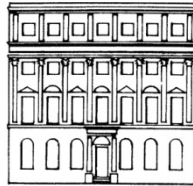


German Historical Institute
London



BULLETIN

ISSN 0269-8552

Stephan Bruhn and Cornelia Linde:
Workshop on Medieval Germany
Conference Report
German Historical Institute London Bulletin, Vol 41, No. 2
(November 2019), pp184-186

Workshop on Medieval Germany, organized by the German Historical Institute London in co-operation with the German Historical Institute Washington and the German History Society, and held at the GHIL on 17 May 2019. Conveners: Len Scales (Durham University) and Cornelia Linde (GHIL).

After the success of the first Workshop on Medieval Germany in 2017, the second event of this kind took place at the German Historical Institute London on 17 May 2019, organized jointly by the German Historical Institutes in London and Washington and the German History Society.

The first paper, 'The Admonishing Bishop in Twelfth-Century England and Germany', was presented by Ryan Kemp (Aberystwyth). Kemp pointed out that in England, bishops tended to admonish their monarchs, in stark contrast to their German counterparts. A further notable difference lay in the bishops' perceptions of kingdoms and their own dioceses. Whereas in Germany the dioceses played a much more significant role, in England the kingdom itself was of greater importance to the bishops. The two regions thus had different traditions in the understanding of the episcopal office. The panel's second speaker was Jonathan Lyon (Chicago). His paper examined the punishment of bad advocates as portrayed in hagiographical texts, a theme that can be traced throughout the Middle Ages. Lyon pointed out that the comparative lack of research on the old monastic orders in the period after the advent of the mendicants was partly to blame for a distorted portrayal of the phenomenon in modern scholarship. The final paper of the first panel was given by Amelia Kennedy (Yale). She examined the thirteenth-century *Visio Rudolfi*, composed at Salem, as a means of exploring the role of abbots at Cistercian monasteries, based on the example of the order's monastery at Kaisheim. Kennedy criticized the fact that this text had not been taken seriously by earlier scholarship, bringing to light evidence that it was a response to circumstances at the abbey and took the form of a subtle critique.

The second panel was a double session addressing the problems and challenges of editing specific medieval texts. Steffen Patzold (Tübingen) highlighted the challenges which Carolingian capitular-

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

ies posed for modern editors. Basing his deliberations around the process of editing the *capitulare missorum*, Patzold's thorough investigation of the transmission showed convincingly that there was no such thing as an official version of the text. He argued that the *capitulare* was, in fact, by its nature not a legal text per se. Rather, he argued, it mirrored ongoing discussions at court. Benedikt Marxreiter (MGH) and Thomas J. H. McCarthy (New College Florida) presented their work on the digital edition of the continuations of Frutolf of Michelsberg's *Chronicle*. They are working jointly on an edition of the text on the basis of the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI), and presented the method to the audience, while at the same time highlighting the complexities of the transmission.

After lunch, the workshop continued with a paper by Michelle Hufschmid (Oxford). She brought together two scholarly traditions, namely, the mostly English tradition of Crusade history and the mostly German tradition of Staufer history. So far, she argued, these two traditions have not been talking to each other. Hufschmid unites them by examining the crusades against Friedrich II and Conrad IV. While the anti-king Henry Raspe sought to defeat Conrad IV, William of Holland focused on legitimizing his own rule. The crusades against the Staufer, Hufschmid concluded, were well-organized military campaigns which aimed to legitimize the anti-kings as the new kings. Patrick Meehan's (Harvard) paper explored the role of guides (*Leitsleute*) at the Prussian-Lithuanian frontier at the turn from the fourteenth to the fifteenth century. These guides composed *Wegeberichte* that detailed routes into Lithuanian territory. Their texts provide insights into perceptions of the frontier as well as into specific local knowledge. The network of *Leitsleute* proved to be an institutionalized system of communications built on personal relations. The Teutonic knights, however, regarded the *Leitsleute* as a liability, as the chronicles often record their failings, deliberate or not.

In the fourth panel Alexander Peplow (Oxford) looked at poems and songs as a means of expressing political ideas. In particular, he explored Henry of Meissen's (called Frauenlob) *Sprüche* in order to examine reactions to, and understanding of, swift changes in the process of imperial election by the seven electors. Peplow thus looked at the anti-clerical poet as a political writer. The second paper in the panel also dealt with the imperial electors in the broadest sense by focusing on their chancellors. In her paper 'The Chancellors of the

German Electors: Early Modern Professional Specialists or Black Sheep of the Family? A New Look at a Late Medieval Administrative Elite', Ellen Widder (Tübingen) concentrated on Matthias Ramung who was chancellor of the Electoral Palatinate and died in 1478. Widder took a social history approach, noting among other things that the office of chancellor conferred a specific rank in the social hierarchy. She pointed out that Matthias Ramung was probably an illegitimate child of Count Palatine Louis III who, by promotion to the office of chancellor, kept close connections with the court.

The final panel began with a paper by Jill Rehfeldt (Cottbus), speaking about the water supply system of the city of Leipzig. Using archaeological evidence, she showed that contrary to the widespread idea of the 'dirty Middle Ages', there was, in fact, an acute awareness of the need for urban hygiene, and that this need was met in the city of Leipzig. In addition to investigating the measures that were taken for this purpose, Rehfeldt also identified the driving forces behind them and the sources funding initiatives that included not only a fresh water supply but also the sewage system and the disposal of waste water. Next Duncan Hardy (University of Central Florida) explored late medieval imperial reform (*Reichsreform*) by taking the example of Margrave Albrecht Achilles of Brandenburg and his regional court (*Landgericht*) in Franconia. Hardy's focus was on the practice, rather than the theory, of the reforms. *Reichsreform*, he remarked, was a versatile idea that could take many different forms, had different meanings, and could be put to different uses. In his paper, he looked at how normative ideas were applied in practice by Margrave Albrecht Achilles, including in his dealings with different imperial agencies. The final paper of the workshop, 'Reconstructing a Late Medieval Discourse: The "Oppression" of the Nobility by the Towns in Upper Germany (c.1380-1525)', was given by Ben Pope (Tübingen). He presented the first ideas for a larger research project on the alleged oppression of the rural nobility in Upper Germany in the fifteenth century. Pope examined the origins of this discourse of oppression, paying special attention to the ideas and identities connected with it. All in all, this was an inspiring day of stimulating papers and fruitful discussions, and we are looking forward to the next Workshop on Medieval Germany, to be held in 2021.

STEPHAN BRUHN (GHIL) and CORNELIA LINDE (GHIL)