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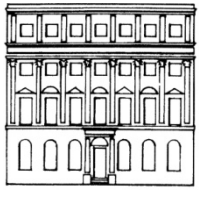

BULLETIN

ISSN 0269-8552

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Twelfth Workshop on Early Modern Central European History
Conference Report
German Historical Institute London Bulletin, Vol 37, No. 2
(November 2015), pp128-131

Twelfth Workshop on Early Modern Central European History, co-organized by the German Historical Institute London, the German Historical Institute Washington, and the German History Society, and held at the GHIL on 8 May 2015. Conveners: Bridget Heal (University of St Andrews), David Lederer (NUI Maynooth), Jenny Spinks (University of Manchester), and Angela Schattner (GHIL).

Following the success of the previous workshops, this was the twelfth collaboration between the German Historical Institute London and the German History Society. This year the workshop was also co-organized by the German Historical Institute Washington, which generously provided travel scholarships for Ph.D. students to participate in the workshop. Breaking with tradition, this workshop was held not in autumn but in spring in order to avoid a clash with other German history related events, such as the German History Society's Annual General Meeting. The workshop was very well attended, bringing together twenty-eight scholars from as far afield as Oxford, Dresden, North Carolina, and Shanghai. The nine papers were carefully organized, allowing participants to discuss a large variety of topics in early modern German history, including personal, social, and economic relationships; notions of religious culture; and the struggle for peace and order, not only in Germany, but also in central Europe.

After a warm welcome, the first session, chaired by Angela Schattner, dealt with order and disorder in early modern Germany. Christopher Kissane (London School of Economics) gave insights into his current project, 'bEUcitizen', investigating the development of local citizenship in Europe over the past 500 years. In his paper, Kissane presented common and divergent patterns of citizenship across a range of German cities up to 1789. Evidence suggests that citizenship was more widespread in Free Imperial Cities than in territorial cities, but it was not easily available because of a number of barriers such as fees, religious background, and gender. Thus women could technically obtain citizenship, but were effectively excluded. Gerd Schwerhoff (University of Dresden) gave illuminating insights into the culture of invective. Spurred by recent terrorist attacks on the satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, Schwerhoff shed light on the culture

The full conference programme can be found under Events and Conferences on the GHIL's website <www.ghil.ac.uk>.

of invective in the sixteenth century. In the early modern period insults fulfilled an important social function: teasing, taunting rituals, and insult competition were means of integrating into certain social groups. Insults were especially popular among students, but they were found at all levels of society, in particular in the learned elites. Within this culture of invective, people of different faiths were one of the target groups. Consequently contemporaries of Martin Luther were not taken aback by his strong language.

The second session focused on global religious networks and was chaired by Bridget Heal. In her paper, Renate Dürr (University of Tübingen) investigated the Jesuits' impact on the early Enlightenment. Dürr showed how missionaries contributed significantly to the production of knowledge in Europe through their activities all over the globe. Their reports clearly demonstrate the communicative process of acquiring knowledge aided by local populations. The Jesuits thus contributed, implicitly and explicitly, to Enlightenment debates. Adding to this global perspective, Duane Corpis (NYU Shanghai) investigated how charities in Protestant parishes increasingly widened their geographical scope. By the seventeenth century there was already a steady shift towards global charity networks such as those providing disaster relief for cities that had recently been attacked. With expanding trade networks, these long-distance charity networks grew in size. Corpis illustrated his arguments with the example of Erfurt. Whereas in the sixteenth century the city had given charity to recipients outside the parish on only four occasions, by the eighteenth century, it catered for many more foreign recipients over a much larger geographical area. Similarly, in Augsburg 20 per cent of the *Evangelische Wesenskasse* went outside the city between 1730 and 1770.

After lunch the focus shifted towards religious culture in early modern Germany. Tricia Ross (Duke University, Durham, NC) opened the session by presenting parts of her Ph.D. project on the relationship between religion and medicine. In her paper Ross focused on various Protestant sermons and commentaries on Sirach (Ecclesiasticus). Although Lutherans denied Sirach a place in the biblical canon, it was nonetheless frequently used, especially chapter 38, which deals with the relationship between physicians and patients. In discussions on Sirach, physicians were presented as imitators of the Great Physician, Christ, offering not only a cure for the body, but

also consolation for the soul. Sermons also formed the basis for Paul Strauss's (University of Nebraska-Lincoln) paper, which focused on the depiction of Ottoman Turks. Comparing sermons by Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed preachers, Strauss concluded that they functioned as abridged history stories. They were intended to transmit general knowledge about the origins of the Turks, the spread of Islamic empires, and (often violent) interactions between Christians and Muslims. Furthermore, many preachers used such sermons to prove exegetical points, but also to build confessional boundaries. The third paper, given by Martin Christ (University of Oxford), concentrated on the boundaries of toleration in a multi-confessional region, Upper Lusatia. A closer look at the three editions of a Catholic hymn book produced in this area reveals that it cannot be simply classified as a product of the 'Counter-Reformation'. Instead the visual, textual, and aural elements point to a complex and multi-layered vision of Catholicism in Upper Lusatia which accommodated Slavonic and Lutheran influences.

The fourth panel of the day widened the geographical scope once again by focusing not exclusively on Germany, but on central Europe. This last session, chaired by David Lederer (NUI Maynooth), discussed confessional and national crises. In his paper on confessional crises in early eighteenth-century central Europe, Patrick Milton (University of Cambridge) explored responses to religious persecution in the Holy Roman Empire and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Despite considerable differences in constitutional arrangements, contemporaries often viewed the Reich and the Commonwealth in similar terms. This facilitated interventions especially on confessional matters. The Commonwealth was strongly influenced by the culture of mutual surveillance and external intervention in the Reich, a fact often criticized by leading members of the Polish establishment. Kirsten Cooper (University of North Carolina) investigated national rhetoric in France and the Holy Roman Empire during the late seventeenth century, when these two territories conducted almost continuous warfare against each other. A survey of numerous political pamphlets reveals that well before the era of modern nationalism, national rhetoric was an important persuasive tool used to encourage political mobilization. Concepts of 'Germanness' and 'Frenchness' were often used to persuade Germans to support the Emperor.

Each session was followed by lively discussions that addressed questions about religious and national identities, the dissemination of ideas, and their reception. At the end of the workshop attendees felt that the papers had a good chronological spread which allowed for a perspective on the early modern period as a whole. Overall, it was a thought-provoking workshop that introduced original, new work on various aspects of early modern German history. Participants also continued to discuss concepts of honour, identity, order, and disorder in early modern Germany, issues that had already been raised at the German History Society's Annual General Meeting in September 2014. Already much anticipated are the GHS's AGM on 3–5 September 2015 in London, and the next early modern workshop to be held on 6 May 2016.

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