landsberg, founded in 1556, offers a good example. In 1562, the League successfully halted a dispute between the city of Nuremberg and the prince-bishop of Bamberg that had escalated to the brink of war. Sixteen years later, the League intervened in a dispute between the bi-confessional city of Augsburg and Catholic Archduke Ferdinand II of Austria over Augsburg's appointment of a Lutheran pastor in a rural village. In both cases, the League resolved disputes that imperial institutions could not by offering a venue for mediation that both sides treated as binding.²⁴ The commitment League members felt to their alliance as a site of neutral arbitration appears in Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria's description of the Augsburg case. Himself a devout Catholic, Albrecht stated that he

would like nothing better than to see the Lutheran preacher entirely barred from this place, but in order to avoid any kind of suspicion, partiality, and troublesome division within the League, [I] must comply with the clear letter of the League's treaty.²⁵

Rather than side blindly with his religious compatriot, Albrecht sought an agreement that all sides could accept. This commitment to the alliance's core mission allowed the League to craft a solution to the conflict that outlasted the League itself.

These examples illustrate why the practice of cross-status alliance proved so popular. The vast majority of Estates participating in leagues felt duty-bound to obey each alliance's stipulations. In return, they received military protection and assurances that an alliance could intervene to deescalate neighborly disputes before they spiraled out of control. Because members controlled the mechanisms for calling league diets, cross-status alliances could react to crises faster than imperial institutions, and their process of resolution operated much quicker as well. These characteristics of cross-status alliance proved so important to participants that even at the height of the Thirty Years War, the Catholic Liga continued to devote resources to resolving conflicts among its members.²⁶ These activities reveal one of the great ironies of cross-status alliances: while the resolution of neighborly conflicts buttressed regulations issued at the imperial level such as the public peace, it also created new spheres of jurisdiction that overlapped with imperial institutions and could siphon authority away from them by providing alternative venues for conflict resolution overseen by the Empire's territories.

²⁴ For more on both conflicts, see Close, *State Formation*, 135–159, 192–194.

²⁵ Bay HStA, KÄA 2120, fol. 45.

²⁶ Hölz, *Krummstab*, 403–405.

This dynamic highlights another key component of early modern cross-status alliances: their use as a vehicle for pursuing reform of the Empire's political system.

Alliances and visions for the Empire's future

Through their operation, alliances offered cities and princes a way to pursue specific visions of how the Empire should function. This dynamic often created new identities for alliance members, as league membership became a central component of how individual Estates conceptualised their relationship to other Estates within their region and throughout the Empire. Each league portrayed itself as a defender of the Empire's constitution intent on realising its true potential. Such ideas motivated alliances like the Swabian League, which operated largely unopposed, as well as alliances created to counter-act each other, such as the Protestant Union and Catholic Liga in the early seventeenth century. Both of these competing alliances positioned themselves as guardians of the imperial constitution that sought to ensure the proper operation of the 1555 Religious Peace of Augsburg, even as they advanced opposing ideas of what the Peace entailed. The ability of alliances to advocate for specific understandings of how the Empire should function was so important to both princely and urban Estates, in fact, that conflict often erupted over what vision individual leagues should pursue.

Disputes over competing visions for an alliance often involved the use of league military forces by princes for purposes that allied cities deemed improper. Struggles over the deployment of military resources were endemic to cross-status alliances, as the financial importance of urban wealth could empower cities to check policies that their princely allies wished to pursue. In the Swabian League, many cities complained about the financial burden the League's military operations placed on them and therefore sought to limit the League's military activity. Many princes, by contrast, lamented the ability of cities to influence League military decisions in ways that "the princes will not be able to tolerate or suffer much longer."²⁷ These differing viewpoints left cities and princes constantly battling for influence. Their struggle reached a climax in the aftermath of the 1525 Peasants' War, which some princes blamed on the cities.²⁸ Urban leaders rejected these accusations and criticised the harshness with which princes used League forces to quell the rebellion. This rift exacerbated a growing urban-princely antagonism in the alliance that many urban leaders saw as a threat to their independence. Rela-

²⁷ Quoted in Close, *State Formation*, 43.

²⁸ Brady, *Turning Swiss*, 187.

tions became so fraught that magistrates in Ulm argued that if League cities did not thwart princely attempts to impose policies on them, “there will be no other result than that the League’s cities . . . will be subjugated to the other Estates and become their slaves and bondsmen.”²⁹ Heeding this call to action, League cities refused to cooperate with princely demands that the League regulate religious activity within its territories. They succeeded in frustrating League action against the Reformation, but this split over the League’s basic purpose helped lead to its 1534 dissolution.

A similar pattern occurred within the Schmalkaldic League. The League began in 1531 with a core vision of protecting Protestant reform in its member territories, but its Estates slowly diverged over how the League should protect reform. While the initial ability of cities and princes to work together in the alliance produced great victories for the Protestant cause, including a *de facto* recognition of the Reformation’s legality, their relationship frayed in the 1540s. The urban-princely divide appeared most dramatically in 1542, when the League’s leading princes invaded the Catholic duchy of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel in the League’s name without consulting the rest of the alliance. Many urban magistrates accused the princes of pursuing their own territorial interests to the detriment of other League members. Since the invasion had been kept secret from them, the cities could not prevent it, but they agreed to pay only a fraction of the large sums of money needed to support the operation.³⁰

Conflicting visions of how the alliance could best support the Empire shaped each side’s response to the impasse. The invading princes justified their actions as necessary to preserve the Empire’s political order. The territory’s ruler Duke Heinrich had threatened League Estates, and the cities were therefore duty-bound to pay the requested funds. The princes acted “not with the desire to cause disturbance in the Holy Empire, but instead to produce peace and unity within it.”³¹ League cities saw the matter differently. Strasbourg’s preacher Martin Bucer summed up the frustration of many urban officials when he complained that the cities had to pay four times as much as the princes, resulting in “the ripping apart of loyal friendship and salutary alliances.” One could not defend a situation “before God . . . where one side gains profit and the other side ruinous damage.”³² The princes’ attack on Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel undermined the alliance’s purpose, and the cities could not in good conscience fund it. This protest based on controlling the flow of money struck directly at the princes’ ability to act freely. Ultimately, the urban position forced the

²⁹ Quoted in Close, *State Formation*, 50.

³⁰ Brady, *Protestant Politics*, 264; Winckelmann, *Politische Correspondenz*, 278.

³¹ BayHStA, KAA 2094, fol. 90.

³² Lenz, *Briefwechsel*, 254.

princes to accept the cities' terms for reorganising the duchy's occupation. Urban financial contributions gave League princes the means to pursue policies like the invasion of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel that they could not fund on their own, but this reliance on urban wealth also made princes susceptible to opposition if their actions did not mesh with urban visions for an alliance.

A third example shows how pervasive such dynamics were across time. In 1610, several princes in the Protestant Union invaded the Catholic region of Alsace in the Union's name without notifying any of the alliance's urban members. The cities responded much as their predecessors had done in the Schmalkaldic League. Nuremberg's magistrates claimed the invasion revealed "what the princes intend toward the cities, namely that they have allied with them for no other reason than to extort money from the cities according to their whims."³³ As their forefathers had done in the 1540s, the Union's cities restricted funding for the invasion, which cost tens of thousands of Gulden per month. In so doing, urban magistrates hoped to force the withdrawal of Union troops from Alsace by making the "undertaking the responsibility of the princes alone."³⁴

For their part, the princes behind the invasion justified it as necessary to prevent "the ruin of the Fatherland." Union cities needed to "contribute funds and think more about the liberty of religion and the Fatherland."³⁵ The Union's cities, in turn, accused their princely allies of reckless behavior that "could easily light, and in large part has already lit, a fire in the entire Roman Empire."³⁶ While the invasion's supporters offered a vision of the Union as the Empire's savior through offensive action, Union cities understood those same acts as a prelude to the Empire's destruction. As with Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel in 1542, the cities would not budge. Their refusal to bankroll the invasion hamstrung the princes. As one princely aide noted, "since the cities have declared they want nothing to do with this invasion, we see no place to raise the necessary sum of money [to continue it]."³⁷ Almost three months after they crossed the Rhine, Union armies therefore withdrew from Alsace. As in earlier alliances, the importance of urban financial contributions expanded the cities' political agency and empowered them to upend the plans of princes. Even as Union princes acted unilaterally, the success of their endeavor hinged on support from other alliance members. Without it, they could accomplish little.

³³ StA N, Rep. 23, Rchst. Nbg., EUA, Nr. 18, fol. 34.

³⁴ Ritter, *Briefe*, 273–274. On the invasion's cost, see Ritter, *Briefe*, 262, n. 3; 327–328, n. 3.

³⁵ StA N, Rep. 23, Rchst. Nbg., EUA, Nr. 18, fol. 53–54.

³⁶ StA N, Rep. 23, Rchst. Nbg., EUA, Nr. 18, fol. 69.

³⁷ Ritter, *Briefe*, 411.

Conclusion

In all three cases, urban members of cross-status leagues pursued their own vision for their alliance against attempts by princely Estates to impose specific courses of action on them. These dynamics, along with the other activities of alliances, undercut the traditional historiographical narrative of urban political decline during the Reformation era. By facilitating complex interactions between cities and princes throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the politics of cross-status alliances enabled smaller Estates like cities to maintain and in some cases expand their political influence. Leagues involved tradeoffs for both princes and cities, but Estates that joined alliances accepted those compromises because of the benefits they could reap from league membership. These insights have two major implications for the larger theme of European polycentric governance.

First, the history of cross-status alliances shows that size does not always matter when it comes to exerting influence within a polycentric political system. The need to collaborate that is inherent to polycentric government often empowers smaller actors. The Estates of the early modern Empire created numerous cross-status alliances, for a variety of reasons, that benefitted Estates both large and small, albeit in different ways and with different results. Contrary to much modern scholarship on state formation, larger princely Estates frequently acknowledged the usefulness of working with cities, while urban magistrates recognised the advantages they could gain from allying with princes. Both sides made compromises precisely because cities and princes needed each other to achieve their wider goals. The politics of alliance enabled all Estates to express and pursue their vision for the Empire's future through polycentric structures.

Second, the history of alliances shows that political authorities in polycentric systems often accept polycentrism not as a burden, but as a basic aspect of political life that protects individual prerogatives. While princely Estates in the Empire complained about urban influence and certainly sought to exploit urban wealth through alliances, they rarely sought to conquer cities or subjugate them to their direct political rule. Indeed, when princely Estates did attempt such maneuvers, it was often cross-status alliances led by princes that sought to prevent cities being subsumed into princely territorial states. Polycentrism was a fact of life in the early modern Empire, and many princes and cities used cross-status alliances to get the most out of that polycentrism. Such dynamics help explain the wide appeal of polycentric political structures built around formal alliances, both in the early modern past and the twenty-first century present.

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Stephan Sander-Faes

The Composite City: Cities, Power Elites, and States in Early Modern European History

Terms such as “city” and “state” suggest both clear-cut definitions and unity. Yet, the realities of either in Europe, however, in particular during the late medieval and early modern period, reveal both striking levels of diversity across time and space (which is also reflected in the literature) and considerable discrepancies with respect to later scholarly approaches. The “problem of the . . . post-medieval pre-industrial city,” outlined in much detail by Jan de Vries almost forty years ago, was that it was, in effect, an accessory, or by-product, of the much larger transformations that affected Europe after the Black Death.¹ Out of the ensuing upheavals, “a new complex of cultural traits took shape,” marking a radical departure from medieval Christendom, characterised by “centralized despotism or oligarchy, usually embodied in a national state.” Although at first “confused and tentative, restricted to a minority, [and] effective only in patches,” wrote Lewis Mumford, the underlying tendencies pointed towards “baroque uniformity . . . centralism . . . [and] to the absolutism of the temporal sovereign.” From the seventeenth century onwards, “every aspect of life . . . re-united under a new sign, the sign of the Prince.”²

Herein we have the themes that constitute the majority of scholarship on the history of (early) modern European state-making during the of nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Out of the *Waning of the Middle Ages* (Johan Huizinga) and the dislocations that followed the Black Death, contemporaries and historians alike deduced at least one certainty: neither one (imperial) state nor the universal (Roman) church was to achieve dominion over all of Latin Christendom. If anything, late medieval and early modern Europe descended into centuries characterised by seemingly endless conflict. Driven by confessional and political motives, “the capricious ambition of kings and ministers” was eventually matched by the establishment of increasingly intrusive fiscal-financial-military regimes put into place to pay for these wars. These changes usually came about in a hap-hazard way and were mostly improvised, but their intended (and unintended) consequences shaped early modern state formation. By the end of the early modern period, centuries of

1 De Vries, *European Urbanization*, 3.

2 Mumford, *The City in History*, 345, 347.

violent strife and power-political struggles have divided Europe into a number of distinctly circumscribed states, very much unlike other areas of the globe such as China, the Middle East, or (albeit to lesser degrees) northern America.³

As a result of these dynamics, recent scholarship has identified a gradual, if non-linear, tendency, intensifying from the mid-seventeenth century onwards, that continues to inform most periodisation efforts of European history across the Humanities and Social Sciences, be they the English Civil War (1642–1651), the Thirty Years' War and the Westphalian Peace (1618–1648), or the triumph of monarchical supremacy over rebellious aristocratic factions in Bohemia (1618–1620) and France (the so-called *Fronde*, 1648–1653).⁴ There are, of course, similarities and discrepancies in all these contexts, as well as anomalous instances that defy any such categorisation, in particular Europe's republican (non-monarchical) body politics, such as the Dutch and Venetian commonwealths as well as the Old Swiss Confederacy.⁵

These aspects – and the Cold War-related historical-materialistic challenge – notwithstanding, around the turn of the twenty-first century emerged a transdisciplinary consensus that, couched in revised terminology, hinges on enduring change from the mid-seventeenth century onwards. This so-called “Westphalian model” emphasises state sovereignty (primacy) and international law, and it is widely held as a, if not *the*, analytical yardstick to assess organisational development. Scholars of “state formation,” a concept coined by Charles Tilly (1929–2008), traditionally point to geopolitical competition as the prime causative factor in the establishment, and growth over time, of the state's coercive institutions (military), its administrative support system (bureaucracy), and the resulting mobilisation capabilities (state capacity). In this hyper-competitive environment, war, not peace, was the norm, and on these general trends, economists, historians, International Relations (IR) scholars, political scientists, and sociologists are overwhelmingly in agreement.⁶

3 Syntheses by Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall*, 70–139; van Creveld, *The Rise and Decline*, 59–188. Quote by Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, 621.

4 Syntheses by Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall*, 70–139; von Creveld, *The Rise and Decline*, 59–188; on the evolution of state power see Reinhard, *Geschichte der Staatsgewalt*, 125–305.

5 This is no place to itemise. Conveniently, much can be found in Holenstein, Maissen and Paak, *The Republican Alternative*; on Venice see Dursteler, *A Companion to Venetian History*.

6 Follow the evolution of this trend via Tilly, “Reflections,” quote at 42; Giddens, *Nation-State*, 112; Hoffman and Rosenthal, “Political Economy,” 35; Bonney and Ormrod, “Introduction,” 2; Glete, *War and the State*, 216; Spruyt, “War, Trade, and State Formation,” 214–215; Besley and Persson, “Origins of State Capacity,” 1218; Voigtländer and Voth, “Gifts of Mars,” 171–176.

Historiographic contours

Scholarly efforts since the 1980s have contributed significantly to the further conceptual, methodological, and terminological refinement of our understanding of late medieval and early modern Europe. Exploration of the gradual, if non-linear, change from “patrimonial relations” or “domain states” to “fiscal states” is one of the main outcomes.⁷ At its core stands the introduction of the concept of the “fiscal-military state” by John Brewer who sought to flesh out the nexus of administrative, military, and constitutional institutionalisation during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁸ Re-emphasising earlier considerations by Max Weber (1864–1920) and Otto Hintze (1861–1940), emphasis rests on efficient resource mobilisation overseen by representative institutions (parliament), thereby allowing Britain to eventually defeat its Continental peer competitor, France, over the course of the “Second Hundred Years’ War.”⁹

Successful as Brewer’s concept proved to be, its underpinnings are to a certain extent derivative of developments that arose first among American social scientists in the 1970s. Breaking with precedent old (Classical Sociology, Whig History) and new (Historical Materialism, Modernisation Theory), a generation of sociologists like Charles Tilly (1929–2008), Anthony Giddens (1938–), Theda Skocpol (1947–), and many others re-emphasised the nexus of warfare and state formation. Taking recourse to nineteenth-century military science and sociology originating in Wilhelmine and Weimar Germany, this ‘new’ historical sociology, while confined to Anglophone academia before the late 1980s, took over academic discourse during the ensuing decade. By the early twenty-first century, these re-invigorated state-centric and top-down approaches came to all but dominate the historical and social sciences, with “Tilly’s direct or indirect influence on his co-sociologists and in the cognate disciplines of History [deemed] significant, if not canonical.”¹⁰

Tilly’s influence, whether openly acknowledged or (more or less carefully) disguised, has stimulated most enquiries into the origins of the post-medieval and pre-industrial European state system. Yet, few of History’s practitioners seem to have accepted fully the fact that his concept of “state formation” was *not* intended

7 Start with Blockmans and Genet, *Origins of the Modern State*; further see Bonney, *Rise of the Fiscal State*; and the essays in Yun-Casalilla and O’Brien, *The Rise of Fiscal States*.

8 Brewer, *The Sinews of Power*; the state-of-the-art is surveyed in Graham and Walsh, *Fiscal-Military States*.

9 Scott, “Hundred Years War”; Crouzet, “Second Hundred Years War”; synthesis by Blanning, *Pursuit of Glory*, 531–674.

10 Kaspersen, Strandsbjerg and Teschke, “State Formation Theory,” 17, incl. bibliographic guidance.

“to identify a standard process” or “to wonder out loud why states . . . had failed to ‘form’ properly.”¹¹ At virtually the same time Tilly wrote these words, scholars were meeting in Copenhagen to discuss the legacy of his “war-makes-state” hypothesis, yet Tilly’s (self)critical reflections on the twisted teleology it implied did not make it into the proceedings co-edited by Lars Kaspersen, Jeppe Strandsbjerg, and Benno Teschke.¹² Similarly, the relevant entry in the venerable *Oxford Bibliographies*, co-authored by Cecilia Walsh-Russo and Ernesto Castañeda, fails to mention it.¹³ It is highly regrettable that the ideas that sprang from Tilly’s curious mind have been (are) taken up in such a selective manner, which is especially noteworthy as he consistently thought about the “deep roots of the state” well before the early modern period and, of particular interest for our purposes here, the role of cities and city-states, to say nothing about the role organised religion in these matters.¹⁴

Of these, the changing role and status of cities and their inhabitants *within* the emerging European state were part and parcel of Tilly’s understanding of “state transformation” throughout the late medieval and (early) modern periods.¹⁵ It is indeed a quite curious set of circumstances that led to the disconnect between Tilly’s scholarship on the subject matter and the dominant mainstream of historical and social science writing that, with the notable exception of Thomas Ertman, all but downplays (or outright ignores) the role of cities and city-states, as well as urban development and urbanisation.¹⁶ This situation is all the more curious because the majority of the global human population now

11 Tilly, “State Transformation,” 179.

12 The importance of the essays notwithstanding, it is quite telling, indeed, that the terms “city” and “city-state” do not appear in the volume’s “Subject Index” in Kaspersen and Strandsbjerg, *Does War Make States?*, 330–333.

13 Walsh-Russo and Castañeda, “Charles Tilly.”

14 Note, e.g., that the majority of contributions (8 out of 15) in Hannagan and Tilly, “Special Issue in Memory of Charles Tilly” relate to urban history, widely understood. For guidance to yet another glaring omission in these debates on “state formation,” see also Grzymala-Busse, “Beyond War,” the above quote at 21, with explicit reference to the role of cities on 29–30.

15 This is no place to itemise, but see Tilly, *Coercion*, 1–66, *passim*, and, succinctly, 188–189: “On the whole, urban institutions became durable elements of national state structure where – and to the degree that – concentrated capital prevailed . . . which gave considerable bargaining power to major trading cities and their commercial oligarchies.” See also Tilly, “State Transformation,” 188–189, which features a discussion of the example of the city-state of medieval Venice (both above emphases mine).

16 Ertman, “State-building,” esp. 57–63.

lives in urban areas, a threshold that humanity crossed in 2007, according to the U.N. Population Division.¹⁷

These data become less clear once considered in light of regional specifics across time and space. Geographically speaking, the focus here rests on “East Central Europe,” by which is meant the area between the rivers Elbe and Leitha and the (shifting) frontiers of the Russian and Ottoman empires in the east and south-east.¹⁸ However anachronistic and spatially ill-defined, the subsequent remarks thus deal with an area roughly twice the size, and home to roughly a quarter of the population, of “Western Europe” during the early modern period.¹⁹ Needless to say, at least as a thought experiment, if East Central Europe would be “squeezed” into the form of Western Europe, its structural aspects would quite likely also look (even) more alike, in particular in terms of the ratio of land use (fallow vs. tilled) – and urbanisation.²⁰

Before we continue, two preliminaries: throughout East Central Europe, studies on urbanisation often underestimate the role of socio-economic and political factors, in particular the regional, if quite variegated, melding of demesne lordship and economy. This is all the more critical as this omission tends to “overlook the growing significance of seigneurial towns backed by their demesne lords,” argued Markus Cerman, and, if included, “the urban population [of towns below 5,000 or 10,000 inhabitants] may have been between 20 and 30 percent in the Czech lands, Great Poland, and Royal Prussia.”²¹ It is worth remembering, on the other hand, that the rate of European urbanisation, according to Paul Bairoch and Jan de Vries, did not exceed an average of c. 15 percent around the turn of the nineteenth century.²²

17 Of course, urbanisation rates are much higher in high-income countries (often exceeding 80 %), according to U.N. Dept. of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, “World’s Cities.”

18 Background and guidance on terminology and concepts by Okey, “Central Europe/Eastern Europe”; and Evans, “Central Europe.”

19 Population estimates based on Maddison, *World Economy*, 231–232, 241–243.

20 Note that, to define “structural urbanization,” de Vries, *European Urbanization*, 12, relies on a study of an overwhelmingly – almost completely – rural area of France by Tilly, *Vendée*, 16–20.

21 For guidance and definitions, see Cerman, “Demesne Lordship,” 241; Cerman, *Villagers and Lords*, 22–33, 40–43, quotes at 42. Thus, *pace* de Vries, *European Urbanization*, who focuses on cities above 10,000 inhabitants, a definition that was similarly applied by, e.g., Malanima, *Pre-modern European Economy*, 239–241, at 240, fn. 112.

22 Bairoch, “Agriculture,” esp. 452–467; de Vries, *European Urbanization*, 49–79, with regional and ‘national’ data broken down on 39, which shows significantly higher rates for the British Isles (excl. Ireland) and the Low Countries (Netherlands and Belgium); note further his estimates on cities under 10,000 inhabitants at 66.

In spite of many significant changes that transpired during the early modern period – such as the Reformations, the emergence of a “Westphalian system” and, later, a balance of power – European cities and states remained structurally “composite.” Neither the hegemonic aspirations of the imperial universalism of Charles V (r. 1520–1558) nor the dynastic-territorial expansionism of Louis XIV of France (r. 1643–1715), Leopold I of Austria (r. 1658–1705), or Frederick II of Prussia (r. 1740–1786) changed the underlying, ultimately medieval, structural foundations of traditional patrimonial relations and social formations.²³ In other words: the eventual emergence, from around the mid-seventeenth century onwards, of a few major power-political territorial agglomerations did not alter the underlying fundamentals of the European state system. Hence, it should be kept in mind that “state formation” occurred not only (literally) on top of everything else, but that these endeavours involved a fair number of intended, as well as unintended, consequences, ranging from battles altering the course of history to the increasing reliance on civil administrators to support and supply the now-standing standing armies. Thus, and “ironically” so, concluded Charles Tilly shortly before his death, “the sheer growth of Western military establishments civilianized government.”²⁴

If (medieval) and early modern Europe consisted of territorially fragmented and composite polities of all sizes and dimensions, connected to, but co-existing with, state power, scholarly debates should be reflective of these realities rather than assume levels of generality, continuity, and uniformity of (later) socio-political formations. Assuming certain abstractions for the sake of comparative analysis is one thing, but to avoid the pitfalls of inverse teleological projections mentioned explicitly in the literature, we need to recognise the analytical necessity of re-centring the terms of the debate.²⁵

The rest of this chapter will proceed through three stages: an outline of a more comprehensive conceptual and methodological approach, and a close look at the role of cities (and associations of, as well as within, cities) in the evolution of the European national state. By the end, a comparative assessment of the interdependence of “states” and “cities” in early modern Europe is made to outline the state-of-the-art (and where to scholarship may move next).

23 Elliott, “Composite Monarchies,” at 51; and Schreiner “Grundherrschaft,” 69–83, at 87: “Lordship in the late medieval and early modern period was . . . *dominium compositum* in nature, i.e., lordship consisted of various rights” (emphasis in original).

24 Tilly, “State Transformation,” 190.

25 See the explicit words of warning by Elliott, “Composite Monarchies,” 51; Tilly, “State Transformation,” 179.

Concepts, terminology, and periodisation

The state has been the world's pre-eminent ruling organisation for millennia; it is clearly distinct from other associative forms (e.g., households, kinship groups), and few phenomena exert as much influence over our lives as its modern iteration. To move beyond established scholarship and its implicit teleological focuses on either war-induced institution-building or technologically (or economically) deterministic explanations, it is necessary to study the interplay between local/central and social/political power, with the express aim to explore patterns of transition and moments of structural change, as well as the key factors influencing them. Following Charles Tilly, and with due consideration to recent considerations offered by, among others, Thomas Ertman, Daniel Nexon, and Anna Grzymala-Busse, we shall instead use the concept of state *transformation*.²⁶

Conceived of as a “patchwork-in-progress of practices and institutions” that became “institutionalised to a greater or lesser extent over time,” such an approach enables the historian to look at the interactions of state and non-state actors, the tensions of (between) norms and (vs.) practices, and institutional change over time.²⁷ To more fully explore how power transformed the underlying, time-honoured ways and means of authority – a dynamic I conceive of “micropolitical interventions” – means to study the “institutionalized processes and settled procedures regularly used for the handling of public matters.” These interventions required a delicate balance between centralised decision-making and local implementation within socio-territorial formations that, until the abolishment of traditional patrimonial (“feudal”) domination after 1789 (west of the Rhine) and 1848 (east of the Rhine/west of Russia and northwest of the Ottoman empire), were connected to, but co-existed with, state power.²⁸

Cities have always mattered in human affairs, and they did so for two inter-related reasons: before the industrial application of fossil fuels enabled man to dominate nature, human existence remained at the mercy of the elements. Unlike nature, the urban environment was decidedly human, and medieval and early

²⁶ Tilly, “State Transformation,” 179 (emphasis in the original); note that the trifecta of key terms (coercion, capital, and commitment) harks back to Tilly, “Regimes and their Contention,” esp. 45–54. Nexon, “War made the State”; Ertman, “State-building,” 57–63; Grzymala-Busse, “Beyond War,” 23–24; see also Marcuse, “Forms of Power,” on the reformulation of these concepts esp. 340–341.

²⁷ Quotes respectively by Hindle, *State and Social Change*, 19; and Brewer, “Revisiting *The Sinews of Power*,” 29. Cf. roughly similar considerations by Berger and Luckmann, *Social Construction of Reality*, 49–60, 65–85.

²⁸ Definition by Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, 7–8, at 7.

modern burghers took pride in their liberties and accomplishments (e.g., gigantic cathedrals), as can be seen in the richly illustrated publications by Abraham Ortelius (1570) as well as by Georg Braun and Franz Hogenberg (1572–1617).²⁹ While these images – and their continuous reproduction until the eighteenth century – revolutionised how early modern Europeans perceived the world, it also shows that it is easier to depict a city rather than to define what, exactly, a “city” is.³⁰ For our purposes, and following Max Weber, a city is “a relatively closed settlement . . . a large locality” whose inhabitants, economically speaking, “live primarily from commerce and trade rather than agriculture.” To distinguish a city from villages, Weber further emphasised that the former is characterised by “regular rather than occasional exchange,” which is to say that a city is always “a market settlement.” To these structural considerations we may spell out its ecological implications, which is to say that a city is a human settlement that exceeds the carrying capacity of its immediate surrounding, requiring a constant inflow of agricultural products to sustain its population.³¹ In other words: a city is a human-made entity (polity) consisting of multiple contextual, situational, tangible, and immaterial points of reference. Note, finally, that the boundaries between these analytical and practical categories were (are) typically fluid, as well as contingent on their respective discursive, spatial, and/or temporal contexts.³²

Power elites refers to relations within, as well as beyond, population concentrations within a certain territorial context; they may include (associations of) individuals and groups, as well as relate to social, educational, and institutional structures. Following Wolfgang Reinhard, the term similarly relates to the socially, economically, politically, and spiritually privileged individuals, groups, associations, orders and classes ruling over post-medieval pre-modern Europe.³³ Then as now, all politics is local, hence arises the need to investigate the intersections between powerful (associations of) individuals with reference to the then-existing socio-economic and

29 Ortelius and Schneider, *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*; and Braun and Hogenberg, *Städte der Welt*.

30 See the insightful commentary by Jansen, “Wrestling with the Angel,” esp. 277–278.

31 Weber, *The City*, 65–67. Note that the ecological aspect should be taken with a pinch of salt, esp. once one begins to consider backyard farming (poultry, goats and sheep, and pigs), which is very much visible in the images in *Civitates orbis terrarum*, to say nothing of the recent (re)emergence of urban agriculture. On the conceptual history of “carrying capacity,” see Sayre, “Genesis, History, and Limits.”

32 Cf. Löw, *Soziologie der Städte*, 15–73. For exemplary case studies from the British Isles, see Jones and Woolf, *Local Identities*.

33 Reinhard, “Power Elites,” esp. 5–9. As to the lingering status vs. class dispute among urban historians, see Fynn-Paul, “Let’s Talk.”

technological frameworks. Herein, urbanisation rates are as much an indicator of the pre-industrial ways and means of production and distribution, which points to yet another key characteristic of these elites: to the extent that power elites are identifiable at the individual or associative levels, high levels of fluidity and hybridity between the various groups and their denominators (e.g., master-craftsmen, educated professionals such as lawyers and notaries, members of the clergy) similarly characterised the human experience across time and space, at least until the *Great Transformation* (Karl Polanyi) of the nineteenth century.³⁴

As we turn our attention towards the superordinate instance of the *state* in late medieval and early modern Europe, it is imperative to remember that, notwithstanding the above emphasis on ambiguities and hybridity, “there does not exist . . . a rigid alternative between the validity and lack of validity of a given order,” as Weber held:

On the contrary, there is a gradual transition between the two extremes; and also it is possible . . . for contradictory systems of order to exist at the same time. In that case each is “valid” precisely to the extent that there is a probability that action will in fact be oriented to it.³⁵

States, of course, varied widely across time and space in their characteristics. Apart from lingering questions about the origins of “the modern state,” virtually all pre-modern polities – irrespective of them being city-states, territorial, or imperial states – were characterised by the dispensation of indirect, or mediated, authority with considerable discretionary latitude.³⁶ Warlords such as imperial *generalissimo* Albrecht von Wallenstein (1583–1634), collateral lineages of ruling dynastic houses, territorial estates and their offices as well as provincial governors, and, ultimately, individual landlords, city councils, and ecclesiastical con-

³⁴ Ringrose, “Capital Cities,” who called for more inclusive attention focused on cities, incl. roads, migration patterns, and banking. With respect to Venice, it has been described as “a city that allowed for a certain degree of social mobility up and down the status hierarchies but also was characterized by remarkable geographical mobility,” constituting “the central paradox in Venetian history,” by which is meant “the sharp contrast between the tendency of Venetians both to represent and to think about themselves in terms of fixed categories and the underlying realit[ies] of economic, social, and geographical fluidity.” Martin and Romano, “Reconsidering Venice,” 21 (my modification); see also Grubb, “Elite Citizens,” for an outline of one particularly telling example of precisely these “underlying realit[ies].”

³⁵ Weber, *Economy and Society*, 31–33, at 32.

³⁶ Apart from the above indications (n. 7), see Braudel, *Le modèle italien*; and the essays in Braudel, “Origins of the Modern State.” Note, however, that the latter reference is incomplete, as it contains only a selection of the papers delivered at the pertinent conference in Chicago in 1993; for the complete proceedings, see Chittolini, Molho and Schiera, *Origini dello Stato*.

gregations all enjoyed various levels of autonomy and certain, if at times compartmentalised, degrees of freedom of action. Centralised decision-making, direct rule, and uniformity of state actions did not emerge before the late eighteenth century in certain countries before spreading, albeit differing widely, to other regions.³⁷

Taken together, these factors reveal two major epistemological problems arising from the study of cities, power elites, and states, one relating to humankind's seemingly perennial companion, *warfare*, and the other to conventional historiographic schemes. As regards the former, most scholars working on "state formation" tend to extrapolate one or the other development. This is most obvious in the role of armed conflict, which was endemic, if ill-defined, during the late medieval and early modern periods, and whose role in the making of the modern state is usually assumed to simply continue across the conventional disciplinary divide around the turn of the nineteenth century (although contradicted by the absence of comparable levels of inter-state violence between 1815 and 1914). A related problem arises from the application of Western European (mainly British and French) experiences as analytical yardstick to assess the levels of organisational development elsewhere, in particular the role of the state's coercive institutions and mobilisation capabilities.³⁸

On the other hand, mention must be made of the fact that most studies of state institutions, officials, and others engaged in keeping the ship of state afloat generally approach their subjects within rather well-defined conceptual boundaries and/or remain beholden to national historiographic traditions, rather than as transnational and inter-regionally relational socio-political developments.³⁹ These conceptual (and intellectual) constraints are further compounded by the more or less forced, if artificial, adherence to the conventional disciplinary divide between the late medieval (c. 1250–1500), early modern (1500–1800), and modern periods (1800–).⁴⁰ Despite the recent emergence of more suitable transnational and inter-regionally comparative approaches, historical scholarship has yet to re-

37 Synthesis by Reinhard, *Geschichte der Staatsgewalt*, 183–235.

38 E.g., Stone, *Imperial State*; Glete, *War and the State*; Torres Sánchez, *War, State, and Development*; Storrs, *Fiscal-Military State*. Extra-European examples incl. Tegenu, *Evolution of Ethiopian Absolutism*; Tamaki, "Fiscal-Military State Without Wars"; Tamaki, "Comparative Perspectives"; and Edling, *Hercules in the Cradle*.

39 E.g., Salewski, *Geschichte Europas*; and Simpson and Jones, *Europe*, both vols. present their content in separate chapters focused on individual states. Note that (most) titles in the *Oxford History of Modern Europe* also approach their subjects in this manner, with the exception of the four vols. that tie individual country-based studies together (out of so far 24, with perhaps Vital, *A People Apart*, being the one other exception).

40 Duindam, "Early Modern Europe."

tire these exhausted war horses and to acknowledge the implications for the study of cities, power elites, and states in post-medieval pre-modern Europe.⁴¹

Benchmarks of scholarship

Speaking very broadly, social science history research on urban development during the twentieth century falls into two (dual) categories: on the one hand, the towering influence and enduring legacy of Weber's scholarship, in particular *The City*, is the point of departure in any case. Comparably overwhelming are the emphases he placed on both the ancient and medieval roots origins of the "Occidental City" to explore, above all, the rapidly changing circumstances of his own time.⁴² The relative silence concerning the period in-between, especially the medieval city and its modern (and post-modern) incarnations, has been, for the better part of the past five score years since *The City* was first published (posthumously), quite deafening.

While the absence of clear-cut definitions might, in part, explain this unsatisfactory situation, it was not for want of trying. As the post-World War II economic boom matured, large-scale shifts in U.S.-American and Western European educational policies soon followed, which fed into a drastic increase of both student and professorial populations. In terms of social science research into modern cities, the University of Chicago remained in the forefront. As the 1950s gave way to the 1960s, new approaches deriving from developmental theories (in particular focused on centre-periphery relations) and quantitative methodologies that emerged in lock-step with advances in computing power found their way into U.S.-American schol-

41 Apart from Ertman, "State-building," see esp. the fresh approaches by Spruyt, "War and State Formation"; and Gorski and Sharma, "Beyond the Tilly Thesis," respectively. Note that all of these four scholars are social science scholars, in particular representing Sociology (Ertman, Gorski), International Relations (Spruyt), and Comparative Politics (Sharma). Curiously enough, the past three decades have significantly altered how scholars approach state *formation*, in particular with respect to the factors that make a polity "successful" (while all but omitting the "other" side of that equation, i.e., the *end* of states; while no such hypothesis has been formulated (yet), see the aptly named, if somewhat eclectic, epilogue ("How States Die") by Davies, *Vanished Kingdoms*, 729–739; and Tainter, *Collapse of Complex Societies*, 91–126.

42 In this endeavour, Max Weber was hardly alone. His (almost) counterpart in the other extremely dynamic capitalist economy was Robert E. Park (1864–1944), one of the leading U.S.-American sociologists of the first half of the twentieth century. His major contributions incl. Park, "The City: Suggestions"; and the essays in Park, Burgess and McKenzie, *The City*. Guidance by Martindale, "Prefatory Remarks"; and Lannoy, "When Robert E. Park Was (Re)Writing 'The City'."

arship.⁴³ Meanwhile, European urban research, more often than not with Dutch scholarship in the vanguard – most notably Pim Kooji and Jan de Vries – developed (a kind of) ‘urban systems theory’. Building on Weber’s bespoke considerations, these studies re-emphasised the importance of “the occidental city” for the eventual emergence of (north-western) Europe’s special path to Modernity.⁴⁴

After the end of the Cold War (1947–1991), urban history changed markedly, with previously dominant impulses, deriving mainly from North American and Western European scholarship, becoming increasingly diverse and ‘globalised’. These trends have yielded a number of studies on the European city by, for instance, Leonardo Benevolo, Christopher Friedrichs, and others, as well as engendered a re-issuance of Mumford’s classic *The City in History*.⁴⁵ One of the main outlets on this side of the Atlantic is the “European Association for Urban History” (EAUH), founded in 1989, to promote multidisciplinary exchange across the Humanities and Social Sciences (albeit significant blind spots remain, in particular with respect to east central and eastern European experiences).⁴⁶

The multi-facetted changes of the past roughly three decades may be synthesised (abstracted) into three trends, or tendencies: first, as urban research became increasingly globalised, we have witnessed an incredible profusion of works on different cities in different parts of the world. The diffusion of global history, however, has not kept up with the necessary conceptual and methodological requirements, which recalls Harold Dyos’ characterisation of the field: “Urban history is not a discipline. It is not even a clear-cut field. It has to be regarded as a kind of strategy, an operational strategy.”⁴⁷ Simply adding the epithet ‘global’ to the study of history does not absolve its practitioners from these essential requirements. Second, while the return of “the state” to the forefront of scholarly enquiry was initially tied to the development of the European city, more recent iterations of “state formation” have all but re-focused their attention on the emergence and characteristics of distinct fiscal-financial-military regimes. Herein, too, we are able to observe the same kindred spirits of the

43 (Almost) programmatic in the former case is the paper by LSE-trained Lampard, “History of Cities.” Exemplary for the latter aspect are the essays in Schnore, *New Urban History*.

44 Influences incl., e.g., Christaller, *zentralen Orte in Süddeutschland*. See esp. Kooji, “Peripheral Cities”; de Vries, *European Urbanization*. On the latter’s impact in particular, see Cruz and Mokyr, *Birth of Modern Europe*, esp. the essays by the co-editors.

45 Notable works incl. Benevolo, *La città nella storia d’Europa*; Benevolo, *The European City*; Friedrichs, *Early Modern City*. Exemplary for its global comparative approach is McClain, Merriam and Kaoru, *Edo and Paris*. Mumford, *The City in History*.

46 <https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/centres/eauh> (accessed August 4, 2021). As regards the above-mentioned blind spots, among the more promising endeavours is the “Eastern European Economic History Initiative”: <http://www.weast.info/> (accessed August 4, 2021).

47 Stave, “Conversation with H. J. Dyos,” 491.

above-referred terminological and methodological confusion, as well as a rather inexplicable departure from the paths of enquiry explored by Wim Blockmans and Charles Tilly as recently as a quarter-century ago.⁴⁸ Thirdly, as these particular problems grew bigger over time, urban history, too, became more insular as the genre of biographies of individual cities likewise expanded massively.⁴⁹ Herein, the most significant modification of this operational strategy is the increasing focus on a limited number of “Global Cities” (Saskia Sassen) or “World Cities” (Peter Taylor).⁵⁰ The most prominent outlet for these studies is the “Globalization and World Cities Research Network” (GaWC) at Loughboro University, which is perhaps best known for its ranking of globally leading cities, compiled since the turn of the twenty-first century.⁵¹

In short: research on the trajectories of European cities and states has diverged considerably over the past thirty years. While the study of both has become increasingly infused with the spirit of our age, conceptual, methodological, and, sadly, also traditional geographical blind spots continue to abound, despite – perhaps as a consequence? – of the many turns in scholarship since around 1990. Given these benchmarks of scholarly enquiry, a fresh approach to cities and states is warranted, in particular with respect to their post-medieval pre-modern incarnations.

Of “composite” states and “composite” cities

From the first city-states and empires in Mesopotamia to the present (and, arguably, into the future as well), urban and state development occurred in lockstep. Irrespective of variation across time and space, a more comprehensive approach might consist in a combination of Weber’s ideotypical definition, site-specific ecological-economic implications, and the acceptance of the existence of transitory, or

48 Tilly and Blockmans, *Cities and the Rise of States*; and the essays in *Theory & Society*, 39, no. 3/4 (n. 14). By contrast, note the de facto absence of meaningful discussion of “city” in, e.g., the essays in Blockmans, Holenstein, and Mathieu, *Empowering Interactions*, whose index (at 329, emphasis in the original) merely lists “city(ies), see also local society(ies)” in four contexts and “city-states” in six instances. On the terminological problems of recent works relating to state formation in the mould of Brewer, *The Sinews of Power*, see Scott, “Fiscal-Military State,” esp. 43 (on Prussia), 47–48 (on Prussia, Russia, and the Habsburg monarchy); on its methodological implications, see also Brewer, “Revisiting *The Sinews of Power*,” 27–29.

49 E.g., Hibbert, *London*; of more recent vintage are, among others, Burrows and Wallace, *Gotham*; and Jones, *Paris*.

50 Sassen, *Global City*; Taylor, *World City Network*.

51 Globalization and World Cities Research Network: <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc/> (accessed August 4, 2021).

liminal, phenomena mentioned in *Economy and Society*.⁵² Such an approach implies integration of macro, or structural, changes that affected late medieval and early modern European states and, above all its urban, societies, including, but by no means limited to, the impact of seaborne exploration and expansion (whose importance was noted by Adam Smith, Karl Marx, and John M. Keynes⁵³) and the series of religious reformations that ultimately shattered the unity of Latin Christendom (which ideally includes the emergence of the mendicant orders in the middle ages, the “Hussite Revolution” of fifteenth-century Bohemia,⁵⁴ the “mainstream” European Reformations, and the reform-minded spiritual, if not spiritistic, movements of the eighteenth century).⁵⁵

Pre-modern cities and states (co-) existed at the *intersections* of political, economic, social, and religious aspects shaping everyday life in late medieval and early modern Europe. Notable nodes, or connectors, between macro changes and their transposition into the much smaller (micro) worlds inhabited by our pre-modern ancestors include the interrelated trends of the concentration of political and economic power over time (oligarchisation) at the practical and discursive levels, with the latter relating to the use of non-conformism in acts of political rebellion, from John Wyclif (c. 1320s–1384) to Jan Hus (c. 1372–1415) to the diffusion of Catharism to the religious wars and revolutions that tore apart sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe, and from the economic to the cognitive-intellectual consequences of

52 See n. 31 and 35.

53 Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, 749–814, at 793, called “the discovery of America, and that of a passage to the East Indies . . . the two greatest and important events recorded in the history of mankind.” Marx, *Capital*, vol. I, 914–926, at 915, added: “The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the indigenous population of that continent, the beginnings of the conquest and plunder of India, and the conversion of Africa into a preserve for the commercial hunting of blackskins, are all things which characterize the dawn of the era of capitalist production.” And Keynes, “Economic Possibilities,” 321–332, at 324, dated “the beginnings of British foreign investment to the treasure which Drake stole from Spain in 1580 . . . out of [which Queen Elizabeth I] paid off the whole of England’s foreign debt, balanced her budget, and found herself with about £ 40,000 in hand. This she invested in the Levant Company – which prospered. Out of the profits of the Levant Company, the East India Company was founded; and the profits of this great enterprise were the foundation of England’s subsequent foreign investment.” See also the insightful commentary on these (and other meta) theories by Lane, *Profits from Power*, 1–11.

54 The eminent scholarly work is by Šmahel, *Husitská revoluce*; see also Boubín, “The Bohemian Crownlands,” both incl. bibliography. Further guidance by Šmahel, “The Hussite Movement.”

55 See, among others, Brady, *German Histories*; and MacCulloch, *Reformation*; German scholarship is surveyed by Lutz, *Reformation*; and Mörke, *Die Reformation*.

the (forced) integration of “the Other” into the European world-system.⁵⁶ The below figure is but one attempt to (ideotypically) visualise these entanglements (Figure 1).

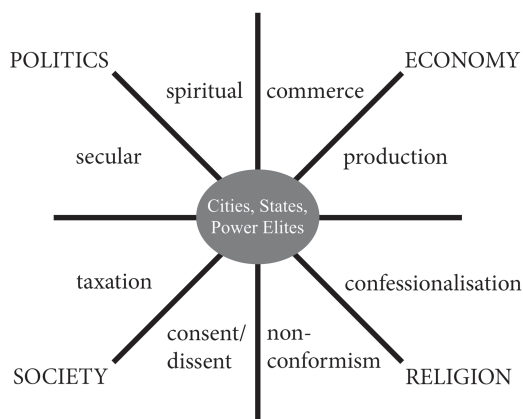


Figure 1: Intersections of political, economic, social, and religious aspects in late medieval and early modern Europe. Figure by the author.

While far from perfect, the figure allows the historian to reconstruct and reflect on the tensions arising from the configurations of late medieval and early modern Europe, by which are meant the inter-relationships between macro, meso (intermediate), and micro developments within socio-political arrangements caught between monarchical universalism and the realities of local/regional federative structures based on patriarchy and traditional patrimonial domination.⁵⁷ Thus equipped, we may now proceed to heed the call of one of Germany’s leading urban sociologists, Martin Löw, to “disassemble” and “isolate” the various constit-

⁵⁶ This is not the place to itemise. Conveniently, as regards, e.g., the neighbouring Ottoman empire, see Goffman, *Ottoman Empire*; most recently, see Mikhail, *God’s Shadow*. As regards the latter title, note the controversy its publication engendered, as noted by Pfeiffer, “Global Morality Play,” who opens her review with the assertion that “the defeat of the Mamluks in 1516–1517 is the most significant conquest most people have never heard of.” Do note that the Ottoman’s “world-historical” importance was referred to as “the decisive event to their greatness” by Braudel, *Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World*, vol. II, 667–669, at 667; note that Braudel’s consideration, first published in English in 1972–1973, remains outside the purview of either Mikhail’s book or Pfeiffer (scathing) review.

⁵⁷ Terms and concepts via Weber, *Economy and Society*, 839–900 (patrimonial codification), 956–1005 (bureaucracy), 1010–1031 (patrimonialism), 1082–1090 (feudalism to bureaucracy); on the differentiation between area-based federative structures and monarchical universalism, see Wilson, *From Reich to Revolution*, 7–17.

uent components of a city (state) to further our understanding of their dynamic development and inter-relationships across time and space.⁵⁸

Departures from Venice to (East Central) Europe

One of the most compelling examples of the outlined ambiguities is Venice, which was “not only one the greatest cities of medieval and early modern Europe,” but “it also was one of [its] most enduring republics, an expanding empire and, from the fifteenth century on, an imposing regional state.”⁵⁹ The Venetian commonwealth, a small city-state for most of the early medieval period, first rose to prominence around the turn of the first millennium, and, in spite of significant setbacks (in particular during the thirteenth century), dominated the lucrative maritime trade with East Asia until the late sixteenth century.⁶⁰ Venetian commercial supremacy rested on the combination of its maritime power and the safe passage afforded to its mercantile marine by a string of colonial possessions that linked the lagoon emporia with the most important trading hubs at the western ends of the Silk Road in the Levant.⁶¹

From around 1000 to 1500, Venice benefitted tremendously from its commercial connections with Asia, yet these were carefully safeguarded by the Most Serene Republic’s military might, as elucidated by eminent scholar Frederic Lane in his aptly titled, if ambiguous, study, *Venice: A Maritime Republic*.⁶² Venetian commer-

58 Löw, *Soziologie der Städte*, 66–68. Note that this approach departs from Weber who considered the ancient and medieval (European) city as comparatively static in nature, in particular in terms of structural change.

59 Martin and Romano, “Reconsidering Venice,” 1.

60 The standard textbooks on Venice incl. Arnaldo and Folena, *Storia della cultura veneta*; Cozzi, Knappton and Scarabello, *Repubblica di Venezia*; and the multi-vol. Ruggini, *Storia di Venezia*. Bibliographical guidance Dursteler, “A Brief Survey.” The concept of a Venetian “commonwealth” derives from Sander-Faes, *Urban Elites of Zadar*, as noted in the preface by Gherardo Ortalli and Bernd Roeck on 11–13; it inspired a conference, “Il commonwealth veneziano,” held in Venice on 6–9 March 2013, though my contribution remained unnoticed in its proceedings, Ortalli, Schmitt and Orlando, *Il Commonwealth veneziano*.

61 On Venice’s commercial-political endeavours, see the synthetic accounts by Arbel, “Colonie d’oltremare”; Arbel, “Venice’s Maritime Empire”; see also O’Connell, *Men of Empire*.

62 Lane, *Venice*. Its ambiguity derives (in part) from its embedding in post-1945 U.S.-American scholarly emphasis on republicanism, on which see Martin and Romano, “Venice Reconsidered,” 5–9; Muir, “Republicanism”; on its impact, see Dursteler, “A Brief Survey,” 19. Curiously enough, most “international” Venetian scholars do not mention Lane’s contribution, whatever its shortcomings, detailed by Cochrane and Kirshner, “Deconstructing Lane’s Venice.” Tilly, “State Trans-

cial supremacy, achieved and maintained at high costs (in terms of spending on military matters, in particular including fortifications),⁶³ came under severe pressure from two directions: militarily, the emergence of the Ottoman empire eventually morphed into a significant military-political threat from at least the mid-fifteenth century onwards. Consequently, *armed conflict* between the Sublime Porte and Venice increased in frequency and intensity until the early eighteenth century, a situation that historian Giovan Battista Nani (1616–1678) summarised as follows: “One cannot live next to the Turks, without becoming an enemy of them.”⁶⁴

As always, there is more than first meets the eye with respect to the causes and effects of these geopolitical developments, and, on top of it, it would be far-fetched to ascribe causation to correlation. That said, mention must be made that Tilly’s “far-fetched” comparison between Venice (Europe) and China (East Asia) covers the five centuries from 1000 to 1500 in the case of the former – which means, in effect, omission of the “tectonic” shifts in the Venetian elites’ economic disposition during the early modern period.⁶⁵ Profits from long-distance commerce had begun to decline well before the turn of the sixteenth century, and the famous Venetian system of state-protected galley convoys (*mude*) progressively declined from around 1495 onwards before it was discontinued in 1569.⁶⁶ Contemporaries recognised this gradual, if non-linear, change, which merchant and diarist Girolamo Priuli (1476–1547) referred to as a “flight from the sea.”⁶⁷ Recognition of its waning commercial preponderance certainly contributed to what economists today refer to as diversification, and diversify their economic disposition the

formation,” 188–189, at 189, does not mention it, instead characterising “Venice as a capital-centered state,” albeit qualified by adding “the complementary importance of coercion, capital, and commitment.”

63 See, e.g., the amply illustrated accounting of fortifications in the (Croatian) Adriatic by Žmegač, *Bastioni*; do note the frequent mentioning of fiscal problems deriving from military (defence) expenditures reported by virtually all Venetian officials governing the republic’s Dalmatian and Albanian possessions in Ljubić and Novak, *Commissiones et relationes Venetae*.

64 Nani, *Historia della Repubblica Veneta*, vol. II, 24: “certo, che à Turchi niuno può star vicino senza essere, ò diuenir’ inimico, e che alla scimitarra fatale dell’Ottomano, la Repubblica [di Venezia], che è la più prossima, è la più esposta.”

65 Tilly, “State Transformation,” 186–187 (on China), 188–189 (on Venice), quote at 189. Note his emphasis on the findings (dissemination) of his war-induced (trans) formation thesis on Chinese Studies, in particular relating to Tin-bor Hui, “Tilly’s State Formation Paradigm.”

66 This is no place to itemise. Conveniently, much is summarised (synthesised) by Pezzolo, “The Venetian Economy,” incl. bibliographic guidance; do note, specifically, Mueller, “L’imperialismo monetario veneziano”; and Doumerc, “Il dominio del mare.” On the state-organised galley convoys, now see de Larivière, *Naviguer, commercer, gouverner*.

67 The “fuga dal mare,” the words of Girolamo Priuli, on which see Segre and Cessi, *I diarii di Girolamo Priuli*, vol. I, 50. Context by Doumerc, “Il dominio del mare,” 167–178, who on 172 speaks

Venetian elites did. Adopting a defensive foreign stance (mainly vis-à-vis the Ottoman empire), including a related change in fiscal-financial matters deriving from it, the city's patricians refocused their attention towards their extensive landed possessions located on the Italian mainland and the scaling up of manufacturing throughout the lagoon.⁶⁸ Construction activities of patrician country estates increased markedly over the course of the early modern period, and so did agricultural production, in particular in those areas amenable to reliable and especially cheap transportation, such as rivers and canals.⁶⁹

Table 1: Venetian villas with/out farm annexes, 1500–1800.

	No. of villas ^a	Farm annexe ^b	Share of total ^c	No annex ^d
Before 1499	23	12	52	3
16th cent.	160	95	60	9
17th cent.	189	108	57	8
18th cent.	243	104	43	19
After 1800	78	27	35	4

Sources: based on Bassi, *Ville delle provincia di Venezia*; Chiovaro *La provincia di Treviso*; Zucchello, *La provincia di Padua*; guidance by Mavia, *Ville venete*.

Analysis of a sample of patrician villas from an area between Treviso, Venice, Padua, and Castelfranco Veneto, circumscribed roughly by the rivers Brenta and Sile as well as the *Terraglio*, the ancient direct road between Mestre and Treviso; in all, the surveyed area corresponds roughly to a rectangle with 30–40km lengths. The above figures contain information about 693 individual villas (20 sites without detailed dating information were omitted).

a) number of villas within that area, with approx. construction dating to the three centuries that generally constitute the early modern period, excl. 20 villas without unambiguous dating; b) number of villas that had neighbouring buildings (*adiacenze*) used for agricultural production, such as wings (*ala*), outbuildings to store tools or grains (*barchesse*), pigeon lofts (*colombaie*), haylofts (*fienili*), tool sheds (*attrezzi*), and barns (*granai*); c) proportion of villas with farm annexes; d) number of villas without any identifiable buildings relevant for agricultural production.

of a “structural crisis” (*crisi strutturale*) of the galley convoys. See also Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism*, vol. III, 89–174; and Wallerstein, *Modern World System*, vol. I, 300–344.

⁶⁸ On Venice's public debt, which was closely correlated with armed conflict, see Lane, “Funded Debt”; and Mueller, “Bank Loans to the Venetian State”; full treatment by Lane and Mueller, *Money and Banking*, vol. II, 359–487.

⁶⁹ Pezzolo, “The Venetian Economy,” 267–268; context by Cipolla, *Before the Industrial Revolution*, 187–194; and Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism*, vol. III, 116–138; on water-borne transport, see also Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism*, vol. I, 415–430.

These issues may be traced by using construction of patrician villas in the area closest to Venice as a proxy. As the above table (Table 1) shows, building activities increased sharply throughout the early modern period, rising sevenfold during the sixteenth century and exceeding an order of magnitude during the eighteenth century. Out of a sample of roughly 700 villas in the immediate vicinity of Venice, 346 (c. 48–49 percent) included any number of productive buildings attached to them. Almost the same number of villas (324, or c. 46–47 percent) were built near a waterway, of which approximately two thirds (208 villas) were located at the banks of the river Brenta. Building activities remained elevated throughout the early modern period, even though data from the 208 villas at the banks of the Brenta suggest that the incidence of building annexes relating to agricultural production declined over time.⁷⁰

These findings are far from simply being reducible to discussions about conspicuous consumption that, more often than not, echo then-widespread allusions to elite decadence most prominently on display in Carlo Goldoni's plays, such as *La villeggiatura* (1756) and especially in his *Trilogia della villeggiatura* (1761). Even so, these developments are of considerable relevance to assess the trajectory of the post-medieval pre-industrial evolution of cities, power elites, and states.⁷¹ While this is neither the place nor the time to recount, in granular detail, the variegated regional trajectories, the literature on the various meta-regions of early modern Europe (north-western, east/central, and Mediterranean) is quite clear, even if we are lacking an up-to-date comparative assessment. While using different concepts and terminology across these three regions – “proto-industrialisation” and the “industrious revolution” (Jan de Vries), “second serfdom” and “subjection in demesne lordship,” and *villeggiatura*, respectively – the eventual end-results are quite similar: increases of pre-industrial production deriving from increased levels of (structural) coercion, which particularly affected the autonomy and liberties of urban settle-

⁷⁰ Estimates based on the assumption of less than 100m distance from the villa to a waterway. Detailed analysis over time provides the following particulars with respect to construction activities at the riverbanks of the Brenta: 5 villas (3 with farm annexes) before 1499; 63 in the 16th century (33 with farm annexes, or c. 52%); 56 in the 17th century (21 with farm annexes, or c. 37.5%); 69 in the 18th century (19 with farm annexes c. 27–28%).

⁷¹ The research landscape into these three regions-*cum*-systems is quite uneven: there is quite a lot recent work on north-western Europe, there are bits and pieces on East Central Europe, and only scattered evidence from the Mediterranean. As elsewhere, this is no place to itemise; on the first region, see, e.g., de Vries and van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy*; and, more recently, de Vries, *Industrious Revolution*. On East Central Europe, see the seminal surveys by Cerman, “Demesne Lordship”; and Cerman, *Villagers and Lords*. On the (Italian) Mediterranean, now see Alfani and Di Tullio, *The Lion's Share*, incl. bibliographic guidance on 2–14, 19–47.

ments.⁷² Of course, these trends manifested themselves very differently across time and space throughout late medieval and early modern Europe, yet they appear to have resulted in roughly similar outcomes: growing levels of wealth and concentration of property ownership in ever fewer hands, the continuation of traditional patrimonial (“feudal”) social relations, and a secular trend towards higher degrees of bureaucratisation of local, regional, and state administration. In other words: while life more or less continued as it had, elites’ command and control of the general population grew over time.⁷³

These changes, however, had very little impact on the organisation of states, cities, and the rhythms of everyday life. Take, for instance, the city of Venice, where much of the distinctively pre-modern cityscape of c. 646 hectares is still largely intact. Subdivided into six “boroughs” (*sestiere*), we can find more than a hundred church buildings, ecclesiastically organised in about seventy parishes. Historically, although overwhelmingly Roman Catholic, Venice’s population included a number of sizeable non-Catholic communities, such as Greeks, Armenians, and Jews, as well as a number of Reformed communities.⁷⁴ Everyday life was typically centred around these structures, and it took place in particular on the *campi* and *piazze* in front of the various parish churches. Everyday life was very much local, if not localistic, and it was intimately connected to civic rituals

72 Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism*, vol. I, 514–520, at 519: “Everywhere in Europe, as soon as the state was firmly established it disciplined the towns with instinctive relentlessness, whether or not it used violence. The Habsburgs did so just as much as the Popes, the German princes as much as the Medicis or the kings of France. Except in the Netherlands and England, obedience was imposed.”

73 Helpful proxies to grasp the extent of the growing reach of the state incl., first and foremost, taxation, the growth of military strength (at least on paper, and as measurable in terms of the share of state expenditure on the army and navy), and the growth of “paperwork,” incl. the establishment of dedicated archives to keep track of the increasing amounts of paper. Start with the references in n. 7 and 8. On the underlying role of paper in all of this, see Megan Williams’ project, “Paper Princes,” which investigates the shift from mostly oral to overwhelmingly written diplomacy in early modern international relations; pending publication of its results, Williams, *Politics of Paper*, Relatedly, on the emergence of archives in early modern Europe, see Friedrich, *Die Geburt des Archivs*.

74 Exemplary spiritual communities incl. San Giorgio dei Greci, San Bartolomeo dei Tedeschi, Santa Croce degli Armeni, and the (demolished) Santa Maria dei Servi, as well as the convent of San Lazzaro degli Armeni. See, among others, Prodi, “Structure and Organization”; guidance by Cristellon and Menchi, “Religious Life”; D’Andrea, “Charity and Confraternities”; Ravid, “Venice and its Minorities.” Book-length studies incl. Imhaus, *Le minoranze orientali*; Sperling, *Convents and the Body Politic*; Laven, *Virgins of Venice*; and Bruke, *Greeks of Venice*. Note that comparable structures, if not on the same scale, characterised many Mediterranean cities.

and their public display, such as depicted famously in the *Procession in St Mark's Square* by Gentile Bellini or the annual celebrations of the Battle of Lepanto (7 November 1571).⁷⁵ We further note the ubiquity of symbolic communication via the Republic's coat of arms, the Winged Lion of St Mark, which was widely diffused throughout its possessions.⁷⁶ Apart from these conventional subdivisions, we further find additional associative layers well beyond these administrative, political and ecclesiastical, cultural, and symbolic aspects. Of these, the state-owned naval yards, the famous *Arsenale di Venezia*, and its workforce, are perhaps the most renowned ones, but there was also the 'War of the Fists' (*Guerra dei Pugni*), a ritualistic, recurring public brawl between the factions of the *Nicolotti* vs. *Castellani*, which, much like multilingualism and situational language use, cut across many of the above-mentioned categories, to say nothing about the ubiquity of confraternities or dinner parties.⁷⁷

The extent of some of these features, especially a vibrant culture of (conspicuous) consumption found among the politically important and socio-economically well-to-do, clearly relate to Venice's extraordinary size and wealth relative to other cities of late medieval and early modern Europe.⁷⁸ *Ceteris paribus*, the majority of them, however, is also found in (much) smaller cities throughout and beyond the Venetian possessions, including the city's dominion over its immediate surroundings, which, at least in parts of East Central Europe, appear to have been larger in size than in Western Europe.⁷⁹ In frontier regions such as along the ill-defined and shifting borders with the Ottoman empire throughout East-Central Europe, there would be additional aspects to consider, such as military structures (fortifications and garrisons) 'attached' to urban settlements including logistical support, a pleth-

75 Start with Muir, *Civic Ritual*, esp. 167–172; see further Queller, *Venetian Patriariate*, 51–112; guidance by Muir, "Anthropology of Venice"; and Povoio, "Liturgies of Violence." On Lepanto, now see Hanss, *Lepanto als Ereignis*.

76 See the exhaustive accounting by Rizzi, *I leoni di San Marco*; and Rizzi, *I leoni dolomitici*.

77 On the Arsenal see Lane, *Venetian Ships*; Lane, *Venice*, 336–389; and Davis, *Shipbuilders*. On the brawling factions, see Davis, *War of the Fists*. On dinner parties and manners, see Murano, "La festa Veneziana"; guidance on education and multi-lingualism by Grendler, "Education"; Rosenthal, "Clothing, Fashion, Dress, and Costume"; and Ferguson, "Venetian Language."

78 Despite recurring plague (and other) epidemics, Venice was one of premodern Europe's largest cities with between c. 100,000 (1500) and c. 200,000 (1600) inhabitants; after the mid-17th century, its population remained around 140,000 people. Lacking a full-length study on consumption history, see Sperling, *Convents and the Body Politic*, 18–71; and Cecchini, "Patterns of Consumption."

79 See, e.g., developments in Dalmatia via Krekić, "Developed Autonomy"; Krekić, "Venezia e l'Adriatico." As regards the urban jurisdictions beyond the city walls (and the *ager publicus*), note that Dalmatian cities ruled over larger districts than their German counterparts, according to Malz, "Frühneuzeitliche Modernisierung als Sackgasse," esp. 104–113, at 105.

ora of individuals who were not citizens of any give place, but rather enjoying residency rights (*habitatores*) or were classified as “foreigners” (*forenses*), as well as a number of associative groupings that cut across the conventional status hierarchy of pre-modern society (and later scholarly assumptions), including groupings like merchants, soldiers and sailors, clergy, notaries, travellers, etc.⁸⁰ In monarchical-aristocratic polities, which constituted the overwhelming majority (norm) of European states, we need to further include competing jurisdictional competencies (lord vs. city council, as well as turf wars within the municipal and seigneurial administration), various royal privileges (city rights, mining privileges, etc.) granted to one or the other corporate institution (confraternities, brotherhoods, minting privileges, etc.), judiciary differentials (high vs. low justice, secular vs. ecclesiastical), and the thorny issues deriving from ownership rights of subordinate(d) instances, such as a convent in a city with both corporate bodies possessing property titles inside or outside the city’s jurisdiction. Here we note that these – and many other comparable issues – are found virtually all over Europe, but these were differences of degree and not of kind.⁸¹

Once disassembled, every post-medieval pre-modern city appears to be (at least) as fragmented as its superordinate structure, the state. This must be inferred from close analysis of cities and towns, large and small, with their partially overlapping layers of cultural, linguistic, religious, political, socio-economic, symbolic, and other constituent parts, movable as well as immovable. To these social constructs, we must further add any number of environmental and geophysical variables (as well as the comparably variegated human responses thereto), whose

80 On the Venetian-Ottoman borders, see Panciera, “La frontiera dalmata”; and Mayhew, *Dalmatia*. Comparable conditions also characterised the Habsburg-Ottoman borders in Central Europe, on which see Pálffy, *Hungary Between Two Empires*; and, for an in-depth study of the realities on the ground in such a “Land without Borders,” see Michels, *Habsburg Empire under Siege*, with the above quote serving as header for Ch. 1 (27–64). Similar caveats apply to “Ottoman” subjects generally (who were similarly highly ‘diverse’), as explained by DoPaço, *L’orient à Vienna*. For an exploration of these groups in the Venetian context, see Sander-Faes, *Urban Elites of Zadar*, 64–141.

81 E.g., the particular status of the City of London Corporation vs. the various other municipal institutions that constitute(d) London and, *mutatis mutandis*, all other large metropolises, on which see the exemplary essays in Sander-Faes and Zimmermann, *Weltstädte, Metropolen, Megastädte*. Other examples incl. urban associations, such as the Hanseatic League, the Swabian League of cities, on which see Hardy, *Associative Political Culture*; or the mining privileges of towns like Schwaz in the Tyrol, Austria, or Joachimsthal (today Jáchymov, Czech Republic), perhaps early modern Europe’s most famous mining town, to say nothing of Potosí and the Cerro Ricco in Bolivia, on which now see Büschges, “*La villa imperial de Potosí*.”

communicative and infrastructural consequences similarly varied widely.⁸² Furthermore, it would be easy, if problematic, to assume that these individual parts testify, in and of themselves, to a certain kind of unity or uniformity of intent or purpose. To the contrary, as an early eighteenth-century secular visitation report from Bohemia concerning the multi-faceted situation of St Vitus Church (kostel Sv. Víta) in Krumau (Český Krumlov) illustrates. The church, “including its subjects, is incorporated into the lordship [*Herrschaft Krumau*], the prelate’s sinecure, however, is separated from it,” with “most quarrels with the prelate’s sinecure revolv[ing] around the criminal jurisdiction over the subjects.”⁸³

It is worth pointing out, though, that this level of multi-dimensionality (fragmentation) is not only visible in such micro-contexts, but also relates to superordinate contexts. The same report also lists four categories of borders, namely: a) Bohemia’s borders with the Archduchy of Austria above the Enns River and the Prince-Bishopric of Passau; b) the lordship of Krumau’s borders with other Eggenberg property titles, specifically Winterberg (Vimperk), Driřlawitz (Drslavice), Wallern (Volary), and Nettolitz (Netolice); c) borders with “those incorporated monasteries, parishes, and the like;” and d) the borders with “other foreign” holdings, in particular with “Libejowitz [Libějovice], Frauenberg [Hluboká nad Vltavou], Budweis [České Budějovice], this here prelatry [of St Vitus Church in Krumau], *Meierhöfe*, Gratzen [Nové Hradce], Umlowitz [Omlenice] . . . Rosenberg [Rožmberk nad Vltavou].”⁸⁴ While differentiations such as these were certainly structural (diachronic), mention must also be made of yet another layer of spatiotemporal (synchronic) factors. When, for instance, adverse weather ruined the harvest or a fire destroyed a number of houses, the seigneurial administration usually intervened and (temporarily) reduced the affected tax burden commensurately.⁸⁵

82 To cite perhaps the most prominent European example, see the environmental history of Venice by Crouzet-Pavan, *Sopra le acque salse*.

83 SOAVT, OČK, Vs, Sign. 1 7 W 3, no. 1, c.5r-c.6r, s.d. On jurisdictional complexity in early modern Bohemian towns, see Pánek, “Die Halsgerichtsbarkeit”; the particular South Bohemian context is explored in great detail by Himl, *Die “armen Leüte” und die Macht*.

84 SOAVT, OČK, Vs, I 7 W 3, no. 1, c.22v-c.23v, quotes at c.23r; see also the section on seigneurial urbaria on c.23v-c.24r. Gratzen, Rosenberg, and Libejowitz were in the possession of the Bucquoy Frauenberg belonged to Marradas; the phrase “incorporated monasteries” relates to the Abbeys of Goldenkron (Zlatá Koruna) and Hohenfurth (Vyšší Brod), to say nothing about the 10 seigneurial demesne farms (*Meierhöfe*), which were likewise administered (partially) in separate ways, on which see Sander-Faes, *Herrschaft und Staatlichkeit*, esp. 297–352.

85 Take, e.g., fire damages in the city of Krumau, whose tax burden was temporarily reduced (from May 1675 to June 1678) by subtraction of “4 $\frac{9}{16}$ Angeseßene,” which resulted in an overall reduction of the tax burden by some 286 fl. 46 kr 3 $\frac{11}{16}$ d. Or the “severe weather damages” that affected the domains of Goldenkron in autumn and winter 1688, which prompted seigneurial tax

Comparable factors also characterised public administration and governance at the state level throughout the late medieval and early modern period. Change at the state level usually came about in a hap-hazard way, with many intended as well as unintended consequences. Central government, such as existed before the turn of the nineteenth century, did not have at its disposal the resources needed, human or otherwise, to monopolise and exercise authority throughout the entire expanse of its territory. In other words: state authority was unable to overcome the vested interests of landed wealth. Thus, central governments had to rely on a combination of state and non-state actors and institutions – in particular seigneurial officials – to transfer people, goods, and ideas from one part of the state to another. This peculiar situation left a lasting mark on contemporary perceptions and subsequent interpretations, with historical scholarship from the nineteenth century until recently maintaining that the continued existence of estates and their diets in East Central Europe were indicators of “weak” state power.⁸⁶ Around the turn of the millennium, this interpretation began to change. “Rediscovering” post-1918 interpretations by Otto Hintze on the role of representative assemblies in state-making, current scholarship holds that the continued existence of the estates’ pre-modern (“feudal”) diets and offices was, in fact, conducive to the establishment of effective central authority throughout East Central Europe.⁸⁷ This line of reasoning has been most forcefully espoused by Habsburg

official Simon Präxl to instruct his counterpart to list all damages in minute detail “to ensure that every village will receive a commensurate [tax] reduction [damit khainem orth nichth zu wenig noch zivil Defalcirt werden möchte]” before the tax assignment could be drawn up. Quotes from SOAvT, OČK, Vú, Sign. I 4L∞, fasc. 63, s.p., Extract from the Seigneurial Contribution Accounts, Krumau, s.d. (two items); s.p., Simon Präxl to Johann Franz Padibrikh, Krumau, 15 March 1689 (emphasis in the original), respectively.

⁸⁶ Szabo, “Perspective from the Pinnacle,” at 250. Similarly, the long-held view of estates and their assemblies as “the driving force [behind] modernisation” has come under fire from a variety of angles recently, among which the most important are the encyclopaedical review by Bömelburg and Haug-Moritz, “Stand, Stände,” at 826; and the critique by Breuilly, “Napoleonic Germany,” who pointed out (at 135) that such reductionist views simply fail “to capture the full range of contemporary positions.”

⁸⁷ Contrast the Hintzean *Machtstaat*, developed before 1914, with the post-1918 emphasis on parliaments and representative assemblies as key drivers of state formation. See Hintze, *Allgemeine Verfassungs*; and Hintze, *Staat und Verfassung*, with particular attention to Central European in the essays “Staatenbildung und Verfassungsentwicklung: Eine historisch-politische Studie,” vol. I, 34–51; “Staatsverfassung und Heeresverfassung,” vol. I, 52–83; and “Der österreichische und preußische Beamtenstaat im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert,” vol. I, 321–358. These shifts, in particular Hintze’s post-1945 reception in Anglo-American academia, very much influenced Helmut Koenigsberger, esp. his essays on “Monarchies and Parliaments”; Koenigsberger, “*Dominium Regale*”; and Koenigsberger, “Parliaments and Estates.” On Hintze’s legacy, see Gerhard, “Otto Hintze”;

scholars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries such as William Godsey, Shuichi Iwasaki, and others.⁸⁸ Yet, almost everyone and everything beyond the court, the estates and their diets, as well as the central administration remain outside the scope of recent research.⁸⁹

Despite this growth in scale, the scope of enquiry has not kept up. Only a few studies on the emergence of modern states and societies suggest that this transition rested in no small part on elements of traditional authority, yet, more often than they do not, these too remain within the confines of aristocratic circles and urban elites.⁹⁰ Until now, there has been no recognition that the expansion of state authority before 1848 was predicated on implementation by non-state actors, including seigneurial officials, and that the study of these dynamics, experiments, and procedures was part and parcel of the transformation of pre-modern social formations, rural *and* urban, into modern state and societies, as well as a major factor that shaped the evolution of modern Europe. In short: as the recent literature on state-making continues to focus on the activities of statesmen and central governments, with the importance of both the role of Europe's traditional elites and "infrastructure" increasing in recent years, the role of cities and the urban aspect therein, remains, by and large, outside these considerations.⁹¹

and Neugebauer, "Otto Hintzes Weg." On Prussian history and historiography, Neugebauer, "Staatsverfassung"; and the essays in Neugebauer, *Das 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*.

88 Guidance by Mat'a and Winkelbauer, "Das Absolutismuskonzept"; individual lands are surveyed in Mat'a and Winkelbauer, *Bündnispartner und Konkurrenten der Landesfürsten?*; recent book-length studies incl. Iwasaki, *Stände und Staatsbildung*; Godsey, *The Sinews of Habsburg Power*; Godsey and Mat'a, *The Habsburg Monarchy*.

89 Notable exceptions, albeit geographically focused mainly on German Central Europe, incl. Ullmann and Zimmermann, *Restaurationssystem und Reformpolitik*; Franz, *Landgemeinden*; Franz, *Durchstaatlichung und Ausweitung*; Brophy, *Popular Culture*; Holste, *In der Arena der preußischen Verfassungsdebatte*; and the essays in Ganzenmüller and Tönsmeier, *Vom Vorrücken des Staates in die Fläche*, with the latter focused mainly on the second half of the 19th century. On the impact of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, see Planert, *Der Mythos vom Befreiungskrieg*.

90 E.g., Mayer, *Persistence of the Old Regime*; Lieven, *Aristocracy in Europe*; and the essays in Asch, *Adel*.

91 Synthesis by van Laak, *Alles im Fluss*; guidance by Joyce and Mukerje, "The State of Things," 1–19, but note the authors focus mainly on British and French experiences.

Conclusion: Returning ‘the city’ to debates on early modern state transformation

Despite the uneven historiographical landscape, there is enough evidence to contend that the late medieval and early modern periods were characterised by highly flexible and dynamic hybrid formations exhibiting both pre-modern and seemingly modern, or modernising, aspects. Hence, it is necessary to conceive of state-making as a patchwork-in-progress that comprised any number of different “practices,” by which are meant “institutionalized processes and settled procedures regularly used for handling public matters.”⁹² Active participation by both state and non-state actors was the norm, not the exception, as were any number of entanglements of urban-rural and urban-state relations, which bestows upon the contexts considered here high levels of hybridity, as both John Brewer and Gerald Aylmer for the early modern period, as well as Colin Kidd and Malcolm Petrie writing about our era, emphasise.⁹³ The latter aspect is crucial, for reflections on contemporary events and developments always play a role in scholarly treatments of the past. This can be clearly seen, for instance, in (say) Weber’s reflections on then-current debates among German classicists Karl Blücher and Gustav von Schmoller, as well as on Walter Sombart’s hypothesis on the origins of Modernity, as related in the afterword of the German edition of *The City*.⁹⁴ Another telling example is the recent increase in comparative assessments of Chinese and European experiences, spearheaded by Victoria tin-bor Hui and Charles Tilly, with the latter comparing, admittedly in a self-declared “far-fetched” manner, late medieval and early modern Europe’s arguably most successful city-state (Venice) with China.⁹⁵

These preliminaries aside, the above discussions convey the following four *thematic* implications: first and foremost, the role of cities and urban develop-

92 Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, 7.

93 Brewer, “Revisiting *The Sinews of Power*,” 29; Aylmer, “From Office-Holding to Civil Service,” at 106; Kidd, “Hybridity.” These ambiguities are not a just a historical fact, as comparable degrees of hybridity also characterise “Brexit,” note Kidd and Petrie, “Our National Hodgepodge.”

94 Nippel, “Nachwort,” 103–122. Note that while German-language original of *The City* first appeared posthumously in 1921, with all the above information common knowledge, it has been omitted from English-language editions, esp. noticeable in Ch. XVI = “The City (Non-Legitimate Domination),” in Weber, *Economy and Society*, 1212–1372; note further that these contextual facts are similarly absent from the English translation of Weber, *The City*, esp. in Martindale, “Prefatory Remarks.”

95 See esp. Tin-bor Hui, *War and State Formation*; and her contribution on Tilly’s impact, Tin-bor Hui, “Tilly’s State Formation Paradigm.” The above quote is by Tilly, “State Transformation,” 189.

ment in late medieval and early modern state transformation remains, by and large, under-explored. This holds particularly true for the established, if widely ignored, role of ecclesiastical protagonists and structures. There exists some work on the role of the Papacy, but there is remarkably little on, say, spiritual polities, such as (arch) bishoprics, convents and monasteries, or the role of ecclesiastical (quasi) princes in the Holy Roman Empire.⁹⁶

This is all the more surprising, second, given the fact that “non-conformism” (in its original sense)⁹⁷ was the conventional discursive framework of reference for political dissent, as can be seen from the mendicant orders and Catharism of the (high) middle ages to the Hussite Revolution and its theological-intellectual offspring, the much better-known, as well as incomparably more often discussed, European Reformations of the sixteenth century, as revealed by letter Martin Luther sent to Georg Burckhardt, dated 14 February 1520: “In short: we are all, without knowing, Hussites. Yes, Paul [the Apostle] and Augustine are *literally* [*wortwörtlich*] Hussites.”⁹⁸

Since the emergence of History as an academic discipline in the early nineteenth century, third, the Lutheran Reformation has been associated with the paradigmatic shift from the late medieval to the early modern periods. Yet, given the multitude of events, proclamations, and publications surrounding the quincentenary of Luther’s proposition of the Ninety-Five Theses, the Hussite connection is of crucial importance to the “world-historical significance [*welthistorische Bedeutung*]” of the former.⁹⁹ While the latter is in many ways a departure from John Wyclif’s earlier teachings, even the most cursory look at how the “Hussite Revolu-

96 On the Papacy, start with Prodi, *Il sovrano pontefice*; Prodi, *The Papal Prince*; more recently, see, e.g., Wright, *Early Modern Papacy*; Reinhard, *Glaube und Macht*; guidance by Braun, “The Papacy.” On the ecclesiastical princes, now see Stapper-Schröder, *Fürstbittsinnen*.

97 The “failure or refusal to conform to an established church,” in particular “the movement or principles of English Protestant dissent,” according to “Nonconformity,” Merriam-Webster: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/nonconformity> (accessed August 18, 2021).

98 Quoted in Székely, “Das Erbe von Jan Hus,” 5 (my emphasis): “Kurz wir sind alle, ohne es zu wissen, Hussiten. Ja, Paulus und Augustinus sind wortwörtlich Hussiten.” Exemplarily, cf. the accounts by Brady, *German Histories*, who mentions the Hussites extensively on 63–68, 72–79, esp. 77–79; by contrast, Anglophone research, exemplified by MacCulloch, *All Things Made New*, a revised version of *Reformation*, mentions neither John Wyclif nor Jan Hus and the Hussite Phenomenon. Similarly, German (mainstream) scholarship, while mentioning them briefly, has seemingly doubled down on the “world-historical significance” (see n. 99) of the Lutheran Reformation, on which see, e.g., Schilling, *Martin Luther*, 17, 147; German scholarship is surveyed in Schilling and Mittelhalmer, *Der Reformator Martin Luther*, with Hus being mentioned only by Brady (“Luther und der deutsche Marxismus,” 195–203, at 201).

99 This notion is similarly wide-spread in the German-language public sphere, on which see, e.g., the “Interview mit Joachim Gauck”; and the blurb praising Kaufmann, *Reformation*.

tion” (František Šmahel) played out reveals profound implications for most Western interpretations, to say nothing about the obvious consequences for time-honoured disciplinary periodisation schemes: the burning of Jan Hus at the Council of Constance (1414–1418), whose teachings pre-date Luther’s by a century; on the role of Bohemian cities and their association in the mutual defence of Hussitism; on its truly *epochal* achievements, such as the dispossession of church property, freedom of conscience for the peasantry, and the exclusion of the first estate from politics,¹⁰⁰ to say nothing about the role of *oral* dissemination of the Hussite creed, for the Bohemian (or Czech) Reformation occurred well before the invention of the Printing Press.¹⁰¹ In short, the Hussite Revolution was not simply a reformation before *the* sixteenth-century reformations, it was not only the first one to occur, but it also went much further than its better-known successors throughout most of the early modern period and well into the nineteenth century.

Fourth, *ceteris paribus*, its inclusion calls into question established narratives close to Western European interpretations, such as the historiographic importance of “the Lutheran Reformation,” the role of the printing press in its dissemination, and their seemingly exclusionary, and overwhelmingly so, urban manifestations.¹⁰²

Finally, to return to the topic at hand, this essay shall be understood not so much as a revisionist manifesto, but as a call to further, open-minded study of the intricate relationship between cities, power elites, and states in post-medieval pre-modern Europe. If we intend to, it is possible to find ever smaller fractions of the various movable parts that made up the Old World’s “composite” cities and states. Post-medieval pre-modern European urban societies, elite groups, and states were neither static nor uniform. To the contrary, they consisted of a number of coexisting, corresponding, and competing constituent parts. In any case, these should first be identified individually, and then aggregated to avoid anachronistic, overly simplistic, and/or theoretical models that stand little, if any, chance to hold up to scrutiny once applied beyond one’s concrete set of examples. “City,” “power elites” and “state,” then, are best considered analytical containers

100 Šmahel, “The Hussite Revolution,” 180–181; and Boubín, “The Bohemian Crownlands,” 196–197, noting the significance of the Diet of Kuttenberg (Kutná Hora) in this regard, where “religious peace” was accomplished, which “[had been] the first time in European history that the lowest classes of society were allowed freedom of faith.” Note, further, that also Poland-Lithuania’s comparatively tolerant confessional stance (far) exceeded that of many “western” monarchies.

101 This is similarly no place to itemise; see esp. Eisenstein, *Printing Revolution*.

102 Proposed by Moeller, *Reichsstadt und Reformation*; followed by Ozment, *Reformation in the Cities*; more recent studies incl. Close, *The Negotiated Reform*; and Christ, *Biographies of a Reformation*.

that serve clearly indicated ends, as opposed to supporting roles in the propagation of a preconceived, often retro-teleological lines of reasoning.¹⁰³

This is not to say that recognition thereof requires a kind of “new” local and/or urban history, but it is necessary to relate individual case studies to the bigger picture in plausible ways. Individual actions and structural developments convey different (differing) consequences for central governments and local (or regional) actors and institutions alike, which further touches on long-standing scholarly debates about “centre and (vs.) periphery.” Looking at one or the other trend from a different perspective almost immediately generates new insights, which is neither a new nor a particularly original thought. In fact, these notions have been around for more than a century, as indicated by Lucien Febvre’s study of Spanish rule over the Franche-Comté and echoed, however faintly ever since, by John Elliott and Darryl Dee.¹⁰⁴ It appears therefore necessary to widen our conceptual approach to “the city” and its relationship with “the state” and traditional patrimonial social formations, all of which were “composite,” and hence beset with rather comparable political, economic, and structural problems.¹⁰⁵

Acknowledgement thereof, then, opens up a variety of analytical, conceptual, and practical avenues of research, which allows the historian to connect individuals, corporate institutions (associations, convents, guilds, etc.), cities, and individual lordships with the established work on *Crown, Church, and Estates*.¹⁰⁶ The main aim of this chapter, then, is “not to plump for one or other of these views of [the city, power elites, or of] the state – local/central, social/political – but to investigate their interaction[s]” to add additional analytical and epistemological depth to the study of the “complex relations between the varied bodies that made up the fractured polit[ies]” that constituted late medieval and early modern Europe.¹⁰⁷

103 Pace, e.g., Scheidel, *Escape from Rome*; or the (in) famous “Blue Banana,” conceived in the late 20th century by Brunet, *Les villes européennes*.

104 Febvre, *Philippe II et la Franche-Comté*; Elliott, *Revolt of the Catalans*; Dee, *Expansion and Crisis*.

105 Elliott, “Composite Monarchies”; Schreiner “Grundherrschaft,” 87; Cerman, *Villagers and Lords*, 58–93; Sander-Faes, “Composite Domination.”

106 Evans and Thomas, *Crown, Church and Estates*; this “triad” was subsequently augmented, from the 18th century onwards, by “three further buttresses . . . army, bureaucracy, and managed economy,” according to Evans, “Preface,” vii–x, at viii.

107 Brewer, “Revisiting *The Sinews of Power*,” 34.

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IV The Contemporary City – Polycentric Disorder?

Christoph Bernhardt

Economic Boom, Environmental Crisis, and Polycentric Governance in a Transnational Perspective: Cities and States in Struggle along the Upper Rhine in the Late Nineteenth and the Late Twentieth Century

Patterns and problems of polycentric governance in modern Europe have been fundamentally shaped by the rise of the national state in the course of the nineteenth century. In that process cities lost a good part of their autonomy as developed in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period and were increasingly integrated and subordinated under the institutional regime of the states. In the different European countries a variety of institutional pathways and balances of power between cities and central governments emerged. As a result in key fields of local policies, like urban planning and social welfare, German cities since the Prussian reforms from 1808 (the so-called “Stein’sche Städteordnung”) was granted more autonomy than French municipalities.¹

This chapter discusses some key questions of polycentric governance between cities and states along an approach which puts the relation of institutional structures on the one hand and patterns of political agency of various groups of actors on the other centre stage. It states that institutional rules as public law and constitutions set a strong framework in which the roles and competences of actors were formally defined and modes of governance can be identified by a structural analysis. But an examination of historical social and political struggles as documented in archival sources shows that the patterns of agency and governance, driven by social interests of individual or collective key actors, often differed from formal legal rules.

Following this concept the paper in a first step briefly reflects some aspects of recent theoretical debate on approaches of multilevel governance and scalar policies in different disciplinary discourses. Against this background some strategies of scalar politics and horizontal as well as vertical political cooperation are discussed along two empirical cases of polycentric governance drawn from the

¹ Krabbe, *Die deutsche Stadt*. This chapter is partly based on empirical studies that were first published in Bernhardt, *Im Spiegel des Wassers*.

Upper Rhine region in the late nineteenth and the late twentieth century. It will be shown that in both periods economic change and environmental policies triggered new socio-spatial arrangements and informal political coalitions between actors from the local up to the transnational scale.

Multilevel governance and “scalar strategies” as concepts for historical research

In a general sense the concept of Governance addresses the study of political processes, in which the state, the market and social networks or communities are perceived as interrelated institutional mechanisms. Special interest is given to interactions between representatives of the state, supra-national agents and the civil society.² Within this general framework, Multilevel Governance (MLG) was developed in the last decades as a subfield of Governance analysis which took a lot of inspiration from studies on the European integration.³ The concept pays special attention to decisions in multi-layered complex political systems from the local up to the supranational level and to the interactions, strategies and conflicts between actors involved.⁴ Even if historical struggles and problems, like the governance of Federal States or inter-municipal cooperation, provide rich empirical material for the concept and in return reflect its relevance for historical research, studies in a long-term historical perspective which explicitly refer to concepts of governance are rare.⁵

In recent times critical geographers have increasingly discussed similar problems of political agency across administrative scales from a perspective of the production of spaces. In contrast to MLG-studies this approach doesn't focus on the institutional dimensions but on “scalar strategies” of actors like global enterprises or NGOs which act across vertical administrative hierarchies and try to accumulate power in or outside formal institutions.⁶ The cases of local social movements that create vertical networks and act up to the national scale and beyond or of environmental lobby groups like Greenpeace which grew up from local to global players⁷

2 Benz, *Governance*, 20; Schuppert and Zürn, *Governance*, 20.

3 Benz, *Politik*; Knodt and Kohler-Koch, *Deutschland*.

4 Mayntz, “Steuerungstheorie.”

5 Bernhardt, “Governance, Statehood, and Space.”

6 Wissen, Röttger and Heeg, *Politics of Scale*; Belina, “Skalare Praxis.”

7 Mayer, “Multiskalare Praxen.”

are illustrating the wide range of institutional constellations and patterns of agency which are addressed in this field of research.

Besides “classical” problems of Multilevel Governance in national states, like federalism, as discussed by Jansen along the role of regions in modern Italian history or by Mecking along the struggle for major administrative reforms in West-Germany around 1970,⁸ complex scalar constellations in transnational settings provide especially rich material for empirical research. This is evident in studies from a global history perspective as followed by Osterhammel for the nineteenth century as well as in the analysis of special institutional situations, like the international status of West-Berlin in the Cold-War-period.⁹

The following study about two major debates on problems of urban and regional development along the Upper Rhine between Mannheim and Basel in the late nineteenth and the late twentieth century tries to show, how economic interests and environmental concerns motivated actors to develop specific patterns of governance. Their political activities often contested and partly transcended existing hierarchical institutional structures as fixed in constitutions, legal rules and formalised administrative procedures. The horizontal cooperation amongst municipal authorities together with informal vertical networking in the late nineteenth century and bottom-up interventions from municipalities in the intermediary scale of regional planning in the late twentieth century will be discussed as two complex forms of polycentric governance. Drawing inspiration from both MLG studies as from “scalar strategies”-approaches helps to reveal the formal institutional as well as the informal dimensions of such governance processes.

Multilevel governance in the late nineteenth century: Cities and states in struggle on navigation and water management along the Upper Rhine

The first case analysed here reflects a campaign of municipal actors along the Upper Rhine region between Mannheim and Basel, which in the late nineteenth century massively fought for a policy of spatio-economic equality in navigation on the Rhine with the help of large-scale water management. The region under

⁸ Jansen, “Region – Province – Municipality”; Mecking, “State – Municipality – Citizen.”

⁹ Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt*; Stahl, “Preparing for Landing.”

survey underwent after the German-French War of 1870/71 a fundamental transformation in political, institutional and economic regards. The former French Alsace-Lorraine regions were integrated in the German State under a special legal regime of “Reichsland” which gave the national government a relatively strong role in regional politics.¹⁰ In the following decades controversial public disputes emerged about the problem of better connecting Strasbourg and the whole region south of Mannheim to the major shipping routes on the Rhine. Local authorities and chambers of commerce strongly called for a participation in the significant economic benefits that inland harbour cities were able to draw from their function as hubs of regional and national transport.¹¹

In that regard Mannheim throughout the nineteenth century massively profited from its position as the terminus of large-scale Rhine navigation, just like Cologne in the lower Rhine region, where goods had to be transferred from larger to middle size ships due to the decreasing water depth in upstream direction (Figure 1). As a result Mannheim towards the end of the nineteenth century became the most important “traffic hub for southern Germany.”¹² Innovations in transport technologies and the dynamic expansion of loading capacities from small sailing ships to large steamships strongly stimulated this process. While sailing ships heading for Mannheim in the 1840s had no more than approximately 100 tons of loading capacity, the early steam tugs already had a loading capacity of up to 400 tons, and the iron ships that advanced from the 1890s onwards carried more than 1,000 tons. At this time tugboats were able to tow two barges each with a total load of 1,200 tons, the strongest of these tugboats even a good 2,000 tons.¹³

After Mannheim had been from 1840 onwards connected by rail to Heidelberg, Karlsruhe and Basel and the city’s harbours had been linked to its railway station in 1854, neither the regional state of Baden nor Mannheim’s municipal authorities had any interest in helping to expand large scale shipping towards the south. In contrast to the commercial rise of Mannheim, Strasbourg’s economy declined throughout the nineteenth century, as the French city had been disconnected from large scale navigation since the early nineteenth century. In general up to the 1890s industrialisation progressed rapidly only along the Frankfurt-Mannheim axis, but did not yet substantially expand southwards to Karlsruhe, Strasbourg or Basel.¹⁴

¹⁰ Fisch, “Elsaß.”

¹¹ Engelkamp, “Die Rheinschiffart,” 89.

¹² Engelkamp, “Die Rheinschiffart,” 89.

¹³ Honsell, *Die Wasserstraße*, 33.

¹⁴ Schmitt, *Die Binnenwasserstraßen*, 14, 117.

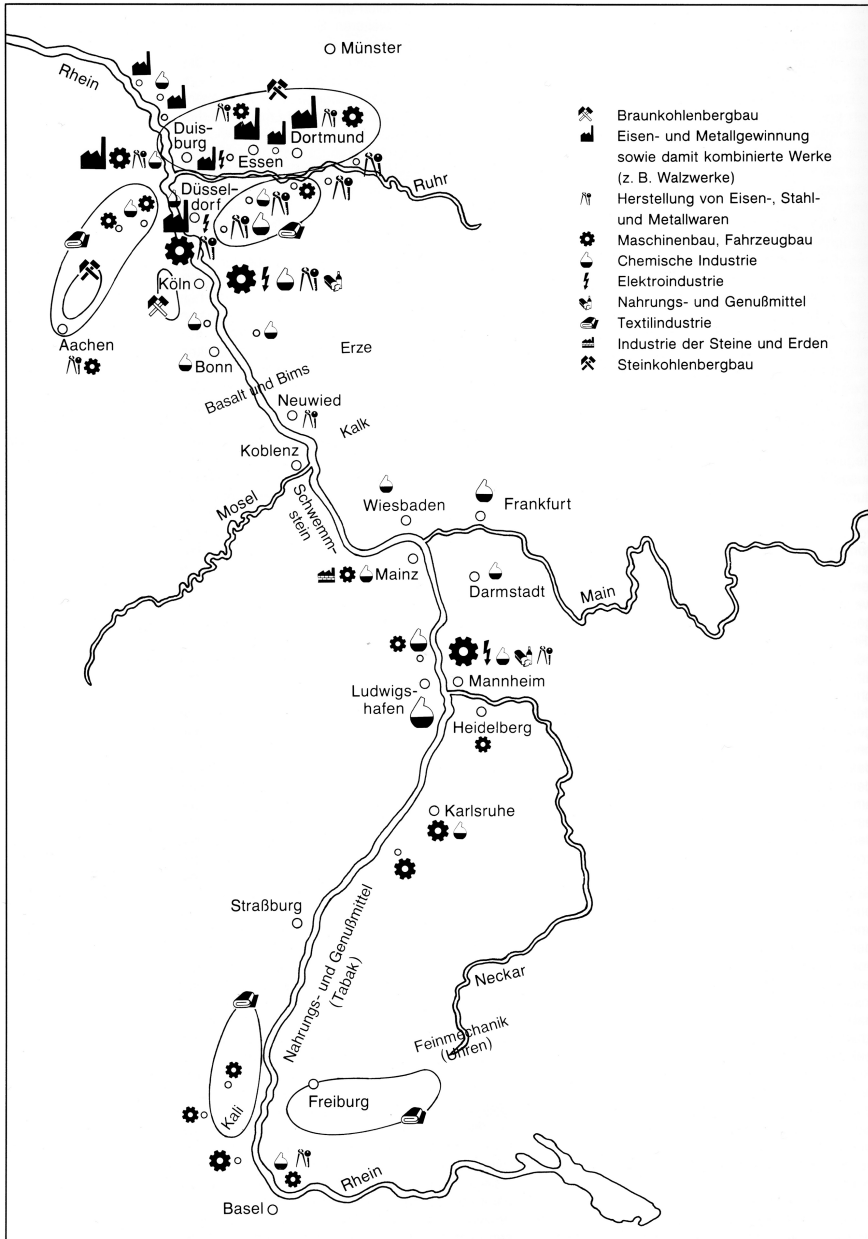


Figure 1: The Rhine industrial regions (late nineteenth century). Marianne Diedrich/Manfred Köhler, Map, in Bolt, *Der Rhein*, 54.

Contesting the Mannheim head of navigation status

Throughout the last third of the nineteenth century Strasbourg local authorities together with other southern German cities launched campaigns to change the situation. The protagonists of the campaigns intended to lift Mannheim's and the Baden government's political blockade against an expansion of large scale shipping to the south. The political dispute also developed to a confrontation between protagonists of two different technological concepts for a modernisation of the water ways. One faction in this conflict was calling for the construction of a lateral canal between Strasbourg and Mannheim (resp. its twin city Ludwigshafen), the other voted for a regulation of the existing riverbed. The conflict should only end after the turn of the nineteenth century when a consensus was made in favour of a low water regulation of the river bed. The main driving force in the debate was the interest of a large number of local authorities southwards from Mannheim and up to Strasbourg and Basel to overcome traditional natural boundaries for large-scale shipping, like large gravel banks and low water problems, with the help of large-scale water management. This discussion was triggered by a strong movement of urban actors who in fact fought for an egalitarian spatial policy, as will be shown in the following paragraphs.

Nearly immediately after Strasbourg's annexation to the Reich in 1871, the local Chamber of Commerce developed an intensive agitation for the construction of a canal on the left bank of the Rhine to Ludwigshafen. The chamber was a powerful corporation of the leading private entrepreneurs and an important representative of the local bourgeoisie which in their majority adhered to French cultural traditions. With the canal project the Chamber took up older concepts for canal constructions in France in general and around Strasbourg in particular.¹⁵ As early as the 7th of May 1871 its representatives handed over to the German chancellor Bismarck a petition for the construction of the canal to Ludwigshafen at the expense of the Reich. In July, the Chamber set up an action committee, which publicly called for the formation of an association. In 1872 first drafts of a plan for a canal Strasbourg-Ludwigshafen with a length of 117 km and 19 locks were presented. The basic idea of the plans was to connect the "sales areas of the Upper Rhine plain" to the Westphalian coal basin and the Dutch seaports by means of an efficient water-

¹⁵ Descombes, "L'aménagement," 355.

way. The proponents of the canal argued that the freight costs, especially for coal, would be considerably lower than those of railways.¹⁶

The canal committee in fact took up the ideas of an older Strasbourg “Comité pour la défense de la navigation,” which represented citizens groups which were rooted in French cultural traditions. This background sheds light on strong intercultural tensions in the city as an important factor behind the public disputes and struggles. In February 1872 the Comité was able to gain public attention and support with a major public event and the accession of 60 cities, including Cologne and Karlsruhe. However, right from the start of the initiative an increasing political gap emerged between the committee and its supporters on the one side and the regional governor (“Oberpräsident”) of the state, Eduard von Möller, on the other. This key actor in Alsatian politics and representative of the national government in Berlin did not want to commit himself to the project of a channel, so that the initiative of Strasbourg’s chamber of commerce in the short run came to a “complete standstill.”¹⁷

An intermunicipal network driven by “prospective investment”

But in the course of the 1880s despite the reluctance of the Alsatian regional authorities which were directed from the German central government in Berlin and lacked, compared to other German regional states, strong administrative competences, the campaign for the canal project attracted growing public interest. Its promoters were able to mobilise support from other cities along the upper Rhine and contacted Chancellor Bismarck. Furthermore the regional chief engineer of water management in Alsace, building director Willgerodt, became a strong advocat of the channel project which he promoted with his technical expertise and his excellent professional networks. Amongst the coalition in favour of the channel the middle Badian cities and especially the Badian capital Karlsruhe were strongly engaged. This city in 1883 had developed an initiative by itself for a “canal for shipping and irrigation” between Strasbourg und Germersheim on the right side of the river. Even the Badian parliament in 1898 discussed a project for a “canal for irrigation and commerce” between Basel and the Kaiserstuhl region.¹⁸

¹⁶ Ott, “Der neue Hafen,” 251.

¹⁷ *Bericht an den Gemeinderath*, 4.

¹⁸ Moser, “Der Rheinseitenkanal,” 99.

But before a regulation of the river bed could be realised which promised to equalize existing socio-spatial disparities a shift in the balances of power had to be achieved. In contrast to the findings of leading scholars like Hans-Ulrich Wehler, who found a dominant role of the state in similar struggles on water management, canal building and policies for interregional infrastructures and economic balance in Prussia,¹⁹ in the Upper Rhine case the Badian state stayed relatively inactive. As a consequence over a period of three decades the cities increasingly dominated the public debate. The city of Strasbourg, despite the failure of its campaigns in the 1870s, felt encouraged by the broad public support to take up once more its call for a connection to large scale shipping. The economic success of the newly built harbour “Vor dem Metzgerthore,” southeast of Strasbourg which was opened in the early 1890s, stimulated navigation so strongly that it proved to be too small as early as around 1900.²⁰

In the course of the 1890s the middle Badian cities entered into the debate more actively and finally were able to achieve a political breakthrough for the regulation project. Large investment in harbour facilities that many of the cities had undertaken since the 1880s played an important role for their engagement. Like Mannheim, which as early as around 1874 had massively expanded its harbours by the new facilities of the Friesenheim and Mühlau harbours which were waiting for amortisation of the invested capital, the city of Worms also had constructed new harbours.²¹ Many middle Badian municipalities, headed by Kehl and Karlsruhe, had made “prospective investments” in their naval infrastructures in the course of the 1890s, even before a decision on the modernisation of the river course had been made which in principal was the decisive precondition for an amortisation of these investments. Leading water engineers of the late nineteenth century, like Reinhard Baumeister and Max Honsell, took part in projects like the construction of the Karlsruhe harbours.

In this process the new harbour of the city of Kehl, located opposite to Strasbourg and constructed from 1896 to 1900, caused a shift in spatial economies and regional balances of power. It was projected and realised by the Badian railways which up to that time had been hostile to any expansion of large-scale shipping southwards from Mannheim. The large new Kehl harbour which by an investment of 10 millions Mark disposed of docks of 12 km length, 52 km of railway tracks and a water surface of more than 52 hectares was opened in May 1st of 1900.²² This project for the first time clearly indicated in terms of public infra-

19 Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, 677–678.

20 *Bericht an den Gemeinderath*, 3.

21 Schmitt, *Die Binnenwasserstraßen*, 150.

22 *100 Jahre Rheinhafen Kehl*.

structural policies, that even for the Baden state authorities a defense of the “Terminus”-position of Mannheim was not anymore realistic. The public railway company had realised the new situation and wanted to participate at the profit which large-scale shipping southwards of Mannheim was promising.

The success of one of the early projects of “prospective investment” in new harbour facilities in the city of Lauterburg since the 1880s stimulated the process even more. This kind of investment set in fact a kind of “re-inforcing stimulus,” as the cities were forced by their earlier investment to become politically active and call for a river regulation in order to safeguard their revenues. In contrast to similar strategies of infrastructural policies in other historical periods which failed and produced derelicted industrial wastelands, these policies proved to be successful as they could draw profit from the general boom of industrialisation and large-scale navigation at the end of the nineteenth century. Even Mannheim despite the clearly expected loss of its “gateway”-position didn’t stop the expansion of their harbour facilities and opened new ones around 1900.²³

Reclaiming the “general public interest” in spatial policies

The key arguments that the cities used in order to promote their interests referred to some of the most important key terms of political economy in the nineteenth century which are highly relevant for an analysis of polycentric governance in modern European history. It was first of all the call to consequently give priority to the principles of “general public interest” (*allgemeines Interesse*) and the “common good” (*Gemeinwohl*) in public infrastructural policies that the cities raised in order to promote their interests. In contrast the position of the Badian and Bavarian state authorities as well as the arguments of the Mannheim local administration and the Badian railways was qualified as representing selfish “individual interests” of minor relevance, as was argued by Karlsruhe mayor Schnetzler and his Strasbourg colleague Back in 1894 in a meeting of the middle Badian municipalities.²⁴ The mayors strongly demanded that the “higher viewpoint of the general interest had to be imposed” (Back). Instead of an “individual” the “patriotic” interest should guide the decision about the conflict, as the resolution of the cities claimed.²⁵ According to this

²³ Schneider, *Zusammenfassende Darstellung*, 66.

²⁴ *Verhandlungen*, 5, 9.

²⁵ *Verhandlungen*, 12.

resolution, the river would have to be “treated and governed as a whole (*als ganzes behandelt und verwaltet*),”²⁶ as mayor Back addressed the spatial and territorial dimension of the principles of *Gemeinwohl* resp. *allgemeines Interesse*. This implied also a plea to give more competences to the national state authorities and to limit those of special interests as proclaimed by the federal state of Baden.

As a result of long parliamentary debates in 1906 a sophisticated compromise on the financial contributions of different parties involved, from the local up to the national state, was made. The project was fixed in a contract and realised until 1913. To sum up this historical case of polycentric governance we can state, that here a horizontal cooperation of local authorities was able to impose its interests against the strong opposition of powerful actors like the Badian state authorities and the railway company. Building a coalition with experts from the water engineering administration, develop a technological project according to advanced professional standards, mobilise strong legal and political arguments like “general interest” and “public good” helped the cities to win this struggle. Based on their growing economic power in the context of rapid industrialisation and a general economic boom in the years around 1900 the cities could successfully claim that their interests were completely congruent with the overarching general respectively national interest.

The insights drawn from this case are challenging established positions in the scholarly debate on infrastructural and territorial policies in two ways: Horizontal cooperation of local authorities could be identified as a second pathway in the political management of interregional disparities, in addition to the well known case of national intervention for interregional equality, as studied by Wehler along Prussian policies for canal construction in the nineteenth century.²⁷ This latter political strategy until today plays an important role in public policies and is e.g. proclaimed by the German constitution or EU policies. At the same time the historical case reviewed here can be regarded as a counterexample to the common stereotype of “nimby” conflicts, in which local actors are blamed to defend from a narrow egoistic position their individual interests against more general political solutions.

26 *Verhandlungen*, 7.

27 Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, 677–678.

Regional development along the Upper Rhine after WWII

After WWII the regions along the Upper Rhine between Mannheim and Basel entered into another wave of urbanisation and industrialisation which was driven by the economic boom of the “Trentes Glorieuses” or “Wirtschaftswunder.” It was not by accident that as a result of this boom strong environmental problems emerged, in which once again questions of regional water management played a key role and the new policy field of regional planning was institutionally established.

Some numbers on the demographic growth in the Upper Rhine area illustrate the dynamic development that the region underwent between 1950 and 1970. In that period in the district (“Regierungsbezirk”) of Freiburg the urban population increased in the city of Kehl from 42,000 to more than 60,000, in Offenburg from 84,000 to 113,000, and in Lahr from 72,300 to 88,100 inhabitants. In the whole southern Baden region including rural areas also the population density increased, e.g. in the Freiburg district from 135/km² (1950) to 188/km² (1970) per average. Scholars have talked of the emergence of a “new spatial balance” (Albrecht)²⁸ between the urban and the rural areas and of the post-WWII as an era of the “urbanisation of the countryside” (Nolte).²⁹ In contrast at the Alsatian side of the river the population in rural areas declined while the region around Strasbourg drew profit from country-to-town-migration.

The different pathways of regional development on both sides of the river were partly caused by diverging patterns of public policies and regional planning. As a result in the Badian territories the economic transformation did not follow a simple stereotype logic from agriculture through industrialisation to tertiarisation. In contrast the proportion of industrial production remained relatively low while agriculture, food production and forestry as well as the service and education sectors were quite strong. On this basis the district of Freiburg underwent a dynamic economic development between 1970 and 1988, which only slightly lagged behind the gross value added of the capital district of Stuttgart.³⁰

This development was, as a view across the Rhine shows, also a result of public funding schemes and spatial development policies, which set different priorities on both sides of the river. In the German part of the Upper Rhine region agriculture, tourism, human capital and infrastructure were strongly promoted, while in Alsace, partly as a result of French national industrial policies, a kind of

²⁸ Albrecht, *Der Einfluss*, 59, 67.

²⁹ Nolte, “Jenseits der Urbanisierung,” 476.

³⁰ Schuhbauer, *Wirtschaftsbezogene regionale Identität*, 93.

“catch-up” industrialisation took place, particularly in the Rhine bank zone.³¹ This was also a long-term effect of the lateral “Canal d’Alsace” built since 1928 in the southern part of the Upper Rhine in which from Kembs to Breisach “one industrial zone (. . .) after the other” emerged.³² Industrial and port zones were mainly developed in Ottmarsheim, Neu-Breisach, Huningen and Marckolsheim, and especially in the area around Mulhouse. Amongst the environmental consequences of this policy were increased water pollution, e.g. from fertilizer factories, and growing air pollution, e.g. from waste incineration plants.³³

Variations in spatio-economic planning and the rise of environmental problems

As mentioned above the emergence of large-scale industrial zones on the French bank of the Rhine was induced by public planning schemes. According to the Alsatian “orientation scheme” (regional plan), their total area was to amount to 3,200 ha (of which 1,100 ha were occupied in 1976) at twelve locations. From 45,000 jobs that were planned to be created in Alsace 9,000 should be located in the riparian zones along the Rhine. Such industrial zones initially also had been planned in the German Southern Upper Rhine planning region in the 1970s. However, due to the ecological importance of the Rhine floodplains, the need for compensatory measures for the ecological damage caused by large scale water management and finally the stagnation in the industrial sector since the late 1970s, these industrial zones were abandoned in favour of industrial settlements in urban areas in the Eastern hinterland of the river.³⁴ As a result in the Baden regions there was a long-term transition from an agrarian to a service society with comparatively weak industrialisation in the east of the Rhine, while in the Western French side a “catching up” industrialisation stayed dominant.

This development was accompanied by a strong process of urbanisation, which in that period progressed from north to south. Large scale destruction of houses in WWII together with high numbers of refugees from East Germany were strong drivers of a boom in housing construction by which the number of apartments built between 1945 and the end of the 1960s almost reached the number of existing apartments from the period before 1945. As a result of the settlement

31 Becker-Marx and Jentsch, *Es ist Zeit für den Oberrhein*.

32 Tümmers, *Der Rhein*, 111.

33 Tümmers, *Der Rhein*, 160–164.

34 Homburger, “Landschaftsentwicklung,” 315.

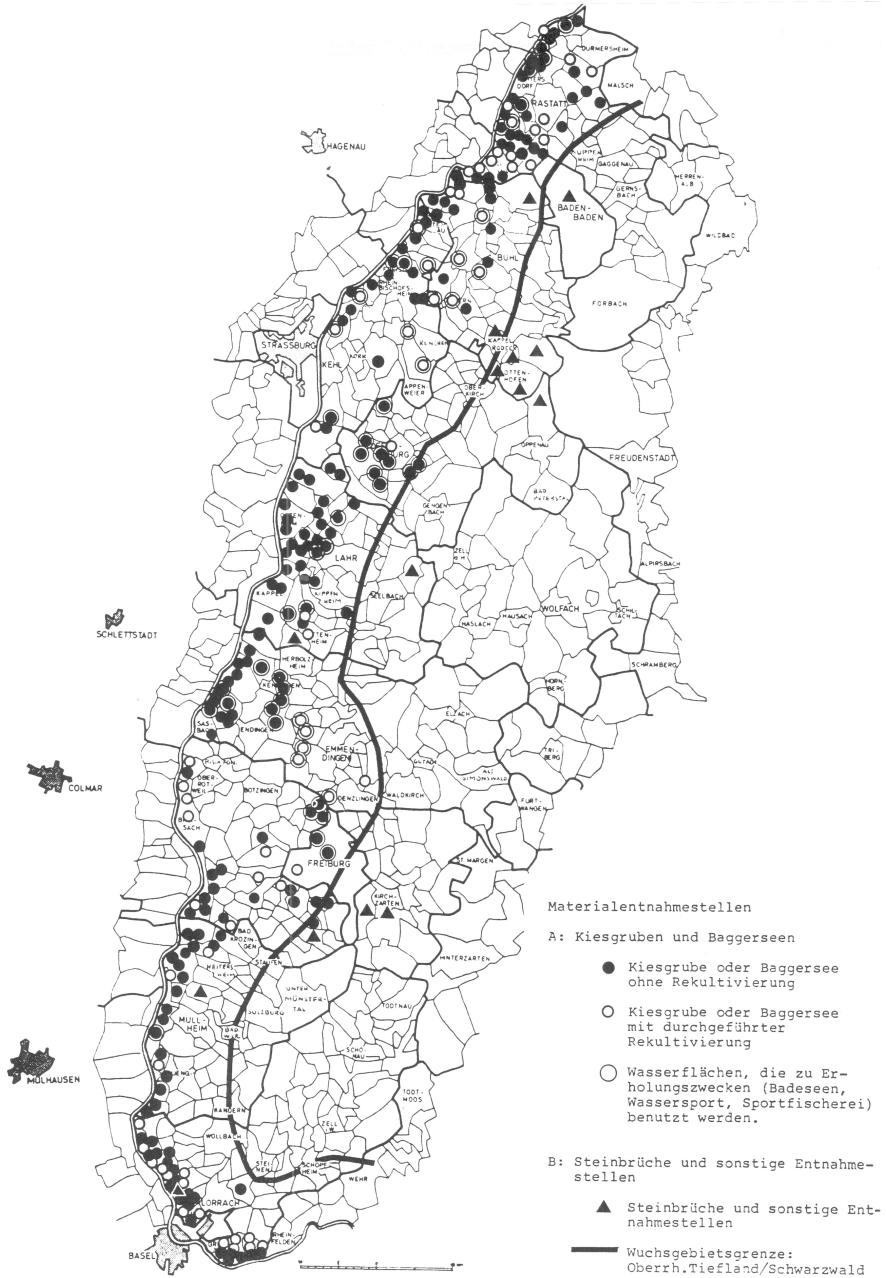


Figure 2: Gravel pits along the Upper Rhine (1968). Deutscher Rat für Landespflege, *Landespflege am Oberrhein*, 15.

pressure the amount of land used for housing and transport purposes in the Southern Upper Rhine region strongly increased.³⁵ These trends implied a considerable consumption of natural resources and represented in a way the spatial dimension of what Christian Pfister has called the “1950s Syndrome” of extreme consumption of natural goods.³⁶

Parallel to the rapidly growing exploitation of natural resources, like gravel and sand, growing environmental concerns were emerging. Besides other problems the large-scale gravel extraction threatened drinking water supplies as it revealed groundwater deposits and exposed them to the input of pollutants. Gravel extraction had already come under discussion in the pre-1914 high urbanisation period (Figure 2). After 1945, it increased strongly on both sides of the Upper Rhine. On the French side this was especially the case between Seltz and Lauterbourg, while the German Middle Upper Rhine region around Karlsruhe alone, as an ‘export region’ was estimated to cover about 10% of the whole German demand for gravel and sand.³⁷ The quality of drinking water was also increasingly endangered by problems of wastewater treatment and groundwater pollution from agriculture.

The emergence of formal regional planning

Since the 1950s several planning institutions on the German Side were working on these and other problems of regional development in the Upper Rhine region. Amongst them were the State Planning Office at the Baden-Württemberg Ministry of the Interior, a working committee in the Regional Council of South Baden and various regional planning associations.³⁸ The latter were constituted as municipal associations following the model of the association “Siedlungsverband Ruhrkohlebezirk” which had been established in 1920. They already became involved in the discussions on the state development plan of 1956 and represented in fact the “bottom up”-faction in the debate on regional planning which increasingly got into confrontation with the “top-down” policies of the state of Baden-Württemberg.³⁹

35 Homburger, “Landschaftsentwicklung,” 315; Regionalverband Südlicher Oberrhein, *Raumordnungsbericht*, 25.

36 Pfister, *Das 1950er Syndrom*.

37 Internationale Kommission für die Hydrologie des Rheingebietes, *Der Rhein*, 92; Tümmers, *Der Rhein*, 169.

38 STA Freiburg, F 30/2, Nr. 258.

39 STA Freiburg, F 30/2, Nr. 685.

Such regional associations were voluntary unions which principally every city or town could join. They primarily served the promotion and coordination of common interests but in most cases lacked formal legal competences, in contrast to formal planning associations discussed below. The Breisgau Planning Association, which belonged to the first type, criticised the “Preliminary Regional Planning Project for Breisgau” drawn up by the state administration and submitted its own concept as a “counter-proposal” to the Freiburg Regional Council, which acted as the body responsible for implementing state planning on the regional scale. The Freiburg Regional Council also tried to mediate between the state government and regional institutions.⁴⁰ Amongst other demands, the “counter-proposal” formulated a program for the expansion of the transport network, criticised the layout of the regions referred to as *Raumschaften* and in particular the predominance of the *Raumschaft Freiburg*, and called for the development of “spa and recreational landscapes.”⁴¹ The latter demand referred to the long-term history and the important contribution of the regions to the transition to “tertiarisation.” In the 1960s, this trend was also expressed in the state’s support to programmes such as the “Kur- und Bäderprogramm 1967” and concepts for designating the area between the Rhine side canal and the Kulturwehr Breisach as a motorboat and leisure zone.⁴²

Mediating top-down and bottom-up policies by regional planning

Around 1970, the dispute over regional planning in the southern Upper Rhine escalated. The region was regarded as a “problem area” of Baden-Württemberg with special needs for regional planning resulting from the consequences of the side canal and large-scale gravel extraction. For this reason, the first public “Area Development Plan” was drawn up for this region and presented in draft form in 1966. The Planning Association Middle Breisgau (*Mittlerer Breisgau*) immediately proposed a separate regional plan. Parallel to the state’s regional development plan, the State Forestry Administration drew up a landscape framework plan on behalf of the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Viticulture and Forestry, “in order to be able to check the regional planning decisions against the conditions and requirements of the landscape and the balance of nature.”⁴³ This intervention of a

⁴⁰ STA Freiburg, F 30/2, Nr. 366.

⁴¹ Planungsgemeinschaft Breisgau, Schreiben vom 15.6.1960, in STA Freiburg, F 30/2, Nr. 366.

⁴² STA Freiburg, F 30/2, Nr. 366.

⁴³ Deutscher Rat für Landespflege, *Landespflege am Oberrhein*, 6.

special ministerial authority indicates a key problem of polycentric governance at the time: In addition to the vertical and horizontal dimension of governance strong tensions between sectoral interests and the strategies for a comprehensive planning beyond such sectoral interests fundamentally shaped the logics and patterns of political action. Subsequently, the debates on the implementation of environmental policy objectives by means of spatial planning became part of the overarching context of major controversies on a fundamental administrative reform. As a result of these debates in the early 1970s new regional planning associations (*Regionalverbände*) and regional plans were introduced, which still today are the main instruments of regional planning in Germany. In these planning associations which were legally designated to formally take part in public procedures of spatial planning the municipalities of several counties were gathered. Their status in fact represented a compromise between bottom-up and top-down-concepts of the highly controversial regional reform, as the *Regionalverbände* lay between the primacy of state policy on the one hand and more far-reaching municipalisation efforts on the other.⁴⁴ As a mediating body for the institutional balancing of diverging interests, regional planning was defined as a part of state planning and fixed as “spatial planning in planning regions (. . .).” At the same time, however, regional planning was controlled “bottom up” through the decision-making body of the regional assembly, which was dominated by local representatives and municipal interests (while private actors were not represented).⁴⁵ The newly established regional associations (*Regionalverbände*) were equipped with small planning departments which had to draw up regional plans according to a 1975 guideline of the Ministry of the Interior. These regional plans had to “concretise the principles and objectives of regional planning laid down in the development plans of the state” and “link them to the regional development concepts.”⁴⁶

A transboundary comparative view shows that Germany by introducing the *Regionalverbände* followed and re-inforced the overall German institutional concept of federalism, and municipal planning competences. In contrast, French reforms of the 1960s and 1970s on similar challenges only gradually modified the dominance of the central state by introducing in 1972 the new institutional scale of “regions” and in the field of water politics in 1964 a state-controlled river basin management.⁴⁷ Some special legal rights of Alsatian cities, which were influenced by older German legal rules and differing from the general French rules, focussed

44 Hahn and Brandel, “Die kommunale Verwaltungsreform,” 6–10.

45 Greiving, “Das Verhältnis,” 75.

46 Regionalverband Südlicher Oberrhein, *Raumordnungsbericht*, 2.

47 Grillmayer, “Territorialreform in Frankreich”; Dobrenko, *La loi sur l'eau*.

mainly on fields like local financial autonomy or labour rights while spatial planning was not addressed.⁴⁸

Water problems as a touchstone of regional planning

In the first regional plan for the Southern Upper Rhine region of 1976, this difficult mediating position between the state government, municipalities and various private interests was reflected in a characteristic way against the background of the border situation. It was no coincidence that the water issue proved to be the main problem and seismograph of regional conflicts. As a first step, the regional plan carried out a comprehensive inventory of the landscape, which differed from that of the Federal Institute for Regional Studies and Spatial Research. In terms of general regional development, the plan also took recent trends, such as the slowdown in industrial activities, into account. The “site preservation plan” therefore did not envisage any increase in the region’s relatively low level of industrialisation and preferred to create new industrial zones on the edge of the existing industrial centres in the “foothill zone.”⁴⁹

On the other hand, the plan had to meet the requirements of the state’s “technical development plan for power plant sites” and identify three Rhine floodplain areas as sites for nuclear power plants. This contradicted the basic intention of the planners to develop the Rhine floodplains as an ecological compensation area and as a part of the regional green corridors in which settlement should not take place. The plans were quite detailed so that they represented a “direct guideline for the urban land-use planning of the municipalities” and formally implemented supra-municipal spatial and environmental policy objectives on the municipal planning level.⁵⁰ This planning implementation from the state and regional to the municipal level met with resistance from the municipalities in many cases. The latter were therefore blamed in the literature as “brakemen” against environmental planning, e.g. in the field of flood protection.

The special significance of the “water question” and the mediating role of regional planning in the fierce controversy over regional water planning for the southern Upper Rhine were particularly striking. In contrast to transport, settle-

⁴⁸ Woehrling, “Das elsass-lothringische Lokalrecht.”

⁴⁹ Homburger, “Landschaftsentwicklung,” 315.

⁵⁰ Homburger, “Landschaftsentwicklung,” 315.

ment and economic planning, the water question was the source of massive conflicts. The key point of the dispute was the attempt of the Water Management Department in the Regional Council of South Baden to intensify regional water protection policy in the preparation of the first “Regional Plan” for the Southern Upper Rhine region, in which the Council imposed strict restrictions on new permits for “excessive gravel and sand mining in certain areas.”⁵¹

The regional planning unit took a mediating stance in the conflict between such environmental policies and commercial interests of municipalities and private entrepreneurs. The first “Regional Planning Report” of 1976 in agreement with the Regional Council regarded the destruction of large areas of the Rhine floodplain by gravel extraction (e.g. near Breisach-Burkheim, south of Whyll, north of Kehl etc.) very critically and called for a stop to the designation of new gravel extraction areas. However, the plan was more cautious with regard to the prohibition of an expansion of gravel areas than the Regional Council and expressed doubts if a prohibition “in this generally strict form is necessary for adequate groundwater protection.”⁵² With this argument, the planners took a position that lay between the policy of the regional council and its own direct supervisory body, the regional assembly. The Regional Assembly, as the supreme body of the Southern Upper Rhine Regional Association, represented the municipal and private interests in further intensive gravel extraction and resolutely resisted the restrictive policy of the Regional Council. As a result, the first formal regional plan had to enter into force in 1980 without the conflict chapter on water protection areas and stayed incomplete for some time. Their scope and legal status could only be formally regulated three years later.⁵³

Besides divergences between municipal representatives and their planning unit, the overall development indicates a paradigm shift in regional planning in this period. The various forms of land use were being taken into account more carefully in planning, and environmental issues were being upgraded in comparison to their previous subsumption under interests for economic development. From a cross-border perspective, the picture was contradictory. While there was a clear convergence of concepts on both sides of the Rhine with regard to the restrictive designation of gravel extraction areas and for regional green corridors in Alsace as in Baden, the industrial development policy in Alsace maintained the designation of large sites of 300–400 ha each. A strong point of conflict was the emission of the French chemical industries, of which the German municipalities

51 Homburger, “Landschaftsentwicklung,” 316.

52 Regionalverband Südlicher Oberrhein, *Raumordnungsbericht*, 30, 34–35, 49.

53 Wiederhold, “Vorsorge ‘Wasser’ in der Regionalplanung.”

feared negative effects on the Baden spa towns of Badenweiler, Bad Krozingen and Bad Bellingen.

In contrast to the cooperation in international bodies such as the IPCR (International Commission for the protection of the Rhine), by which riparian states promoted measures against water pollution, or the German-French commission for the Canal d'Alsace, which was already quite advanced at that time, cross-border cooperation at regional level did not yet find its way to concrete joint projects. Several bodies such as the Conference of Upper Rhine Regional Planners and the tri-national government commission (Germany, France and Switzerland) had worked for such a cooperation since the 1950s but hadn't succeeded yet. On the local and regional scale different concepts of planning and competences of local and regional institutions constituted serious obstacles, which could only be overcome by joint projects towards the end of the twentieth century. The regional scale proved to be a laboratory for area-related environmental policy, but at the same time lagged behind in the implementation of substantial cross-border cooperation.

Conclusion

This article intended to show that a comprehensive study of formal institutional as well as informal political dimensions in historical struggles is necessary to fully understand the dynamics and patterns of polycentric governance and the ways in which they were historically discussed. The first case has shown the key roles of private actors, like trade chambers, and of economic interests, like profits drawn from large-scale navigation and of cooperation between cities as powerful triggers for new forms of polycentric governance. In the campaigns to raze the monopolistic Mannheim terminus position in large-scale navigation around 1900 arguments of "the general interest" were successfully mobilised by municipal authorities. "Scalar strategies" connected such hegemonic ideological concepts for spatio-economic equality with horizontal as well as vertical coalitions, in which the Regional federal State of Baden was put under pressure by local political actors, economic players as the railways companies and supra-regional actors on the national scale. The main insight from this first case for the concept of polycentric governance is the power that voluntary inter-municipal cooperation could develop against the formal hierarchic political system.

In the second case another economic boom and different strategies of regional planning in the same region after WWII triggered different pathways of economic development on both sides of the Upper Rhine. Problems to synchronise state policies for regional development with local interests and the rise of strong environ-

mental concerns were identified as driving forces for the emergence of regional planning as a new policy field. Negotiating top-down state wide planning and bottom-up campaigns for regional development became a major challenge for this intermediary actor in the field of regional economic and environmental planning. The article argues that transnational cooperation was apparently easier to realise on the bilateral or multi-lateral scale of interstate agreements which were developed for the Rhine since the early nineteenth century and made the region a pioneer of European integration than on the regional and inter-municipal scale where it only emerged around the turn to the twenty-first century. The main insight from this second case is that in the late twentieth century polycentric governance became even more complex and multipolar as European and regional institutions which were driven by environmental concerns emerged as new scales of political action.

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Andrew McTominey

“As Easy as Turning on the Tap”: Experiences of Water Usage in the City, 1918–1939

The supply of water to towns and cities has always been vitally important to the economic and social wellbeing of residents and industries. Disruption to water supply through a lack of rain had the potential to negatively impact the lives of urban residents and industrial production, as well as heighten the danger posed by fire. Drought also gave water authorities in Britain, overwhelmingly owned by municipal governments during the early-twentieth century, an opportunity to stress the merits of water economy, calling on urban residents to use less and limit wastage. Water became a tool of urban governance as pressure from municipal authorities during drought had the potential to change the behaviour of urban residents. The agents of urban governance, in this case unelected official expertise and local newspapers, played an important role in disseminating a municipal discourse that allowed councils to rule from afar. However, as has been shown of drought in the late-nineteenth century, the acceptance of water as an essential commodity, and subsequent consumer action, highlights how central water usage had become to everyday life, which led to small-scale acts of resistance.¹

As a commodity supplied and maintained by municipal authorities, water offers a good example for examining polycentric urban governance. This is especially true during periods of drought, as tensions between usage and economy, and the governing agencies that propagated these narratives, are more visible than in times of normal supply. This chapter will examine the role of water and drought in the polycentric urban governance of Leeds, West Yorkshire, during the inter-war period, focusing on three particular periods of drought: 1921, 1929, and 1933–1934. Heatwaves and low levels of rainfall affected the city throughout the inter-war period, however the need to save water in certain years, and the effectiveness of campaigns to save water can be questioned. Rule from afar may well have been the intention of the Leeds Corporation, with local newspapers and the unelected Waterworks Department manager Harry Shortreed playing key roles in disseminating municipal narratives around water economy and urban citizenship. This paper, though, will argue that, while in some ways successful, the practice of everyday acts of resistance such as watering lawns and washing

1 Taylor and Trentmann, “Liquid Politics”; Taylor et al., “Drought is Normal.”

cars, as well as infrastructural changes to the city, meant that the success of these tactics of governmentality can be questioned.

Historians and social scientists interested in the exercise of authority in the city have been influenced by Michel Foucault's work on the diffusion of power throughout the urban arena.² Placing emphasis on urban governance, rather than government, can help to disrupt the distinction between local government and other institutions to show how power was exercised throughout the city. As this paper will demonstrate, infrastructure, expertise, and local newspapers all played a role in attempting to enact governance through the supply of water. Indeed, Simon Gunn and Tom Hulme have termed newspapers as "coadjutants of rule" that reconstructed towns and cities to their readership and, in some cases, shamed their readers into certain types of behaviour.³

Some historians of governance have been further influenced by Foucauldian ideas around governmentality, within which water supply is firmly embedded.⁴ However, historians such as Vanessa Taylor and Frank Trentmann have situated water supply within a narrative of consumerism, pointing to responses to the droughts of the late-nineteenth century – the first droughts after full pressure constant supply had been implemented in London – to show how entrenched the use of water had become within the politics of everyday life. Water was not a way of imposing self-governance, but had become a part of life, and a sudden lack of water resulted in disruption to everyday life and saw consumer action against water authorities.⁵

Like many towns and cities in the UK, water supply in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries was controlled by municipal government, guided by ideas around municipal socialism. In this UK, this was less of a strict ideological doctrine and more a general principle to acquire utilities and services for the public good. There are questions over how socialist municipal socialism was, particularly in the UK when many public utilities like water were purchased when socialism as a political force was nascent.⁶ Indeed, Leeds was not a particularly radical city, however the provision of water, gas, and trams amongst other services by the municipality was well established by the inter-war period. Infrastructural improvements, such as the construction of new reservoirs or water closet

² Gunn, "Elites, Power, and Governance," 196, 202.

³ Gunn and Hulme, "Introduction," 10.

⁴ Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom*, 66; Otter, "Locating Matter," 54.

⁵ Taylor and Trentmann, "Liquid Politics."

⁶ This is markedly different to other countries such as the USA or Germany, where Socialist politicians were elected to office in the early twentieth century with a mandate for urban reforms. See Booth, "Municipal Socialism"; Schmidt, "Public Services."

conversions, while costly, were conceptualised within a narrative of urban improvement. As shown below, these infrastructural improvements continued to be delivered despite the disruptions caused by drought during the inter-war years.

Leeds and water famine

The population of the wider Leeds area, which included small townships such as Armley, Hunslet, and Holbeck, was approximately 458,232 in 1921. By 1931, this has increased to roughly 482,809.⁷ This large population, as well as the city's industrial economy, meant that there was a large demand for water. As such, the city's water consumption increased during the inter-war period, growing at a rate of 1% per annum between 1913 and 1962. When compared with other large cities, seen in Table 1, it is clear that demand was greatest in Leeds and, therefore, there was more strain on the city's water supply network than elsewhere. Although water demand increased during the period, the city completed construction of Leighton Reservoir in 1926, bringing an extra 1,050 million gallons to the city's water network. However, the reservoir was not officially opened until 1932. This meant that, although water was available from Leighton during the 1929 drought, the reservoir was not fully brought into service until the 1930s.

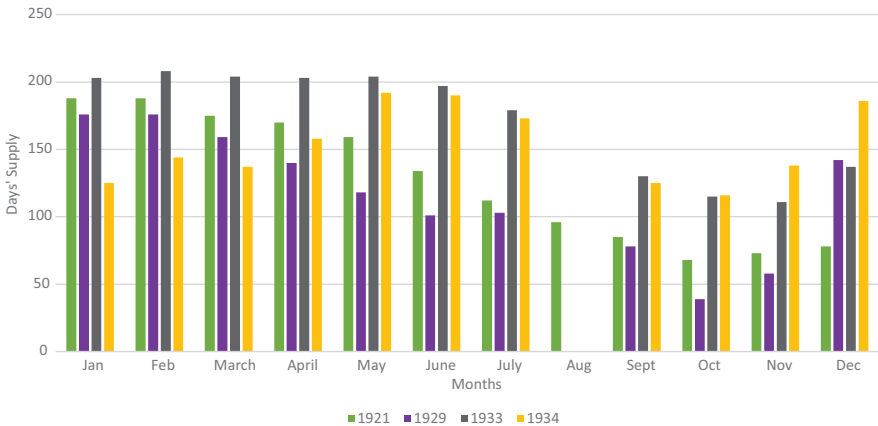
Table 1: Yearly increase in water consumption in UK cities, 1913–1962. From Hassan, *History of Water*, 53. Figures for Manchester, London and Birmingham end in 1938.

UK cities	Yearly water consumption rate
Leeds	1%
Birmingham	0.7%
Manchester	0.6%
Liverpool	0.4%
London	0.3%
Newcastle	0.2%

The increased use of water, though, became particularly apparent during periods of drought. While Leeds was not the only city in the UK to be affected by drought, Graph 1 shows the numbers of days' supply available to Leeds across the year

⁷ 1921 Census of England and Wales; 1931 Census of England and Wales.

during 1921, 1929, and 1933–1934.⁸ In all four years water levels decreased steadily from the start of the year until October before recovery. Indeed, there were periods that drought was particularly acute – the 1929 drought was the most clearly severe drought during the period, with supply falling to 39 days in October. While the drought of 1921 did not reach that level of severity, water levels fell to 68 days’ supply in October of that year. 1933–1934 presents a slight counterpoint to the other years highlighted. This was a period that, for all intents and purposes, was deemed as a drought period. However, the statistics show that water levels did not drop below 100 days, and that although water levels continued to be relatively low from 1933 into 1934, recovery occurred much earlier in the year than the other examples, before falling again in the autumn and then recovering. The addition of Leighton reservoir was undoubtedly a factor in this, and newspapers praised the foresight of former councillors for providing Leeds with a supply that could comfortably withstand the drought of those years. However, it is of interest here because the same rhetoric was employed in 1933 as in 1929, which helps to illuminate the ways in which the Corporation attempted, and in some ways failed, to govern from afar.



Graph 1: Graph showing number of days’ supply in Leeds water network during drought years. Leeds Corporation, “Waterworks Committee Minutes, vol. 10–11.”.

One of the main components of urban governance was the influence of unelected officials who held expertise beyond municipal councillors. While town clerks were

⁸ The Waterworks Committee figures only list the number of days’ supply available for the month of August for 1921, so for the years 1929 and 1933–34 the figure is unknown.

key figures in guiding councils through the potentially murky legal waters of urban government, municipal engineers came to play an increasingly important role through the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁹ In the case of the Leeds Corporation, the Waterworks Department manager Harry Shortreed played a large role in encouraging water economy. Shortreed was appointed Waterworks manager in 1927 having spent twenty-two years in the department, serving as chief clerk from 1905 as well as secretary to the Northern sub-regional section of the Advisory Water Committee.¹⁰ As manager of the Waterworks Department, he gave talks to a number of institutions in the city and was often quoted by newspapers during times of water famine stressing the need to economise usage, often drawing upon the theme of citizenship. Indeed, as the drought of 1934 took hold, Shortreed urged people to address the “tremendous wastage of water,” arguing that “what was really needed in water supply was people on their honour.”¹¹ Given his position, Shortreed was a key figure in propagating narratives around water usage, many of which were disseminated by local newspapers.

Newspapers were consciously utilised by the Corporation in order to disperse the expert narratives of drought from people like Shortreed, both through reports and adverts. Newspapers would, at times, highlight the behaviour of urban residents during drought, a trait that was more common during the drought of 1921 than the other periods of water famine. In the context of urban governance, it is important to read these reports, and those that follow, as acts of resistance by residents. An article in the *Yorkshire Post* commented that a family in the suburbs had used the garden hose to keep their children cool, a practice that would, no doubt, be discontinued after the Waterworks Committee’s call for economy.¹² By suggesting that the wastage of water would stop following the Committee’s warning to residents, the newspaper was attempting to instil this very behaviour in urban citizens so that others would follow the example of this anonymous family. Indeed, the article juxtaposed this middle-class behaviour with a specific call from the Waterworks Committee to prevent water wastage, especially when using hose pipes to wash cars and sprinklers to water garden lawns – a warning to those who would resist this governance.

Adverts from the Corporation also warned citizens of excessive water usage. One such advert placed in the *Leeds Mercury* underlined the importance of taking care when using water due to the importance of water economy to the commu-

9 Rodger and Moore, “Who Really Ran the Cities,” 39.

10 “He Planted Washburn Valley Scheme.” *Yorkshire Evening Post*, May 20, 1949, 7.

11 “Weather Luck of Leeds: Saved from Water Restrictions.” *Leeds Mercury*, March 24, 1934, 9.

12 “Welcome Breeze in Leeds.” *Yorkshire Post*, July 12, 1921, 8.

nity.¹³ This situated the responsibility of each person within a wider framework of urban citizenship that stressed civic duty. The intervention of local government and voluntary societies was a key aspect of citizenship during the inter-war period, which, in this case, took the forms of direct and indirect calls for good citizenship and water economy.¹⁴ A further advert from September 1929, though, was much more forthright. In this instance, there is little appeal to the ideals of urban citizenship, but the outright threat of legal action if caught wasting, misusing, or simply drawing too much water.¹⁵ The practicalities of enforcing this threat would have been difficult, however it shows the different narratives employed by the Corporation in order to modify water usage and enact governance, particularly as water levels continued to fall.

Another way that newspapers emphasised the effects of drought was the cartoon. Sometimes maligned, the study of cartoons can provide a view into popular culture. Indeed, the quick production of cartoons for daily newspapers meant that they reflected and were produced by the flow of events, such as drought, as can be seen.¹⁶ A cartoon from the *Leeds Mercury* in 1933 depicts ‘Bill Drought’ scoring his umpteenth goal at the expense of rain. In the background, Old Man Weather, a popular depiction for the weather symbolised by the weather-vane on his head, is lazily blowing his whistle with his eyes closed while acting as the referee, representing the lack of rain during the summer as the muscular ‘Bill Drought’ shoots straight at the weak and unprepared goalkeeper and, nonetheless, scoring. Although the crowd at the match between ‘Sunshine Hotspur’ and ‘Pluvius Thunderers’ is quite diverse, a group of less enthused spectators stand in the background, the pitchfork perhaps signifying farmers who were suffering during the drought. While rain was scarce, the water supply for the city in September 1933 was relatively secure at 130 days. This suggests, then, that although the weather may have been hot, there was less need to worry regarding supply. Nevertheless, this narrative of water economy was pursued with the aid of visual material, which sought to hammer home the need for stringent water usage.

In an attempt to reinforce water economy, specific examples of water wastage were often commented on in newspapers by regular columnists and letters to the editor in an attempt to anonymously alter behaviour.¹⁷ In doing so, they provide important glimpses into local resistance to urban governance. A correspondent of the *Yorkshire Evening Post* called J.B. argued in 1919 that water wastage

13 “Public Notices.” *Leeds Mercury*, July 25, 1929, 2.

14 Hulme, *After the Shock City*, 8–9.

15 “Public Notices.” *Leeds Mercury*, September 12, 1929, 2.

16 Agar, “Technology and British Cartoonists,” 181.

17 Croll, *Civilising the Urban*.

was “a sin against the community.” He pointed to the “senseless amount” wasted on gardens, lawns and swilling flagstones, as well as the practice of washing out standing water from pipes.¹⁸ The *Leeds Mercury* columnist ‘The Onlooker’ argued in 1929 that “instead of saving water during the shortage, the citizens of Leeds have been consuming more than ever,” trying to illicit a sense of guilt while also linking water usage to citizenship.¹⁹ The regular *Yorkshire Evening Post* columnist ‘Yorkshireman’ wrote during the 1933–34 drought of coming across an instance in the suburbs of a man watering his garden at night, using his car headlamps to illuminate the area.²⁰ Another such incident in 1934 was reported by the *Yorkshire Post* columnist ‘Northerner’, who described how a group of young men heckled a man watering his garden in the middle class suburb of Headingley – the man carried on regardless.²¹

Several letters sent to the editors of the Leeds newspapers also reported misbehaviour around water usage. A correspondent called ‘Disgusted’ in 1929 wrote disapprovingly of those who wasted free water in cafe restrooms, calling for those who wilfully wasted water to be penalised.²² Another named ‘Prudent’ implicitly criticised water wastage in 1934 by providing a series of suggestions of how to save water. In an example of how drought could disrupt middle class leisure activities, Prudent wrote that “Hot baths after every game of golf, tennis, etc are unnecessary” and that “No one should fill the washing bowl full – either at home or in hotels or clubs – merely to wash their hands.”²³ These examples illustrate the ways in which newspaper correspondents and members of the public attempted to alter people’s behaviour by highlighting instances of misuse and selfishness. They also tacitly highlight that not everyone followed the guidance of the Corporation, there was some resistance to narratives of water economy. It is in these anonymous accounts that we can question how effective the Corporation was at governing from afar.

18 J.B. “An Appalling Waste of Water: Hints on the Conservation of our Precious Supplies.” *Yorkshire Evening Post*, May 24, 1919, 7.

19 The Onlooker. “North Country Gossip.” *Leeds Mercury*, June 29, 1929, 9.

20 Yorkshireman. “Diary of a Yorkshireman.” *Yorkshire Evening Post*, September 16, 1933, 8.

21 Northerner. “This World of Ours.” *Yorkshire Post*, July 23, 1934, 6.

22 Disgusted. “Water Wasters.” *Leeds Mercury*, July 20, 1929, 9.

23 Prudent. “Water Shortage: Suggestions for its Avoidance.” *Yorkshire Post*, June 2, 1934, 10.

Infrastructure

A key part of both municipal socialism and governmentality was the construction of infrastructure. For the former, infrastructure was the means of providing a number of public services, from bringing clean water into the home to waste disposal. For the latter, it was a means of manipulating everyday behaviour – by piping clean water into homes, residents would be encouraged to wash more frequently.²⁴ It is also a part of the urban fabric that residents become more aware of during drought.²⁵ In the early twentieth century, one of the key aspects of water infrastructure were water closets. Water-closets, differentiated from midden privy closets by their ability to flush waste away into connected sewers, first came into popular usage in British cities during the mid-nineteenth century, however their distribution remained uneven well into the twentieth century.²⁶ Although most English towns with a population of over 50,000 had water-closets by 1911, the dispersal was sporadic due to cost and insufficient water systems, as it was in other parts of Europe.²⁷ Indeed, Leeds was not the only city to undertake the conversion of trough-closets to water-closets during the inter-war period.²⁸ The implementation of water closets resulted in an increase in water consumption in comparison to dry toilets such as midden privies which collected excrement in a pail to be disposed of by the municipal authority.²⁹ As Frank Trentmann has noted, “with every flush, two to three gallons went down the pan.”³⁰ The programme of technological improvement undertaken by the Leeds Corporation during the 1920s, then, had an impact on water demand.

The inter-war period saw the completion of this project in Leeds, with a vast number of changes made across the city. 2,700 conversions were made according to the Leeds Corporation’s Health Committee during the 1920s, the vast majority taking place in 1927, costing a combined £68,000. As can be seen in Figure 1, these improvements targeted specific working-class areas of the city.³¹ The vast majority of improvements took place in industrial areas of the city, namely the South Leeds districts of Holbeck, Hunslet, and Beeston; Armley in West Leeds; and Burmantofts and Richmond Hill in East Leeds. While not to the same degree, work-

24 Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom*, 66.

25 Huler, *On the Grid*.

26 Taylor and Trentmann, “Liquid Politics,” 238.

27 Trentmann, *Empire of Things*, 179; Hassan, *History of Water*, 26.

28 For an example of this see Kerr, *Annual Report*, 42.

29 Crook, *Norms, Forms and Bodies*, 167–168.

30 Trentmann, *Empire of Things*, 178.

31 Information for this map has been collected from Leeds Corporation, “Health Committee Minutes, January 1927 to December 1930.” The base map has been reproduced with the permission of Edina Digimap Historic Collection.

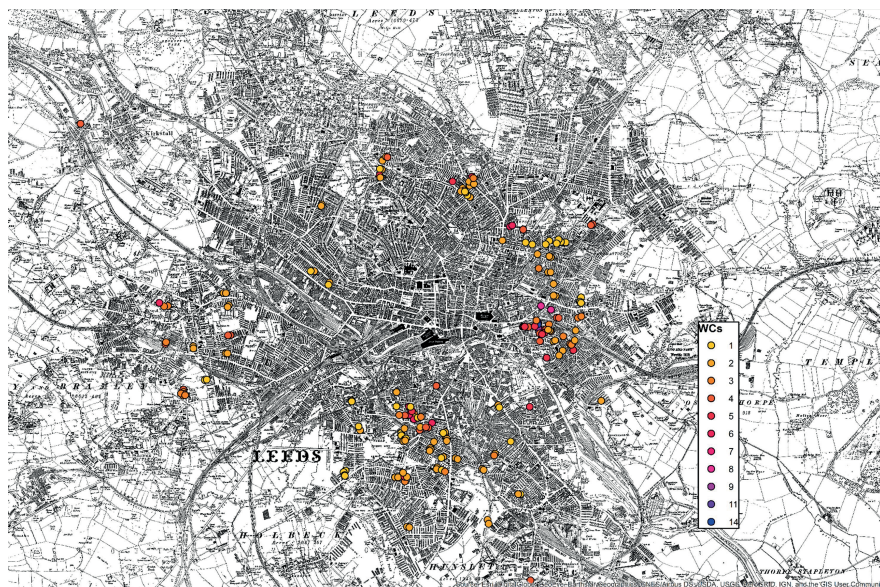


Figure 1: GIS map of Leeds showing conversion of dry conservancy closets to water closets. Information for map from Leeds Corporation, “Health Committee Minutes, January 1927 to December 1930.” Base map reproduced with the permission of Edina Digimap Historic Collection.

ing-class housing in Woodhouse and Little Woodhouse was also targeted for improvement. This highlights that the standard of housing in working-class areas across the city was lacking, and that the large-scale nature of the improvements led to an increase in water demand. This is pertinent for two reasons. Firstly, the Corporation spent a vast amount of money on improving working-class areas of the city. While this was a continuation of pre-war urban improvements aimed at improving the health of working-class residents, there was a surge of upgrades during the 1920s, which meant that by 1927 all dry conservancies had been upgraded. This also meant, as has been highlighted above, that these areas used more water than before due to the nature of the water-closet. Secondly, the improvements also tied into narratives of citizenship. The Corporation spent a relatively large amount of money on these improvements at a moment in time when public finances were stretched after the First World War and subsequent economic depression.

The commitment of the Corporation to these improvements, then, emphasised their aim to provide amenities on a par with wealthier middle-class areas of the city, at least in terms of basic infrastructure, and their commitment to the broad principles of municipal socialism. As Tom Hulme has highlighted, local government

was particularly concerned with moulding working class citizens in a way that measured up to economic ambitions in an increasingly globalised world; improving the infrastructure of working-class areas could help to improve health.³² The conversion of water-closets, then, is emblematic of a discourse of citizenship that acknowledged civic solutions to urban problems rather than large scale utopian planning or condemnation.³³ These infrastructural improvements are important factors in this chapter for two reasons, then; firstly, they show that increased water usage was not just confined to middle class areas of Leeds during the inter-war period; and, secondly, that the ideal of citizenship that was so central to narratives of water economy and drought was becoming a more inclusive concept.

The programme of improvement implemented by the Corporation was notable for targeting working-class areas of the city. There was also the risk of working class consumers becoming more vulnerable during times of drought. As Taylor and Trentmann have shown during the late nineteenth century, tenants were reliant on landlords to provide correct fittings for water-closets that did not function properly. Infrastructure, then, had the potential to make poor consumers more vulnerable; while the midden privies were risks to public health, they would have at least operated functionally during times of water famine.³⁴ Historians of governmentality would point to these improvements as evidence of ruling from afar, altering the patterns of everyday life so that working-class residents engaged in the sanitary city. However, in the context of water famine, these improvements were evidence of an increase in water usage as a direct result of the actions of the Corporation. As the narrative of citizenship was used to encourage residents to save water, it was also used as a justification for increasing the city's reliance on its water infrastructure.

Urban residents were also targeted with visual evidence of infrastructural deficiencies in order to reinforce narratives of water economy. Visual material was increasingly utilised in newspapers during the inter-war period, as well as in guidebooks, which trained the reader into seeing the landscape in a particular way.³⁵ Images of dry reservoirs, both reservoirs specific to Leeds and from the wider West Riding area, were published in order to show the effects of drought on water supply. The *Leeds Mercury* published a photograph of a barren Swinsty Reservoir, North Yorkshire in July 1929 with the ominous headline 'Warning to Water Wasters'.³⁶ The picture shows the extent of the 1929 drought in stark terms,

32 Hulme, *After the Shock City*, 9.

33 Hulme, *After the Shock City*, 28–34.

34 Taylor and Trentmann, "Liquid Politics," 227.

35 Brace, "Envisioning England," 380.

36 "An Empty Leeds Reservoir: Warning to Water Wasters." *Leeds Mercury*, July 13, 1929, 12.

with the only water present the small stream of the original River Washburn. The image was captured from the base of the reservoir, with the embankment wall looming in the background to further emphasise the size of the city's waterworks and, therefore, the lack of available water. The presentation of this image, in the top left corner of the page and taking up over half of the column in width, was there to shock readers, most of whom would have not otherwise been able to see the state of the reservoirs given the lack of accessible transport from Leeds to their rural waterworks. A similar picture was published in the *Yorkshire Evening Post* in 1925 of Fewston Reservoir, as well as pictures of barren reservoirs at Barnsley and Mytholmroyd, West Yorkshire in 1933 and 1934, with the primary function of shocking readers into water economy. Indeed, the caption from the *Yorkshire Evening Post* reads that Leeds was in no danger of water scarcity, but the image conveys the necessary message that readers needed to economise, regardless of water levels. As Fiona Summers has noted, photographs have often been considered as powerful instruments in conveying truth because they show a vision of a specific place. This has obscured the ways in which photography constructs rather than records an image.³⁷ These images, then, were not just objective recordings of the urban-rural hinterland, but they conveyed a specific message around social behaviour and infrastructural deficiencies caused by drought.

Conclusion

Repeated calls were made during the droughts of the 1920s and 1930s to restrict water wastage and engage in good citizenship, and in some ways these calls were partially successful. During the dry summer of 1929, the *Yorkshire Post* reported that, following calls for water economy, usage had fallen from 20 million gallons a day to just over 17 million gallons a day, a sizeable decrease in usage, which roughly equated to a gain of 6 gallons per person.³⁸ It is also clear from some of the correspondents that some in Leeds took the threat of drought seriously. They not only modified their own behaviour but they encouraged others to do the same. However, while the supply of water may be considered within the framework of governmentality, it is clear from examining the impact of drought on Leeds's governance that not all residents were governed into self-rule. Resistance to urban governance is evident from the examples cited by the city's newspapers – people did continue to water their lawns and wash their cars regardless of calls for economy.

³⁷ Summers, "Photography and Visual Culture," 446.

³⁸ "In the Big Towns: How Leeds and Bradford are affected." *Yorkshire Post*, July 5, 1929, 11.

Somewhat ironically, one of the greatest resisters to these narratives was the Corporation, which, through infrastructural improvements, increased its dependence on the city's water networks. This was pointedly highlighted by Shortreed himself in 1929, who, at the height of the drought, had received an anonymous letter asking him to 'tell the truth' about the availability of water.³⁹ Clearly, not all were convinced by the repeated calls to save water despite the lack of rain and hot conditions. If nothing else, this highlights the tensions between municipal socialism and the availability of finite resources for the public good. It also highlights the class dynamics at play – if resistance reported in the newspapers was largely taking place in middle class suburbs, then improvements to water closets in working-class areas of the city spread this resistance.

It may well have been the intention of the Corporation to govern from a distance, but, as this chapter has shown, the direct and indirect responses to drought from the water authority and municipal residents complicated urban governance. Reading the supply of water in this way provides a way to conceptualise polycentric urban governance, a governance that was tied with cultural ideas of citizenship as well as the role of newspapers and expertise in the governing of the city. Indeed, the ideal of citizenship, in this context, became an agent of urban governance. As a model of behaviour that encouraged thinking of others when drawing water or washing cars, it became interwoven with governing the urban landscape. This chapter, then, has highlighted the importance of taking a cultural approach to polycentric urban governance by highlighting the cultural importance held by water, which meant that people continued to use it during drought despite calls to the contrary, as well as the importance of citizenship and institutions with cultural influence such as local newspapers to attempts to govern the urban arena. Newspapers played a key role in disseminating the municipal agenda and creating 'civic publics', a role that continued into the inter-war period.⁴⁰ The provision of water, thus, played a large role in the governance of the city, even when it was in short supply.

39 "Hours of Welcome Rain: But Farmers Want Much More." *Leeds Mercury*, October 1, 1929, 5.

40 O'Reilly, "Creating a Civic Consciousness," 249.

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Uwe Andersen and Kai Pfundheller

Sister Cities and Urban Diplomacy Today

A look back in time reveals a paradoxical situation: In the period before the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, cities, associations of cities or principalities were the main pillars of foreign policy in Europe. Going back to Antiquity, these associations shaped the development and generation of political entities. Since the Peace of Westphalia – the birth of the nation state – the international importance of cities has steadily declined, while nations have solidified their monopoly on foreign policy, reaching one peak with the east-west conflict. But a closer look reveals that cities, municipalities and counties (hereafter collectively referred to as municipalities) have always put out feelers across international boundaries, through business or personal connections between their populations.

One of the greatest peace projects of the twentieth century is the twinning of municipalities. Through such partnerships, people meet, overcome prejudices, and form friendships across borders. There are numerous examples of such enthusiastic activity along these lines in Europe – like the first exchanges between German and French cities in 1948, and the first visits of pupils from Cologne to Israel, which took place ten years after the end of World War II. The increased international integration has also massively boosted the international activities of municipalities, and this trend is likely to continue given the situation as described by London-based scholar Dan Koon-hong Chan:

With globalization come global problems. While we live in a twenty-first-century world of interdependence, we face seventeenth-century Westphalian political institutions with defined boundaries and separated responsibilities of nation-states.¹

This chapter intends to explore the current state of sister cities in Germany: How they are organised, how many there are in Germany and Europe, how they differ from urban diplomacy, and how they relate to the nation-state. Much data has been generated and many facts have been gleaned through the continuing project work of the Kompetenzteam Europa in the *Auslandsgesellschaft.de* e.V.² International relationships between municipalities have been investigated in numerous projects – here, the focus is on North Rhine-Westphalia.

¹ Chan, “City diplomacy.”

² Further information about this research project and its publications is available at <https://staedtepartnerschaftennrw.org/lesetipps/>

Terminology

Here, the terms “city partnership” and “urban diplomacy” will be defined and differentiated from one another. As can be seen in academic literature and in major international city associations, there is no one definition of the “twinning” of municipalities. The different definitions lead to different results in surveys of city partnerships. The most commonly used definition is that of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), which describes these partnerships as formal, not limited in time or scope, and based on a twinning contract (or charter). To that definition we would add that these partnerships are open to all members of society, unlike the sponsoring relationships prevalent in the early twentieth century. The latter were concluded between cities in different countries in order to strengthen the position of minorities living abroad and thus to boost international relations, as occurred in 1925 with the German minority in the Danish city of Sonderburg, which had a sponsorship relationship with the German city of Kiel.

The term “city partnership” is applied collectively to partnerships of all local authorities, including those between municipalities or districts. Aside from city partnerships, the CEMR includes “friendship” and “contact” as forms of connection between local authorities. A friendship is defined as a connection based on an agreement, limited in time and/or with specific projects connecting the partners. Particularly with partnerships based on specific projects, the term project partnership has become dominant, and will be used below. A contact partnership is described as a connection without any formal consolidation.

Urban diplomacy is the collective term referring to the foreign policy of all local authorities, a policy that has experienced a revival due to globalisation and the emerging challenges facing society. While all sister cities are expressions of urban diplomacy, the latter includes other activities of municipal foreign policy. Sister cities continue to form the heart of cities’s foreign policy, but there are numerous project partnerships and especially cooperations through international associations of cities that have enjoyed a boom over the past ten years.

Many municipalities around the world are facing similar challenges, whether they are related to climate change, digitalisation, the future of mobility, rural exodus in many regions, or even to peaceful coexistence in ever-more heterogeneous cities, their populations impacted by increased migration. Many challenges can only be managed through cooperation between municipalities. Most interesting of all is that international organisations view municipalities as legitimate partners in the implementation of policies and include them in international conferences. Representatives of national foreign policy increasingly reflect the role of urban diplomacy, as then-Minister of State Niels Annen from the German Foreign Office in 2019 in Düsseldorf put it:

. . . the increasing international role and importance of cities and metropolitan regions thus definitely connects with foreign policy:

- International agreements such as the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Climate Agreement or the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction emphasise the central importance of urban spaces for sustainable development.
- None of the 17 sustainability goals (SDGs) listed in the 2030 Agenda can be achieved without sustainable urban development. Two thirds of all the 169 sub-goals of the 2030 Agenda can only be met in and with cities.
- This is one of the main reasons why my home city of Hamburg is applying to become one of the sites for a UN Technology Innovation Lab, where groundbreaking technologies aiming to solve the most urgent problems facing humanity are to be developed.
- Cities bear a large share of the responsibility for global climate change and are also taking on a pioneering role in climate protection.³

Within this context, sister cities or urban diplomacy can take very different forms vis-à-vis state foreign policy:⁴

1. Foundation of state foreign policy: Sister cities support and shore up directives of state foreign policy. Examples include the Franco-German sister cities established under the Elysée Treaty, or the agreements established under the German-Polish Friendship Treaty.
2. Pioneering state policy: Anticipating the reconciliation processes of state foreign policy. Examples include the German-French sister cities set up before the Elysée Treaty, the sister cities established as a basis for the accession of countries to the EU, or the sister cities with municipalities from the Soviet Union following the 1969 détente policy of the social-liberal coalition.
3. As a complement to state policy or in a division of responsibilities: While states negotiate foreign policy treaties, such as in environmental policy, parallel conferences are held at the municipal level. A recent example would be the dynamics of sister cities between German and Ukrainian municipalities following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. The number of these twinnings skyrocketed from merely around 70 before the war to close to 120 about a year later. While German municipalities were among the first to send humanitarian help and supplies to Ukraine, their continuing initiatives and networking activities were subsequently both applauded and supported at the federal level, visible in the patronage of the newly built sister cities by the German and Ukrainian presidents in October 2022. To some extent, however, this type of cooperation between the state level and local level is merely tolerated. Examples of this are the human rights dialogues between the civil societies of

³ Annen, “Städte.”

⁴ Pfundheller, *Städtepartnerschaften*, 67.

Germany and China within the framework of a city partnership, and Cologne's parallel contacts with partner cities in Israel and Palestine.

4. At a critical distance from or in clear opposition to state foreign policy: This relates to sister-city agreements concluded between municipalities from countries that have no state-level foreign relations – or only negative relations. Examples include the sometimes-intensive contacts within the framework of German-German sister cities in the era of the Hallstein Doctrine or the sister cities with municipalities in Nicaragua in the 1970s and 1980s, intended to support Sandinista politics.⁵

Currently one could add to these four points that in many respects, the relationship between municipalities in two countries can support continuity in official foreign policy even when it falters as a result of national elections. For example, the many German-American sister cities were key during the term of President Donald Trump, when high-level government contacts were marked by disagreement. This also applies to the current partnerships between cities in Germany and Hungary, Poland and Turkey. These partnerships, too, underscore the special importance of urban diplomacy.

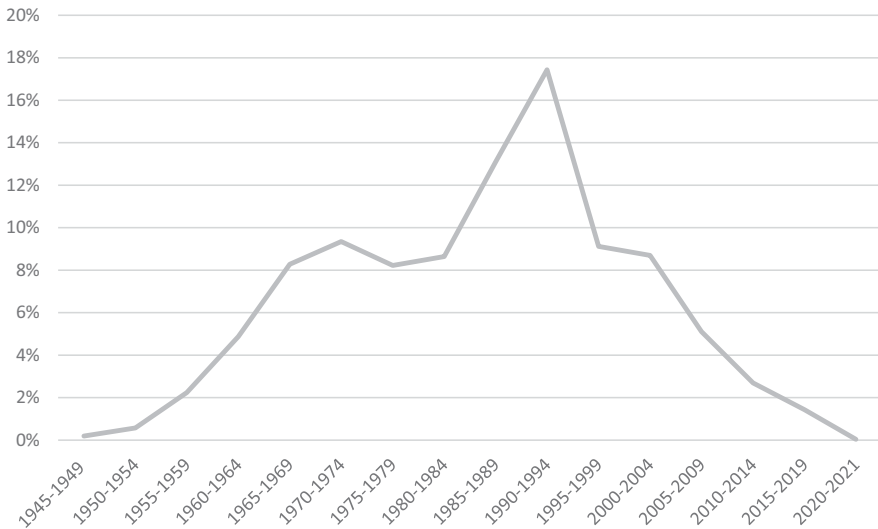
Sister cities in Germany

According to the last CEMR overall survey, conducted in 2010, there were about 34,000 cross-border municipal partnerships among the 37 member countries. The five countries with the most sister cities in Europe were France (6,776 partnerships), followed by Germany (6,277), then at a considerable distance Poland (3,508) and Italy (2,755) and in fifth place United Kingdom (2,059). By far the most sister cities were between Germany and France, with 2,281, although this total includes contacts and friendships.

Three initiatives in particular set the stage for sister cities in Germany. One began shortly after the end of World War II, when the British, Americans and Canadians invited German municipal representatives to visit them abroad and see how structures between cities function on a democratic basis. This initiative generated several sister cities from 1948 to 1950, such as between Hannover and Bristol or Bonn and Oxford. Also praiseworthy is the post-war initiative by Swiss professors and writers Hans Zbinden, Eugen Wyler and Adolf Gasser: They founded the Inter-

⁵ For an analysis of state reactions to fears of communist infiltration through city partnerships, see the example of the British government at the height of the Cold War: Clarke, "Town Twinning."

national Union of Mayors for Franco-German Understanding (IBU), and the CEMR, into which the IBU was integrated administratively in 1985. The idea was to strengthen the municipality as the core of democracy, in order to prevent another world war. Ultimately, the contacts between French and German mayors during the IBU meeting led in 1950 to the first German-French city partnership: between Montbéliard and Ludwigsburg. The umbrella organisation, CEMR, forms the European section of the World Union of Local Governments (UCLG). The following chart shows the development of sister cities since 1945 in five-year increments (Graph 1):



Graph 1: Development of sister cities in Germany since 1945. Source: CEMR data bank: <https://www.regre.de/partnerschaft/online-datenbank>.

As noted, in 1945 the first German sister cities were established with American and British cities as a result of the Allied occupation of Germany. The first such connection with a French city – that between Ludwigsburg and Montbéliard – was followed by many new German-French partnerships; the number of new partnerships reached its first peak in 1965–1979. The Franco-German friendship treaty in particular gave an enormous boost to partnerships between those two countries.

After a brief decline, the number of newly-established partnerships reached an absolute peak. Between 1990 and 1994, 17.4% of all partnerships were established. Two developments played a major role in this growth: German unification, when many former East German municipalities established partnerships with western European cities; and the end of the classic east-west conflict. At this

stage, many partnerships were established between cities in central and eastern Europe, and with Polish cities above all.

After this period, growth dropped again to 8.7% between 2000 and 2004 and to 1.4% in 2015–2019. A satiation effect is recognisable in municipalities. Many prefer project partnerships, or participation in joint European projects with other municipalities without necessarily becoming partner cities. The new countries of focus in the last 15 years turn out to be Turkey and China: the latter mainly for economic reasons, and Turkey mainly due to migration. Here, sister cities help promote integration.⁶

As our investigations show, sister cities in Germany are very seldom terminated. Even if some of them have been inactive for years, there is still a prevailing opinion in municipalities that one should endeavour to keep the partnerships alive, even if there is no money to invest in them. This may also be due to the fact that decisions to disband would have to be made by a city council and might draw negative public attention.

Among the countries that are tied to German cities, France dominates. Approximately 1/3 of all German sister cities are with France, followed by Poland and Great Britain. A more granular look at the rankings reveals very different regional emphases in Germany's states. Both historical and regional connections play a major role. For example, North Rhine-Westphalia has a disproportionately high number of partnerships with municipalities in the Netherlands, Belgium or Luxembourg, simply due to the proximity and close cooperation between that German state and the Benelux countries. And Bavaria has a disproportionately high number of partnerships with municipalities in Austria or Italy. One can safely say that more than 90% of German partnerships are with other European municipalities, followed by cities in America, Asia and the other continents.

Sister cities are organised by civil society and city administrations; their identity and tasks vary from one municipality to the next. Many municipalities have an association for all their partnerships. In addition, they have designated administrative staff; their numbers depend on a given municipality's size, tradition and self-image. Our investigations in North Rhine-Westphalia reveal a roughly three-way division according to the size of the city and the concomitant professionalisation of its city partnership work. The small municipalities with fewer than 50,000 residents usually have many more personal contacts, but the work is less professional, and if any dedicated staff are employed, the number is usually proportionately small. With cities that have populations between 50,000 and 100,000 the work is organised in a more professional manner, with established staff positions within the municipi-

⁶ See Auslandsgesellschaft Deutschland, "Migration und Integration."

pal administration. Finally, in large cities, city partnership work is embedded within local work related to Europe, in other words international networks, project partnerships and/or European projects. The most common organisational form is a team directly under the mayor, although the number of positions varies. We will discuss this topic again in greater detail in the section on urban diplomacy.

Schools are generally very strong players in this partnership work. One limitation is that school partnerships are not always congruent with municipal partnerships, often because there is no comparable school in the partner city or because partnerships with schools abroad are based on previous personal contacts. In addition, schools have varying commitments to international exchange.

The biggest challenge of partnerships, but also their biggest potential benefit, is their dependence on people. Even major commitment in many municipalities falls on the shoulders of very few people who become involved in partnership work – teachers, private individuals, city council members or administrative staff. These dedicated volunteers organise many activities in a partnership, and when they leave the commitment can also decline sharply. In contrast, city employees represent continuity in partnership work.

Our studies have shown that sister cities and activities between cities in Europe have developed greatly in recent years. Alongside the traditional encounters supported by civic engagement (sports, culture, schools), new forms of cooperation related to Europe are emerging, particularly in the thematic and project-related forms of cooperation through city partners or tri- and multilateral city partnerships, “partners of partners,” as well as project- or theme-related networks.

There has been a clear shift in the goals of these forms of cooperation in recent decades, towards using trustful cooperation with partner cities to jointly tackle municipal challenges; indeed, European municipalities face very similar challenges. Examples abound of positive developments in municipalities in Germany and abroad, initiatives that grew out of city partnerships. In addition, there is a major boom in project work in cross-border intermunicipal cooperation, in projects that are limited in time and subject matter. Importantly, the change in funding logic – pure exchanges are not funded, but joint thematic work is – has promoted this shift of motives.⁷

One of the biggest challenges facing sister cities in many municipalities is the ‘aging out’ of dedicated participants – in other words, the very people who initiate and organise inter-city exchange. These partnerships thrive and depend on civic engagement. Clearly, there is a need for new approaches to public relations and

⁷ For further background on civic development policy, see Engagement global, “Handreichung zur kommunalen Entwicklungspolitik.”

digitalisation, with the aim of giving sister cities –sometimes unfairly seen as out-moded – a new look, and thus winning over participants from new target groups.

Against this background, the Coronavirus pandemic hit sister cities particularly hard. These partnerships thrive on in-person meetings, on getting to know each other, and on the many friendships that have developed over the years. Since March 2020, personal meetings have become extremely difficult or even impossible to arrange. According to a recent study of Polish sister city relationships with cities in North Rhine-Westphalia by the Netzwerkstelle Städtepartnerschaften, Polish sister cities are very active, comparatively speaking – it is rare to see digital options replacing in-person events.⁸ When asked how their partnership has dealt with the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic, 21.8% answer that they are collaborating digitally for the first time; 7.3% say they were already collaborating digitally before the pandemic and have only increased their use of digital tools; 47.3% are postponing their in-person meetings; and 23.6% have no activities at all. There is no telling if or when this will change. To be sure, the creativity of many partnerships that have switched over to digital contact is impressive. Nevertheless, the statistics make it clear that sister cities – and many other municipal projects – will need a great deal of development work after the pandemic. In particular, municipal administrations will have to reactivate dormant partnerships to serve as anchor points when that time comes.

Sister cities are the mosaic stones of international understanding; this movement creates a global network and for many people, represents their first opportunity to participate in internationalisation. Partnerships have significantly contributed to integration in Europe. Thus, for example, the more than 2,000 sister cities that Germany shares with France form the backbone of this exchange. Within their framework, civil society, politics and administration meet regularly, and there has been a marked improvement in understanding between the two countries. This strength must be used and developed further beyond this example. A major project ahead for sister cities is to focus on developing offers of internationalisation for populations for whom internationalisation is not a given. For example, if one looks more deeply into the Erasmus + statistics, the special challenges facing municipal partnership work clearly stand out. Almost 80% of the €15 billion available for the Erasmus program is currently spent on student exchanges, while only 22% goes to vocational training exchanges – largely due to the relative lack of infrastructure for exchanges at vocational schools as opposed to universities.⁹ In short, while vocational exchanges have been on the increase since the 1990s, they

⁸ <https://staedtepartnerschaftennrw.org/>

⁹ See “Europaweiter Vergleich.”

remain at a low level compared to student exchanges – in 2019, only around 33,000 students received financial support.¹⁰

If the European training system is to be strengthened, study abroad for trainees must be the rule rather than the exception. This would boost participants' appreciation for the benefits of a united Europe. Furthermore, it would be a decisive starting point for the future focus of municipal partnerships and European work. The partnerships often lead to contacts with administrations, companies and social organisations that are eligible for admission. Here in particular, municipal cooperation is essential: it helps ensure that each municipality does not need to gather experience on its own, but rather has the opportunity to work with others to develop ways to boost the exchange of trainees within Europe. This improves their own vocational training while strengthening the sense of European community among young participants. Especially in rural areas, there is an exodus of well-trained youth. A stronger vocational exchange program can certainly also help increase the appeal of the training profession locally. An initial point of contact can be the local trainees themselves, who can gain valuable career experience as well as personal experience in partner municipalities. This would also strengthen ties between participating municipal administrations at home and abroad.

Theses on urban diplomacy

Here we will attempt to condense key aspects of urban diplomacy, which is still a young and volatile field of research, in a generalised and theoretical manner.

1. Within the framework of trends on globalisation and governance, the long-held monopoly of the nation-state in international political relationships has been eroding steadily; in the state's multi-level system, the sub-national levels – in Germany, those are states, regions, municipalities – have developed their own activities and established structures and partnerships. For example, the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia has established a partnership with Ghana.
2. With the increase in urbanisation – according to the United Nations, in 2021 most of the world's population, 56%, lived in cities, and that percentage is expected to grow to more than 66% by 2050 – cities dominate quantitatively in the area of international exchange.

¹⁰ <https://www.na-bibb.de/presse/statistik/>

3. Bilateral sister cities continue to be the most important instrument of municipal foreign policy, but there is a clear shift in form and activity, particularly toward tri-lateral and multilateral sister cities and project partnerships.

4. Large cities dominate when it comes to international city alliances and in the number of bilateral partnerships. This is no surprise, given their greater financial and human resources. However, the reduced international attention to the problems facing small and mid-sized cities and communities, as well as those facing rural areas, is an issue that needs to be addressed.

5. The organisational underpinnings of municipalities' international influence have grown over time, together with their self-awareness of their role in this area. For example, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) is a global umbrella organisation with a regional/continental base, and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) works at the level of the European continent. However, this strengthening has been accompanied by a decrease in transparency, due to the existence of numerous special networks that vary in content, focus and membership numbers. A few examples of such diversity are:

- International Observatory of Mayors on Living Together (a city network that grew out of a 2015 mayors' summit in Montreal, describes itself as a “unique platform for the exchange of experiences, knowledge and innovative practices related to social cohesiveness, inclusion and community safety in cities” and emphasises its city-university partnerships as a standout feature);
- U(rban)20 (a city network that strives to bring a local perspective to the G20, the elite club of major industrialised and emerging economies);
- C40 (a network of major cities founded in 2005 with a focus on climate activism; today it has some 100 member cities;¹¹)
- ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability (founded in 1990 in New York at the conclusion of the UN's first World Congress on Local Governments for Sustainable Development, the Bonn-based organisation with representative offices on all continents now has some 1,000 member cities);
- The Hanseatic League of Cities (founded in 1980 in the spirit of the historically powerful Hanseatic League, an alliance of cities in the Middle Ages; it aims to give these relationships a modern form. It has some 200 member cities in 16 countries, but about half of its member cities are in Germany).

6. Seen from a bird's eye perspective, the importance of Urban Diplomacy has increased. What seems most effective is a combination of push factors (see Thesis 4) and pull factors – namely, the growing recognition, particularly on the UN level,

¹¹ For an empirical analysis of C40's work, see Acuto, Michele, *Global Cities*.

that most global goals can't be achieved without the active participation of cities (the classic example: 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals – SDGs). Indicative of the growing importance is the increased attention paid to urban diplomacy in policy and academic circles. Recently the term has popped up in Germany, including at the Ambassadors' Meeting of the German Foreign Office (AA); at the Global Policy Lab – a diplomacy think tank supported by the AA and various foundations; and at a video conference of the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP): “Urban Diplomacy als Motor deutscher und europäischer Handlungsfähigkeit – Städte als außenpolitische Akteure” (June 2, 2021). Still, empirical studies on the role of urban diplomacy remain scarce.¹²

7. The international scope of action for cities and communities is greatly influenced by their role in national political systems, and thus also by their relationships to the other levels in multi-level national political systems. For example, German municipalities traditionally play an important independent role, but the same is not always true for their international partners – including those within the EU. These asymmetrical positions remain a serious challenge.

8. Relationships between the civic level and other political levels are basically interdependent, but for the most part the influence exerted on the municipalities is more important. Attempts by ‘higher’ levels to exert influence cover the entire range, from enabling/promoting to restricting/preventing. Control objectives (‘financial reins’) can also be connected with funding measures. In an extreme case, the national level can instrumentalise the Urban Diplomacy of municipalities as an element of national foreign policy – an aspect that, especially in the case of authoritarian states, should not be glossed over.

9. The Coronavirus pandemic has, as expected, impacted city partnerships. A survey in North Rhine-Westphalia indicates an intensification of the status of existing partnerships: the health crisis prompted particularly active partnerships to break new ground (such as increasing their use of digital options), while partnerships that were already on the wane saw a clear diminution of activities.

10. From an analytical perspective, in the triangular relationship between civil society/municipal level/state (‘higher’) level, the relationship between the state and civil society has become more open and permeable, like that with the municipal level, with a tendency toward governance. But the relationship is still quite different from one nation to another, shaped as it is by tradition (as can be seen even

¹² A recent positive exception is an anthology of four case analyses: Amiri and Sevin, *City Diplomacy*; see also the earlier anthology by Amen et al., *Cities and Global Governance*.

through a comparison of Western systems such as those in the USA and Germany). This also impacts the cross-border activities of civil society.

11. The international influence of civil society organisations has clearly grown (especially through lobby groups and globally in the UN system: a classic example is the development of the SDG); the reverse channel of influence – from the international level to national civil society, an influence that has also become stronger – sometimes encounters fierce resistance, especially from national governments (Russia is a particularly memorable example).

12. There is a close relationship between municipal level / sister cities and civil society since vibrant sister cities are usually based on strong involvement of civil society (in various organisational manifestations). This is no surprise, since municipalities – as the administrative level closest to citizens in the state structure – are the level that is most tightly interwoven with civil society. The aging of members and especially of active members is turning out to be a pressing practical problem, and not only in Germany. Special efforts must be made to reach out to youth (where schools and sports associations play important roles) as well as to develop flexible models of participation (such as participating in projects, rather than becoming full members). Such models have already been put into practice, with success.

Conclusion and outlook

Sister cities are one of the greatest peace projects of the twentieth century; they could become – and to some extent already are – a global peace project of the twenty-first century, beyond Europe. Sister cities have contributed greatly to integration within the European Union and to international understanding around the world. They now have the task of adapting to the twenty-first century, of bringing together traditional approaches with new possibilities. To that end, the tool of urban diplomacy is helpful in many regards. Currently, there are a few general trends to observe. Cities, especially large ones, are exchanging ideas on how to cope with their own problems and adopt innovative ideas from abroad. In addition, foreign policy engagement on the municipal level depends largely on individuals, and does not follow a fixed path; this trend is definitely worth watching. However – as this chapter demonstrates clearly – international relations between municipalities, and their close connection to local civil society, are essential for the networking of the population and for increasing international understanding and responsible global action. Historians will look back 100 years from

now and see exactly what municipalities actually have contributed. But the Paris Climate Change Conference and especially the implementation of its results are good examples of their potential.

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