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# Bulletin



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## Bulletin

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## ARTICLES

### ***THE GENIUS OF PARLIAMENT? CULTURES OF COMPROMISE IN BRITAIN AND GERMANY AFTER 1945***

CONSTANTIN GOSCHLER

The crisis of Western liberal democracy has frequently been invoked in public discourse and in academic studies. It is said that Western democracies are increasingly polarized, making public communication on political issues more difficult, and that a key component of liberal democracy is particularly affected: the willingness to compromise. Such fears about a wavering pillar of democracy were for example articulated by the left-liberal German journalist Heribert Prantl in 2016. In an editorial which he cheerfully titled ‘A Hurrah for Compromise’, he expressed his concern about the endangerment of a democratic virtue that he argued had only displaced the previous German hostility to compromise after 1945. Responsible for this, he said, was above all the TINA rhetoric – ‘there is no alternative’ – which had been popularized by Margaret Thatcher and adopted by Angela

This article is the edited version of my Inaugural Lecture as Gerda Henkel Foundation LSE/GHIL Guest Professor 2022/3. I am very indebted to Frank Trentmann (Birkbeck, University of London) for commenting on several versions and providing me with endless new ideas, and to Rüdiger Graf (Leibniz Centre for Contemporary History Potsdam), who made extremely helpful comments on an earlier draft. I would also like to thank Sina Steglich for her valuable comments on the final version of the manuscript and, last but not least, Angela Davies and Jozef van der Voort, who revised the text linguistically and stylistically. I would also like to thank the members of the research network ‘Cultures of Compromise’ in Duisburg-Essen, Münster, and Bochum for stimulating discussions and intellectual inspiration. All translations are my own.

Merkel: ‘The claimed lack of alternative was the successor to the old lack of compromise.’<sup>1</sup>

German perceptions of a crisis in the connection between democracy and compromise, which have also inspired social science studies of populism,<sup>2</sup> often refer to the British case as a warning. Yet a similar anxiety over the loss of compromise has developed in Britain in recent years. After the narrowly decided Brexit referendum of 2016, the British political consultant Chris Rumfitt wrote an essay titled ‘How Britain Lost the Art of Political Compromise’. Britain had imported the ‘culture wars’ from the USA, he argued, and was now also deeply divided politically. ‘This hasn’t always been the British way’: in a golden past, both major parties

recognised that Britain is a country founded on compromise and consensus, and that maintaining ‘one nation’—Disraeli’s famous expression—is more important than ‘winning’. To put it another way, this is not a country where the 52 ruthlessly impose on the 48, for that doesn’t make for a sustainable and stable society.

Rumfitt ended with an Obama-like appeal to British national virtues: ‘We can do the British thing. We can compromise. We can respect the majority while reflecting on and accommodating the concerns—and indeed the anguish—of the minority.’ And so he ended: ‘Let’s come together and find the grand national compromise that is consistent with our national character and our history.’<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Heribert Prantl, ‘Ein Hoch auf den Kompromiss’, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 3 Apr. 2016, at [<https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/essay-ein-hoch-auf-den-kompromiss-1.2927339>], accessed 7 Dec. 2022.

<sup>2</sup> In 2018 and 2020 the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin investigated the prevalence of populist attitudes in Germany with the help of an online survey. Question eight presented the statement: ‘What is called “compromise” in politics is in reality nothing but a betrayal of one’s own principles.’ Expressing agreement with this sentiment was considered an indicator of populist attitudes in the terms of this survey. See Robert Vehrkamp and Wolfgang Merkel, *Populismusbarometer 2018: Populistische Einstellungen bei Wählern und Nichtwählern 2018* (Gütersloh, 2019), at [<https://doi.org/10.11586/2018059>]; eid., *Populismusbarometer 2020: Populistische Einstellungen bei Wählern und Nichtwählern 2020* (Gütersloh, 2020), at [<https://doi.org/10.11586/2020044>].

<sup>3</sup> Chris Rumfitt, ‘How Britain Lost the Art of Political Compromise’, *Unherd*, 26 Feb. 2018, at [<https://unherd.com/2018/02/britain-lost-art-political->

Such assessments of national political character in Britain and Germany in the media raise questions about the definition of ‘compromise’ and also about the difference between compromise and other modes of conflict resolution, namely consensus or striking a deal. According to Veronique Zanetti, ‘a compromise refers to the process or outcome of a decision or negotiation in which the parties involved modify the objective of their action or their action itself in the light of divergent and irreconcilable beliefs in a manner acceptable to all parties but not considered optimal by any.’<sup>4</sup> In this way, compromise differs from consensus, in which a shared judgement on the subject of the conflict is produced. Unlike consensus, compromise is characterized by the fact that it is painful for both sides, which is why the underlying conflict does not have to become permanently quiescent. However, it is more difficult to distinguish a compromise from a deal. Here I will follow Ulrich Willems, who suggests distinguishing deal from compromise depending on the degree to which the objects of conflict are normatively charged by the opposing parties. In a deal, the concessions thus concern claims of lesser importance than is the case with a compromise.<sup>5</sup> This is ultimately a gradual distinction that can change depending on either the perspective of the parties involved or that of the observers, which poses a first challenge for historical interpretation. A second challenge is to ascertain whether the sources actually refer to factual compromises – that is, either to political procedures or to political outcomes – or whether talk of compromise is merely used as a rhetorical figure in political debate.

Moreover, Sandrine Baume and Stéphanie Novak have suggested that we should differentiate between compromise ‘as a strictly technical

compromise/], accessed 6 Dec. 2022; for another example, see Martin Kettle, ‘Britain Needs a Brexit Compromise: Forging One Could Be the Making of Corbyn’s Labour’, *Guardian*, 3 Apr. 2019, at [<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/apr/03/britain-brexite-compromise-making-corbyns-labour>], accessed 6 Dec. 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Veronique Zanetti, *Spielarten des Kompromisses* (Berlin, 2022), 20.

<sup>5</sup> Ulrich Willems, *Wertkonflikte als Herausforderung der Demokratie* (Wiesbaden, 2016), 251–3. Willems also offers a subtle interpretation of alternative attempts at definition.

process' and compromise 'as a political principle'.<sup>6</sup> In line with this approach, the following article examines neither techniques of conflict, nor the concrete resolution of conflicts through compromise, but starts the analysis one step earlier by discussing the transformations of the seemingly disparate cultures of compromise in Britain and Germany after 1945. According to Willems, such cultures of compromise include the 'social, politico-legal, and cultural preconditions and conditions which make settling social conflicts based on painful mutual concessions easier or more difficult'.<sup>7</sup> To what extent do different cultures of compromise exist in Britain and Germany and how did they change after 1945? In which discourses, institutions, and practices were such cultures of compromise anchored? And how can their significance for the resolution of specific political conflicts be assessed? The article will first inspect the lines of tradition behind interpretations of British and German cultures of compromise, before in a further step conducting an empirical exploration focused on the House of Commons and the German Bundestag, as parliaments are places where the conditions for compromises are both shaped and reflected in a special way.

### I. *Compromise in Britain and Germany: Traditions of Interpretation*

In 1945, Friedrich Hayek, an Austrian economist who at that time taught at the London School of Economics and Political Science, responded in *The Spectator* to criticism of his book *The Road to Serfdom*, published the previous year, in which he had condemned the current trend towards a planned economy in Britain. He pointed out that his critics repeatedly referred to a British self-image which he summarized in the title of his article as 'The British Genius for Compromise'. Hayek argued: 'The peculiar point about these invocations of the genius for compromise is that they are produced in reply to an argument which, at least by

<sup>6</sup> Sandrine Baume and Stéphanie Novak, 'Compromise and Publicity in Democracy: An Ambiguous Relationship', in ead. (eds.), *Compromises in Democracy*, 69–94, at 70.

<sup>7</sup> Ulrich Willems with Jan-Hendryk de Boer, Mariko Jacoby, Karsten Mause, Manon Westphal, and Stefan Zeppenfeld, 'Kompromiss, Konsens, Deal: Ein Definitionsversuch' (unpublished working paper).



implication, was a defence of the very institutions which have created this trait, and a warning that they are rapidly disappearing.<sup>8</sup> Hayek thus elevated himself to the status of defender of the British genius for compromise, which for him was indissolubly linked to a free-market society.

Hayek's confrontation with his critics points to the extent to which the British self-image was shaped as early as 1945 by a firm belief that British political culture was characterized by a special capacity for political compromise. This self-image was probably based on a British literary tradition that had already started in the late eighteenth century, according to which democracy and compromise belonged closely together. Examples range from Edmund Burke (1775) — 'All government, indeed every human benefit and enjoyment, every virtue, and every prudent act, is founded on compromise and barter'<sup>9</sup> — to Thomas Babington Macaulay (1843) — 'A life of action, if it is to be useful, must be a life of compromise'<sup>10</sup> — and John Morley's book *On Compromise* (1874).<sup>11</sup> In the first place, however, these were elements of a discourse that did not say anything about whether political practice in Britain was actually characterized by compromise, and many counter-examples could be cited.

In any case, such perceptions of an intimate relationship between democracy and compromise in Britain have not gone unchallenged in more recent times. Against the backdrop of intensive European efforts to find a compromise solution for a trade agreement with the UK, the political journalist Paul Taylor explained Brexit in April 2019 as the logical consequence of 'Britain's culture of confrontation'. Taylor described the British national character quite differently:

Despite a global reputation for skilled diplomacy, pragmatism and common sense, the truth is that the Brits have spent

<sup>8</sup> Friedrich Hayek, 'The British Genius for Compromise', *Spectator*, 26 Jan. 1945; republished in *Mises Daily*, 22 Sept. 2010, at [<https://mises.org/library/british-genius-compromise>], accessed 6 Dec. 2022.

<sup>9</sup> Edmund Burke, *Burke's Speech on Conciliation with the Colonies (March 22 1775)*, ed. L. DuPont Syle (Boston, c.1895), 75.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Babington Macaulay, *Critical and Historical Essays, Contributed to the Edinburgh Review*, 3 vols., 5th edn (London, 1848), ii. 91.

<sup>11</sup> John Morley, *On Compromise* (London, 1874).

centuries fighting each other and tend to regard compromise, rather than patriotism, as the last refuge of a scoundrel. This central feature of British politics has proved historically incompatible with membership of the EU—a den of perpetual compromise and incrementalism.<sup>12</sup>

Even if a particular tradition of British willingness to compromise is turned on its head here, Taylor shares an important premise with that position—namely, the assumption that deeply rooted national traditions exist that either facilitate or hinder compromise as a means of political conflict resolution.

Political scientists have also tended to regard Britain as a classic country of compromise, while Germany is seen as the stronghold of a tradition that has long been hostile to compromise. Alin Fumurescu explains these differences in terms of the history of ideas and notes different lines of tradition in the relationship between political representation and self-representations since the early modern period. On this basis, he distinguishes between a British and a Continental European model, identifying the latter primarily with France: ‘by the end of the sixteenth century the French had started to be increasingly *méfiant*s about compromise, while their English counterparts, far from manifesting such worries, became increasingly enthusiastic about it.’<sup>13</sup> According to Fumurescu, the contrast between Continental absolutism and early parliamentarism in England led to different manifestations of the dialectic between inner life and public roles. While absolutism on the Continent intensified the opposition between the two spheres of the self, in England it collapsed.<sup>14</sup> Unlike in England, compromise in France and Continental Europe was therefore understood as an attack on the core of individuality. Against this background, Fumurescu contends, compromise was always tainted with the odium of betrayal of those inner principles that constituted the centre of the self. However, the extent to which this intellectual–historical interpretation conforms to the history of the concrete political conflicts in these countries is another matter.

<sup>12</sup> Paul Taylor, ‘Britain’s Culture of Confrontation’, *POLITICO*, 5 Apr. 2019, at [<https://www.politico.eu/article/britain-culture-of-confrontation-brexit/>], accessed 6 Dec. 2022.

<sup>13</sup> Alin Fumurescu, *Compromise: A Political and Philosophical History* (Cambridge, 2013), 5.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *ibid.* 12.

Fumurescu's theses culminate in the nineteenth century, when the first reflections on the role of compromise were published, especially in Britain. This is where the German political scientist Martin Greiffenhagen comes in, who contrasts British friendliness with German hostility to compromise, and in doing so brings us into the late twentieth century.<sup>15</sup> His argument is based primarily on the *Studien über die Deutschen* by the German-British sociologist Norbert Elias, who stated that Germany had a weakly developed bourgeoisie compared to England; instead, he says, a militaristic aristocratic culture had dominated Germany in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>16</sup> Greiffenhagen, who was born in 1928, might be considered a typical member of the so-called '45ers. This designation, which should be understood as an expression of a generational self-interpretation,<sup>17</sup> is aimed at those members of a common age cohort who had grown up during the Nazi era and afterwards often translated their personal catharsis into a commitment to the newly established Federal Republic.<sup>18</sup> Greiffenhagen was part of a particular group of male, bourgeois intellectuals in the Federal Republic that shared not only a certain biographical experience, but also a common political project: the transformation of Germany into a Western, liberal democracy, often combined with a non-traditional understanding of the nation. In his case, this also involved a personal

<sup>15</sup> Martin Greiffenhagen, *Kulturen des Kompromisses* (Opladen, 1999).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. 27–32; see also Norbert Elias, *Studien über die Deutschen: Machtkämpfe und Habitusentwicklung im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Michael Schröter (Frankfurt am Main, 1989), published in English as *The Germans: Power Struggles and the Development of Habitus in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Cambridge, 1996).

<sup>17</sup> Benjamin Möckel, *Erfahrungsbruch und Generationsbehauptung: Die 'Kriegsjugendgeneration' in den beiden deutschen Nachkriegsgesellschaften* (Göttingen, 2014); Christina von Hodenberg, 'Zur Generation der 45er: Stärken und Schwächen eines Deutungsmusters', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 70/4–5 (2020), 4–9. Martin Greiffenhagen's generational self-interpretation becomes clear above all in his *Jahrgang 1928: Aus einem unruhigen Leben* (Munich, 1988), esp. 13–14, 55–63.

<sup>18</sup> See Ulrich Herbert, 'Drei politische Generationen im 20. Jahrhundert', in Jürgen Reulecke and Elisabeth Müller-Luckner (eds.), *Generationalität und Lebensgeschichte im 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 2003), 95–114; Dirk Moses, *German Intellectuals and the Nazi Past* (Cambridge, 2007).

dimension: a rebellion against his father, a Protestant pastor, who for him embodied the German tradition of authoritarianism to the highest degree:

The answers to the paternal challenge remain the same to this day: instead of decision, mediation; instead of either/or, dilemmas; instead of confession, scepticism; instead of commitment, analysis; instead of call to action, retreat into theory; instead of declarations of enmity, readiness to compromise; instead of the faith that is the only one that can bring salvation, a sense of a pluralism of world views.<sup>19</sup>

Greiffenhagen asserted that there had been a fundamental change in the political culture of the Federal Republic, so that the traditional hostility to compromise had finally been overcome and the country was able to catch up with the British, Western model. For him, compromise represented a democratic paradigm which was deeply embedded in everyday life. At the same time, for him the concept of 'compromise' involved an expectation; it predicted future development. The liberal optimism of the 1990s was in a sense extended in *Kulturen des Kompromisses* into a coming golden age of compromise. These ideas refer to an evolutionary model of a process of civilization, relying not only on Norbert Elias, but also on Alexander Rüstow and Irenäus Eibl-Eibesfeldt, thus ultimately linking the evolution of society with biology.<sup>20</sup>

To historians of modern Germany, the narrative of German redemption after 1945, to which Greiffenhagen contributes his own variant, seems familiar. It is obviously in the historiographical tradition of Germany's 'special path to modernity', its *Sonderweg*, which had its heyday in the 1970s. According to this theory, the catastrophe of National Socialism was a consequence of Germany's partial modernization, which deviated from the 'normal', Western path, but after 1949 the Federal Republic finally succeeded in making great

<sup>19</sup> Martin Greiffenhagen, 'Anders als andere? Zur Sozialisation von Pfarrerskindern', in id. (ed.), *Pfarrerskinder: Autobiographisches zu einem protestantischen Thema* (Stuttgart, 1982), 10–34, at 12.

<sup>20</sup> See Greiffenhagen, *Kulturen des Kompromisses*, 1–3; id., 'Die Deutschen: Norbert Elias und die politische Kulturforschung', *ZiF: Mitteilungen*, 4 (1997), 1–9.

strides on the long road to the West.<sup>21</sup> Since the 1980s, the thesis of a German special path to modernity has been increasingly criticized. Not only was the idea of Germany's civic deficit called into question, but it was also asked whether Britain did not itself represent a special case in many respects.<sup>22</sup> A little later, the end point of the development process presupposed here also began to dissolve in a discursive acid bath: 'modernity', 'civilization', 'the West'—the key terms of this thinking have all become extremely precarious. One might be sceptical about Greiffenhagen's teleology, which points to a coming liberal age of compromise. Nevertheless, his reflections have great heuristic value, as they suggest that the cultures of compromise in Britain and the Federal Republic developed in contrary directions after 1945. In the process, he raises questions that are in part also significant for events that occurred only after the publication of his book in 1999.

II. *House of Commons and Bundestag:  
Parliaments as Spaces of Compromise*

Parliaments are particularly appropriate places to study cultures of compromise, although this has hardly been attempted so far.<sup>23</sup> An important exception is an article by Wolfram Pyta, who discusses the Reichstag in the Weimar Republic as an experimental field of democratic consensus culture. For him, a parliamentary 'culture of compromise' means 'a disposition of the main political actors to make decisions'. Thus, his main focus is on the 'leadership of politicians . . . to make compromises palatable to their party which touch on particularly sensitive policy areas for its identity'.<sup>24</sup> In the end, however,

<sup>21</sup> From the extensive historiographical debate on the German *Sonderweg* see notably Helmut Walser Smith, 'When the Sonderweg Debate Left Us', *German Studies Review*, 31/2 (2008), 225–40.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford, 1984).

<sup>23</sup> For a political science approach to the role of rhetorical strategies in parliamentarism for dealing with dissent, cf. Kari Palonen, *Parliamentary Thinking: Procedure, Rhetoric and Time* (Cham, 2019).

<sup>24</sup> Wolfram Pyta, 'Die Weimarer Republik als Experimentierfeld demokratischer Konsenskultur', *Historisches Jahrbuch*, 140 (2020), 22–67, at 28–30.

Pyta's main concern seems to be the old debate about the responsibility for the failure of the Weimar Republic. He seeks to exonerate the Catholic Centre Party led by Chancellor Heinrich Brüning while at the same time incriminating the Social Democratic Party (SPD) because of its dependence on the trade unions, which, he argues, had left it incapable of compromise and thus ultimately made a coalition of democratic parties impossible.

However, compromise was never just an achievement of charismatic democratic party leaders. Rather, parliaments seem interesting in three particular respects: first, standards of political decision-making are negotiated on the parliamentary stage; second, a compromise reached in committees of various kinds has to be presented to the public in parliament; and third, reflection on the institutionalization of compromise takes place in parliaments through repeated discussions of the institutional and normative preconditions of compromises. A first step here will be to discuss the spatial and procedural institutionalization of compromise in the House of Commons and the Bundestag, before in a second step analysing the role of compromise in parliamentary debates. In such a *histoire croisée*<sup>25</sup> which is aware of the several dimensions of reflexivity involved in the topic, reciprocal influences must also be taken into account, even if they mainly worked in one direction. Even after 1945, Westminster democracy served as a 'parliamentary place of longing'<sup>26</sup> for Germany, with an idealized image of the British constitutional system of the nineteenth century as the point of reference.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, 'Beyond Comparison: *Histoire croisée* and the Challenge of Reflexivity', *History and Theory*, 45/1 (2006), 30–50.

<sup>26</sup> Christoph Schönberger, *Auf der Bank: die Inszenierung der Regierung im Staatstheater des Parlaments* (Munich, 2022), 4; cf. also Florian Meinel, *Vertrauensfrage: Zur Krise des heutigen Parlamentarismus* (Munich, 2019), 49–53; Andreas Wirsching and Andreas Schulz, 'Parlamentarische Kulturen in Europa: Das Parlament als Kommunikationsraum', in eid. (eds.), *Parlamentarische Kulturen in Europa: Das Parlament als Kommunikationsraum* (Düsseldorf, 2012), 11–26.

<sup>27</sup> See Marie-Luise Recker, 'Westminster als Modell? Der Deutsche Bundestag und das britische Regierungssystem', in Gerhard A. Ritter and Peter Wende (eds.), *Rivalität und Partnerschaft: Studien zu den deutsch-britischen Beziehungen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Festschrift für Anthony J. Nicholls* (Paderborn, 1999), 313–37, at 334.

Christoph Schönberger has studied the spatial arrangements of the parliamentary chambers of the House of Commons and the Bundestag and analysed the symbolic order built there. He rightly points out that the political staging is decisively shaped by the location of the performance.<sup>28</sup> In the House of Commons, ministers, if they are also MPs, sit in the front row of the benches to the right of the speaker. Behind them sit the members of the parliamentary majority. Opposite them, across a large table, sit the members of the opposition. The Bundestag, on the other hand, continues the seating arrangement of the Reichstag in Imperial Germany. The president of the Bundestag is enthroned in the centre and the government sits to his or her right, with civil servants seated behind the government. As Schönberger aptly puts it: 'The seating arrangement in London presents the government as the leadership of the parliamentary majority, that in Berlin as the head of an administrative machinery.'<sup>29</sup> In the House of Commons, the confrontation between the governing party and the opposition is thus symbolically staged. In the Bundestag, by contrast, the government is enthroned somewhat above the parliament and is thus spatially not directly involved in debates between MPs. If a German member of parliament wanted to attack the government from the lectern, they would have to look over their right shoulder.

The spatial arrangement of both parliaments also expresses those elements that shape the institutionalization of compromise. Thus to the left of the president of the German Bundestag we find the – mostly empty – seats of the Bundesrat, that is, the chamber of the states (*Länder*). Federalism forms an essential institutional element of the German culture of compromise, since important areas of legislation, such as the budget, can only be regulated in agreement with the states. For this reason, Article 77(2) of the Basic Law of the Federal Republic established a mediation committee between the Bundestag and the Bundesrat, which was supposed to 'bridge the factual and political differences of opinion between the two houses on a legislative resolution of the Bundestag by finding a compromise proposal'.<sup>30</sup> This institutionalization of compromise in the legislative process,

<sup>28</sup> Schönberger, *Auf der Bank*, 17.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. 148.

<sup>30</sup> Max Josef Dietlein, *Der Vermittlungsausschuß des Deutschen Bundestages und des Bundesrates* (Munich, 1983), at 2–3.

which has played an important role especially at times when the two houses had different political majorities, has some similarities to the conference committees which are supposed to mediate between the Senate and the House of Representatives in the USA. In contrast, the House of Lords, which was deprived of the right of veto on the budget in 1910, developed into an institution where ‘important committee work is done behind the scenes’, while ‘politics for the public’ takes place in the House of Commons.<sup>31</sup>

Another institutional prerequisite of compromise is electoral law. The House of Commons is elected by a system of majority voting, while personalized proportional representation applies to the Bundestag. Attempts were made in the Bundestag in the 1950s and again in the 1960s to introduce a majority voting system,<sup>32</sup> and several attempts have also been made to introduce proportional representation in the House of Commons.<sup>33</sup> While both efforts were unsuccessful, the accompanying debates provide important insights into the different understandings of the role of compromise in each country. In 1955, Hugo Scharnberg, an MP for the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and chairman of the electoral law committee of the Bundestag, argued for the introduction of majority voting to help deradicalize politics and assist the parties in the centre:

From this predominant interest of both parties in the marginal voters in the centre, a policy of moderation, understanding, and compromise must consistently result for both government and opposition. In a sense, they are subject to a centripetal force. This is all the more true for the opposition as it must be ready at any time to take over the government after new elections.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Thomas Mergel, *Großbritannien seit 1945* (Göttingen, 2005), 28.

<sup>32</sup> Marie-Luise Recker, *Parlamentarismus in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Der Deutsche Bundestag 1949–1969* (Düsseldorf, 2018), 72–105; ead., ‘Westminster als Modell’, 324–32; Eckhard Jesse, *Wahlrecht zwischen Kontinuität und Reform: Eine Analyse der Wahlsystemdiskussion und der Wahlrechtsänderungen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1949–1983* (Düsseldorf, 1985).

<sup>33</sup> Pippa Norris, ‘The Politics of Electoral Reform in Britain’, *International Political Science Review*, 16/1 (1995), 65–78, cf. esp. 71–5.

<sup>34</sup> Stenographische Berichte des Deutschen Bundestags (hereafter DBT), 2. Wahlperiode (hereafter WP), 94. Sitzung (6 Jul. 1955), 5332; see also DBT, 2. WP, 254. Sitzung (18 Mar. 1953), 12204.



The background to these considerations was that in the 1950s the CDU and its sister party, the Christian Social Union (CSU), had to rely on a broad alliance with parties that were often far to the right in order to form a government. Thus, without much enthusiasm, Konrad Adenauer formed changing coalitions with the Free Democratic Party (FDP) as well as other parties such as the German Party, the Free People's Party, and the All-German Bloc/League of Expellees and Those Deprived of Rights. It was not until the 1960s that two-party coalitions between the CDU/CSU or the SPD and the FDP developed into the defining political model of the Federal Republic for almost four decades. Florian Meinel describes this as a 'dramatic shrinking and consolidation of the party system from eleven to two and a half parties'.<sup>35</sup>

On the other hand, in the House of Commons, Conservative British MP Gary Waller defended first-past-the-post voting in 1981 because it led to stable governments rather than shaky coalitions: 'Coalitions are far more likely to come about after an election as a result of compromises and bargains dictated overwhelmingly by political opportunism. In that sense it is a far less democratic system.' And finally, he went on, small parties would gain enormous power and would thus be able to force compromises from the larger party 'which, very likely, the majority of those who did not vote for that party would find unacceptable.' While he considered coalitions in politics necessary, they should not be formed between parties but within them for reasons of stability:

We have a coalition in Britain, but it is one within the parties. Compromise can best be achieved within the parties even though some of my hon. Friends, for example, have more in common with some Labour Members than with others of their hon. Friends in their own party. Centre parties introduce a fundamentally unstable element into the system, which is currently not present.<sup>36</sup>

Conservatives in the Bundestag and in the House of Commons thus both spoke out in favour of majority voting as they were keen to

<sup>35</sup> Meinel, *Vertrauensfrage*, 66.

<sup>36</sup> House of Commons Hansard (hereafter HC) Debates (hereafter Deb.), vol. 2, col. 1274 (10 Apr. 1981).

govern without unloved coalition partners. But their justifications contradicted each other on one important point. Scharnberg hoped that the introduction of majority voting would lead to an increasing orientation of the major parties towards a politically moderate 'centre'.<sup>37</sup> This intimate connection between 'compromise' and the political 'centre' has a long tradition in German political culture.<sup>38</sup> Waller, on the other hand, feared the strengthening of the political centre, which could tip the scales and force the major parties to make unpopular compromises as a consequence of proportional representation. In this respect, the liberal German FDP may have been in his mind's eye. For Britain, he described a political system in which compromises ideally took place within the parties, while Parliament appeared as a place of political confrontation. Behind this was thus also an opposing understanding of the relationship between political stability and compromise.

In the Federal Republic, the model of a *Volkspartei*, or catch-all party, which made compromise an internal party matter, became the guiding principle at least for the major parties. But there, unlike in Britain, a broad consensus prevailed that such popular parties should be oriented above all towards the political centre in order to keep extremes in check—the spectre of the Weimar Republic still hovers over this political discourse today. However, since personalized proportional representation has remained the rule in the Federal Republic, coalition governments were usually necessary, which entailed inter-factional compromises, as CDU/CSU whip Heinrich von Brentano described in the Bundestag on 6 December 1961: 'The existence and success of a coalition government depends on the willingness of the coalition partners to overcome differences of opinion on the domestic and foreign policy course by way of genuine compromise and to meet each other in loyal cooperation.'<sup>39</sup> As I have said, in Britain coalition governments were described as a nightmare by the defenders of first-past-the-post voting, who preferred intra-party compromises. Thus

<sup>37</sup> On Scharnberg's role in the suffrage debate cf. Recker, *Parlamentarismus*; ead., 'Westminster als Modell', 324.

<sup>38</sup> See Pyta, 'Weimarer Republik als Experimentierfeld', 42; Recker, 'Westminster als Modell', 318–19.

<sup>39</sup> DBT, 4. WP, 6. Sitzung (6 Dec. 1961), 65.

not only the institutionalization of political compromise differed in the two parliaments, but also the associated interpretations of the political function of compromise, which can be traced in parliamentary debates.

### III. *Parliamentary Debates and Cultures of Compromise*

Compromise does not usually emerge from parliamentary debates. Rather, it is generally achieved in party or parliamentary committees, and also in informal discussions between MPs, since the sociability of parliamentarians, which often cuts across parties, plays an important role.<sup>40</sup> However, for research into the cultures of compromise, which aims to identify the manifold social preconditions for this particular kind of conflict settlement, parliamentary debates form an excellent source. There we can not only examine the different uses and evaluations of the term 'compromise' and the changes associated with it, but parliamentary debates in both countries also provide information on what expectations were associated with compromise, which political conflicts could be regarded as subject to compromise in the first place, and, last but not least, where compromise was considered impossible. To this end, the stenographic minutes of the House of Commons and the Bundestag for the period from 1949 until the 1990s will be analysed using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. The discussion proceeds in three steps. First, how are compromises justified and connoted in parliamentary speech acts? Is the notion of 'compromise' used differently in Britain and Germany? Second, how is the relationship between democracy and compromise described? And how is this related to the self-understanding of parliamentarism in both countries? Third, how are the limits of compromise described in these debates? Which issues are considered non-negotiable? And with which counterparts is it impossible to compromise?

<sup>40</sup> See Thomas Mergel, *Parlamentarische Kultur in der Weimarer Republik: Politische Kommunikation, symbolische Politik und Öffentlichkeit im Reichstag* (Düsseldorf, 2002).

*'True' or 'Fair' Compromise?*

An analysis of the uses of the word 'compromise' in the House of Commons and in the Bundestag faces the problem that it captures terms of both reference and analysis. Their uses differ significantly in some cases: while 'compromise' as an analytical term draws a sharp line between itself and both 'consensus' and 'deal' in order to create a clearly definable study area in the first place,<sup>41</sup> this clear-cut demarcation is blurred in the language of the source. For analytical purposes, then, the term 'compromise' must be considered as an ideal type (to use Max Weber's concept), and therefore the variations in the usage of the term which we can find in the sources are important for the investigation, in that relevant aspects of the different cultures of compromise become visible through the analysis of shifting semantic borders. Whenever compromise has been mentioned in the House of Commons or in the Bundestag since the late 1940s, it has been embedded in different semantic fields. Such differences can be investigated by applying collocation analyses that statistically represent the proximity and clustering of adjectives with which the term 'compromise' is linked.<sup>42</sup>

A quantitative analysis—for example in the form of an evaluation of the frequency of the term 'compromise', or a collocation analysis of the adjectives occurring together with it—only provides meaningful results when accompanied by a qualitative analysis of the content. Neither the frequency of occurrence of the term 'compromise' nor the positive or negative attribution of this term allow us to directly conclude a particularly compromise-friendly or compromise-unfriendly political culture, as the comparison of the content with the debates shows. However, when these are combined with a qualitative analysis of the occurrence and use of the term 'compromise' during parliamentary debates, revealing insights emerge. This can be illustrated by an example: the all-time high in the use of the phrase 'spirit of compromise', which evokes the positive myth of British friendliness towards compromise, came precisely at the time of the dispute over

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Willems et al., 'Kompromiss, Konsens, Deal'.

<sup>42</sup> Stefan Pulte and Bithleem Sagiroglou (Ruhr-Universität Bochum) have helped me a great deal in creating collocation analyses of the word 'compromise' in the House of Commons and in the Bundestag.

Brexit, which is generally regarded as the nadir of the British culture of compromise.<sup>43</sup> But this seemingly paradoxical result again points to the value of combining qualitative and quantitative methods, for here the hypothesis could be formulated that the evocation of a willingness to compromise can also have an appellative character aimed precisely at an opposing political practice. The following analysis, which seeks to correlate quantitative and qualitative findings, is thus concerned with such complex processes.

If we look at the British case, the first thing that strikes us is that in the House of Commons—and likewise in the House of Lords—positive uses of the term ‘compromise’ consistently dominated in parliamentary speeches (see Table 1). These were mainly signalled by adjectives such as ‘reasonable’ and ‘fair’, which are mirrored, as it were, by the most frequently used negative adjectives, including above all ‘unsatisfactory’ and ‘shabby’.<sup>44</sup> If this already implies that compromise was primarily understood in British parliamentarism as a more or less fair exchange of interests, the impression is reinforced by the fact that the boundaries between compromise and the words ‘consensus’ and ‘deal’ were fluid. The notion of compromise in British parliamentary debates thus referred to a specific understanding of political conflict that corresponds to what some commentators see as Adam Smith’s ideal of a free market, ‘in which everyone could simply trade fairly with one another, each seeking their best advantage and then walking away without owing anyone anything.’<sup>45</sup> This does not mean, of course, that the British parliamentarians who used the term ‘compromise’ in this way were necessarily convinced that political reality really always reflected such mutual maximization of benefit. But the use of this term had and still has a considerable appellative

<sup>43</sup> See keyword search for ‘spirit of compromise’ in House of Commons Hansard, 1945–2021, at [<https://hansard.parliament.uk/search/Contributions?startDate=1945-01-01&endDate=2021-12-31&searchTerm=spirit%20of%20compromise&house=Commons&partial=False>], accessed 27 Dec. 2022.

<sup>44</sup> See House of Commons and House of Lords, list of adjectival collocates, evaluation of changes at ten-year intervals, 1950–2000, in *Hansard Corpus: British Parliament* at [<https://www.english-corpora.org/hansard/>], accessed 27 Dec. 2022. The statistical tool does not allow values for the House of Commons to be shown separately.

<sup>45</sup> See David Graeber, *Debt: The First 5,000 Years* (New York, 2014), 399.

potential, and in this respect it also resembles the term ‘free market’. As such, the genealogy of the alleged ‘British genius for compromise’ which Friedrich Hayek sketched out in 1945<sup>46</sup> certainly made an important point: as I have shown, for him, compromise and the free market belonged inextricably together.

Table 1: Adjectival collocates for the word ‘compromise’ in House of Commons and House of Lords debates, 1950–2000.

COLLOCATE	FREQUENCY*	FREQUENCY PER MILLION
reasonable	545	0.68
possible	248	0.31
fair	220	0.28
noble	205	0.26
sensible	199	0.25
acceptable	178	0.22
good	165	0.21
honourable	162	0.20
other	140	0.18
British	120	0.15
satisfactory	114	0.14
necessary	113	0.14
right	112	0.14
political	111	0.14
best	94	0.12
difficult	80	0.10
happy	72	0.09
new	68	0.09
certain	61	0.08
present	61	0.08

\* Frequency of the collocation within the interval of five words before or after the search item.

Data from *Hansard Corpus: British Parliament*, at [<https://www.english-corpora.org/hansard/>], accessed 27 Dec. 2022.

<sup>46</sup> Hayek, ‘The British Genius for Compromise’.

In contrast, the term ‘compromise’ was used differently in the Bundestag in the first decades after 1949 (see Table 2). There, the concept of ‘necessary’ compromise dominated, especially in the 1950s. Thus the intellectual–historical tradition of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel’s dictum ‘freedom is insight into necessity’ was combined with the contemporary historical dimension of the Federal Republic struggling to take its first steps towards sovereignty. Over the following decades, this semantics gradually shifted towards ‘sustainable’ and ‘fair’, which can be described as a gradual alignment with the British semantics of compromise.<sup>47</sup> Compromise was thus also regarded in the Bundestag in the best case as the result of a rational reconciliation of interests, albeit with a stronger emphasis not on common sense, but rather on the moral quality of the agreement reached.

Table 2: Adjectival collocates for the word ‘Kompromiss’ in Deutscher Bundestag, 1950–2000.

COLLOCATE	FREQUENCY*	FREQUENCY PER MILLION	STRENGTH OF ASSOCIATION
<i>gefunden</i> (struck)	188	0.27	7.0681
<i>faul</i> (rotten)	164	0.24	7.0552
<i>tragfähig</i> (workable)	104	0.15	6.1565
<i>tragbar</i> (tolerable)	73	0.11	5.7027
<i>fair</i> (fair)	85	0.12	5.5356
<i>vernünftig</i> (reasonable)	187	0.27	5.5062
<i>ausgehandelt</i> (negotiated)	39	0.06	4.9622
<i>erzielt</i> (achieved)	40	0.06	4.8331
<i>akzeptabel</i> (acceptable)	36	0.05	4.7868
<i>vertretbar</i> (justifiable)	46	0.07	4.7838
<i>ausgewogen</i> (balanced)	47	0.07	4.7032
<i>erreicht</i> (reached)	24	0.03	4.0164

<sup>47</sup> For the following, see the dynamic collocation analysis (word cloud) for ‘Kompromiss’, Bundestag, 1949–2000, at *Deutsches Textarchiv*, [<https://kaskade.dwds.de/dstar/bundestag/diacollo/?query=Kompromi%C3%9F&date=1950-2000&slice=10&score=ld&kbest=10&cutoff=&profile=2&format=cloud&groupby=1%2Cp%3DADJA&eps=0>], accessed 27 Dec. 2022.

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<i>vorliegend</i> (on the table)	98	0.14	3.8571
<i>unterschiedlich</i> (different)	74	0.11	3.7687
<i>Luxemburger</i> (Luxembourg)	15	0.02	3.6503
<i>gut</i> (good)	193	0.28	3.4408
<i>optimal</i> (optimal)	18	0.03	3.4295
<i>historisch</i> (historic)	27	0.04	3.4084
<i>schlecht</i> (bad)	32	0.05	3.3154
<i>annehmbar</i> (adequate)	10	0.01	3.0546

\* Frequency of the collocation within the interval of five words before or after the search item and only within the same sentence.

Data from *Deutsches Textarchiv*, at [<https://kaskade.dwds.de/dstar/bundestag/>], accessed 27 Dec. 2022. All forms and combinations of the word ‘Kompromiss’ have been considered.

Thus in German parliamentary usage of the word *Kompromiss* (‘compromise’), the conflict between inner conviction and outer political action appears more strongly. This impression becomes even clearer when one considers the negative attributions of compromise. In the Bundestag, the adjective *faul*, which means ‘rotten’ and refers to the poor moral quality of a compromise, was consistently the top negative attribution. Accordingly, the use of the term ‘compromise’ in the Bundestag was also characterized less by that seamless transition between ‘compromise’ and ‘consensus’ so characteristic of the British case than by an opposition of these terms. Thus, on 14 July 1950, the German MP Georg August Zinn (SPD) justified the joint committee draft of a law on the election of judges as follows: ‘As great as the differences in opinion seemed to be, if one looks at the original drafts, it has been possible to find generally satisfactory solutions here, and without any bad compromises being made. It has been possible here to convince each other.’<sup>48</sup> The Social Democrat opposition politician thus praised the consensus, which he explicitly distinguished from a –‘rotten’– compromise.

While a long-term trend of alignment with the British understanding of compromise can be discerned in the Bundestag, so that it ultimately came to be considered as a rational reconciliation of interests in both countries, important semantic differences remained. These

<sup>48</sup> DBT, 1. WP, 75./76. Sitzung (14 Jul. 1950), 2731.



were based on disparate understandings of the nature of ‘compromise’: ‘fair’ compromise in Britain was opposed to ‘true’ compromise in Germany. So while the link between compromise and pragmatism which Martin Greiffenhagen aptly describes for the British case seems to have lasted, German decisionism<sup>49</sup> was apparently transformed, though the emphasis on the inner, moral quality of the decision<sup>50</sup> contained therein has been preserved for much longer.

Finally, may we conclude from the use of positive or negative connotations that there is principled hostility towards or sympathy with compromise on both sides? Unfortunately, it is not so simple. Often a strategic relationship is more apparent: those who wanted to legitimize an achieved compromise, or push through a certain compromise solution, made positive attributions, and vice versa. The liberal MP Otto Graf Lambsdorff (FDP) summed up this mechanism in 1973 in the Bundestag: ‘People always talk about rotten compromise when the compromise doesn’t suit them.’<sup>51</sup> Talking about compromise in parliaments therefore also forms part of a ‘blame game’ that thrives on the fact that uncompromising behaviour is sanctioned either positively or negatively in public.<sup>52</sup> We are thus dealing with complicated feedback mechanisms between parliaments and the public, the study of which still entails considerable challenges.

*Compromise as National Tradition or Touchstone of Democracy?*

The semantic differences in uses of the word ‘compromise’ which we have seen so far also point to different self-perceptions in the House of Commons and the Bundestag. On the British side there existed an unbroken and self-confident parliamentary tradition after 1945. Friedrich Hayek’s assessment, already quoted, that there was a specific British ‘spirit of compromise’ was frequently echoed in the House of Commons. The ability to compromise was thus not only declared to be a major element of the institutional self-understanding of the

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Greiffenhagen, *Kulturen des Kompromisses*, 19–48.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Ulrich Pfister, ‘Einleitung’, in id. (ed.), *Kulturen des Entscheidens: Narrative – Praktiken – Ressourcen* (Göttingen, 2019), 11–36.

<sup>51</sup> DBT, 7. WP, 42. Sitzung (14 Jun. 1973), 2331.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. also Baume and Novak, ‘Compromise and Publicity in Democracy’.

British Parliament, but also a part of British identity. In the context of a debate on the abolition of the death penalty, which had been conducted in Britain throughout the twentieth century, Labour MP Sydney Silverman declared in 1956:

Where people are unanimously resolved to serve the same ultimate end but are passionately, deeply, sincerely divided as to the ways in which that can be done, it is in the British tradition to look to some kind of compromise which will give to both sides something, perhaps the bulk, of what they want without conceding the whole case to either.<sup>53</sup>

And during a debate on the Glasgow Corporation Bill on 24 April 1956, Captain James Duncan, an MP for the National Liberals, also defended his position with an invocation of the British tradition of compromise: 'The great thing in the British Constitution is compromise and making a thing work.'<sup>54</sup> Referring to compromise in the House of Commons usually had a largely rhetorical function in that it either served to legitimize a compromise that had been reached, or was intended to persuade the opposing party to make such a compromise. In the case of the death penalty, it actually took several more decades before a compromise was finally achieved.

The Bundestag, on the other hand, had to build its self-confidence as a democracy in the first place after 1949, as the parliamentary tradition in Germany had been interrupted for twelve years by the Nazi dictatorship. In the process of reclaiming a democratic self-understanding, the notion of a traditional German hostility to compromise was also repeatedly addressed in critical terms. In 1950, during a debate on worker participation in German industry, the conservative MP Johannes DeGENER (CDU) declared: 'If we had been willing to compromise more often in our German history, we would not be in the predicament we are in today. I am a friend of workable compromises, and I hope that a compromise solution will be reached in committee.'<sup>55</sup> So while in Britain at this time compromise was talked about as if it were a self-evident national virtue, in the Bundestag we can find pedagogical exhortations

<sup>53</sup> HC Deb., vol. 548, col. 2629 (16 Feb. 1956).

<sup>54</sup> HC Deb., vol. 551, col. 1724 (24 Apr. 1956).

<sup>55</sup> DBT, 1. WP, 80. Sitzung (27 Jul. 1950), 2971.

that served to explain compromise and establish it as the new standard of political culture. The Social Democrat MP Helmut Schmidt in particular raised this point again and again. On 27 March 1968, for example, the then SPD whip justified the necessity of political compromise in government coalitions in the Bundestag:

There are people in Germany who use the expression 'rotten compromise' for this agreement process as a relic from the Wilhelmine age, or even worse: from an age that came later. I want to make it quite clear that anyone who does not have the will to compromise within him or herself is not fit for democracy.<sup>56</sup>

In this way, compromise became the touchstone of successful democratization. Learning to compromise thus long enjoyed the status of a self-imposed project of democratic training in the Federal Republic, supported above all by parts of the Protestant milieu and by Social Democratic education reformers. An important place for the dissemination of such ideas was the Bad Boll academy, a Protestant educational institution founded in 1945, which is now the largest of its kind in Europe. According to Sabrina Hoppe, its founder, Pastor Eberhard Müller, was convinced 'that after the ideology of Nazi Germany only a culture of communication and exchange, a culture that is based on compromises, could anchor an understanding of democracy in the young German society.'<sup>57</sup> This was also in keeping with programmes which had been promoted by the Western allies after 1945 with the assumption that in schools and civic education institutions the (West) Germans should learn to debate like the British.<sup>58</sup>

Other sections of German Protestantism took up the tradition of decisionism, however. As Martina Steber has shown, in the 1960s the Protestant theologian Helmut Gollwitzer castigated the

<sup>56</sup> DBT, 5. WP, 161. Sitzung (27 Mar. 1968), 8469.

<sup>57</sup> Sabrina Hoppe, 'Demokratische Konsenskultur? Von der Sympathie des bundesdeutschen Protestantismus für eine Ethik des Kompromisses', *Journal for the History of Modern Theology/Zeitschrift für Neuere Theologiegeschichte*, 23/2 (2016), 218–35, at 218, available at [<https://doi.org/10.1515/znth-2016-0029>].

<sup>58</sup> See also Nina Verheyen, *Diskussionslust: Eine Kulturgeschichte des 'besseren Arguments' in Westdeutschland* (Göttingen, 2010), esp. 272–81.

‘conventionalization of Christianity’ by the CDU and defined Christianity in a steely tone as a radical counter-programme to the society of its time: ‘Gospel-oriented, radically different, of a “dynamic, revolutionary character”, unworldly, uncompromising.’<sup>59</sup> Attempts to base democracy in the Federal Republic on a culture of compromise thus repeatedly wrestled with German intellectual traditions that preferred rigid adherence to truths of faith and convictions. Luther’s legendary closing words at the Diet of Worms in 1521—‘Here I stand, I can do no other’—had become firmly engrained in the German imagination and continued to be popularized and trivialized in many ways in the Federal Republic until more recent times, from Luther socks to Luther condoms.<sup>60</sup> One might say that Martin Greiffenhagen epitomizes this dichotomy within German Protestantism. Starting with his personal dispute with his father, a staunchly authoritarian Protestant pastor, he conducted a theoretical debate between militant decisionism on the one hand and an attitude of scepticism, tolerance, and willingness to compromise on the other.<sup>61</sup>

Such conflicts also shaped the debate when, on 13 March 1975, the Social Democratic Minister President Heinz Kühn, as the representative of the Bundesrat in the Bundestag, promoted the North Rhine-Westphalian school reform and spoke in favour of teaching children to deal with conflict:

This means that the school must educate children in tolerance, in the ability to choose compromises, in the realization that truth always consists of partial truths and is almost never only on one side. Therefore, education in the ability to compromise and in tolerance is the main task of the school.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Martina Steber, *Die Hüter der Begriffe: Politische Sprachen des Konservativen in Großbritannien und der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1945–1980* (Berlin, 2017), 189–90.

<sup>60</sup> See [<http://www.luthersocke.de/>] and ‘Luther-Kondome: “Hier stehe ich und kann nicht anders”’, *god.fish*, 21 Mar. 2017, at [<https://god.fish/2017/03/21/luther-kondome-hier-stehe-ich-und-kann-nicht-anders/>], both accessed 12 Dec. 2022. On the older intellectual-historical traditions of German decisionism, cf. also Greiffenhagen, *Kulturen des Kompromisses*, 19–48.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Greiffenhagen, *Jahrgang 1928*, 17–22; id., ‘Anders als andere?’.

<sup>62</sup> DBT, 7. WP, 155. Sitzung (13 Mar. 1975), 10806.

Kühn presented these educational reform ideas, which at the time were the subject of a veritable culture war, in the context of a debate on internal security that had been prompted by fears of left-wing terrorism in the Federal Republic. In the atmosphere of a state of emergency, which again promoted a climate of either/or, he thus attempted to plead for tolerance of ambiguity, though he was met with derisive comments from conservative MPs.

Whereas in the 1950s and 1960s the main concern had been to establish and stabilize democratic rules in the Federal Republic, which included learning to compromise, from the 1970s the democratic rules of the game were considered secure, provided that they did not appear to be endangered from the outside—above all by terrorism. From the 1980s, however, conflicts over compromise and democracy shifted back to the Bundestag itself. After a three-party system consisting of CDU/CSU, SPD, and FDP had established itself in the Bundestag since 1961, a new party, the Greens, entered for the first time in 1983.<sup>63</sup> Because of its origins in the new social movements, this party initially questioned the political rules of the game that had by now become firmly established. In particular, the Greens criticized the fact that compromises were not negotiated in the Bundestag and were thus reached in a non-transparent manner. Their criticism went to the heart of the understanding of democratic culture that had developed since 1949, which is why the Greens were now accused of being hostile to democracy.

This situation was repeated in a similar way when a post-communist party, the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS, now Die Linke), entered the Bundestag after the first all-German election in December 1990.<sup>64</sup> Like the Greens before them, PDS MPs criticized the lack of transparency in reaching compromises, and the established parties again censured their lack of understanding of democracy. The new parties' criticism of the institutionalization of compromise in committees and not in the public arena thus shook the very democratic self-understanding that the Bundestag had so laboriously acquired after 1949, which had manifested itself not least in the emphatic adoption of the British model of

<sup>63</sup> See Silke Mende, *'Nicht rechts, nicht links, sondern vorn': Eine Geschichte der Gründungsgrünen* (Munich, 2011).

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Thorsten Holzhauser, *Die 'Nachfolgepartei': Die Integration der PDS in das politische System der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1990–2005* (Berlin, 2019).

compromise. While the Green party was ultimately considered ‘fit for compromise’, Die Linke, at least in the Bundestag, shares the fate of the far-right Alternative for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland, AfD), which only joined in 2017. In both cases a limit to compromise continues to be maintained by the other parties, although here, too, the boundaries occasionally erode.

So while in the Federal Republic after 1949 it was believed by many, though not all, that a British culture of debate and compromise had to be adopted, that culture was persistently regarded in Britain as a national virtue. To a certain degree, the British ‘spirit of compromise’ was even considered an export good. During a 1953 debate in the House of Commons about expressing British gratitude for the Marshall Plan through a scholarship programme for scholars from the USA, the Labour MP Geoffrey de Freitas suggested: ‘Marshall scholars should have a chance of learning our way of life and especially the value of our political characteristics of tolerance and compromise. Of course we have much to learn from them as well.’<sup>65</sup> In this paternalistic perspective, the USA became the grown-up model colony which received important impulses from Britain, but was also able to give something back.

But what about the other colonies? After the Second World war, the wave of decolonization repeatedly produced discussions in the House of Commons as to how far the former colonies had progressed in adopting those British political virtues that were seen as a prerequisite for peaceful development. However, decolonization was accompanied by violence from the beginning. Thus, while in the Federal Republic it was above all domestic political developments, including terrorism, that raised the questions of where compromises were applicable and where they were not, and also who was able to compromise and who was not, in Britain these debates were especially driven by the confrontation with political violence in the context of decolonization.

### *The Limits of Compromise*

The limits of compromise can be described by a mixture of social, normative, institutional, and epistemological boundaries, and here

<sup>65</sup> HC Deb., vol. 517, cols. 742–3 (3 Jul. 1953).

we find some remarkable differences between Britain and Germany. For a long time, the House of Commons has been marked by a relatively high degree of social and cultural homogeneity, and therefore mutual recognition among MPs has tended to prevail. While this did not presuppose shared points of view or normative assumptions, it included a mutual commitment to a shared rationality. This was based on often similar origins and socialization, including a debate culture oriented towards sporting competition.<sup>66</sup> In an attempt to advance the long-running research controversy surrounding the British post-war consensus, Dean Blackburn has recently shifted the emphasis onto the importance of shared epistemological foundations. He refers to a ‘common enthusiasm for empiricist reasoning’ among the Labour and Conservative parties: both were ‘committed to evolutionary forms of change, and they eschewed the notion that any social or political arrangement was of universal value.’<sup>67</sup> This is not an entirely new argument, as it essentially reformulates the familiar image of British pragmatism once again. But Blackburn calls attention to the importance of shared basic epistemological assumptions as an element of cultures of compromise.

It might be argued that besides a shared epistemological model of empiricism or critical rationalism, the alternative tradition of the gentlemanly ideal, which focused on personal trust as a criterion for vouching for truth,<sup>68</sup> still continued to have an effect in British politics after 1945. A good indicator of this is provided above all by attempts to have intricate conflicts solved by commissions headed by honourable chairpersons, as was also repeatedly attempted – unsuccessfully – in the debate on the death penalty. In 1949 the Attlee government set up the Royal Commission on Capital Punishment to find a compromise solution to the deadlocked dispute. After four years of work, the Commission’s report was finally published in 1953. During a debate in the House of Commons on 16 February 1956, MP Sydney Silverman quoted the central result of this report: “‘We conclude with regret

<sup>66</sup> See Mergel, *Großbritannien seit 1945*, 31–2.

<sup>67</sup> Dean Blackburn, ‘Reassessing Britain’s “Post-War Consensus”: The Politics of Reason 1945–1979’, *British Politics*, 13 (2018), 195–214, at 196.

<sup>68</sup> See Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life* (Princeton, 1985).

that the object of our quest"—that is, a compromise—"is chimerical and that it must be abandoned."<sup>69</sup> So it was still up to the House of Commons to reach a compromise. In 1957 the Homicide Act was finally reformed and the number of crimes punishable by death was reduced. Labour MP Charles Mapp had defended the draft during the previous deliberations of the bill—"I believe that this is an experiment in compromise. It is a typical decision of our race and country"<sup>70</sup>—thus using a reference to the ostensible British national character to appeal to the Conservative opposition.

Yet the compromise contained in the Homicide Act continued to be fought over by both supporters and opponents of the death penalty in the years that followed. In 1961 the Conservative MP Fred Harris proposed a national referendum 'to ascertain public opinion regarding a revision of the Homicide Act, 1957, to permit the full restoration of capital punishment for murder.'<sup>71</sup> The secretary of state for the Home Department, the Conservative MP Rab Butler, bluntly rejected the proposal: 'No, Sir. The referendum is not part of our constitutional practice.'<sup>72</sup> This episode is significant for our understanding of the limits of compromise in the House of Commons: unlike the compromise, the referendum knows only winners or losers. As early as 1918, Max Weber had stated:

The referendum, as a means of both election and legislation, has internal barriers that follow from its technical nature. It only answers with 'yes' or 'no' . . . The referendum does not know the compromise on which the majority of all laws are inevitably based in every mass state with strong regional, social, confessional, and other antagonisms.<sup>73</sup>

Thus to reject the idea of a national referendum on the issue of the death penalty in the early 1960s was to defend the British culture of compromise.

<sup>69</sup> HC Deb., vol. 548, col. 2632 (16 Feb. 1956).

<sup>70</sup> HC Deb., vol. 708, col. 1544 (18 Mar. 1965).

<sup>71</sup> HC Deb., vol. 638, col. 1356 (20 Apr. 1961).

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> Max Weber, 'Parlament und Regierung im neugeordneten Deutschland (Mai 1918)', in *id.*, *Gesammelte politische Schriften*, ed. Johannes Winckelmann, 3rd exp. edn (Tübingen, 1971) 306–443, at 398.



In the Bundestag, by contrast, limits to compromise were drawn from the beginning. These limits, which were based on ideological differences that were seen as irreconcilable, were directed above all at the KPD, the German Communist Party, which was still represented in the Bundestag until 1953 and was finally banned in the Federal Republic in 1956. However they also applied to extreme right-wing speakers. The East–West conflict had a stronger direct impact on parliament in Germany, which was divided until 1990, than in Britain. After the KPD was removed from the Bundestag, the limits to compromise were shifted outwards under the banner of an anti-communism shared by all parties in the Bundestag, and were now mainly focused on the Soviet Union and the GDR. ‘Any willingness to compromise ceases where the fundamental rights and freedoms of the constitutional order are to be restricted’,<sup>74</sup> declared FDP Whip Erich Mende on 1 October 1958, and similar statements can be found in abundance in the proceedings of the Bundestag.

The limits of compromise drawn vis-à-vis the Eastern bloc by the three remaining parties in the Bundestag only eroded in the context of the *Neue Ostpolitik* (New Eastern Detente) promoted by the SPD from the beginning of the 1970s. This policy was based on the assumption that there would also be at least a limited willingness to compromise on the part of the East.<sup>75</sup> Although the CDU/CSU did not subscribe to this position ideologically, it did eventually adhere to it in practice. German reunification was thus followed by an era of cross-party consensus between the CDU and the SPD centred on compromise with Russia, which was seen as the successor to the Soviet Union – and this has only broken down recently.

In the House of Commons, on the other hand, for a long time questions about the limits of compromise arose less in domestic affairs than in foreign relations – a dividing line which has been increasingly blurred by migration. In addition to the country’s status as a junior partner of the USA in the Cold War, decolonization, which began after the Second World War, played a central role. The attempt to reorganize the British colonial empire in the form of the Commonwealth drew strongly on the guiding principle of compromise, which was considered the crowning

<sup>74</sup> DBT, 3. WP, 41. Sitzung (1 Oct. 1958), 2419.

<sup>75</sup> See e.g. Helmut Schmidt on negotiations between Germany and Poland, DBT, 7. WP. 202. Sitzung (26 Nov. 1975), 13972–4.

achievement of Britain's self-declared civilizing mission: 'This great concourse of nations, the British Commonwealth, has no future at all in a turbulent world unless it is based upon compassion, tolerance and compromise', Viscount Hinchinbrooke stated on 4 July 1960.<sup>76</sup>

Yet the conflicts that soon evolved during the process of decolonization also prompted the question of whether compromises with the former colonial other were possible at all. In 1775, when Edmund Burke had campaigned in the House of Commons for a compromise with the American colonies, he based this above all on the fact that 'the people of the colonies are descendents of Englishmen' and thus also possessed the English will to freedom.<sup>77</sup> But what if the colonized were not considered equal? On 8 November 1974, Conservative MP Ronald Bell blamed the African negotiating culture of the indaba for the failure of the recent talks between Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith and Bishop Muzorewa, the leader of the United African National Council:

the discussion on whether the terms of that agreement should be approved proceeded by the African process of indaba instead of by the European process of discussion and vote. Had it been dealt with by discussion and majority vote, which is after all, what we understand by democracy – that is to say, by the representative system – we should have seen an end of the Rhodesia problem by now . . . One cannot have this mediaeval or, rather, primitive African system of indaba on one side of the negotiations and plenipotentiaries on the other. It does not make sense, and it will never work.<sup>78</sup>

While on the one hand it was debated whether Africans still lacked an equivalent to the British culture of compromise – if the former colonial others were considered capable of compromise at all – on the other hand it was repeatedly stated in the House of Commons that, as in the case of Southern Rhodesia, it was representatives of the White settlers, such as Ian Smith, who made the limits of compromise abundantly clear.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>76</sup> HC Deb., vol. 626, col. 116 (4 July 1960); see also Beverley Baxter, HC Deb., vol. 470, col. 1554 (5 Dec. 1949).

<sup>77</sup> Burke, *Conciliation with the Colonies*, 28.

<sup>78</sup> HC Deb., vol. 880, col. 1481 (8 Nov. 1974).

<sup>79</sup> See e.g. Humphry Berkeley, HC Deb., vol. 720, col. 589 (12 Nov. 1965); Andrew Faulds, HC Deb., vol. 737, cols. 1672–4 (8 Dec. 1966).

The conflict over Northern Ireland, which grew into a civil war, also put stress on the culture of compromise in the House of Commons. Even after the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, which put a temporary end to the violence, the conflict raised a problem that had already arisen in the context of decolonization: what kinds of dealings were possible and appropriate with radical opponents of compromise or even with terrorists? Where were the limits here? Thus, from the 1960s onwards, an ever-deeper divide gradually emerged between those MPs who favoured compromise solutions and those who, in case of doubt, advocated non-compromise — that is, violence. A symbolic turning point was the sinking of the ARA *General Belgrano* in the Falklands War in 1982. The torpedoes Margaret Thatcher had ordered to be fired at the Argentinian warship, as was pointed out in the House of Commons at the time, wilfully sank the chances of settling the Falklands conflict through a compromise.<sup>80</sup> Long before the dispute over British membership of the EU, this marked a deep break in the British culture of compromise on the part of the Thatcherites,<sup>81</sup> who thus seemingly took a contrary course to the Federal Republic.

There is much to suggest that the limits of compromise have continued to shift in both countries during the last three decades, but this must be left for a more detailed investigation. Here we can only hint at the lines that need to be followed. For the British case, it remains to be clarified in more detail what connection existed between the path to Brexit and changes to the national culture of compromise. The starting hypothesis would be that the British process of alienation from the EU can be seen above all in the way the so-called Luxembourg Compromise was handled: from 1966, due to a French intervention, an informal veto right existed in the Council of Ministers of the EEC in cases in which a country's national interests stood in the way of a decision with a qualified majority.<sup>82</sup> Paradoxically, the European culture of compromise was

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Tam Dalyell, HC Deb., vol. 34, col. 900 (21 Dec. 1982).

<sup>81</sup> See Richard Toye, 'From "Consensus" to "Common Ground": The Rhetoric of the Postwar Settlement and its Collapse', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 48/1 (2013), 3–23; Steber, *Hüter der Begriffe*, esp. 90–2.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Helen Wallace, Pascaline Winand, and Jean-Marie Palayret (eds.), *Visions, Votes and Vetoes: The Empty Chair Crisis and the Luxembourg Compromise Forty Years On* (Brussels, 2006); N. Piers Ludlow, *The European Community*

thus based on not having to compromise in certain cases. The gradual erosion of this unofficial right of veto set in motion a debate in the House of Commons that began in the 1980s and finally culminated in Brexit. The fact that the ultimate decision resulted from a referendum, which, as we have seen, had been considered an inappropriate political decision-making practice as recently as the 1960s, marked a deep rupture in the British culture of compromise: it was one of those yes/no decisions aptly characterized by Max Weber, one that allowed a narrow majority to triumph completely over a minority.

In the Federal Republic, on the other hand, the limits of compromise seem to have expanded with the nation's territory since reunification. This is illustrated in part by the controversial asylum compromise, with the SPD agreeing to the far-reaching restriction of the right of asylum, including the amendment of the Basic Law. In return, the CDU/CSU made only minor concessions on the naturalization of foreigners in the Federal Republic, rejecting the immigration law demanded by the SPD.<sup>83</sup> Above all, however, reference should be made to the grand coalitions under Angela Merkel's chancellorship from 2005 to 2009 and again from 2013 to 2021, in which the CDU/CSU and SPD jointly formed the government. During these years, compromise became the hallmark of German politics, epitomized by Chancellor Angela Merkel, who on the occasion of her last participation in an EU summit in October 2019 was praised by Luxembourg's Prime Minister Xavier Bettel as a 'compromise machine'.<sup>84</sup>

The consequences of the post-unification era for the German culture of compromise still need to be examined more closely. Yet it seems that while the United Kingdom is currently suffering from the consequences

*and the Crises of the 1960s: Negotiating the Gaullist Challenge* (London, 2006), esp. 118–24; Kiran Klaus Patel, *Project Europe: A History*, trans. Meredith Dale (Cambridge, 2020), 23, 141.

<sup>83</sup> See Ulrich Herbert, *Geschichte der Ausländerpolitik in Deutschland: Saisonarbeiter, Zwangsarbeiter, Gastarbeiter, Flüchtlinge* (Munich, 2001), 315–22; Patrice G. Poutrus, *Umkämpftes Asyl: Vom Nachkriegsdeutschland bis in die Gegenwart* (Berlin, 2019), 161–78.

<sup>84</sup> 'Stehende Ovationen für die "Kompromissmaschine" Merkel', *Der Spiegel*, 22 Oct. 2021, at [<https://www.spiegel.de/ausland/angela-merkel-auf-eu-gipfel-lob-fuer-die-kompromissmaschine-a-ffcff8ff-f7e0-4c79-bd80-c3c14e4c3c12>], accessed 13 Mar. 2022.

of Brexit, which can be interpreted as a departure from a long tradition of political compromise, the Federal Republic is currently struggling with the fact that its adherence to compromise, represented above all by German policy towards Russia and China, has led the country into a dead end from which it is at present painfully trying to extricate itself.

#### *IV. Conclusion*

Taking a critical view of the current mainstream position that liberal society is in crisis owing to a declining ability to compromise, this article first examined various long-term interpretations of the contrasting significance of compromise in Britain and Germany. In the British case there is a tradition of emphasizing compromise as a national political virtue, though this has been called into question in the context of Brexit. In the German case, on the other hand, it is claimed that an original hostility to compromise dissolved after 1945. These often stereotypical opposing descriptions, which have long circulated between academia, politics, and the public, formed the starting point for my discussion of the opposing cultures of compromise in Britain and Germany. Hence my focus was not on the techniques of compromise, but on its social, cultural, and institutional preconditions, and to this end I examined the House of Commons and the German Bundestag.

First of all, the different institutional anchoring of compromise in the two parliaments became clear. On the one hand, both the spatial order of the House of Commons and British electoral law emphasize confrontation between opposition and government, while compromises must be made primarily within the political parties. In the Bundestag, on the other hand, the spatial arrangement was inherited from the Imperial Reichstag. This removed the government as the head of the executive from direct confrontation with the opposition and at the same time took into account the important role of federalism, which represents a key driver of the institutionalization of compromise in the Federal Republic. Moreover, Federal German electoral law, unlike its British counterpart, has focused primarily on strengthening the political 'centre'. In Britain, by contrast, for a long time political polarization and the willingness to compromise paradoxically seemed to go hand in hand.

While British parliamentarism after 1945 was supported by a great deal of confidence in stability and continuity, West German parliamentarism established a mode of crisis avoidance in which the ability to compromise was to be guaranteed above all by the 'community of democrats' and secured by the political exclusion of 'extremists'. The social and epistemic commonality among British MPs thus contrasted with the appeal to 'anti-totalitarian attitudes' among members of the Bundestag. This reflects the fact that the use of the term 'compromise' had different connotations in the two parliaments for a long time: it tended to be idealistic in the Bundestag, but more pragmatic in the House of Commons. These differences diminished over the decades, and the British understanding, which emphasizes the 'fair' exchange of interests in a political market rather than ostensibly disreputable bartering, gradually prevailed in the Federal Republic as well. Yet the regular, almost ritual invocation of compromise in both parliaments cannot simply be equated with a corresponding practice; rather, it often served to legitimize political agreements or to exert pressure on the political opponent to reach an agreement. This, however, presupposed that compromise had a high status in the national political culture.

In Britain, a dialectical relationship can thus be observed between a distinct political culture of conflict and the invocation of compromise as a national virtue, repeatedly renewed in the House of Commons. The latter not only served to invoke the national political community across all conflicts, but also supported a sense of global purpose and thus at the same time stabilized the idea of the 'civilizing mission', which came under increasing pressure in the era of decolonization. In the Bundestag, on the other hand, which first had to acquire a democratic self-confidence, it was precisely the Weimar democracy's alleged inability to compromise that was seen after 1949 as a major cause of its failure. Conversely, the willingness to compromise was repeatedly declared to be a sign of democratic capability in general. The latter has been shaken in several waves in the Bundestag since the 1980s as new parties moved in that regularly criticized the well-rehearsed parliamentary compromise routines as non-transparent; in Britain, majority voting has so far prevented such a development. The question of the limits of compromise, however, not only concerned procedures, but also centred on the counterparts with whom compromises could be concluded, especially

if they were enemies of liberal democracy. During the Cold War, communism and the Soviet Union were considered in both Britain and Germany as impossible to compromise with. Yet while this attitude was partially softened from the 1970s in the context of detente, the discussion of terrorism produced a new debate on the limits of compromise, in which advocates and opponents of compromise increasingly clashed. In this context, the study of cultures of compromise also touches on historiographical debates about the role of the 'state of exception' in liberal democracies during the Cold War.<sup>85</sup>

It thus remains to be investigated in more detail how far the changes in the role of the cultures of compromise in Great Britain and Germany since the 1980s and 1990s that are suggested by the findings to date can be explained. Initially, there is much to suggest that after a process of alignment in the first post-war decades, in which the Federal Republic adopted a British-style culture of compromise, Britain, which had traditionally prided itself on its 'spirit of compromise', moved in the opposite direction. The fact that a referendum, which structurally represents an antithesis to compromise, sealed the Brexit decision in 2016 can be seen as a powerful symptom, though it still needs a deeper explanation.

This would require an analysis of parliamentary debates in both countries that goes beyond the present study. Our view of the cultures of compromise in Great Britain and the Federal Republic as a whole must also be expanded. Three areas seem particularly important here. First, the study of cultures of compromise should also take in parliaments beyond the national framework. This includes both the European and the regional level, which would have to be examined at least by way of example. A stronger distinction would also have to be made between different party landscapes in a conceptual-historical perspective. Second, it will be necessary to look at interactions between politics and the public. To this end, the media's handling of the concept of compromise needs to be examined in particular, as does the difference made by social media. And third, to what extent are different cultures of compromise also rooted in everyday communicative practices? And

<sup>85</sup> See Cornelia Rauh and Dirk Schumann (eds.), *Ausnahmezustände: Entgrenzungen und Regulierungen in Europa während des Kalten Krieges* (Göttingen, 2015).

to what extent are these, in turn, linked to political and pedagogical concepts that aim to bring about the everyday normalization of practices of compromise as a contribution to anchoring democracy? It makes all the more sense to look at these concepts because, in view of the current discourse of a crisis in liberal democracy, the old ways of reacting to the experience of dictatorship after 1945 are in part experiencing a new boom.

The ongoing historicization of cultures of compromise in Britain and Germany will embed debates about the connection between democracy and compromise<sup>86</sup> more deeply in the context of the multifarious history of liberal democracy and thereby hopefully also contribute to a less agitated view of current crisis debates. Above all, this is also the prerequisite for answering the crucial question of whether political conflicts in Britain and Germany were resolved in practice more or less by way of compromise. In this way, the study of this subject can hopefully also contribute to discussing further a fundamental question: the significance of political cultures for political decision-making processes in democracies.

<sup>86</sup> For an excellent overview of the different positions, see Sandrine Baume and Stéphanie Novak, 'Introduction', in ead. (eds.), *Compromises in Democracy*, 1–18, at 2–4.

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# ***THE LONDON BILLS OF MORTALITY: STATE OF THE ART AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF RESEARCH***

MARTIN CHRIST

Since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic at the end of 2019, we have been surrounded by statistics of death. Countless news outlets report when, where, and how many people have died. While these statistics provide important pointers for the spread and development of the disease, they have also led to renewed discussions about the uses and abuses of statistics concerning the dead. They draw into sharp focus the fact that how the dead are recorded and counted is important for the functioning of human societies, as it informs large-scale medical and political decisions. What is often overlooked in these discussions is that there is a long history of recording the dead and using mortality statistics.<sup>1</sup> One of the most striking examples of premodern statistics of this sort is the London *Bills of Mortality*.

While this source is known to experts on early modern London and features in a range of scholarly works, the *Bills* have further potential. The term ‘bills of mortality’ refers to the statistics that recorded burials and causes of death from at least the early seventeenth century to the middle of the nineteenth. From 1611, the Company of Parish Clerks was responsible for collecting this information and printing the *Bills*. Some other English and Scottish towns had comparable publications, but the longevity of the production of the *Bills* and their importance are unique to London.

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<sup>1</sup> But there are some exceptions; see e.g. Anirban Banerjee, Manisha Chakrabarty, and Subhankar Mukherjee, ‘Data as Guide to Policy: Bills of Mortality of 17th Century and COVID-19 of 21st Century’, in Mousumi Dutta, Zakir Husain, and Anup Kumar Sinha (eds.), *The Impact of COVID-19 on India and the Global Order: A Multidisciplinary Approach* (Singapore, 2022), 81–98 for an explicit comparison between the two cases.

This article first sketches the general contours of the *Bills of Mortality*: their genesis, production, use, and decline. In this part I also draw attention to the actors involved in their production. The next part summarizes previous analyses, both early modern ones and those by modern historians. Then the limits of, and problems with, the *Bills of Mortality* take centre stage in order to illustrate that we cannot take them at face value. Finally, I outline two areas where further examination of the *Bills of Mortality* seems especially promising.

### *Early Modern London and the Bills of Mortality*

Although it is difficult to estimate how many people lived in London in the early modern period, it is clear that it was one of the most significant cities in Europe and that its population increased steadily between 1600 and 1850.<sup>2</sup> In 1600 London housed around 20,000 people; fifty years later that figure had doubled. Although the number of Londoners declined during the 1665 plague epidemic, by 1700 estimates put the population at around 600,000. Over the following fifty years growth slowed, and in 1750, 650,000 people called London home. Around 1800 London broke the 1 million mark for the first time, and by 1850 it already had more than 2 million inhabitants.<sup>3</sup> With this population growth came constant discussions about London's spread. New boundaries were drawn, and the city was divided into different parts.

London had a complex administrative structure, including overlapping and contested jurisdictions.<sup>4</sup> It was part of the county of Middlesex, which was largely urbanized by the early modern period and dominated by the growing metropolis of London. At its core was the City

<sup>2</sup> For a recent in-depth study of a single part of London during this period, see Adam Crymble, 'The Decline and Fall of an Early Modern Slum: London's St Giles "Rookery", c.1550–1850', *Urban History*, 49/2 (2022), 310–34.

<sup>3</sup> Paul N. Balchin, *The Shaping of London: A Political and Economic Perspective 1066–1870* (London, 2020; 1st edn 2014); Louis Wirth, 'Urbanism as a Way of Life', *American Journal of Sociology*, 44/1 (1938), 1–24.

<sup>4</sup> There is a large body of general literature on London and its administration. See e.g. Paul Griffiths and Mark S. R. Jenner (eds.), *Londinopolis: Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London* (Manchester, 2000); Karen Newman, *Cultural Capitals: Early Modern London and Paris* (Princeton, 2007).

of London plus the City of Westminster and, later, Southwark to the south.<sup>5</sup> Each of these entities had their own administrative bodies and they were frequently listed as separate units in early modern sources. A further division of what is today considered London was into liberties and wards – units of jurisdiction with mostly medieval origins. The City of London consisted of twenty-six wards, which were subdivided into 242 precincts.<sup>6</sup> Liberties and wards varied greatly in size and significance, and some had special privileges or responsibilities. For example, the liberty of Tower Division had unique military obligations. For the *Bills*, the most important division was into parishes, London's primary ecclesiastical and administrative units, which numbered more than 150.<sup>7</sup> The *Bills of Mortality* further divided parishes into those within, straddling, and adjoining the city walls. London's dead were buried in the churchyards of individual parishes, and parish clerks – lay men and women responsible for record-keeping – kept the lists of the dead. It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that cemeteries were established on the outskirts of the city. Many of the migrants that came to London had confessions and religions that deviated from the teachings of the Church of England, resulting in adaptations to burial rituals and recording systems.<sup>8</sup>

The administration of such a complex metropolis was a constant challenge. Record-keeping was one of the main means by which urban administrators sought to regulate the living and the dead. However,

<sup>5</sup> On Westminster, see Patricia Croot, 'A Place in Town in Medieval and Early Modern Westminster: The Origins and History of the Palaces in the Strand', *London Journal*, 39/2 (2014), 85–101.

<sup>6</sup> See M. S. R. Jenner and P. Griffiths, 'Introduction', in eid. (eds.), *Londinopolis*, 1–23.

<sup>7</sup> On parishes, see Gary G. Gibbs, *Five Parishes in Late Medieval and Tudor London: Communities and Reforms* (London, 2019); Keith Wrightson, 'The Politics of the Parish in Early Modern England', in Paul Griffiths, Adam Fox, and Steve Hindle (eds.), *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England* (London, 1996), 10–46.

<sup>8</sup> Catharine Arnold, *Necropolis: London and Its Dead* (London, 2006); Vanessa Harding, *The Dead and the Living in Paris and London, 1500–1670* (Cambridge, 2002); ead., 'Burial of the Plague Dead in Early Modern London', in J. A. I. Champion (ed.), *Epidemic Disease in London* (London, 1993), 53–64, available online at [<https://eprints.bbk.ac.uk/id/eprint/17936/1/Epidemic-Disease-Harding.pdf>], accessed 9 Feb. 2022.

the first initiatives for recording demographic data were undertaken by the church. In 1518 Henry VIII issued orders charging priests to record plague deaths.<sup>9</sup> In 1538 Thomas Cromwell extended these instructions by giving standing orders to keep parish registers, which recorded weddings, christenings, and burials.<sup>10</sup> London was one of the first towns to introduce death statistics.<sup>11</sup> Parish registers listed names, dates, sometimes cause of death, age, and where a person lived or was buried. For most of the sixteenth century, mortality statistics were not published and were only available to the municipal administration and the Crown. This changed in the seventeenth century when the *Bills* began to be printed.

The origins of the *Bills of Mortality* lie in plague prevention. While handwritten *Bills of Mortality* were given to the aldermen of the City of London in the early sixteenth century, plague statistics were printed and displayed publicly for the first time during the 1590s.<sup>12</sup> In these early *Bills*, other causes of death were not normally recorded. The precise date of the first printed *Bills of Mortality* is disputed because so few were preserved.<sup>13</sup> Some scholars argue that the *Bills* were issued

<sup>9</sup> Kristin Heitman, 'Authority, Autonomy and the First London Bills of Mortality', *Centaurus: An International Journal of the History of Science and its Cultural Aspects*, 62/2 (2020), 275–84.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* On parish clerks, see Oswald Clark, 'The Ancient Office of Parish Clerk and the Parish Clerks Company of London', *Ecclesiastical Law Journal*, 8/38 (2006), 307–22. On parish registers, see R. A. P. Finlay, 'The Accuracy of the London Parish Registers, 1580–1653', *Population Studies*, 32/1 (1978), 95–112.

<sup>11</sup> Major Greenwood, 'Medical Statistics from Graunt to Farr', *Biometrika*, 32/3–4 (1942), 203–25.

<sup>12</sup> The precise date of the first hand-written *Bill* is disputed. See William Ogle, 'An Inquiry into the Trustworthiness of the Old Bills of Mortality', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 55/3 (1892), 437–60, at 438, 452–3 for a hand-written *Bill* dated to 1512 (but without a date in the original sources); William A. Brend, *Bills of Mortality* (London, 1908), 2 for a dating to 1532; Cornelius Walford, 'Early Bills of Mortality', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 7 (1878), 212–48, at 214 for a dating to 1562.

<sup>13</sup> See Heitman, 'Authority', 276; ead., 'Of Counts and Causes: The Emergence of the London Bills of Mortality', *The Collation*, 13 Mar. 2018, at [<https://collation.folger.edu/2018/03/counts-causes-london-bills-mortality/>], accessed 25 Jan. 2023, for the dating to 1592; Walford, 'Early Bills', 216 for a dating to 1594; and Stephen Greenberg, 'Plague, the Printing Press, and Public Health in Seventeenth-Century London', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 67/4

LONDON BILLS OF MORTALITY

in the 1590s; in any case, they were discontinued in 1595, when the plague in London abated, and reintroduced in 1603. In the words of Thomas Laqueur, the *Bills of Mortality* provided the ‘first systematically collected’ mortality statistics.<sup>14</sup>

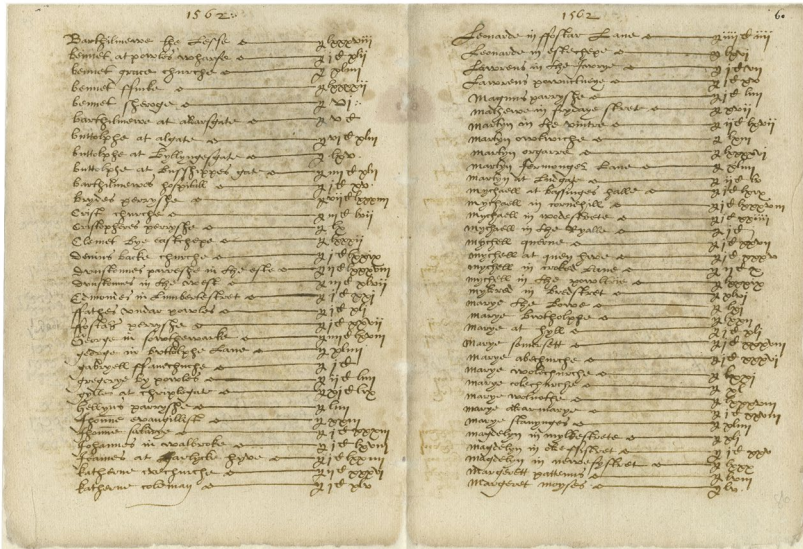


Fig. 1: City of London, handwritten summary of the *Bills of Mortality*, 1 Jan. 1563–1 Jan. 1564. Call #: X.d.264, fo. 59<sup>v</sup>–60<sup>r</sup>, 15188. Used by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

The existence of multiple recording systems demonstrates the continued development of statistics of the dead and the trial and error process used to determine which system was best suited to the needs of early modern Londoners. The *Bills* provided more quantitative analysis than parish records, depersonalizing individual deaths into a general data set for London.<sup>15</sup> Parish records likely drew on the same sources of information and served as a basis for the *Bills*. However, they focused

(2004), 508–27, at 512–13 for the 1603 dating. Earlier scholarship has other dates still. See e.g. Ogle, ‘An Inquiry’, 439, who dates the first printed *Bill* to 1625.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas W. Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains* (Princeton, 2015), 289.

<sup>15</sup> On the use of the term ‘data’ in premodern contexts, see Cristina Sasse, *Die Stadt lesen: Englische ‘Directories’ als Wissens- und Orientierungsmedien*,

on the payments which family members of the newborn or the deceased owed the parish, whereas other recording systems, such as the *Bills*, were more concerned with the spread and prevention of plague and other diseases. A 1609 snippet bill retains the earlier focus on the plague but does not include other causes of death, illustrating the presence of multiple recording systems. It is now held in the Folger Shakespeare Library. Filled in by hand and probably cut from a larger sheet, it indicates one of the first attempts to unify recording systems, although it does not yet contain the features typical of a *Bill of Mortality* (Fig. 2). The adaptability of these records indicates a nuanced understanding of needs specific to early modern communities.

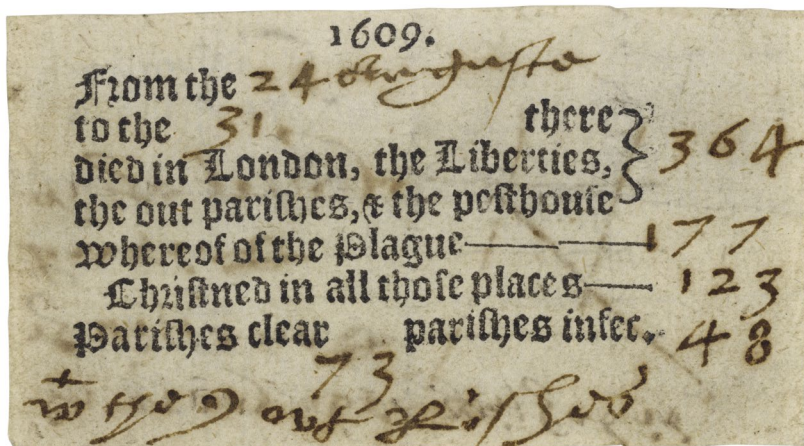


Fig. 2: Pre-printed plague bill with handwritten data inserted. Call #: STC 16743.8, recto, 3047. Used by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

Sources from the seventeenth century give a clear indication of how data for the *Bills* was collected. Women called ‘searchers’, who had some experience around sickness and death, identified the cause of death after being called by a family member or alerted by the tolling of a bell. On Tuesdays, they dropped off the information in a box in the parish clerk’s office; on Wednesdays, the data was compiled, and then the *Bills* were printed on Thursdays.<sup>16</sup> They were first sent to 1760–1830 (Berlin, 2021), especially the discussion of its use as a ‘controlled anachronism’ on p. 123.

<sup>16</sup> K. J. Rothman, ‘Lessons from John Graunt’, *Lancet*, 347/8993 (1996), 37–9.

the king or queen and the lord mayor and aldermen. The combined expertise of the parish clerks, searchers, and aldermen enabled the Crown and city administration to obtain a reasonably accurate picture of London's health, and this helped them to decide on quarantine rules and whether the court should move to Oxford during outbreaks of plague.<sup>17</sup> Elizabeth I's chief adviser William Cecil (1520–98) was one of the officials who asked to see the *Bills of Mortality*, suggesting that they were read at the highest levels of government before being made available for general sale from the early seventeenth century onwards.

In 1603 the format of the *Bills* was standardized. They now consisted of parish-by-parish death counts and burials, including the cause of death.<sup>18</sup> At first, *Bills* were produced and sold as one-sided handbills. From 1627, the Company of Parish Clerks had its own printing press and produced two-sided quarter sheets which included the cause of death on the verso.<sup>19</sup> In some cases, the London *Bills of Mortality* also featured illustrations or elaborate frontispieces.<sup>20</sup> In other instances, they might contain a preface or written explanation of the statistics themselves. Until the nineteenth century, when the first British census was successfully conducted, parish clerks sold weekly *Bills of Mortality* and a summary on the Thursday before Christmas. While the *Bills* were increasingly standardized over this period, they were sometimes also adapted, for instance, in annual summaries of the weekly *Bills*. Compilations of the *Bills of Mortality* and the use of extracts illustrate that systems of recording continued to develop. Further categories and details were added in the course of the seventeenth century, including headings for male and female, baptisms, and the price of salt and bread.

<sup>17</sup> E.g. Charles II and his court moved to Oxford during the 1665 plague in London. See 'The Second Parliament of Charles II: Sixth Session (Oxford) – Begins 9/10/1665', in *The History and Proceedings of the House of Commons*, vol. i, 1660–1680 (London, 1742), 85–92, available through *British History Online* at [<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/commons-hist-proceedings/vol1/pp85-92>], accessed 2 Jan. 2023.

<sup>18</sup> J. C. Robertson, 'Reckoning with London: Interpreting the *Bills of Mortality* before John Graunt', *Urban History*, 23/3 (1996), 325–50, at 330.

<sup>19</sup> Greenberg, 'Plague, the Printing Press, and Public Health', 525.

<sup>20</sup> Jacob Murel, 'Print, Authority, and the *Bills of Mortality* in Seventeenth-Century London', *Seventeenth Century*, 36/6 (2021), 935–59.




ARTICLES

Figs. 3 and 4: Worshipful Company of Parish Clerks, typical two-sided, printed London *Bill of Mortality* (22–29 July 1679). Call #: 265428, recto and verso, 4179. Used by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

F 265428

*The Diseases and Casualties this Week.*



**A** Gall ————— 13  
 Apoplexy ————— 12  
 Cancer ————— 2  
 Childbed ————— 2  
 Chiricomes ————— 3  
 Consumption ————— 64  
 Convulsion ————— 102  
 Cough ————— 1  
 Dropic ————— 10  
 Drown'd 8, one at S. John Zachary, one at S. Martin in the Vintrey, one at S. Dunstan in the West, one at S. James Clerkenwell, and four at S. Katharine Tower  
 Evil ————— 3  
 Fever ————— 60

Flux and Small pox ————— 50  
 Flux ————— 2  
 French-pox ————— 6  
 Grief ————— 1  
 Griping in the guts ————— 134  
 Jaundies ————— 2  
 Impostume ————— 6  
 Infant ————— 1  
 Kill'd at S. Martin in the fields ————— 1  
 Livergrown ————— 1  
 Measles ————— 2  
 Plaxet ————— 1  
 Rickets ————— 10  
 Rising of the Lights ————— 2  
 Spotted Fever ————— 2  
 Stillborn ————— 13  
 Stone ————— 2  
 Stopping in the Stomach ————— 9  
 Surfeit ————— 10  
 Teeth ————— 38  
 Thrush ————— 2  
 Vomiting ————— 11  
 Wind ————— 3  
 Worms ————— 2

Christened { Males — 122 }  
 { Females — 113 }  
 In all — 235

Buried { Males — 300 }  
 { Females — 265 }  
 In all — 565

Plague — 0

Increased in the Burials this week — 123

Parishes clear of the Plague — 132      Parishes Infected — 0

*The Assize of Bread set forth by Order of the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen*  
 A penny Wheaten Loaf to contain Eight Ounces, and three half-penny  
 White Leaves the like weight. And Household Bread made of  
 Wheat to contain double the weight of White Bread.



LONDON BILLS OF MORTALITY

LONDON 32.		From the 22. of July to the 29.		1679.	
Ent.	Pl.	Ent.	Pl.	Ent. Pl.	
St Lyan Woodstreet	1	St Gregory by St Pauls	1	St Martin Ironmongerlane	1
St Alphonsus Barkin	4	St Helen	1	St Martin Ludgate	1
St Alphonsus Breadstreet	4	St James Dukes place	3	St Martin Organs	1
St Alphonsus Great	1	St James Garlickhithe	3	St Martin Curwiche	1
St Alphonsus Honilane	1	St John Baptist	2	St Martin Vintrey	2
St Alphonsus Lefe	1	St John Evangelist	2	St Matthew Fridaystreet	1
St Alphonsus Lombardstreet	1	St John Zachary	2	St Michael Bassishaw	1
St Alphonsus Stayning	1	St Katharine Coleman	2	St Michael Cornhill	1
St Alphonsus the Wall	3	St Katharine Creechchurch	2	St Michael Crookedlane	1
St Alphaige	2	St Laurence Jewry	1	St Michael Queenhithe	1
St Andrew Hubbard	1	St Laurence Pountney	1	St Michael Quern	1
St Andrew Roderhauf	1	St Leonard Fenchurch	1	St Michael Royal	1
St Andrew Wardrobe	1	St Leonard Fosterlane	1	St Michael Woodstreet	1
St Ann Aldergate	1	St Magnus Parke	1	St Mildred Breadstreet	2
St Ann Blackfriars	3	St Margaret Lockbury	1	St Mildred Postney	2
St Anthollas Parisk	1	St Margaret Mofes	1	St Nicholas Acones	1
St Anthollas Parisk	1	St Margaret Newfishstreet	1	St Nicholas Coleabby	2
St Bartholomew Exchange	1	St Margaret Patrons	2	St Nicholas Olaves	1
St Bennet Pinck	1	St Mary Abchurch	2	St Olave Hartstreet	1
St Bennet Gracechurch	1	St Mary Aldermanbury	1	St Olave Jewry	1
St Bennet Paulward	1	St Mary Aldermay	1	St Olave Silverstreet	1
St Bennet Shreshog	1	St Mary le Bow	1	St Peacrus Soperlane	1
St Bonolph Billingsgate	1	St Mary Bothaw	1	St Peter Cheap	1
St Bonolph Church	3	St Mary Colechurch	1	St Peter Cornhill	1
St Christophers	3	St Mary Hill	1	St Peter Paulward	1
St Clement Eastcheap	1	St Mary Magd. Milkstreet	1	St Peter Poor	1
St Dionis Backchurch	2	St Mary Magd. Oldfishst.	1	St Steven Colmanstreet	1
St Dunston East	3	St Mary Mouthaw	1	St Steven Walbrook	4
St Edmund Lombardst.	1	St Mary Sommerfet	1	St Swithin	2
St Echeborough	1	St Mary Stayning	1	St Thomas Apoffles	2
St Faith	2	St Mary Woolchurch	1	Trinity Parisk	1
St Gabriel Fenchurch	1	St Mary Woolnoth	1	St Vedast alias Foster	1
St George Bonolphlane	1				
Christened in the 97 Parishes within the walls — 35		Buried — 69		Plague — 0	
St Andrew Nolborn	22	St Botolph Aldgate	22	St Bawlaars Southwark	10
St Bartholomew Great	3	St Botolph Bishopgate	19	St Sepulchres Parisk	3
St Bartholomew Lefe	1	St Dunston West	9	St Thomas Southwark	13
St Bridget	11	St George Southwark	10	Trinity Minorites	1
St Dunswal Preckne	1	St Giles Cripplegate	46	At the Festivoite	0
St Dunswal Aldergate	7	St Olave Southwark	29		
Christened in the 16 Parishes without the walls — 79		Buried — 206		Plague — 0	
St Christ Church	2	St Lambeth Parisk	5	St Mary Whitechappel	31
St John at Hackney	1	St Leonard Shorehithe	17	St Pauls Shadwel	15
St Giles in the fields	31	St Magdalen Bermondsey	19	St Rocherwith Parisk	4
St James Clerkwell	10	St Mary Hington	5	St Sepucy Parisk	55
St Katharine Tower	9	St Mary Newington	5		
Christened in the 14 Out-parishes in Middlesex and Surrey — 71		Buried — 204		Plague — 0	
St Clement Danes	15	St Martin in the fields	44	St Margaret Westminster	21
St Paul Covent Garden	10	St Mary Savoy	4	At the Festivoite	0
Christened in the 7 Parishes in the City and Liberties of Westminster — 50		Buried — 85		Plague — 0	

The Bills of Mortality became a source of information about the spread of disease for the inhabitants of London. They were available to the public both for an annual subscription of four shillings and

for individual sale.<sup>21</sup> In the seventeenth century, John Graunt complained that his fellow Londoners only used the *Bills* to watch for short-term patterns in mortality, suggesting that most readers used them to inform specific decisions on a day-to-day basis.<sup>22</sup> The reports of accidental deaths provided a topic of conversation; during epidemics the weekly *Bill* communicated vital information on which to base decisions about personal safety and business strategies.

Three groups of people were especially important in the production of the *Bills of Mortality*. First came the aforementioned searchers, who were the initial point of call for the families and friends of the deceased.<sup>23</sup> Their original purpose was to record plague deaths. Two searchers were employed in every London parish, so that the parish did not have to spend large sums of money to gather information on the dead, as the searchers were only semi-professional. These women, normally widows, unemployed, or poor, performed the crucial function of determining the cause of death, including during plague epidemics. Their assessment could result in whole households being quarantined. They were recognizable because they carried red staffs and were normally known in their communities. The important work of Richelle Munkhoff has particularly developed the scholarship on searchers. She argues that these women were marginalized, yet had significant power over Londoners.<sup>24</sup>

Searchers played an important role in recording the dead well into the nineteenth century.<sup>25</sup> As part of the generation of knowledge

<sup>21</sup> Robertson, 'Reckoning with London', 332-3.

<sup>22</sup> John Graunt, *Natural and Political Observations Mentioned in a Following Index, and Made Upon the Bills of Mortality by John Graunt . . . with Reference to the Government, Religion, Trade, Growth, Ayre, Diseases, and the Several Changes of the Said City* (London, 1662); Robertson, 'Reckoning with London'.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas Rogers Forbes, 'The Searchers', *Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, 50/9 (1974), 1031-8.

<sup>24</sup> Richelle Munkhoff, 'Searchers of the Dead: Authority, Marginality, and the Interpretation of Plague in England, 1574-1665', *Gender and History*, 11/1 (1999), 1-29.

<sup>25</sup> Wanda S. Henry, 'Women Searchers of the Dead in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century London', *Social History of Medicine*, 29/3 (2016), 445-66; Richelle Munkhoff, 'Poor Women and Parish Public Health in Sixteenth-Century London', *Renaissance Studies*, 28/4 (2014), 579-96; ead., 'Searchers

around dead bodies, these women, who had no formal medical training, were able to participate in the collection of information. The fact that they were not professionalized shows that recording the dead in the early modern period was a multifaceted process, one that involved semi-professional aspects.<sup>26</sup> The searchers had to swear an oath that they would report numbers and causes of death truthfully to the parish clerks. In the 1625 orders published by the Corporation of London, the searchers were instructed to

by vertue of their oath, make true report to the Constable of that precinct . . . to the intent that true notice may bee given . . . to the Clarke of the Parish, and from him to the Clarke of the Parish Clarkes, that true certificate may be made.<sup>27</sup>

If they broke their oath, they were liable to corporal punishment.

Contemporaries also recognized the searchers as a distinctive group with their own agency in the city, as we know from an entry in Samuel Pepys's (1633–1703) diary. On 31 October 1665, he recorded:

I to the office, where Sir W. Batten met me and did tell me that Captain Cocke's black was dead of the plague—which I had heard of before but took no notice. By and by Captain Cocke came to the office, and Sir W. Batten and I did send to him that he would either forbear the office, or forbear going to his own office. However, meeting yesterday the Searchers with their rods in their hands coming from his house, I did overhear them say that the fellow did not die of the plague[.]<sup>28</sup>

of the Dead'; ead., 'Reckoning Death: Women Searchers and the Bills of Mortality in Early Modern London', in Jennifer C. Vaught (ed.), *Rhetorics of Bodily Disease and Health in Medieval and Early Modern England* (London, 2010), 119–34.

<sup>26</sup> Julian Litten, *The English Way of Death: The Common Funeral since 1450* (London, 2002).

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Niall Boyce, 'Bills of Mortality: Tracking Disease in Early Modern London', *Lancet*, 395 (2020), 1186–7, at 1186.

<sup>28</sup> I use the online version of Pepys's diary, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys: Daily Entries from the 17th Century London Diary*, ed. Phil Gyford, at [<https://www.pepysdiary.com/>], accessed 2 Jan. 2023, entry of 31 Oct. 1665. The entries are searchable by date, which is how they are cited in the following.

This entry illustrates how the information provided by the searchers could fuel rumours, and the importance of these women's role during times of plague.

Indeed, the figure of the searcher was so well known to early modern English readers that one of the most famous iterations of this figure is fictional. In Act V, scene ii of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (1592), a searcher delays a messenger on his way to find Romeo, resulting in the tragic turn in the finale of the play. In Italy, where *Romeo and Juliet* is set, there were no searchers; in other words, Shakespeare translated this London innovation to Italy. Shakespeare did not explain the reference, indicating that searchers were well known to London audiences, who would have watched the play in one of the city's theatres.

After collecting the information, the searchers handed it over to the parish clerks, a second group of people crucial in the production of the *Bills*. They were members of the Worshipful Company of Parish Clerks, one of the oldest guilds of the City of London. In 1555, London's lord mayor and aldermen granted the Worshipful Company of Parish Clerks compensation for weekly mortality statistics. As a result, searchers were employed for the first time. Parishes and their clerks thus played the central role in collecting data on deaths, as well as on christenings and weddings, from when records first began to be kept in London.<sup>29</sup> The clerks compiled lists for their individual parishes and then sent this information on to the Worshipful Company of Parish Clerks. In some cases, weekly statistics were collated with annual ones, possibly to allow the total number of deaths to be compared with those of other years or in other cities.

A third group – printers – played an important role in producing and disseminating the *Bills*. The change from single-sided handbills to the more comprehensive double-sided sheets was closely connected to the availability of printing in early modern London.<sup>30</sup> The printing industry was concentrated in cities, which explains why comparable developments can normally only be found in other European cities

<sup>29</sup> Clark, 'Ancient Office of Parish Clerk'; Robertson, 'Reckoning with London'.

<sup>30</sup> Joseph Monteyne, *The Printed Image in Early Modern London: Urban Space, Visual Representation, and Social Exchange* (London, 2007); Murel, 'Print, Authority, and the *Bills of Mortality*'.

with a functioning print industry.<sup>31</sup> In some publications, the printers proudly added their imprint: Printer to the Stationers' Company.<sup>32</sup> The *Bills of Mortality* were sold to the general public by the numerous pamphlet sellers in the city. From paying the searchers to selling the death statistics, money was an important factor in the production of the *Bills*, long before the supposed 'economization' of death in the nineteenth century.<sup>33</sup>

Recent research has shown how fruitful it is to focus on the actors behind the *Bills of Mortality*, namely, the searchers, parish clerks, printers, consumers, and the deceased themselves.<sup>34</sup> A way to further understand the importance of these groups and specific individuals is to consider their interactions with each other. Some older scholarship has emphasized complaints made by parish clerks about the work done by searchers, and these warrant further investigation as a way of understanding the dynamics between semi-professional health workers and representatives of the church. Investigating the interactions between different groups involved in the production of the *Bills* can also compensate for the lack of documents left behind by individual searchers. By focusing more explicitly on individual actors and their agency, it is possible to gain new insights into the reading and use of the *Bills of Mortality*.

Finding definitive numbers for their circulation is difficult, and they follow the same pattern as other early modern prints in this respect. The Hall of Parish Clerks used to house most of the *Bills*. Several fires, the last in 1940, destroyed large numbers, making an assessment based on survival rates even more difficult. Some of the

<sup>31</sup> On the role of print in the dissemination of information about plague, see S. J. Greenberg, 'The "Dreadful Visitation": Public Health and Public Awareness in Seventeenth-Century London', *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association*, 85/4 (1997), 391–401.

<sup>32</sup> John Bell, *London's Remembrancer: Or, a True Account of Every Particular Weeks Christnings and Mortality in All the Years of Pestilence Within the Cognizance of the Bills of Mortality, Being XVIII Years* (London, 1665).

<sup>33</sup> Matthias Bähr and Thomas Hajduk, 'Tod ist ihr Geschäft: Die Ökonomisierung der Beerdigungspraxis im viktorianischen London', *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 102/4 (2015), 421–36.

<sup>34</sup> Henry, 'Women Searchers of the Dead'; Munkhoff, 'Poor Women and Parish Public Health'; ead., 'Searchers of the Dead'; ead., 'Reckoning Death'.

*Bills of Mortality* are kept there; others are held by the British Library, the Folger Shakespeare Library, the Wellcome Collection, and various smaller archives. For many weeks, no *Bill* at all survives. However, there are indications both in those that have survived and in other sources that they had a wide readership, in London and beyond. Some of the copies we have are folded, suggesting they were tucked into books or pockets; others contain annotations, showing that the *Bills* were read; and others still were enclosed in correspondence.<sup>35</sup> J. C. Robertson has identified three letters citing the *Bills of Mortality* as a source of information: one from a Venetian merchant reporting on London, one to the East India Company, and one on the question of whether a family should leave London during an outbreak of plague. All of them date from the 1603–4 epidemic and illustrate that even the early *Bills* were used to inform decisions.<sup>36</sup> In Essex, Ralph Joselin transcribed extracts from the *Bills* in 1665–6, tracing the spread of the disease.<sup>37</sup> And the Anglican preacher William Allin similarly noted that the plague was spreading and explicitly referred to the *Bills of Mortality*. References in diaries and other ego-documents likewise point to the *Bills of Mortality* as a very popular genre. Besides Pepys's diary, there are further examples of their reception in a variety of other sources.<sup>38</sup>

After 1819, parishes provided fewer records and the *Bills of Mortality* gradually decreased in importance. By the 1850s, the *Bills* were rare and the last known one dates from 1858. Other systems for recording deaths were put in place instead. After the passing of the Births and Deaths Registration Act (1836), the registrar general's weekly returns took the place of the *Bills*. In 1855, the Metropolitan Board of Works became the body overseeing these activities. Unlike the *Bills of Mortality*, these new ways of counting the dead

<sup>35</sup> Heitman, 'Of Counts and Causes'; Spencer J. Weinreich, 'Sums Theological: Doing Theology with the London *Bills of Mortality*, 1603–1666', *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture*, 90/4 (2022), 799–823, at 803.

<sup>36</sup> Robertson, 'Reckoning with London', 325–7.

<sup>37</sup> Munkhoff, 'Searchers of the Dead', 20.

<sup>38</sup> The *Bills of Mortality* are mentioned explicitly in Pepys's *Diary* on 24 Mar. 1661/2, 24 Dec. 1662, 29 June 1665, 25 July 1665, 27 Sept. 1665, 9 Nov. 1665, and 20 Nov. 1666. See also Weinreich, 'Sums Theological', 802, who traces references to the *Bills* in sermons, homilies, tracts, poems, and pamphlets.

were based on death certificates rather than burials, making them more reliable.<sup>39</sup> The first census in 1801 also made the overview of London's population development contained in the *Bills of Mortality* redundant.

### *Approaching the Bills of Mortality*

#### *Health Statistics*

One of the most common ways of analysing London's *Bills of Mortality* is for health statistics. Particularly when taken together with other sources, they can be a revealing indication of London's health, pointing to maladies ranging from smallpox to air pollution.<sup>40</sup> In the early modern period, authors already recognized this kind of analysis as particularly fruitful. For instance, the anonymous *Four Great Years of the Plague* collated mortality statistics for the years 1593, 1603, 1625, and 1636 with the aim of comparing death rates.<sup>41</sup> Gaps were left for readers to complete the statistics for coming years. Or, to name another example, John Bell's *London's Remembrancer* (1665) drew on the *Bills* to provide a 'just Accompt of every Weeks Christnings and Burials in all the Years of PESTILENCE'.<sup>42</sup>

But the most famous statistical analysis of the *Bills* dates from the later seventeenth century: John Graunt's (1620–74) *Natural and*

<sup>39</sup> On the decline of the *Bills*, see Paul Slack, 'Counting People in Early Modern England: Registers, Registrars, and Political Arithmetic', *English Historical Review*, 137/587 (2022), 1118–43.

<sup>40</sup> Olga Krylova and David J. D. Earn, 'Patterns of Smallpox Mortality in London, England, over Three Centuries', *PLOS Biology*, 18/12 (2020), 1–27; J. Landers, 'Mortality and Metropolis: the Case of London 1675–1825', *Population Studies*, 41/1 (1987), 59–76; Peter Brimblecombe, 'Interest in Air Pollution among Early Fellows of the Royal Society', *Notes and Records: The Royal Society Journal of the History of Science*, 32/2 (1978), 123–9, esp. 126–7.

<sup>41</sup> Anon., *The Four Great Years of the Plague, Viz. 1593, 1603, 1625, and 1636 Compared by the Weekly Bills of Mortality Printed Every Thursday in the Said Years, by Which its Increase and Decrease is Plainly Discerned in All Those Years* (London, 1665).

<sup>42</sup> Bell, *London's Remembrancer*, preface [no page numbers].

*Political Observations Made Upon the Bills of Mortality*.<sup>43</sup> Graunt is considered to be one of the first demographers and epidemiologists.<sup>44</sup> He was born in London and worked as a haberdasher, but also held political offices such as councilman and warden of the Drapers' Company. Graunt produced a table listing the probability of survival to different ages based on information gathered from the *Bills of Mortality*, seeking thus to explain London's high mortality rate.<sup>45</sup> *Natural and Political Observations* led to his election as a fellow of the Royal Society of London, a decision endorsed by King Charles II.<sup>46</sup> In this work, Graunt estimated the population size of London and England, their birth and death rates, and the spread of diseases.<sup>47</sup> It enjoyed some success, running to five editions, with the final version

<sup>43</sup> On the authorship of the *Natural and Political Observations Made upon the Bills of Mortality*, see Charles H. Hull, 'Graunt or Petty?', *Political Science Quarterly*, 11/1 (1896), 105–32; M. Greenwood, 'Graunt and Petty', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 91/1 (1928), 79–85. I follow the common interpretation of Graunt as the primary author.

<sup>44</sup> Henry Connor, 'John Graunt F.R.S. (1620–74): The Founding Father of Human Demography, Epidemiology and Vital Statistics', *Journal of Medical Biography: OnlineFirst*, 15 Feb. 2022, 1–13; Andrew C. A. Elliott, 'Danger of Death', in id., *What Are the Chances of That? How to Think About Uncertainty* (Oxford, 2021), 143–58; 'John Graunt on Causes of Death in the City of London', *Population and Development Review*, 35/2 (2009), 417–22; D. V. Glass, M. E. Ogborn, and I. Sutherland, 'John Graunt and His *Natural and Political Observations* [and Discussion]', *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London: Series B, Biological Sciences*, 159/974 (1963), 2–37.

<sup>45</sup> Chris Galley, 'A Model of Early Modern Urban Demography', *Economic History Review*, 48/3 (1995), 448–69, at 448–9. On Graunt's scientific method, see Philip Kreager, 'New Light on Graunt', *Population Studies*, 42/1 (1988), 129–40; Robert Kargon, 'John Graunt, Francis Bacon, and the Royal Society: The Reception of Statistics', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 18/4 (1963), 337–48.

<sup>46</sup> Graunt, *Natural and Political Observations*; id., *Natural and Political Observations Made Upon the Bills of Mortality*, 5th edn (London, 1676).

<sup>47</sup> Margaret Pelling, 'Far Too Many Women? John Graunt, the Sex Ratio, and the Cultural Determination of Number in Seventeenth-Century England', *Historical Journal*, 59/3 (2016), 695–719; ead., 'John Graunt, the Hartlib Circle and Child Mortality in Mid-Seventeenth-Century London', *Continuity and Change*, 31/3 (2016), 335–59; Rothman, 'Lessons from John Graunt'; Paul Slack, 'William Petty, the Multiplication of Mankind, and Demographic Discourse in Seventeenth-Century England', *Historical Journal*, 61/2 (2018), 301–25.



printed after Graunt's death, in 1676. Some scholars see this work as 'the birth of epidemiology'.<sup>48</sup>

Although Graunt used the information provided in the *Bills*, he was critical of the searchers and their ability to determine the cause of death, arguing that they were not sufficiently qualified to identify many diseases. Regarding plague, he thought that the numbers were too high, a criticism partly based on Graunt's own political agenda as he was trying to counter rumours that the plague had started with the accession to the throne of Charles I.<sup>49</sup> Graunt's work initiated further discussions of the *Bills of Mortality*, their interpretation, and their uses.<sup>50</sup> Scholars of the history of medicine and epidemics found the *Bills* a particularly useful source in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including for discussions on what the causes of death mentioned in the *Bills* meant.<sup>51</sup> This broader interest is also displayed in more recent research, for instance, in a symposium held at the Folger Research Library in 2018, and in press coverage relating to the *Bills of Mortality*.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Alfredo Morabia, 'Epidemiology's 350th Anniversary: 1662–2012', *Epidemiology*, 24/2 (2013), 179–83, at 179.

<sup>49</sup> Robertson, 'Reckoning with London', 346.

<sup>50</sup> James Harvey, *Scelera Aquarum, or, A Supplement to Mr. Graunt on the Bills of Mortality: Shewing as Well the Causes, as Encrease, of the London, Parisian, and Amsterdam Scorbutic with All Its Attendants. Demonstrating the Locality of the Said Causes and How They Result from Morbifick Salts Which Abound in the Strata of the Earth and Stagnate Waters Round Those Three Cities* (London, 1701); Ian Sutherland, 'John Graunt: A Tercentenary Tribute', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series A (General)*, 126/4 (1963), 537–56.

<sup>51</sup> E.g. Cornelius Walford, 'On the Number of Deaths from Accident, Negligence, Violence, and Misadventure in the United Kingdom and Some Other Countries', *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, 44/3 (1881), 444–527, at 444–9; Edward A. Holyoke, 'On Meteorological Observations and Bills of Mortality', *Memoirs of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 2/2 (1804), 58–61. See also the brief discussion of the cause of death 'burst' in F. William Cock, 'Bills of Mortality', *British Medical Journal*, 2/3433 (1926), 760.

<sup>52</sup> London Bills of Mortality (Symposium), at [[https://folgerpedia.folger.edu/London\\_Bills\\_of\\_Mortality\\_\(symposium\)](https://folgerpedia.folger.edu/London_Bills_of_Mortality_(symposium))], accessed 25 Jan. 2023; Katy Stoddard, Chris Fenn, Apple Chan-Fardel, and Paul Torpey, 'Mapping London's Great Plague of 1665', *Guardian*, 12 Aug. 2015, at [<https://www.theguardian.com/society/ng-interactive/2015/aug/12/london-great-plague-1665-bills-of-mortality>], accessed 25 Jan. 2023.

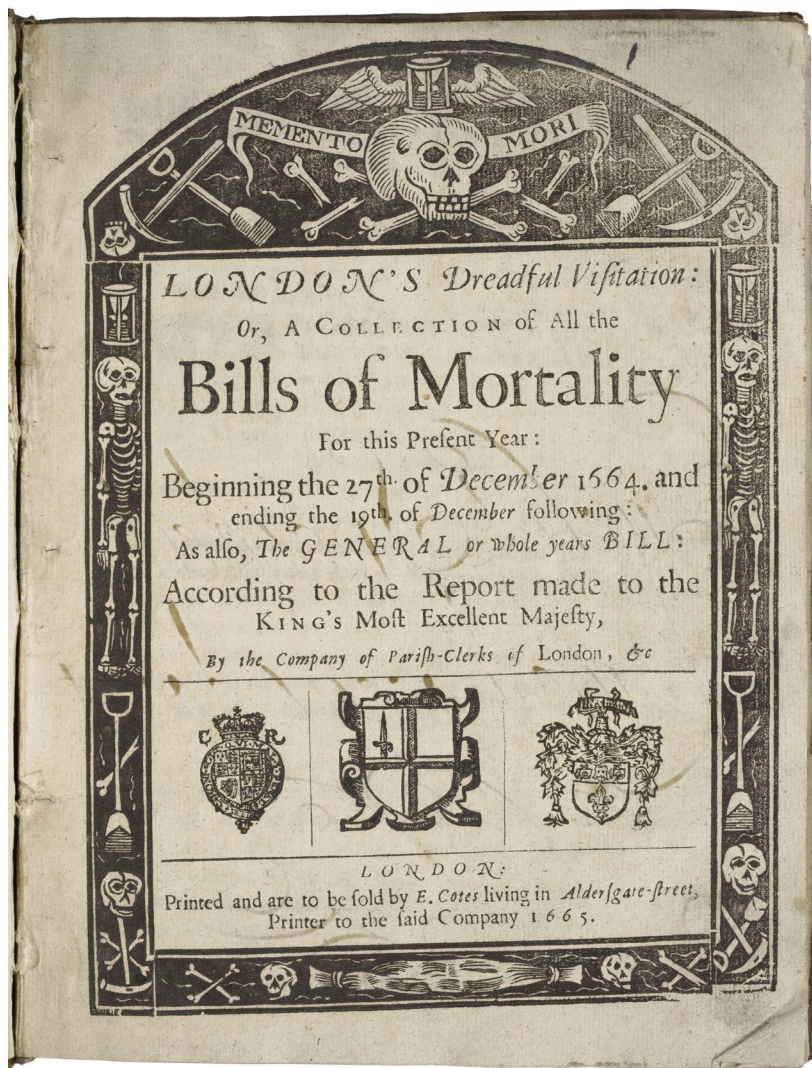


Fig. 5: Worshipful Company of Parish Clerks, *London's Dreadful Visitation* (London, 1665). Summary of the London Bills of Mortality during the 'plague year' 1664/65 (27 Dec. 1664–19 Dec. 1665). Call #: L2926.2, title page, 3222. Used by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

The *Bills* have proven especially valuable for assessing the impact of outbreaks of epidemic diseases in London. Foremost among these is the plague epidemic of 1665–6 (see Fig. 5) which, over almost eighteen months, killed an estimated 100,000 people, amounting to almost a quarter of London's population.<sup>53</sup> Although approaches which take the *Bills* at face value have been rightly criticized, they nonetheless provide an indication of the scale of plague deaths in the metropolis. Certain other kinds of disease can also be analysed, as can their impact on specific population groups.<sup>54</sup> In some cases, modern scholars continue to use the illnesses mentioned in the *Bills* to trace the development of a specific sickness over a long period of time.<sup>55</sup> The project 'Death by Numbers' uses data from the *Bills* to quantitatively assess the impact of major diseases through computational analysis in order to trace long-term patterns of change.<sup>56</sup>

### *Population Growth and Urban Development*

A second common focus of research on the *Bills* has been as a source for population statistics.<sup>57</sup> The *Bills* were used not only by the aldermen and the Crown to calculate London's size, but also in other early modern publications commenting on England's economy and society.<sup>58</sup> They were especially important because there was no logistical infrastructure for a census and some communities tried to avoid

<sup>53</sup> Greenberg, 'Plague, the Printing Press, and Public Health', 508–27.

<sup>54</sup> Gill Newton, 'Infant Mortality Variations, Feeding Practices and Social Status in London between 1550 and 1750', *Social History of Medicine*, 24/2 (2011), 260–80.

<sup>55</sup> Krylova and Earn, 'Patterns of Smallpox Mortality'.

<sup>56</sup> 'Death by Numbers: Quantitatively Analyzing the London Bills of Mortality', at [<https://deathbynumbers.org/>], accessed 20 Jan. 2023.

<sup>57</sup> John Landers, *Death and the Metropolis: Studies in the Demographic History of London, 1670–1830* (Cambridge, 1993).

<sup>58</sup> Peter Pett, *A Discourse of the Growth of England in Populousness and Trade Since the Reformation* (London, 1689); see also nineteenth-century interpretations, e.g. John Angus, 'Old and New Bills of Mortality; Movement of the Population; Deaths and Fatal Diseases in London During the Last Fourteen Years', *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, 17/2 (1854), 117–42.

attempts to count them.<sup>59</sup> Much as they do for historians today, the *Bills of Mortality* provided early modern Londoners with one of the few indications of London's population size, making it possible to attempt to control it.<sup>60</sup> The fact that early modern scholars such as John Graunt showed an interest in these statistics resulted in the survival of parallel sources, partly compensating for losses during the Great Fire of 1666 and other disasters.<sup>61</sup>

Besides Graunt, other early modern scholars were also interested in using the *Bills* to estimate population size—foremost among them William Petty (1623–87).<sup>62</sup> A surveyor and economist, he used the *Bills* to estimate the size of London's population,<sup>63</sup> and his calculations suggested that London was bigger than Paris. He also drew comparisons with Dublin.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, he estimated the general population of England at more than seven million in 1686, providing an early attempt at a census.<sup>65</sup> The quantification of political debates, known as 'political arithmetic', has formed one focus of these discussions.<sup>66</sup> In a recent article, Paul Slack has shown that parish registers and *Bills of Mortality* formed the basis for early attempts to estimate England's

<sup>59</sup> On the British census, see Kerstin Brückweh, *Menschen zählen: Wissensproduktion durch britische Volkszählungen und Umfragen vom 19. Jahrhundert bis ins digitale Zeitalter* (Berlin, 2015), esp. 23–5.

<sup>60</sup> This has been linked to Foucauldian notions of biopolitics. See Ted McCormick, 'Political Arithmetic's 18th Century Histories: Quantification in Politics, Religion, and the Public Sphere', *History Compass*, 12/3 (2014), 239–51, at 242–4.

<sup>61</sup> Harvey Gideon, *The City Remembrancer: Being Historical Narratives of the Great Plague at London, 1665; Great Fire, 1666; and Great Storm, 1703 . . . Collected from Curious and Authentic Papers, Originally Compiled by the Late Learned Dr. Harvey . . .*, 2 vols. (London, 1769).

<sup>62</sup> On Petty, see Ted McCormick, *William Petty and the Ambitions of Political Arithmetic* (Oxford, 2009).

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*; Slack, 'William Petty'.

<sup>64</sup> Galley, 'A Model of Early Modern Urban Demography', 448.

<sup>65</sup> Brückweh, *Menschen zählen*, 60.

<sup>66</sup> The term was coined by William Petty around 1670. For an excellent recent overview and critique of political arithmetic, see McCormick, 'Political Arithmetic's 18th Century Histories'. See also *id.*, 'Political Arithmetic and Sacred History: Population Thought in the English Enlightenment, 1660–1750', *Journal of British Studies*, 52/4 (2013), 829–57.

population size.<sup>67</sup> He argued that ‘the machinery of registration had become a monopoly in the hands of an ecclesiastical establishment determined to preserve its practices and privileges’, which prevented major changes for more than three hundred years.<sup>68</sup>

In addition to the general population trends made visible in the *Bills of Mortality*, their structure also permits other kinds of research on urban developments. As they are divided by individual parishes, it is possible to see how population patterns changed in specific parts of London and how parishes evolved over more than 300 years. This provides insights into the development and growth of the city more generally. The *Bills of Mortality* have also helped scholars to understand the demands of urban density during times of disease.<sup>69</sup> The more populous parishes suffered especially bad outbreaks of plague, as the squalor resulted in the presence of rodents that carried fleas. Alongside other sources, the *Bills of Mortality* can be used to understand more about early modern living standards and social developments within the city and individual parishes.<sup>70</sup> For example, Craig Spence has discussed the prevalence of violent and accidental deaths in early modern London, based on the *Bills* and other sources.<sup>71</sup>

### *Culture and Literature*

More recently, scholars have moved away from a purely statistical use of the *Bills* to emphasize their narrative aspects and the rhetorical features of texts that interpret them.<sup>72</sup> These approaches place them more

<sup>67</sup> Slack, ‘Counting People’. See also Peter Buck, ‘Seventeenth-Century Political Arithmetic: Civil Strife and Vital Statistics’, *Isis*, 68/1 (1977), 67–84; Robertson, ‘Reckoning with London’, 346–7.

<sup>68</sup> Slack, ‘Counting People’, 1143.

<sup>69</sup> Gibbs, *Five Parishes*.

<sup>70</sup> Neil Cummins, Morgan Kelly, and Cormac Ó Gráda, ‘Living Standards and Plague in London, 1560–1665’, *Economic History Review*, 69/1 (2016), 3–34; Gibbs, *Five Parishes*.

<sup>71</sup> Craig Spence, *Accidents and Violent Death in Early Modern London: 1650–1750* (Woodbridge, 2016).

<sup>72</sup> Erin Sullivan, ‘Physical and Spiritual Illness: Narrative Appropriations of the Bills of Mortality’, in Rebecca Totaro and Ernest B. Gilman (eds.), *Representing the Plague in Early Modern England* (New York, 2010), 76–94; Greenberg,

firmly in the realm of cultural and literary analysis that accompanied the integration of the *Bills* into other early modern English sources, including visual ones.<sup>73</sup> The reception of the *Bills* in other texts shows how important they were in a range of settings, for instance, letters, poems, and ego-documents.<sup>74</sup> Pepys used the *Bills of Mortality* as a source of information, as we know from his 1665 entries. On Thursday 7 September he wrote:

Up by 5 of the clock, mighty full of fear of an ague, but was obliged to go, and so by water, wrapping myself up warm, to the Tower, and there sent for the Weekly Bill, and find 8,252 dead in all, and of them 6,878 of the plague; which is a most dreadfull number, and shows reason to fear that the plague hath got that hold that it will yet continue among us.

And on 12 October of the same year, he reported: ‘Good newes this week that there are about 600 less dead of the plague than the last. So home to bed.’<sup>75</sup> Although he did not mention the *Bills* explicitly in this second entry, they are his most likely source of information.

This focus on the use and reception of the *Bills* has expanded scholars’ understanding of them beyond their role as some of the earliest health statistics. For instance, Erin Sullivan has drawn attention to how the *Bills* were employed in narrative and clerical sources, reinforcing broader discourses on divine punishment and the urban community.<sup>76</sup> In this way, scholars have shown that the *Bills* were not only mined for information, but actually shaped how early modern Londoners behaved and thought about themselves and their city.

‘Plague, the Printing Press, and Public Health’; Philip Kreager, ‘Death and Method: The Rhetorical Space of Seventeenth Century Vital Measurement’, in Eileen Magnello and Anne Hardy (eds.), *The Road to Medical Statistics* (Leiden, 2002), 1–35, esp. 2 on Graunt.

<sup>73</sup> Mark S. R. Jenner, ‘Plague on a Page: *Lord Have Mercy Upon Us* in Early Modern London’, *Seventeenth Century*, 27/3 (2012), 255–86.

<sup>74</sup> Robertson, ‘Reckoning with London’, 325–7. See also Kathleen Hines, ‘Contagious Metaphors: Liturgies of Early Modern Plague’, *The Comparatist*, 42 (2018), 318–30.

<sup>75</sup> *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, at [<https://www.pepysdiary.com/>], accessed 24 Jan. 2023, entry for 12 Oct. 1665.

<sup>76</sup> Sullivan, ‘Physical and Spiritual Illness’.

Other scholars have explored the *Bills* more explicitly in connection to England's complex confessional landscape. Spencer J. Weinreich traces the impact of the *Bills* in a range of literary genres, illustrating that Anglicans, Puritans, and Dissenters used them to justify their theology and show that God punished or favoured certain confessional groups.<sup>77</sup> Ted McCormick's work shows that the Puritans in particular used death statistics to further their theological causes.<sup>78</sup>

The *Bills* could calm or heighten fears of disease, and they influenced practical decisions about the introduction of quarantine measures and whether to flee from plague.<sup>79</sup> They countered rumours and provided more reliable information for aldermen as well as ordinary citizens.<sup>80</sup> Moreover, they enabled individuals to assess the ebb and flow of diseases in the city, including the city administrators who decided on quarantine rules and theatre closures. The weekly *Bills* shaped the short-term decisions of citizens, while for aldermen and the Crown they could provide pointers for long-term policies.<sup>81</sup> In the words of Erin Sullivan, the *Bills* 'helped Londoners mentally track, contain, and make sense of the threat they were facing, thus alleviating some of the psychological strain that inevitably arose in these times of crisis'.<sup>82</sup>

### *Challenges in Using the Bills*

#### *Reliability*

Any analysis of the reliability of the *Bills of Mortality* has to take into consideration that they primarily recorded burials, and not deaths. This meant that any movement of the dead between parishes or burials in the countryside could obscure the real number of deaths in

<sup>77</sup> Weinreich, 'Sums Theological'.

<sup>78</sup> Ted McCormick, 'Statistics in the Hands of an Angry God? John Graunt's *Observations* in Cotton Mather's *New England*', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 72/4 (2015), 563–86; id., 'Political Arithmetic and Sacred History'.

<sup>79</sup> Kira L. S. Newman, 'Shutt Up: Bubonic Plague and Quarantine in Early Modern England', *Journal of Social History*, 45/3 (2012), 809–34, at 819.

<sup>80</sup> Robertson, 'Reckoning with London', 330.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.* 345.

<sup>82</sup> Sullivan, 'Physical and Spiritual Illness', 76.

a specific parish.<sup>83</sup> During plague years, there could be especially large discrepancies between the numbers recorded for individual parishes and the actual numbers of deaths. Moreover, comparisons between other sources and the *Bills* indicate that not all burials were recorded and that causes of death probably were not always identified correctly.<sup>84</sup> In the nineteenth century, as the *Bills* decreased in importance and less care was taken in compiling them, some of these problems became worse despite advances in record-keeping.<sup>85</sup>

While the searchers provided important information on causes of death, contemporaries recognized that due to their lack of training, they were not always well qualified to provide accurate statistics. John Graunt claimed that ‘after the mist of a Cup of Ale, and the bribe of a Two-groat fee, in stead of one given them’, searchers could be persuaded to declare a house plague-free, thus ending a quarantine.<sup>86</sup> And the seventeenth-century physician Nathaniel Hodges (1629–88) went even further, writing that plague nurses, likely referring to searchers, were ‘wretches [who] out of greediness to plunder the dead, would strangle their patients and charge it to distemper in their throats’.<sup>87</sup> Complaints about the searchers continued until the nineteenth century.<sup>88</sup> The power they wielded—especially during times of plague—made others suspicious of them. Even if these criticisms were likely exaggerated, the searchers based their assessments on experience and a list of symptoms that left room for interpretation. In the words of Richelle Munkhoff: ‘at

<sup>83</sup> Jeremy Boulton and Leonard Schwarz, ‘Yet Another Inquiry into the Trustworthiness of Eighteenth-Century London’s Bills of Mortality’, *Local Population Studies*, 85 (2010), 28–45.

<sup>84</sup> Ogle, ‘An Inquiry’, 444–6; Boulton and Schwarz, ‘Yet Another Inquiry’.

<sup>85</sup> Ogle, ‘An Inquiry’, 451.

<sup>86</sup> William Petty, *The Economic Writings of Sir William Petty: Together with the Observations on the Bills of Mortality More Probably by Captain John Graunt*, ed. Charles Henry Hull, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1899), ii, 356.

<sup>87</sup> See Graunt, *Natural and Political Observations*; Nathaniel Hodges, *Loimologia: Or, an Historical Account of the Plague in London in 1655. With Precautionary Directions against the Like Contagion . . . To which is Added an Essay on the Different Causes of Pestilential Diseases, and How They Become Contagious. With Remarks on the Infection Now in France and the Most Probable Means to Prevent it Spreading Here*. By John Quincy, 2nd edn (London, 1720), 8.

<sup>88</sup> Ogle, ‘An Inquiry’, 442.



the heart of the supposedly objective bills of mortality lies the searcher's interpretative function, a function that calculates ambiguous signs—tokens, b[l]otches, carbuncles—into literal figures.<sup>89</sup> Although the *Bills* therefore do not provide reliable health statistics in a modern sense, they nonetheless help us understand perceptions of medicine and the creation of medical knowledge over a long period.

Some scholars have stressed the biases and political agendas of others, apart from the searchers, involved in the production and interpretation of the *Bills of Mortality*.<sup>90</sup> In a recent article, Jacob Murel argues that both the records of the early Royal Historical Society and the parish clerks' compilation of the *Bills* indicate that the latter were used for political purposes, to question authority and health measures.<sup>91</sup> One could add here the incentive for printers and pamphlet sellers to earn money from the sale of the *Bills*. Such issues, while not unique to the *Bills of Mortality*, must be taken into account when using them as a historical source.

One particularly striking critique of the *Bills* can be found in Daniel Defoe's *Journal of the Plague Year*, written in 1722 about the 1665 plague epidemic. In an incisive article, Nicholas Seager argues that Defoe criticized the *Bills* as unreliable in this semi-fictional work, undermining their credibility and in the process questioning the use of such statistics in general and deconstructing claims to absolute truth.<sup>92</sup>

### *Exclusion from the Bills*

The *Bills of Mortality* recorded burials—but only those in Anglican churchyards. Most of the interments in major cemeteries such as Bunhill Fields and New Bunhill Fields, where the burials of dissenting religious groups took place, were not recorded.<sup>93</sup> Much previous research has emphasized this exclusion from the *Bills* and the searchers'

<sup>89</sup> Munkhoff, 'Searchers of the Dead', 12.

<sup>90</sup> Robertson, 'Reckoning with London'.

<sup>91</sup> Murel, 'Print, Authority, and the *Bills of Mortality*'.

<sup>92</sup> Nicholas Seager, 'Lies, Damned Lies, and Statistics: Epistemology and Fiction in Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year*', *Modern Language Review*, 103/3 (2008), 639–53.

<sup>93</sup> On dissenting groups, see John Coffey (ed.), *The Oxford History of Protestant Dissenting Traditions*, vol. i: *The Post-Reformation Era, 1559–1689* (Oxford, 2020); Ariel Hessayon, 'Early Quakerism and Its Origins', *ibid.* 139–60; Richard T.

focus on the Anglican dead.<sup>94</sup> However, recent work has painted a more complex picture. Anna Cusack shows that searchers did record Quaker burials, which were then also entered in Quaker burial registers<sup>95</sup> – including records of the 1665 plague epidemic, which explicitly mention the work of the searchers. What, exactly, this means for Quakers in the *Bills of Mortality* is still not entirely clear. In some parishes, such as St Giles Cripplegate, Quakers were included in the regular parish registers as well as in Quaker registers, making it likely that they also featured among the anonymous dead in the *Bills of Mortality*.<sup>96</sup>

Doubts about the recording system behind the *Bills of Mortality* were already raised by early modern authors. On 31 August 1665, Samuel Pepys wrote:

In the City died this week 7,496 and of them 6,102 of the plague. But it is feared that the true number of the dead, this week is near 10,000; partly from the poor that cannot be taken notice of, through the greatness of the number, and partly from the Quakers and others that will not have any bell ring for them.<sup>97</sup>

As the entry indicates, liturgical and logistical choices by some confessional groups complicated the recording of their deaths. Quakers did not usually ring bells when they died, and they used their own carts to transport dead bodies. So it is likely that searchers did not always go to their houses. Moreover, it is possible that some religious groups preferred to remain hidden in certain circumstances, making them unlikely to participate in any kind of centralized recording of

Vann and David Eversley, *Friends in Life and Death: The British and Irish Quakers in the Demographic Transition, 1650–1900* (Cambridge, 2002).

<sup>94</sup> Ogle, 'An Inquiry', 450; Boulton and Schwarz, 'Yet Another Inquiry'.

<sup>95</sup> Anna Cusack, 'The Marginal Dead of London, c.1600–1800' (Ph.D. thesis, Birkbeck, University of London, 2021), 25, 194. For the recording of Quakers in multiple registers, see 194–5.

<sup>96</sup> On Quaker records of their dead, see also John Landers, 'London's Mortality in the "Long Eighteenth Century": A Family Reconstitution Study', *Medical History*, 35/S11 (1991), 1–28.

<sup>97</sup> *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, at [<https://www.pepysdiary.com/>], accessed 24 Jan. 2023, entry for 31 Aug. 1665.

their dead. Within the administrative structures, different religious or denominational groups could develop their own systems and adapt them to changing circumstances, and these were often independent of the *Bills of Mortality*. While at least some Quakers featured in the *Bills*, Pepys's entry indicates that a further factor was the exclusion of the poor, who did not receive a proper burial.

Other confessional groups, such as Methodists, and members of London's stranger churches, such as German Lutherans, French Huguenots, and Dutch Calvinists, may also not have been fully recorded in the *Bills*. Members of the stranger churches were normally only recorded in their own church books. If they were buried in a parish cemetery, they also featured in the *Bills*, but if they were buried elsewhere, the *Bills of Mortality* remain silent about these individuals.

In the diverse metropolis of London, the Anglican focus of the *Bills of Mortality* meant that non-Christian religious groups were not included. For example, Jewish burials were not recorded in the *Bills*.<sup>98</sup> There were numerous Jewish cemeteries on the outskirts of London reserved exclusively for Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews. The first of these—known as the Velho—was established in 1657 at Mile End, a mile from London. Other Jewish cemeteries were created in the early modern period. They differed in size and positioning, but were all tolerated by the municipal authorities and administered independently by the Jewish community. As in other areas of Europe, London's Jews suffered reprisals and their situation was generally precarious. However, there were no significant expulsions or pogroms in London during the early modern period. In the case of the Jews, much research remains to be done. Like the situation with the Quakers, it seems that at least in some parishes, Jews featured in both Jewish and parish registers, meaning they were likely recorded in the *Bills of Mortality*. In the eighteenth century, fewer Jews and Quakers appear in the parish registers, indicating a greater division between the different groups, at least on the page.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Neville Laski, *The Laws and Charities of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Congregation of London* (London, 1952), p. xvii.

<sup>99</sup> On Jewish burials in London, see Cusack, 'The Marginal Dead of London', 246–310.

*Geographical Division and Reach*

Depending on how London was defined, the *Bills of Mortality* did not cover the whole city. Most of them include what was later considered the City of London and parishes in Middlesex. The maximum geographical extent covered by the *Bills* was reached in 1636, yet the city continued to grow. The *Bills of Mortality* were divided by parishes, so when a parish was split into two, this added a new category. These include, for example, the parish of St John, created in 1723 and previously a part of St James's, and the parishes of St Giles and St George, which were merged in 1774. These changes in the parish map of London add a further layer of complication to an analysis of the *Bills*. Another example which illustrates these complexities well is the parish of St Andrew Holborn above the Bars with St George the Martyr, which was formed in 1767 from the Middlesex portion of St Andrew Holborn and part of the parish of St George the Martyr.

The limited geographical reach was an indication of London's expansion rather than a shortcoming of the *Bills* as such. They pointed to the urban sprawl of the city and the difficulty of defining what belonged to London and what was outside it. Suburbs were also difficult to integrate.<sup>100</sup> The London liberties and areas immediately outside the city walls were reported in the *Bills*, illustrating the complex administrative patchwork that was early modern London.

A map that divided up London according to the weekly *Bills* in the early modern period illustrates that this was a long-standing concern.<sup>101</sup> The area marked in black (or green according to the legend) is the part of London that was covered by the *Bills of Mortality*. The map is divided into parishes, and the legend describes the districts inside and outside the ancient city walls. This visualization of the area covered by the *Bills* indicates their importance, but also illustrates the level of knowledge behind their compilation and, at the same time, the limitations of the genre.

<sup>100</sup> Robertson, 'Reckoning with London', 349.

<sup>101</sup> The map can be consulted on *Histpop: The Online Historical Population Reports Website*, at [[http://www.histpop.org/resources/pngs/0011/00150/00001\\_24bit\\_50.png](http://www.histpop.org/resources/pngs/0011/00150/00001_24bit_50.png)], accessed 20 Feb. 2022.

*Possible Directions of Future Research**Comparative Approaches*

In the seventeenth century, the *Bills of Mortality* were already being used as a basis for comparison. This was the case in a 1637 text by Humphrey Crouch in which he compared London's and Newcastle's health statistics, based on the *Bills*.<sup>102</sup> Modern historians could cast their net even wider. Understanding them as part of a Europe-wide attempt to create health statistics can open up new areas of research. The time span covered by the *Bills of Mortality* allows for (partial) comparisons with other urban systems for recording the dead during years when they overlap. This kind of comparative research is still in its infancy, and is often challenging when it involves London, which is considered a unique city in the early modern period. Yet comparisons between London and other settlements, even smaller or less significant ones, can place the metropolis into a broader context and enable scholars to see where London was unique and where it resembled other cities. An analysis of other *Bills of Mortality* would show how far London's *Bills* provided a template influencing the recording of the dead in England, Europe, and beyond.<sup>103</sup>

Other English cities recorded their dead in similar ways and in some cases made explicit reference to London. One example survives from an unnamed town, likely Manchester, for the period 30 June to 7 July 1625.<sup>104</sup> There were *Bills* in Cambridge, at least during the plague epi-

<sup>102</sup> Humphrey Crouch, *Londons Vacation, and the Countries Tearme: Or, a Lamentable Relation of Severall Remarkable Passages Which it Hath Pleased the Lord to Shew on Severall Persons Both in London, and the Country in This Present Visitation, 1636. With the Number of Those That Dyed at London and Newcastle, This Present Year. With New Additions.* By H.C. (London, 1637).

<sup>103</sup> There were *Bills of Mortality* in Barbados and North America. See John Clark, 'An Abstract of the Bills of Mortality in Bridge-Town in Barbados for the Years 1737-1744. Communicated by the Rev. Mr. John Clark', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, 45/487 (1748), 345; Susan E. Klepp, 'The Demographic Characteristics of Philadelphia, 1788-1801: Zacharias Poulson's Bills of Mortality', *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies*, 53/3 (1986), 201-21.

<sup>104</sup> 'Table of Mortality [for Unnamed Town, Possibly Manchester, 30 June-7 July 1625]', in Historical Manuscripts Commission (ed.), *14th Report, Appendix*,

demic in the 1660s, and a very basic *Bill* tallied the deaths in Oxford between 18 and 24 October 1644.<sup>105</sup> Nineteen out of forty-one deaths in Oxford were caused by plague. One particularly striking but under-explored example comes from Norwich, where a set of *Bills of Mortality* from 1579 to 1646 survives that has received little scholarly attention.<sup>106</sup> Preliminary work only has been done on *Bills of Mortality* from Newcastle and Gateshead.<sup>107</sup> A comparison between these *Bills* and those in London could point to telling similarities across regions.<sup>108</sup> In the early seventeenth century, compilations already included statistics from both London and Norwich.<sup>109</sup> In some other English cities, less sophisticated systems of recording were put in place. In Bristol, printed plague tickets gave an idea of the spread of the disease.<sup>110</sup> These were usually given to town administrators and had spaces where the numbers of plague dead could be filled in. They also existed in London and show that multiple recording systems were in use.<sup>111</sup> Paul Slack has identified further *Bills of Mortality*, some of them only in manuscript form, in Chester and

*Part IV (1894): The Manuscripts of Lord Kenyon* (London, 1894), 31–2.

<sup>105</sup> *A Bill of All That Deceased with the Several Diseases they Died of from the 18 of October to the 25, 1644* (Oxford, 1644), Oxford Text Archive, at [<http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12024/A28145>], accessed 26 Jan. 2023; O. J. Benedictow, 'Morbidity in Historical Plague Epidemics', *Population Studies*, 41/3 (1987), 401–31.

<sup>106</sup> Slack, 'Counting People', 1126. See also his *The Impact of Plague in Tudor and Stuart England* (London, 1985) for a discussion of these statistics regarding plague, esp. p. 133 on the Norwich *Bills*.

<sup>107</sup> Graham Butler, 'Yet Another Inquiry into the Trustworthiness of Eighteenth-Century Bills of Mortality: The Newcastle and Gateshead Bills, 1736–1840', *Local Population Studies*, 92/1 (2014), 58–72.

<sup>108</sup> See also the *Bills* from other provincial towns: Joseph McKean, 'Synopsis of Several Bills of Mortality', *Memoirs of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 2/2 (1804), 62–6; id., 'Deductions from Select Bills of Mortality', *Memoirs of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 2/2 (1804), 66–70.

<sup>109</sup> Henry Chettle, *A True Bill of the Whole Number That Hath Died in the Cittie of London, the City of Westminster, the City of Norwich, and Diuers Other Places, Since the Time This Last Sicknes of the Plague Began in Either of Them, to this Present Month of October the Sixt Day, 1603 . . .* (London, 1603), Oxford Text Archive, at [<http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12024/A06259>] accessed 26 Jan. 2023.

<sup>110</sup> Robertson, 'Reckoning with London', 345.

<sup>111</sup> Will Slauter, 'Write up Your Dead: The Bills of Mortality and the London Plague of 1665', *Media History*, 17/1 (2011), 1–15.

York, besides the cities already mentioned.<sup>112</sup> Moreover, the Wellcome Collection has *Bills* from Northampton from the second half of the eighteenth century and *Bills* from Carlisle dating to the 1780s.<sup>113</sup> The impact London had on provincial towns is confirmed by early modern descriptions, which emphasize the importance of the capital for the whole of England. For instance, the author of an article in the *Annual Observer* in 1776 commented that provincial capitals were ‘universally inspired with the ambition of becoming little Londons’.<sup>114</sup> Bearing this in mind, it is not surprising that similar systems of recording gradually emerged in other English cities. Yet there are few scholarly comparisons between these records and their underlying assumptions in different places.

The London *Bills of Mortality* can also indicate broader European patterns of change. Unlike their modern counterparts, early modern writers recognized the potential of the *Bills of Mortality* for making comparisons. One author compared death statistics in London and Amsterdam, for instance.<sup>115</sup> Another example is James Harvey’s assessment of London, Amsterdam, and Paris, and their respective outbreaks of scurvy in 1701.<sup>116</sup> In Dublin, similar sources show that recording the dead had also spread to Ireland, while the Glasgow *Bills of Mortality* indicate the same for Scotland.<sup>117</sup> In the former case, William Petty stresses in the title of his observations on the Dublin *Bills* that he is viewing the city in relation to the London *Bills of Mortality*, suggesting the

<sup>112</sup> Slack, *The Impact of Plague*, 239.

<sup>113</sup> See e.g. Alexander Phillips, *To the Right Worshipful John Gibson, Esq; Mayor . . . of Northampton; This Bill of Mortality is Presented by . . . Alexander Phillips* (Northampton, 1745); John Heysham, *Observations on the Bills of Mortality, in Carlisle* (Carlisle, 1780?–88).

<sup>114</sup> Quoted from Geoffrey Tyack, *The Making of Our Urban Landscape* (Oxford, 2022), 119.

<sup>115</sup> Robertson, ‘Reckoning with London’, 338.

<sup>116</sup> Harvey, *Scelera Aquearum*.

<sup>117</sup> William Petty, *Observations Upon the Dublin-Bills of Mortality, MDCLXXXI, and the State of That City by the Observator on the London Bills of Mortality* (London, 1683); on Glasgow, see also Walford, ‘Early Bills’, 234–45; Robert Cowan, ‘Remarks Suggested by the Glasgow Bills of Mortality: On the Mortality of Children in Glasgow’, *Glasgow Medical Journal*, 5/20 (1832), 353–62. On Dublin, see also Patrick Fagan, ‘The Population of Dublin in the Eighteenth Century with Particular Reference to the Proportions of Protestants and Catholics’, *Eighteenth-Century Ireland / Iris an Dá Chultúr*, 6 (1991), 121–56.

importance of the London version of the *Bills* for developments in other cities. A particularly promising example that has received little scholarly attention so far are the *Bills of Mortality* of Breslau (today Wrocław) in Silesia. These were not only discussed in England, but also led to considerations about potential improvements in London's *Bills*.<sup>118</sup> In Paris, the *État des baptêmes* only began in 1670—later than in London—but also recorded the burials of the dead.<sup>119</sup> Vanessa Harding has explored some of the possibilities of comparing the London and Paris *Bills*, showing that while in Paris around a quarter of burials were attributed to hospitals and institutions, in London it was less than 5 per cent.<sup>120</sup>

Differences are just as important as similarities for this analysis. In Barcelona, statistics were collected and collated in a similar fashion to the London *Bills*, but were not printed.<sup>121</sup> In Italian cities, plague rolls recorded the number of victims.<sup>122</sup> However, in some cases, names, trades, and social statuses were recorded. In London, these did not feature, suggesting a different kind of purpose.<sup>123</sup> These differences indicate that careful consideration is important for this comparative approach, as some of the documents in other cities more closely resemble plague rolls or parish registers than *Bills of Mortality*.<sup>124</sup>

An analysis of similar recording systems can also produce telling results if we consider those cities in early modern Europe which had no comparable records. As far as I am aware, nothing like the *Bills of Mortality* survives from the German-speaking lands, with the notable

<sup>118</sup> See e.g. Edmond Halley, 'Some Further Considerations on the Breslaw Bills of Mortality: By the Same Hand, etc.', *Philosophical Transactions*, 17 (1693), 654–6; James Dodson, 'A Letter from Mr. James Dodson to Mr. John Robertson, F.R.S. Concerning an Improvement of the Bills of Mortality', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, 47 (1752), 333–40.

<sup>119</sup> Harding, *The Dead and the Living*. On other European cities, see also Walford, 'Early Bills', 245–7.

<sup>120</sup> Thomas Birch (ed.), *A Collection of the Yearly Bills of Mortality from 1657 to 1758 Inclusive* (London, 1759).

<sup>121</sup> Robert S. Smith, 'Barcelona "Bills of Mortality" and Population, 1457–1590', *Journal of Political Economy*, 44/1 (1936), 84–93.

<sup>122</sup> C. M. Cipolla, 'The "Bills of Mortality" of Florence', *Population Studies*, 32/3 (1978), 543–8.

<sup>123</sup> Heitman, 'Authority', 278.

<sup>124</sup> This point was already made in the earlier literature. See Walford, 'Early Bills', 235.



exception of Breslau, discussed above, while at least haphazard or rudimentary forms exist in major Italian cities, Paris, and Amsterdam. Partly this points to the fact that these kinds of recording systems were especially necessary in larger urban centres, so the fact that German-speaking Europe had no major metropolis in the seventeenth century might go some way towards explaining this lack. But as the early modern period progressed and German cities grew and became increasingly important, they still had no *Bills*. Further investigations will be needed to show why this was the case and why, by comparison, London's *Bills of Mortality* remained so influential well into the nineteenth century.

A focus on the actors behind the *Bills* can provide further avenues of comparison. For instance, while Munich's dead were only recorded in church books and not in *Bills of Mortality*, there were also women responsible for assessing dead bodies there, much like the searchers. These 'nuns of the soul' (*Seelnonnen*) provided invaluable services, and while they fulfilled similar functions to the searchers, their connection to the Catholic Church also marked them out as different. In other German-speaking cities, women fulfilled similar functions and a comparison with the English searchers may lead to telling results about the role of women in health services.<sup>125</sup>

### *London's Urbanity and the Bills*

The implicit and explicit references to London in the *Bills of Mortality* can help historians understand what it meant to live in an early modern city more generally. The *Bills* and their reception show that urbanity can be defined not only by fixed factors such as population size, density, or the presence of buildings such as a market square, town hall, or city wall.<sup>126</sup> Instead, a more useful understanding of urbanity focuses on its dynamic and changing nature. What urbanity meant

<sup>125</sup> Anja Maria Hamann, 'Rohe Weiber und ehrbare Frauen: Totenfrauen im Spiegel der sächsischen Landtags-Verhandlungen (1836-1848)' (MA dissertation, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 2019).

<sup>126</sup> Susanne Rau and Jörg Rüpke, 'Religion und Urbanität: Wechselseitige Formierungen als Forschungsproblem', *Historische Zeitschrift*, 310/3 (2020), 654-80; Jörg Rüpke, *Urban Religion: A Historical Approach to Urban Growth and*

depended on specific times and circumstances, and also individual historical actors connected to an urban way of life. This definition makes it possible to find urbanity beyond major metropolises and to explain why not all inhabitants of important cities saw their surroundings as ‘urban’.

In addition to the better-known references to the *Bills* in letters and diaries, another type of source that awaits further investigation in this context is satirical texts, which were frequently anti-urban in nature. London was awash with satire, especially in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and some of the texts referred explicitly to the *Bills of Mortality* as a source of information for their ridicule. In the anonymous pamphlet *Hell Upon Earth*, we find the following description of *Bills of Mortality*: ‘those elegant Weekly Records composed to the Honour of Esculapius, and sung or said by the Company of Parish Clerks in and round this Metropolis’.<sup>127</sup> Or, to name another example, around 1780 Richard King looked at London through the lens of the *Bills of Mortality*, criticizing the city and its government.<sup>128</sup> In these writings, the *Bills* functioned as a source of anti-urbanism and could be juxtaposed with idealized descriptions of the countryside.

The popularity of the *Bills of Mortality* was also connected to other patterns of urbanity, which included the availability of printing presses or the ability to read and use basic statistics.<sup>129</sup> The latter was particularly common in London, where sellers used basic statistics for their businesses. The availability of data was probably also linked to the rising literacy rate in England, especially under Elizabeth I. Moreover, the complex administrative system behind the *Bills of Mortality* was important for the functioning of a metropolis, and was not needed in villages to the same extent.

*Religious Change* (Berlin, 2020); id. and Susanne Rau, *Religion and Urbanity Online* (Berlin, 2020), at [<https://doi.org/10.1515/urbrel>].

<sup>127</sup> *Hell Upon Earth: Or the Town in an Uproar. Occasion'd by the Late Horrible Scenes of Forgery, Perjury, Street-Robbery, Murder, Sodomy, and Other Shocking Impieties* (London, 1729), 11.

<sup>128</sup> Richard King, *The New London Spy: Or, a Twenty-Four Hours Ramble through the Bills of Mortality. Containing a True Picture of Modern High and Low Life* (London, c.1780).

<sup>129</sup> Weinreich, ‘Sums Theological’, 822–3.

Paying closer attention to the urbanity presented in the *Bills of Mortality* also provides an opportunity to consider more explicitly the spatial dimensions inherent in this type of source.<sup>130</sup> J. C. Robertson argues that the *Bills* were one of the key sources that shaped early modern Londoners' understanding of their city, showing that 'in the 1660s [Londoners] still wanted to think about their city in traditional terms, apart from the suburbs'.<sup>131</sup> As works on early modern printing have shown, London's print production changed how space was perceived and understood.<sup>132</sup> For a later period, scholars have used other sources to consider the construction of mental maps, most recently in English directories.<sup>133</sup> The *Bills* indicated areas that were particularly dangerous to enter during times of plague, changing how Londoners understood their city.<sup>134</sup> They also provide indications of what was considered a part of London, with some early modern sources using the geographical description 'within the weekly bills of mortality'.<sup>135</sup> In Robertson's words, 'in reading the weekly *Bills* Londoners and outsiders all became accustomed to visualizing the City as a matrix: an interdependent network of proportional relationships that in matters of health increasingly came to be confined within the bounds set by the weekly *Bills*'.<sup>136</sup> Real and imagined maps of the city expressed a certain understanding of urbanity that emerged in London during the early modern period. The use of the *Bills* to inform an understanding of urbanity itself also goes some way towards explaining their longevity and likely popularity.

<sup>130</sup> Susanne Rau and Gerhard Schwerhoff (eds.), *Topographien des Sakralen: Religion und Raumordnung in der Vormoderne* (Munich, 2008); Susanne Rau, *History, Space, and Place*, trans. Michael Thomas Taylor (London, 2019).

<sup>131</sup> Robertson, 'Reckoning with London', 350.

<sup>132</sup> See Monteyne, *The Printed Image in Early Modern London*.

<sup>133</sup> Sasse, *Die Stadt lesen*.

<sup>134</sup> Robertson, 'Reckoning with London', 340.

<sup>135</sup> E.g. Company of Innholders, *To the Honourable the Commons of Great-Britain in Parliament Assembled: The Case of the Several Inn-Keepers, Stable-Keepers, and other Consumers of Hay and Oats, within the Cities of London and Westminster, Borough of Southwark, and Other Places within the Weekly Bills of Mortality* (London, 1767).

<sup>136</sup> Robertson, 'Reckoning with London', 345.

*Conclusion*

London's *Bills of Mortality* have long been recognized as a crucial source for understanding the early modern metropolis. Their great potential has not eluded researchers and scholars, especially for gaining an understanding of London's population development and the dangers of living in the English capital, particularly during times of plague. Since then, further, non-statistical aspects of the *Bills* have been uncovered and analysed, including their reception in other sources.

However, the *Bills of Mortality* can still provide pointers for future research and help answer questions about early modern London. My proposals for future areas of research speak to a historiographical shift that goes beyond a focus on London as an exceptional case study and instead suggests integrating London more fully into broader questions on the functioning of early modern cities and their urbanity. One way of doing this is by comparing London with other early modern towns.

Indeed, the London *Bills of Mortality* can enrich debates on modernity itself. Statistics are arguably one of the features that define modernity. Alongside these came other processes, such as the commodification of death rates through the sale of information or increasing attempts to control populations through biopolitics.<sup>137</sup> However, this is only one side of the story. For all their flaws, the London *Bills of Mortality* provide remarkable clues to long-standing concerns about the health of a complex metropolis that predate our present. They show that the recording and consumption of these kinds of statistics is by no means uniquely modern, while the semi-professional searchers challenge notions of increasing professionalization in the early modern period, and the continued relevance of the church in recording the dead indicates no clear secularization.<sup>138</sup>

The *Bills* can be seen as a premodern way of dealing with death. The long-lasting system of collecting data about the dead illustrates

<sup>137</sup> Ibid. 328; McCormick, 'Political Arithmetic's 18th Century Histories', 242–4.

<sup>138</sup> Slack, 'Counting People'.

that early modern urban polities had their own way of functioning when it came to caring for and treating the dead. Although the *Bills* had issues, recognized by contemporaries and modern scholars, they show a remarkably wide-ranging and nuanced way of dealing with the dead. Early modern systems of recording, then, were not merely a flawed precursor to modern administrative practices, but must be understood in their own right.

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## REVIEW ARTICLE

### **IMAGINARIES OF BELONGING AND IM/MOBILITY: NEW APPROACHES TO STATEHOOD AND MIGRATION IN MODERN HISTORY**

SINA STEGLICH

DELPHINE DIAZ and SYLVIE APRILE (eds.), *Banished: Traveling the Roads of Exile in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, trans. Adrian Morfee, *Migrations in History*, 1 (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2022), vii + 312 pp. ISBN 978 3 110 73731 8. €104.95/£95.00

PANIKOS PANAYI, *Migrant City: A New History of London* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2022), 496 pp. ISBN 978 0 300 26472 2. US\$18.00 (paperback)

STEFFEN MAU, *Sortiermaschinen: Die Neuerfindung der Grenze im 21. Jahrhundert* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2021), 189 pp. ISBN 978 3 406 77570 3. €14.95 (paperback)<sup>1</sup>

GIULIANA LASCHI, VALERIA DEPLANO, and ALESSANDRO PES (eds.), *Europe between Migrations, Decolonization and Integration (1945–1992)*, *Routledge Studies in Modern European History* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020), 204 pp. ISBN 978 1 032 17288 0. £29.59 (paperback)

FORSCHUNGSPROJEKT ZUR MATERIALITÄT VON FLUCHT UND MIGRATION (ed.), *Moving Things*, trans. Henry Holland (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2022), 263 pp. ISBN 978 3 835 35190 5. €19.90

DONATELLA DI CESARE, *Philosophie der Migration*, trans. Daniel Creutz (Berlin: Matthes & Seitz, 2021), 343 pp. ISBN 978 3 751 80317 5. €26.00<sup>2</sup>

I am grateful to Ole Münch (GHIL) for his comments and suggestions.

<sup>1</sup> Published in English as *Sorting Machines: The Reinvention of the Border in the 21st Century*, trans. Nicola Barfoot (Cambridge, 2022).

<sup>2</sup> Published in English as *Resident Foreigners: A Philosophy of Migration*, trans. David Broder (Cambridge, 2020).

History is in motion; the past was in motion—because history seems to be another term for a change in time. But what about space? How can we both analyse the spatial dynamics that are crucial for history and properly engage with the diachronic and synchronic dimensions of any transformation? In other words, how can we think of history in terms of mobility—of people, goods, and ideas on the move—without simply considering everything in the past as fluid, transitory, and unstable, whether physically or conceptually?<sup>3</sup> Histories of im/mobility and migration can be linked to these basic questions, which intrinsically depend on Johann Martin Chladenius's concept of the *Sehepunkt* (tentatively translated as 'point of view') as the anchor required for any analysis of the historical as provisional and ephemeral. These histories always refer to specific notions of belonging, temporal and spatial boundaries and borders, and practices of inclusion or exclusion. Engaging with these topics therefore aims at the core of history and of human sociality in general. Mobility as a theme is not specific to history, but it relates to people, and many disciplines have repeatedly engaged with it. Bringing together the different yet complementary perspectives of anthropology, ethnography, sociology, philosophy, and historiography can sensitize researchers to an understanding of past and present norms, forms of sociality, and (in)visible thresholds. A number of recent publications have made this overarching topic wider, and this review article will therefore discuss the imaginaries and analyses they offer of belonging and im/mobility.

To take a more nuanced approach, the broad theme of im/mobility in history can be approached from different angles. To begin with, one can follow individuals' pathways, their experiences, reflections, and motives for being on the move. In contrast to these small-scale endeavours, the state features as one of the major protagonists of the modern mobility-taming project by observing, controlling, and often limiting flows of mobility. This can be seen as a means of gaining power and therefore as antagonistic to specific forms of mobility regarded as problematic or threatening. Leaving these two poles behind, one can

<sup>3</sup> Influential in this regard is the 'new mobilities paradigm' introduced by Mimi Sheller and John Urry in 'The New Mobilities Paradigm', *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 38/2 (2006), 207–26. See also Tim Cresswell, *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World* (New York, 2006).

also engage with the practice of moving itself. This is when attention turns to objects that enable and facilitate mobility, or accidentally acquire logistical or emotional importance during this process.<sup>4</sup> Finally, zooming out and looking from an eagle's perspective, we see mobility as integral to humankind itself, and something that must be considered not as exceptional and deviant, but as a default mode of being human. These lines of argument will be unfolded in what follows.

### I. *Individual Perspectives: Itineraries and Purposes*

French historians Delphine Diaz and Sylvie Aprile concentrate on the varieties of nineteenth-century exile experience, weighing up the extensive research on aspects of the twentieth-century mobility which resulted from the two world wars. This was accompanied by forced migration, imprisonment, resettlement, colonization, and later decolonization and state-building, or located in the context of labour migration.<sup>5</sup> Beginning with the preliminary questions of who was on the move or on the way into exile—how, when, where, and with whom—they present the lived experience of individuals of different backgrounds and ask what motivated them to leave their homelands. The main point of this approach is not to look at exile in terms of the two poles of departure and arrival, but to emphasize the many steps and ruptures that lay in between these two points. In order to present their protagonists as actors instead of mere objects of observation, tracking, and monitoring by the state, the editors adopt Stéphane Dufoix's concept of *exopolitie* (exopolitics). This allows them to grapple with the variety of political actions that expatriates engaged in as individuals or in groups (Diaz and Aprile, p. 7). In this

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. the conference 'Things on the Move: Materiality of Objects in Global and Imperial Trajectories, 1700-1900', held at the German Historical Institute London, 8-10 Sept. 2022. An outline of the conference can be found on the GHIL's website at [<https://www.ghil.ac.uk/events/conferences-and-workshops/things-on-the-move>], accessed 19 Jan. 2023.

<sup>5</sup> In a similar vein, basing the phenomenon of global mobility in the nineteenth century, see Isabella Löhr, *Globale Bildungsmobilität 1850-1930: Von der Bekehrung der Welt zur globalen studentischen Gemeinschaft* (Göttingen, 2021).



way, the contributions seek to uncover the indeterminate groups of 'banished' people in Western Europe, and to differentiate between them. The editors are interested in individuals' experiences and their pathways into exile, the networks they developed there, their national and religious identities, their social status, and gender-based differences. They also look at what scope for action these individuals had in their new environments, and at the sources that often silence women's voices. Combining quantitative and qualitative methods, Diaz and Aprile present exile experiences from a comparative point of view, systematically adopting the perspective of their historical protagonists, who often compared themselves and their lives here and there, now and then. These comparisons – analytical, source-based, and spatially and temporally oriented – strengthen the impression that exile lives were fragmented and hybrid. As such, they were symptoms of a past reality of political tensions, precarious socio-economic circumstances, religious and ethnic segregation or oppression, and their consequences for group cohesion. Exile lives are the symbolic core of permanent adjustments in the notion of belonging.

This approach of comparative differentiation is the opposite of Panikos Panayi's micro-level perspective offering a local history of London as a 'migrant city'. He does not compare different origins or trace itineraries, but instead focuses on a single place: the British capital – and former centre of the British Empire – as the paradigm of a modern metropolis. He himself does not move long distances, nor leave the urban space behind. Strolling between Westminster and the East End, Brixton and Highgate, he carves out and collects the relics which people of different origins left there. He visualizes the traces deposited on the soil and inscribed into the architecture, and emphasizes the genuine contributions 'migrants' made to building a versatile city of politics and business, culture and religious practices, neighbourhoods, and everyday life that go far beyond the label of a 'melting pot'. If London can be considered an epitome of the globalized world, then Panayi further shapes this image, without romanticizing it or leaving out any inconsistencies. It is of particular charm that this well-told (hi)story, centred around specific biographies, explains the nature of migration from a perspective strongly anchored in the local. Panayi's own *Sehepunkt* does not follow people's comings and goings

or their points of departure and arrival. Rather, he is interested in the perceptions and imaginations of hybrid forms of belonging which originated in the migration processes that became visible on site, taking shape as particular culinary dishes, music genres, sports, places of worship and leisure, and much more. People's mobility becomes tangible as the very basis not just of London as an exceptional case of urban life, but of human sociality in general.<sup>6</sup> This is an achievement in its own right.

The other side of the coin is a longing for order, stability, and homogeneity instead of dynamism and hybridity. This is why different forms of movement were often hierarchized and finally required particular policies to maintain or strengthen the orders they incorporated, and protect various ideas of belonging. Migration histories therefore cannot be limited to individuals' experiences, whether the result of free choice or coercion.

## II. *State Perspectives: Monitoring and Regulation*

It is a truism that a history of modern mobility and migration cannot leave out the state. Since the modern state's *nomos* (body of law) is territorially anchored, its policing methods were (and still are) based on being able to geographically locate and trace its inhabitants. The ability to control visible and invisible borders is central to its nature and self-understanding as a legitimate entity.<sup>7</sup> Given this basic definition, the German sociologist Steffen Mau's choice of topic at first sight seems rather uncontroversial: borders as *Sortiermaschinen* (sorting machines). His argument focuses on various types of borders, how they worked, and the consequences they had for different parts of society. He discusses borders as 'filters' and sees them as instruments of social

<sup>6</sup> For a wider perspective that covers several periods, see also Christoph Cornelissen, Beat Kümin, and Massimo Rospoche (eds.), *Migration and the European City: Social and Cultural Perspectives from Early Modernity to the Present* (Berlin, 2022).

<sup>7</sup> Still relevant to the discussion on the impact of globalization on nation states is Saskia Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages* (Princeton, 2008).

differentiation (Mau, p. 15). In his view, globalization stimulated states' ambitions to control their borders in two contradictory ways. First, *Öffnungsglobalisierung* (the globalization of opening) asked for more porous borders. It eased controls and promoted worldwide trade and transnational interactions, accompanied by people on the move. Yet, second, the lack of visible borders went hand in hand with reinforced border practices, an example of *Schließungsglobalisierung* (the globalization of closure; Mau, p. 16).

Mau's nuanced praxeological analysis highlights the subtle ways in which state actors continued to monitor and regulate mobility by gathering information, selecting and classifying people. Ultimately, the present appears to be a heyday of borders, whether physical or smart and digital, and globalization itself must be regarded not as a process of flattening boundaries, but as a driver of their reinforcement.<sup>8</sup> This Janus-faced form of globalization has led to positive and negative notions of mobility and a way of handling it that ensures that the opening and closing of borders are mutually dependent. Monitored borders create an awareness of mobility that requires nuanced regulation and hence the hierarchization of people on the move. The border, as the title of Mau's study shows, is by no means a neutral demarcation line, but rather a sophisticated generator of social, political, and even ethnic and religious inequality (an *Ungleichheitsgenerator*; Mau, p. 163). The border not only makes inequalities visible at different levels, but perpetuates them and even produces additional hierarchies through biometric analysis and other digital tools. Deciding who is 'in' and who is not – when, where, and for what purpose – is not a question of mere geographical localization but, in a wider and deeper sense, one of socio-political and cultural belonging. Although it takes account of contemporary transformations and challenges, Mau's nuanced study invites us to re-engage with the theme of the border, not as a niche phenomenon of territorial encounters or as a by-product of statehood, but in order to embed it and its ongoing

<sup>8</sup> On the implementation of borders and especially the modern barbed wire fence as a 'modest instrument of power' and metaphor for division, separation, and visible and practical exclusion, see Olivier Razac, *Politische Geschichte des Stacheldrahts: Prärie – Schützengraben – Lager*, trans. Maria Muhle (Zurich, 2003), 8; originally published as *Histoire politique du barbelé* (Paris, 2000).

internal societal and global negotiations into the wider historical context of changing norms of social belonging.

Although borders did not disappear during the processes of globalization—not even within the Schengen area—Europe remains crucial when it comes to the topic of migration, particularly regarding the parallel concepts of the nation state and the citizen that were both challenged by people on the move.<sup>9</sup> Reaching out to contemporary discourses, the volume edited by Giuliana Laschi, Valeria Deplano, and Alessandro Pes brings together views from the fields of history, international relations, and sociology. The contributions analyse Europe as a paradigmatic space which stimulated migration movements during the era of decolonization and integration in the second half of the twentieth century. Presenting Europe as a primary destination for people migrating from other regions of the world, they complement the views of Diaz and Aprile, who introduced Europe as a region of departure, not arrival. Thus both help to break up the narrow impression of migration as a recent phenomenon and a one-way process from the Global South to the northern hemisphere, as it is presented in public discourses that are stimulated by ongoing migratory movements especially, yet not exclusively, in the Mediterranean. The essays in this volume emphasize the importance of Europe for understanding and defining migration.<sup>10</sup> European actors colonized the world, imposed a territorial code of power, and promoted the ideal of homogeneity in non-European contexts. And when decolonization processes began, Europe featured as (an often implicit) role model for nation-building efforts. The bitter irony of this history is that Europe feared a backlash against these overarching transformations. Movement within a region and transgressing its borders are two entirely different things. Whereas Schengen is the most symptomatic example of a genuinely European idea of freedom of movement, this freedom

<sup>9</sup> For the ambivalent perpetuation of inequalities resulting from, and inscribed into, the concept of citizenship, see Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship, Inequality, and Difference: Historical Perspectives* (Princeton, 2018).

<sup>10</sup> See Leo Lucassen, David Feldman, and Jochen Oltmer (eds.), *Paths of Integration: Migrants in Western Europe (1880–2004)* (Amsterdam, 2006) and Peter Gatrell, *The Unsettling of Europe: The Great Migration, 1945 to the Present* (London, 2019).

is not granted to everyone. Thus it perpetuates the inequalities produced by movement (chosen freely or enforced), territorial closures, and policing practices that monitor mobility.

### III. *The Object's Perspective: Material Companions*

The extent to which movement is not just about people and their interactions with the state, but about their everyday lives, becomes clear when considering the material objects that accompanied them. That objects should be regarded not just as trivia but as essential facilitators of movement is a theme of more recent research. The interdisciplinary project 'On the Materiality of (Forced) Migration', jointly conducted by the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology of the University of Göttingen, the Museum Friedland, and the exhibition agency Die Exponauten in Berlin, is an excellent example of how the academic discourse can be opened up by also considering activist and artistic perspectives, and carefully integrating the views of the 'object of study'—migrating people and their own experiences—with individual material companions. The project looks at the relationship between migration and materiality. People on the move took rare yet essential belongings with them, and the project tries to make these objects speak. Personal, often intimate objects—from books, keys, and passports to toys, smartphones, and menstrual products—were regarded not as mere functional things, but as representatives and perhaps even actors of culture, identity, emotions, and communication. During the process of migration—in the cases examined mostly involuntary—additional meaning was attributed to these objects, which could be considered either as memorable remnants of a past life or as travel companions. Approaching the complex of migration via its material boundaries and periphery therefore offers new insights, as people on the move are always 'in touch' with their objects—literally and emotionally (*Moving Things*, p. 16). The whole spectrum of migration that lies beyond mere rational decisions—practical challenges whether individual or collective—opens up when we take into account these material, more-than-human dimensions in which memories, emotions, and traumatic experiences are inscribed and stored.

IV. *The Eagle's Perspective: From Migration to Humankind*

The other way around, zooming not in but out, widens the horizons of migration as an all-inclusive theme. If mobility and migration could be seen as covering everything, what can be described, explained, or discussed that is specific to them? It is possible to subsume many historical and social phenomena under the broad umbrella of mobility. And today it seems to be regarded as a master key to almost every challenge individuals and societies still face. But if so, what is the point of such a perspective? Where do the explanatory core and advantage of it lie? In this regard the intervention by Donatella Di Cesare is invaluable, and not only because to this day a philosophy of migration remains to be written.<sup>11</sup> Starting from the inherent danger that the figure of the migrant poses to the state, representing as it does deterritorialization as well as the fluidization and hybridity of identity, she discusses the paradoxical circumstance that the territorial nation state is not only an entirely modern phenomenon, but that it was what first made the migrant into a migrant. From the moment when the identity of a social group was aligned with the space it inhabited, anyone who tried to transgress this space or ignore its boundaries became an enemy, a potential threat, a deviant whose mobility was disruptive to stability and order, requiring observation, restriction, or immediate prevention. What Di Cesare offers is not merely a repetition of the well-known story. The merit of this book and its approach comes from her questioning of this state-migrant dependency. She asks why we continue to allow states to control territories. She also exposes all the ambivalent and contradictory norms that are bound to the ideal of territorial homogeneity, presumably mirroring that of a social group called society. Among them, one of the most confusing is the idea of

<sup>11</sup> Instead, there is growing interest in bringing together perspectives from different fields of academic and practical engagement with migration. See e.g. the interdisciplinary compendium by Caroline B. Brettell and James F. Hollifield (eds.), *Migration Theory: Talking across Disciplines* (Abingdon, 2022) and the recent sociological-conceptual project which aims to fill this gap with an encyclopedia of migration terms: Inken Bartels, Isabella Löhr, Christiane Reinecke, et al. (eds.), *Inventar der Migrationsbegriffe*, at [<https://www.migrationsbegriffe.de>], last accessed 18 Jan. 2023.

universal human rights based on territorially coded power structures. They can only be granted within specific boundaries and cannot be applied to humanity in the abstract. In theory, human rights are held up—and praised—as a universal standard, but in practice, they fail to be the lived experience of all people. And the focus on (or one might even say: the modern fetish for) territorial borders and their intricate links with power structures on multiple levels can help explain why human rights are rights for some, but not for all.

Di Cesare's strength is combining practical descriptions of challenges and ethical ideals, and meticulously pointing out their shortcomings and the contradictions between the two. As a result of these, the protagonists of mobility—the migrant, the expatriate, the asylum seeker, and the stateless<sup>12</sup>—were confronted with their counterpart: our modern ideal of territorial statehood as a symbol or even a guarantor of our laws, where political acts are fundamentally divided between domestic and foreign affairs. In short, they faced the logos of the political based on the unquestioned assumption of being settled. The end to which Di Cesare's argument inevitably leads is an erosion of the widespread habit of equating migrants with the abnormal or pathological. She wants us to start thinking of migrants as fellow human beings, not as people either requiring relief and support, or evoking acts of control.<sup>13</sup> In theory, this is both simple and logical. Yet when it comes to practical action and consequences, it is a challenging and complex argument, one in which the value of this book resides. Keeping the notion of the migrant at an analytical level would mean a perpetuation of territorial power structures and all their resulting inequalities and inconsistencies. Abandoning the concept of the migrant would open up new landscapes of genuine humanity for all humans. Although this is not a primarily academic appeal but a broader ethical, moral one, according to Di Cesare, it is a step that is necessary and overdue.

Arguing without the word 'migrant' would not mean the end of research on this prominent figure in the study of im/mobilities;

<sup>12</sup> On statelessness, see Mira L. Siegelberg, *Statelessness: A Modern History* (Cambridge, Mass., 2020).

<sup>13</sup> For a parallel discussion of migration as part of the human condition, see Christiane Harzig and Dirk Hoerder with Donna Gabaccia, *What is Migration History?* (Cambridge, 2009), 8–52.

rather, the advantage of this step would be conceptual in nature: an inner, mental shift towards recognizing humans as humans without needing to classify them. And during this process, the popularity and frequent appearance of the figure of the migrant in public and academic discourses can remind us of our task. It may remain an unachievable ideal, but it is one that individuals – whether politicians, intellectuals, researchers, or activists – should strive for.

What this sample of recent contributions to the highly interdisciplinary field of mobility studies offers is by no means coherent with regard to their objects of investigation, their sources, their temporal and spatial scope, their methodological approaches, and least of all their underlying implicit ethical impetus and explanatory goals. Yet there are some shared insights that allow the arguments to be summarized.

First, turning to the figure of the migrant and the term itself, Di Cesare argues for the dissolution of the analytical concept as it inherits a fundamental hierarchization. This would not (and should not) mean denying the existence of the migrant as a prominent historical actor, traceable in the sources and, as such, a relevant topic for ongoing research on the changing norms of human sociality and general policing practices.

Second, even though migration or movement must be regarded as something affecting all humans and not context-specific, its particular relevance in driving adjustments to different forms of belonging, their reasons and imaginaries, remain influential topics worthy of further investigation. To widen the subject temporally and spatially does not necessarily mean levelling all its analytical contours; rather, it means seeking to conduct nuanced studies of distinct settings which allow the varying constitutions of human sociality to be understood. This would again include looking at the links between modernity and mobility, and the role of Europe and other world regions and their views about movement and how it should be handled, in order to sharpen and refine the core idea of mobility.

Third, looking at relations between the individual (rather than an anonymous collective) on the move, and a presumably stable and spatially defined power structure – regardless of whether this is the nation state, an international order, or any other form of socio-political manifestation – allows us to visualize mobility. To consider everyone



and everything in motion would hide movement itself and prevent nuanced analysis and qualitative differentiation.<sup>14</sup> This contrast between the immobile and the mobile makes it possible to engage with notions of ‘normal’, ‘deviant’, ‘problematic’, ‘threatening’, or ‘voluntary’ movement, and to look for their respective historical meanings. Arguing with concepts and counter-concepts, for example, by pairing figures which display a ‘problematic’ mobility – the refugee, the asylum seeker, the traveller, and so on – with figures of presumably legitimate belonging – the citizen, the resident, the family member – may open up ways of contouring the field in a productive way.

Finally, investigating these – and other – subtopics of the broad theme of mobility and migration requires a shift in the *Sehepunkt* from which we grasp some aspects of past and present movement, while others remain out of sight.<sup>15</sup> And what particular *Sehepunkt* we choose for our engagement with the imaginaries of which forms of mobility is itself a product of our internalized modes of belonging.

<sup>14</sup> Peter Adey, ‘If Mobility is Everything Then it is Nothing: Towards a Relational Politics of (Im)Mobilities’, *Mobilities*, 1/1 (2006), 75–94.

<sup>15</sup> See Jan de Vries, ‘Playing with Scales: The Global and the Micro, the Macro and the Nano’, *Past & Present*, Supplement 14, 242 (2019), 23–36.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

JACE STUCKEY (ed.), *The Legend of Charlemagne: Envisioning Empire in the Middle Ages*, Explorations in Medieval Culture, 15 (Leiden: Brill, 2021) x + 277 pp. ISBN 978 9 004 33564 6. €134.00/\$161.00

Historical figures can only be considered 'great' when their contemporaries and posterity portray them as such. In the case of Charlemagne (or Charles the Great), his name and epithet are inseparable in English and French. Certainly, his contemporaries thought of him as an outstanding emperor; however, the glorification of Charlemagne as the Christian emperor par excellence started only after his death. (A similar phenomenon can be seen with Constantine the Great.) Einhard, a confidant of Charlemagne, was the first to shape this image prominently, dedicating a vita to him in the style of Suetonius. From the *Gesta Karoli* onwards, written by Notker the Stammerer, the glorification of Charlemagne exceeded the typical idealization of rulers, and was related to the crisis of the Frankish Empire and the declining power of the Carolingians at the end of the ninth century. Not only was Charlemagne portrayed as a hero in *chansons de geste*, but his battles with Muslims and his connections to the Holy Land also led to him being depicted as the leader of Christendom and the liberator of Jerusalem in the high Middle Ages. The kingdom of the Capetian dynasty was legitimized by the *Reditus regni Francorum ad stripem Karoli*, that is, by the notion that the Carolingians had returned to the French throne with the accession of Louis VIII (r. 1223–6) because his mother, Isabella of Hainaut, was allegedly a descendant of Charlemagne. Furthermore, Charlemagne was worshipped in the Holy Roman Empire as its founding father and was also canonized under Frederick Barbarossa. This was done, however, by an antipope, which is why the cult of Charlemagne was limited to Aachen. Nonetheless, the emperor's good reputation led, among other things, to the establishment of the electoral college being attributed to him.

In short, Charlemagne's image was subject to numerous transformations, shaped by the necessities of different times. The field of research on Charlemagne's reception history is consequently a wide one. Its inception can be dated to Gaston Paris's *Histoire poétique de Charlemagne*, published in 1865, and in the last twenty years there has also been a broad range of research on the emperor's afterlife in the Middle Ages.<sup>1</sup> The editor of the volume under review here, Jace Stuckey, has already published another important anthology on this topic in 2008, co-edited with Matthew Gabriele.<sup>2</sup> There is also an ongoing project in Bristol headed by Marianne Ailes named 'Charlemagne: A European Icon'.

In his introduction (p. 1), Stuckey emphasizes the importance of examining different images of Charlemagne:

There are, however, real disconnects that should not be overlooked in favor of a teleological telling of Charlemagne's stories. The usefulness . . . of the Charlemagne legend in late-medieval England has little to do with the legend in late-ninth and early-tenth century Francia and the 'Charlemagne' celebrated in the *Chanson de Roland* is not the same 'Charlemagne' of the later Middle English romances. This, however, is part of the appeal of Charlemagne. His legend is flexible and malleable in a way that few other historical figures of the Middle Ages were.

The editor has arranged the volume thematically. It begins with the ways in which Charlemagne was remembered and imagined, including both the Carolingian and the post-Carolingian periods. Cullen Chandler analyses the depiction of Charlemagne in the ninth century

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Matthew Gabriele, *An Empire of Memory: The Legend of Charlemagne, the Franks, and Jerusalem before the First Crusade* (Oxford, 2011); Anne A. Latowsky, *Emperor of the World: Charlemagne and the Construction of Imperial Authority, 800–1229* (Ithaca, NY, 2013); Matthew Bailey and Ryan D. Giles (eds.), *Charlemagne and his Legend in Early Spanish Literature and Historiography* (Cambridge, 2016); William J. Purkis and Matthew Gabriele (eds.), *The Charlemagne Legend in Medieval Latin Texts* (Woodbridge, 2016); Marianne Ailes and Phillipa Hardman, *The Legend of Charlemagne in Medieval England: The Matter of France in Middle English and Anglo-Norman Literature* (Woodbridge, 2017).

<sup>2</sup> Jace Stuckey and Matthew Gabriele (eds.), *The Legend of Charlemagne in the Middle Ages: Power, Faith, and Crusade* (Basingstoke, 2008).

and traces its development from Einhard to the Poeta Saxo. Stuckey's essay examines the legendary tales of Charlemagne's connections with the Holy Land, which presented him as the pioneer of the crusades. Stuckey focuses on legendary accounts from the late eleventh century to the thirteenth century in which this connection can be found: 'The representation of Charlemagne in many of the crusade sources is consistent and in a manner that is indicative of a pattern concerning his memory during this era. The vision of Charlemagne became the "prototype" crusader' (p. 60).

The second part deals with late medieval tradition. First, Carla Del Zotto examines Charlemagne's alleged liberation of Santiago de Compostela in the Iberian and Nordic traditions. In both, the treatment of the topic is similar: 'The historical scenario is inscribed into a widened horizon for the triumph of Christianity, where the call for Crusading is not only towards the Holy land but also to Spain, and linked to the pilgrimage to Santiago and the cult of St. James' (pp. 88–9). Christopher P. Flynn then analyses the detailed compendium of the emperor's deeds in the *Speculum Historiale* of Vincent of Beauvais (d. 1264). Although very influential, Vincent's depiction was contradictory, leaving it to the reader to decide which story was credible. Finally, Jade Bailey focuses on the reception of Charlemagne during the Hundred Years War, in which the English king claimed the French throne and thus positioned himself as the direct successor of Charlemagne. Referring to the Talbot Shrewsbury Book, she illustrates how the presentation of Charlemagne in the fifteenth century served as an example for the English king as well as a warning.

The next section concerns the representation of religion and identity in literary sources. Ana Grinberg shows that the account of Charlemagne's intervention on the Iberian peninsula in the Old French romance *Mainet* does not entirely correspond to the pre-existing ideal of the crusaders. Instead, it was influenced by the idea of *convivencia*: 'Christendom and Islam, in this case, are not opposites in a binary but part of the cross-confessional connectivity and cultural exchange happening around and beyond the Mediterranean' (p. 164). Elizabeth Ponder Melick deals with the presentation of 'Saracens' in Middle English romances about Charlemagne and shows how they were used to justify the crusades: 'The eternal conflict with the Saracens allows

[the crusaders] to feel justified in the violence they committed against Muslims in the East during the major crusades, and even allows them to view themselves as victims rather than perpetrators of violence' (p. 93). Larissa Tracy compares the images of Charlemagne and King Arthur, pointing out how they conveyed the hybrid identity of the nobility, with its French descent and growing English identification (p. 228):

For many poets writing in English in the fourteenth century, the figure who most reflected English interests and sensibilities was Arthur, at the expense of Charlemagne. The iconic status of both . . . diminished at varying times, but Arthur experienced a resurgence in the fourteenth century among English audiences as Charlemagne receded somewhat into the background.

In the epilogue, William J. Diebold examines the exhibition 'Ex Oriente: Isaak und der weiße Elefant [Isaac and the white elephant]', held in Aachen in 2003. This exhibition drew attention to an incident that is usually overshadowed by Charlemagne and does not get much attention. Isaac was a Jewish trader who was sent by Charlemagne as an envoy to Caliph Harun al-Rashid. In 802 Isaac returned to the emperor with a gift from the caliph, and a spectacular one by the standards of the early Middle Ages in Western Europe: an elephant named Abul Abbas (incidentally, no contemporary source mentions the colour of the elephant's skin). Diebold describes the curators' innovative approach. It was Wolfgang Dreßen's idea to shift the focus of the exhibition onto Isaac and the intercultural aspects of his journey instead of foregrounding the two rulers. Beyond that, the exhibition examined Orientalism critically and demonstrated its relevance in the present, focusing on the relationship between the three monotheistic world religions, the conflict between Israel and Palestine, and the Iraq War. The exhibition was also accused of antisemitism and was the subject of other debates. Its depiction of Charlemagne, however, was similar to old traditions that had already been established during the emperor's lifetime.

This outstanding volume is held together by the figure of Charlemagne; however, the editor's caveat, which I have cited above, applies

throughout. The ways in which the emperor's image were used and the contexts surrounding it were diverse and cannot be readily standardized, though this was never the aim of the volume. Moreover, the 'Empire' mentioned in the title is not really touched upon. This is a missed opportunity for a slightly more detailed and comprehensive treatment of the subject matter. The epilogue concerning Charlemagne's modern reception deviates a little from the rest of the volume, but also reminds us of the importance of discussing present-day images of Charlemagne. Edited volumes are often criticized for their lack of coherence, though one should not have the same expectations as when reading a monograph. In this case, however, the articles are well connected thematically and offer a broad, yet detailed, variety of images of Charlemagne. The volume also provides profound analyses of the role these images played in the self-perception of the societies in which they were established, and thus provides important approaches for future research.

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STEFFEN PATZOLD, *Presbyter: Moral, Mobilität und die Kirchenorganisation im Karolingerreich*, Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters, 68 (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 2020), 599 pp. ISBN 978 3 777 22023 9. €196.00

In 2008 Steffen Patzold published *Episcopus* (659 pp.); now he has published *Presbyter* (599 pp.). Several medievalist friends have joked that in a few years we should expect a large volume entitled *Diaconus*. Patzold's two important works on Carolingian churchmen, however, take very different approaches. The subtitle of *Episcopus* was 'Knowledge about Bishops in Francia from the Late Eighth to the Early Tenth Century';<sup>1</sup> and the book detailed how representations and self-representations of bishops changed over this period. Patzold showed that early ninth-century Carolingian bishops created their own vision of what a bishop should be and how he should relate to rulers and the secular world. Reformers were successfully able to spread this new 'knowledge' about bishops via councils, admonitory texts, and hagiography in ways that deeply affected both the Frankish church and its Ottonian successor.

The subtitle of *Presbyter* ('Morality, Mobility, and Church Organization in the Carolingian Empire') indicates its main theme less clearly. Patzold considers a more restricted field of priests than Robert Godding, whose work included urban priests and future bishops.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, *Presbyter* focuses on 'local priests', defined (pp. 65–6) as men who

cared for a church beyond the bishop's seat and outside religious communities like monasteries or collegiate churches; and . . . were responsible for the pastoral care of the surrounding laypeople, particularly for the singing of Mass, preaching, and for confession and penance.

Patzold considers such men a new type of priest, contrasting them with a Merovingian church organized around cities, private oratories, and groups of priests serving larger rural settlements. His focus is on local priests north of the Alps, with a few comparisons with the rather different circumstances in Carolingian Italy.

<sup>1</sup> Steffen Patzold, *Episcopus: Wissen über Bischöfe im Frankenreich des späten 8. bis frühen 10. Jahrhunderts* (Ostfildern, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> Robert Godding, *Prêtres en Gaule mérovingienne* (Brussels, 2001).

Many researchers are now studying such local priests, as showcased in a volume which Patzold co-edited with Carine van Rhijn.<sup>3</sup> *Presbyter*, in contrast, focuses on refuting a much older scholarly model of the Carolingian local priest: Ulrich Stutz's concept of the *Eigenkirche* and its priest. Stutz, a highly influential Protestant Swiss-German historian of church law, developed his idea of the *Eigenkirche* from the early 1890s onwards (pp. 17–19).<sup>4</sup> He described it as a church whose owner (whether a layperson, an ecclesiastical foundation, or a bishop) had full control over the property of the church and its endowment, which could be sold, bequeathed, or exchanged as the owner chose. Stutz claimed that owners also controlled the tithes received by the church and chose their own priests, with bishops having no real power to reject candidates for ordination. For Stutz, the Carolingian period was when the *Eigenkirche* was formally recognized in law and became the predominant type of church in the Frankish empire, with many parish churches thus removed from effective episcopal control (pp. 25–8).

Patzold devotes chapter two to what he sees as the 'amazing tenacity' (p. 26) of Stutz's concept in the historiography until the present day. While early medievalists now reject the binaries of Germanic/Roman, state/church, and private law/public law underpinning Stutz's model, his concept is still frequently cited by more general historical works. Many scholars are also still influenced by Stutz's view of the priests appointed to *Eigenkirchen*. He saw such men as poor, menial, and ill-educated dependants of their church-owning lords, who forced bishops to ordain enslaved or freed men despite their unsuitability.

Patzold wants to bury Stutz's model once and for all; in his view, only when we challenge this concept of the *Eigenkirche* can we revise our picture of early medieval priests, churches, and communities from the ground up (p. 20). This determination is the driving force behind *Presbyter* and explains the book's arrangement, caught slightly awkwardly between trying to disprove Stutz's disparaging image of the *Eigenkirche* priest and developing a new model of such men. For example, Patzold spends considerably more time discussing priests' relations to their

<sup>3</sup> Steffen Patzold and Carine van Rhijn (eds.), *Men in the Middle: Local Priests in Early Medieval Europe* (Berlin, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> See in particular Ulrich Stutz, *Geschichte des kirchlichen Benefizialwesens: Von seinen Anfängen bis auf die Zeit Alexanders III.* (Berlin, 1895).



lords, or *seniores* (pp. 451–69) than to their diocesan bishops (pp. 469–74). Carolingian sources say more about priest–bishop relations (which were often tricky), but Patzold wants to emphasize that Stutz’s concept of the church lord misinterprets the evidence (p. 469).

This tension between demolishing an old model and developing a new one is reflected in the sources used for different chapters. Chapters five (on law) and six (on tithes) re-examine normative sources, such as capitularies and council texts, to demonstrate that Stutz was incorrect to claim that owners of *Eigenkirchen* had unlimited powers over them and their priests. Tithes (newly mandated to go to local churches) normally went to the priest rather than to the church’s owner, and there is little evidence of such rules being breached. Church owners could not, therefore, expect any direct income from the churches they had founded.

In contrast to this focus on centrally promulgated texts, chapters four (on the different types of priests), eight (on priests’ families), and nine (on priests’ social relations) draw heavily on recent research on local priests, which predominantly uses charters, to show priests as men thoroughly embedded in networks of local influence. Such recent individual case studies, however, are harder to combine into the type of systematic analysis that Patzold prefers. Sometimes his urge for classification and typologies is very useful, such as when he pulls together the fragments of information known about priests who acted as domestic chaplains to the nobility to create a brief, but reliable picture of such men (pp. 95–101). At other points, however, Patzold’s typologies become overly schematic. He repeatedly stresses the difference between churches with and without baptismal rights (pp. 102–11), since only baptismal churches, in theory, received tithes. Charters north of the Alps, however, rarely mention whether specific churches were baptismal churches, suggesting that this distinction was not particularly significant.

Patzold also does not take enough account of actual liturgical practice. In a world of high infant mortality, and where one of the greatest possible failings of a local priest was to let an infant die unbaptized, families may sometimes have called on the nearest priest for the ceremony regardless of his church’s status. If the infant’s family also attended Mass at the church—another of the criteria for where tithes

were paid (p. 266, n. 98)—any church with a congregation may have easily ‘become’ a baptismal church.

Patzold’s failure to consider baptismal practices reflects a book which tells us surprisingly little about what local priests did pastorally and liturgically. (This contrasts with another recent book on local priests: *Leading the Way to Heaven* by Carine van Rhijn.)<sup>5</sup> Patzold’s approach, mainly concerned with priests’ independent action, education, and material situation, here seems unconsciously affected by Stutz’s Protestantism, as well as more consciously by a twenty-first-century emphasis on ‘quality management and knowledge’ (p. 501).

Perhaps because so much of *Presbyter* is devoted to demolishing Stutz’s model, Patzold’s discussions of more recent research sometimes also take on a rather confrontational tone. This is most prominent in chapter seven (on priests’ education), where a detailed and fascinating account of three priests’ books (pp. 342–86) repeatedly stresses the inaccuracy of Susan Keefe’s classifications of such books, in a way that seems excessive. Though it may be unreasonable to want a 600-page book to be longer, this was a chapter where I would have liked Patzold to expand on his research. Is it possible to use documents written by priests themselves (such as these handbooks and charters) to explore their own self-image? Were such men creating ‘knowledge’ about themselves in the way that Patzold has previously shown Carolingian bishops were?

There are some practical weaknesses in the organization of the book. Although the contents pages include subsections of chapters, the lack of subject and manuscript indexes make some important passages difficult to find. For example, scholars who would potentially be interested in Patzold’s very useful analyses of the collective role of local communities in building churches and choosing priests (pp. 137–42), the lack of Carolingian evidence for unfree priests (pp. 463–9), or the statutes for a confraternity of priests contained in Bern Burgerbibliothek AA 90.11 (pp. 433–48, 514–17) would not easily discover that the book contained such information.

Overall, I felt that *Presbyter* was more successful in demolishing Stutz’s *Eigenkirche* model than in creating Patzold’s own new model

<sup>5</sup> Carine van Rhijn, *Leading the Way to Heaven: Pastoral Care and Salvation in the Carolingian Period* (Abingdon, 2022).

of the local priest. The three themes in the subtitle (morality, mobility, and church organization) are rather unevenly treated. In terms of church organization, Patzold demonstrates that a number of local priests had considerable independence and room for manoeuvre. I would have liked more acknowledgement, however, that charter evidence is biased towards wealthier and better-connected priests. Priests who were completely dependent on their lord are only likely to be documented in exceptional circumstances, such as when the priest Atto complained to Louis the Pious about being defrauded and beaten by his church's owner (pp. 283–4).

Patzold's discussion of the mobility of priests and their congregations makes very good use of an underused source: the *litterae formatae*, letters of recommendation by bishops which authorized priests to move between dioceses (pp. 74–84, 503–5). He does not, however, draw on archaeological data on the locations and spacing of local churches, or evidence on the spatial mobility of witnesses, as pioneered by Wendy Davies's studies of the ninth-century Breton church.<sup>6</sup>

The Carolingian reform movement's emphasis on *correctio*, in the sense of correct moral and spiritual behaviour by local priests and their communities, is a key theme of the book. Patzold follows much recent work in showing just how serious reformers' attempts were to influence the grass roots of society in multiple ways, but he does not discuss how 'reform' might interact with existing community norms. For example, he makes the plausible claim that clerical celibacy was more successfully enforced in the Carolingian period than during the Gregorian reforms of the eleventh century (p. 403). He is unconvinced by the suggestions of Julia Barrow and myself that different regional forms of church organization in the early Middle Ages affected patterns of father–son or uncle–nephew inheritance of church office, and thus the willingness of priests in different European regions to accept celibacy

<sup>6</sup> The potential contribution of archaeology to analysis of local churches is demonstrated by Christine Delaplace (ed.), *Aux origines de la paroisse rurale en Gaule méridionale, IVe–IXe siècles: Actes du colloque international, 21–23 mars 2003* (Paris, 2005). Wendy Davies, *Small Worlds: The Village Community in Early Medieval Brittany* (London, 1988) includes a chapter on local mobility (pp. 105–33).

(pp. 413–17).<sup>7</sup> Yet Patzold provides no alternative explanation for why reformers in ninth-century Francia encountered less resistance to bans on priestly marriages than those in later centuries, or why priests in Carolingian Italy and Brittany did continue to marry.

I am left finally wondering about a wider issue: for whom is this book intended? Patzold says little about more general research on early medieval proprietary churches, such as Susan Wood's monumental *The Proprietary Church in the Medieval West*.<sup>8</sup> He sees Wood's definitions as 'lacking in analytical sharpness' (p. 19, n. 31) and so focuses on Stutz's much more tightly defined concept of the *Eigenkirche*, which he proceeds to demolish. Patzold's academic writing style is clear enough to make this book accessible to non-native speakers, but the book as a whole feels very much intended for the German academy. The substantial research already produced on local priests in the early Middle Ages shows that new models of the Carolingian priesthood can be created without an explicit demolition of Stutz's paradigm. Patzold's book is probably necessary for some corners of German medieval research which have not yet caught up with these developments. The rest of us may not make as much use of its scholarship as we probably should. It is particularly unfortunate in this respect that there is no subject index to signpost the many new and intriguing aspects of Patzold's research within this long text. It is helpful to have this book as a final stake in the heart for Stutz's ideas, but I do not feel that it quite succeeds in providing a new model of the Carolingian local priest.

<sup>7</sup> Julia Barrow, *The Clergy in the Medieval World: Secular Clerics, Their Families and Careers in North-Western Europe, c.800–c.1200* (Cambridge, 2015), 115–57; Rachel Stone, 'Exploring Minor Clerics in Early Medieval Tuscany', *Reti Medievali Rivista*, 18/1 (2017), 67–97, at [<https://doi.org/10.6092/1593-2214/5076>].

<sup>8</sup> Susan Wood, *The Proprietary Church in the Medieval West* (Oxford, 2006).

## PRESBYTER

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EUGENE SMELYANSKY, *Heresy and Citizenship: Persecution of Heresy in Late Medieval German Cities*, Studies in Medieval History and Culture (London: Routledge, 2020), 198 pp. ISBN 978 0 367 41527 3. £145.00

Eugene Smelyansky's book, which grew out of a Ph.D. thesis written for the University of California, Irvine, deals with the persecution of Waldensians between 1390 and 1410 in the cities of southern and south-western Germany—a limitation which is unfortunately not made clear in the much wider title. Smelyansky begins his study with two general chapters. In the first he outlines social developments since the thirteenth century, mainly in the imperial cities; the positioning of the cities in terms of (ecclesiastical) politics during the western schism; and, referring to Bernd Moeller's oft-cited description of the imperial cities as a '*corpus christianum* in miniature',<sup>1</sup> their perception of themselves as self-contained religious and political communities (p. 16). The second chapter concerns the persecution of the Waldensians, largely in the Holy Roman Empire. Smelyansky looks in detail at the events of 1390 to 1404 and introduces—as far as the sources allow—the inquisitors Martin of Amberg, Peter Zwicker, and Heinrich Angermeier.

The following chapters present four case studies. The first deals with the 1393 inquisition Angermeier organized in Augsburg, which was used by Burkhard of Ellerbach, bishop of Augsburg, to gain an advantage in his protracted dispute with the authorities of the former episcopal city, which had become an imperial city in 1316. The city, however, thwarted this attempt by demonstratively reintegrating the repentant heretics into public life. It was only when some of those convicted tried to do a deal with the bishop in order to commute their sentences into fines that the council reacted harshly and condemned five Waldensians to death. The council grasped this chance to establish itself as a righteous authority which was seen to take more effective measures against heretics than the bishop.

Smelyansky's second case study also concerns a trial conducted by Angermeier, this time against Hans Wern, a citizen of Rothenburg Trans. by Angela Davies (GHIL).

<sup>1</sup> Bernd Moeller, *Reichsstadt und Reformation*, 2nd edn (Tübingen, 2011), 51.

ob der Tauber, in the winter of 1394–5. The actions of the bishop of Würzburg, Gerhard of Schwarzburg, also played a part in this case, as he was in dispute with the imperial cities in his diocese and had taken military action against the Swabian League, of which Rothenburg was a member. Angermeier's persecution of the Waldensians gave the bishop a chance to intervene in the internal affairs of his enemies and to target a sensitive spot, their Christian self-understanding. The decisive factor in the trial of Hans Wern, however, were rivalries within the new, upwardly mobile class in Rothenburg, which had established itself in the course of a few generations, distinguishing itself from the old, established families. Both Wern and his opponent, the mayor Heinrich Toppler, were members of this new elite. In order to get rid of his rival, Toppler invited Angermeier to Rothenburg and accused Wern of heresy. The inquisition trial ended in acquittal, but suspicions of Wern persisted. Put on trial again, this time for embezzlement and abuse of office, he was convicted. His reputation and career in tatters, he had to leave town. Thus even an unsuccessful inquisition trial could be effective in a political dispute because of its impact on a person's reputation.

In his third case study, Smelyansky turns to the persecution of the Waldensians in Strasbourg in 1400. There are good records for this, and Georg Modestin has researched it in detail.<sup>2</sup> The case of Strasbourg casts light on the city's awareness of its image. It justified itself in letters to other cities and tried by all means available to limit the extent of the trials, as well-known citizens were implicated. Smelyansky briefly examines the relationship between the city of Strasbourg and its bishops. He plausibly suggests that the actions the city authorities took against the Waldensians were intended to give Bishop Wilhelm II of Diest little excuse to intervene. The sentences imposed in Strasbourg were relatively mild, often resulting merely in the accused being banished. In contrast to how the trial against Hans Wern was conducted in Rothenburg, the reputations of those involved were taken into consideration in Strasbourg. One citizen, Johannes Blumstein, who played a public role as the leader

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Georg Modestin, *Ketzer in der Stadt: Der Prozess gegen die Straßburger Waldenser von 1400* (Hanover, 2007).

of the Waldensians, was able to continue his political and diplomatic career in the service of the city almost without interruption. Damage limitation measures were introduced in Strasbourg. The orthodox image of the city was weighed up against the disadvantages that overly strict inquisitorial procedures against members of the urban elite could bring.

Finally, on the basis of his fourth case study – inquisitions in Fribourg in 1399 and Bern in 1399–1400 – Smelyansky tests his observations in relation to Strasbourg and finds them confirmed and developed in the procedures followed by these cities. In order to retain control, the authorities dispensed with theologically trained inquisitors and resorted to other communication strategies to uncover heresies. Within the cities, inquisitions were set in motion through sermons and calls for denunciations; externally, in relations with other cities, letters and personal meetings were important ways of protecting the reputation of the citizenry while transmitting information. In Bern, the conviction of more than 130 Waldensians resulted in protracted periods of unrest, which the council tried to calm by various measures. The suspects from Fribourg were denounced by representatives of the city of Bern in order to damage Fribourg's reputation. In a letter to the responsible diocesan bishop in Lausanne, the Fribourg authorities left no doubt that the accusations were baseless, and the hitherto energetically pursued inquisition proceedings ended with the acquittal of all defendants due to lack of evidence.

On the whole, Smelyansky's study presents highly convincing findings that will encourage further research. The persecution of real or imagined heretics could be a political instrument in cities which were striving for autonomy, needed to defend their image, or were involved in multiple conflicts with their (former) rulers or between different groups within the city. This offers a new approach to the study of piety, social history, and regional history in the late Middle Ages. Detailed studies like those that Smelyansky has presented in the examples discussed above can and must be undertaken for other cities in different regions.

Only one aspect of Smelyansky's work can be criticized. Despite his thorough bibliographical research, he seems to have missed some of the more recent work on the imperial cities, in particular, the volumes



in the series *Studien zur Reichsstadtgeschichte*.<sup>3</sup> Some of these, which have already applied his approach in a similar way, could have been profitably used for his topic. Nevertheless, especially in the new examples Smelyansky discusses, the book makes an important contribution to the history of heresy in the late medieval German-speaking world. The older research was primarily interested in religious content, spiritual movements, and persecution mechanisms used by the church. But here a pragmatic approach which has already been tested in recent research comes to the fore, making sources from the context of inquisition proceedings useful for investigating social and political history.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Thomas Lau and Helge Wittmann (eds.), *Reichsstadt im Religionskonflikt: 4. Tagung des Mühlhäuser Arbeitskreises für Reichsstadtgeschichte, Mühlhausen 8. bis 10. Februar 2016* (Petersberg, 2017).

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RICHARD REX (ed.), *Henry VIII and Martin Luther: The Second Controversy, 1525–1527* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2021), 322 pp. ISBN 978 1 783 27581 6. £75.00

‘Could you wish for a milder response than this, Luther?’ So ends Henry VIII’s reply to a letter from Martin Luther published in the first Latin edition of their correspondence. We can guess how the German reformer felt about this smug question by looking at his reply, which was tellingly addressed to the ‘King of England with all his blockheads’ (p. 165). This exchange in the mid 1520s has now been presented in a comprehensive edition by Reformation historian Richard Rex.

The English king and the reformer clashed in 1525, and Henry – publicly and vociferously in Europe – rejected Luther and his teachings. It was not the first time. In 1521 a first controversy between the two resulted in the book *Assertio septem sacramentorum adversus Martinum Lutherum* (‘Defence of the Seven Sacraments against Martin Luther’), and in Henry’s legendary title of *Fidei Defensor*, or Defender of the Faith. The second controversy, which Rex fundamentally reappraises in this edition, is less well known, but was no less influential in its time. It started with a letter from Luther to the English king, which was followed by a reply from Henry VIII and another riposte by the German reformer. As soon as this correspondence was published in England and the Holy Roman Empire, it attracted attention from all over Europe and many contemporary observers were prompted to publish their own comments in a variety of formats.

Rex’s book brings together some twenty sources – handwritten and printed letters, prefaces, epigraphs, and verses – that trace the second controversy from 1525 to 1527 and, in particular, the public discourse reflecting what was made of it. The publication is innovative in a number of respects. Up until now, there has been no coherent account of this brief but significant controversy in the history of the Reformation. And Rex has identified one of the two original letters which Henry VIII sent to the Holy Roman Empire in autumn 1526, replying to Luther’s letter from the year before, in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge. Luther had heard a rumour that the English king was

beginning ‘to favour the gospell’ (p. 69)—that is, to follow Luther’s line—and communicated this misjudgement directly to Henry in 1525. Henry, however, could not let this rumour stand and defended himself publicly. His reply was printed in numerous personally authorized copies and sent from London to Cracow and Rome.

In the fifty-page introduction, Rex presents some new interpretations and connections. He convincingly traces the fateful rumour that sparked the second controversy back to the deposed Danish king, Christian II (pp. 13–16), from whom Luther may have heard it. The political–historical reasons why Henry VIII reacted so harshly and publicly are also made clear by reference to the situation in England in 1526 and the first anti-Lutheran measures implemented there. Rex draws close connections with the arrival of Tyndale’s translations of the New Testament in the country, and the reactions to them at Henry’s court. He places Henry’s sharp response to Luther, dated three days after the first public burning of Tyndale’s books, in the context of these defensive measures against Reformation influences from the Continent. The decisions made at court to print the letter and to translate it into English shortly thereafter were also important parts of the English government’s confessional programme, constantly pitting the *Fidei Defensor* against the reformer from Germany.

According to Rex’s reconstruction, Henry VIII sent his Latin reply in duplicate to Albrecht of Brandenburg, the archbishop of Mainz, and Duke George of Saxony, both fierce opponents of Luther in the Holy Roman Empire. Having found one of these letters in Cambridge (p. 24), Rex bases this edition on it as ‘the best attestation of the original text’ (p. 26). This letter was promptly circulated by the Saxon duke and was soon printed in Dresden. This Dresden edition, in turn, was the text on which many other versions (p. 25) that appeared in Europe during the same year were based.

The English king’s new argument with Luther found wide resonance in Catholic Europe. In Rome, cardinals were enthusiastic and editors from Flanders to Rome and Cracow reissued Henry’s letter, with many editions receiving new prefaces commenting on the second controversy. A version printed in Cologne and the Latin edition in England were provided with marginalia and comments by Johannes Cochlaeus, which Rex has carefully included in the current edition.

In his introduction he analyses the textual relationships between the numerous editions identified (sixteen in all, from Cologne to Cracow) and provides a list of early editions (pp. 55–66).

But Henry did not receive only recognition and praise. The Dresden edition also reached Luther's desk and did not remain unanswered. With 'his usual impetuous energy' (p. 32) and in an 'offensive tone' (p. 33) that caused much discussion, he wrote a long reply complaining about the 'pride of Satan' he found in it. Luther was not so much annoyed by the answer itself, but by the title under which his letter appeared in the Dresden edition: 'palinodia', that is, a recantation. In doing so, Luther got himself further into difficulties, as the recantation in the Latin title grammatically referred to the retraction of the injury to the king in the first controversy, but not to a recantation of Luther's teachings.

Luther's reaction, however, could be further exploited by the Catholic side. It also shows that the second controversy cannot be separated from the first. Many of the contentious points were revisited, but not so much substantively as at the level of rhetoric and polemic. As in the first controversy in 1521, Luther's strategy of attacking the king included casting doubt on the latter's authorship. In his first letter Luther wanted to win Henry over to his confessional views, but in the second one he claimed that the king lacked the intelligence to join the correct side in the religious debate. Rex takes this as an opportunity – as in earlier publications from the 1990s<sup>1</sup> – to comment again on the authorship of the *Assertio*. He confirms that Henry VIII himself was 'chiefly responsible' (p. 9) for the book, but suggests that he had received advice from university theologians convened for the purpose. However, he continues to reject the notion that court theologians such as Thomas More or John Fisher were involved, thus arguing against Pierre Fraenkel's introduction to the 1992 Corpus Catholicorum edition of the *Assertio* (pp. 7–12),<sup>2</sup> which sought to highlight their involvement. Ultimately, the question of authorship remains a matter of achieving a balance between strong arguments on both sides, both of which should be given due consideration.

<sup>1</sup> See Richard Rex, *The Theology of John Fisher* (Cambridge, 1991).

<sup>2</sup> Pierre Fraenkel (ed.), *Heinrich VIII: Assertio septem sacramentorum adversus Martinum Lutherum* (Münster, 1992).

Luther's reply to Henry added a new layer to the controversy, and again books appeared that now brought together all three letters and, where necessary, additional commentary on them. For Catholic editors, Luther's inconsistency was demonstrated by his insults towards and contradictory assumptions about a king whom he had previously 'womanishly flattered' (p. 167 n. 6), but shortly thereafter clearly and unquestionably condemned. The aftermath of the Peasants' War of 1525 provided additional arguments against Luther. Anti-Henrician, pro-Lutheran editions, on the other hand, cannot be found—the strategy of English Catholic publications was too effective, and Luther's responses were too stubborn to generate much support.

But despite the clearly anti-Lutheran stance of the English court, Rex considers the second controversy a 'little epoch in the English Reformation' (p. 39). For Henry's decision to have the letter printed in the vernacular as well as in Latin, and to communicate his and Luther's positions to his subjects in a preface that was also a panegyric, was a step towards authorizing a translation of the Bible. Tyndale and Luther did not yet suggest this, but Rex sees the fact that Henry wanted the theological discussion—peppered with biblical passages—to be disseminated in English as a precursor to a dissemination of scripture controlled by the king (pp. 38–9). He points out that not only ruptures but also lines of continuity can be found between the 1520s and later iterations of Henry VIII.

This exemplary edition will also be useful for scholars far beyond historians of the Reformation and those interested in English–German relations. In particular, the prefaces by other authors included here provide examples of a European publication campaign initiated and supported by the English government and Henry VIII. The commentaries in prefaces, marginalia, and epigraphs from across Europe, and the short-lived nature of the debate, point to important publication channels that were well used in the sixteenth century, especially by princes. These texts may also be of interest to linguists and literary historians exploring contemporary translation practices. In particular, friends of humanist rhetoric will take pleasure from the writings of Luther and Henry, as their exchange of blows—complete with biting and sarcastic comments in the printed versions—offers ample material for an examination of the rhetoric of defamation and the prominence

of insult and sarcasm in Renaissance controversies. As these writings appeared all over Europe, Rex's book makes a useful contribution to a European history of the Reformation. Scholars of English–German relations will also find its handling of the strong link between the English Crown and the imperial city of Cologne to be of great interest. Rex, for example, covers councillor Hermann von Rinck's support and patronage of English interests in this important communication hub in the Holy Roman Empire.

The book leaves only a few minor things to be desired. In the select bibliography one could have hoped for a wider range of literature, given the editor's wealth of knowledge. German titles do not appear here, with the exception of the aforementioned Pierre Fraenkel and the popularizing works by Sabine Appel, although material is available on English–Lutheran relations and on Robert Barnes, mentioned frequently by Rex. In the volume itself, the references to the provenances of the documents are not found directly with the individual source texts, but are bundled together in a separate section of the book. Here, further critical information, clearly presented, would have been desirable. In addition, the marginalia included are translated in different places—some in the footnotes, but others in their own separate section (pp. 136–41). This takes some getting used to.

With his book, Richard Rex demonstrates his vast knowledge of English discussions of Luther. Without this, such a special and useful publication would not have been possible. He is to be thanked for making his knowledge and insights available in this close look at the sources.

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MICHAEL CZOLKOSS-HETTWER, *Transnationale Möglichkeitsräume: Deutsche Diakonissen in London (1846–1918)*, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Europäische Geschichte Mainz, 265 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2022), 458 pp. ISBN 978 3 525 31140 0. €75.00

The historiography on German-speaking migrants in Britain has had its ups and downs. After relegation to the fringes throughout most of the twentieth century, the topic started to attract some serious academic interest in the 1990s and 2000s. Studies with a range of methodologies covered different social groups, geographical areas, and historical periods.<sup>1</sup> After a hiatus in in the 2010s, there is now some indication of renewed interest, with stronger emphasis on comparative and transnational aspects. One example is a recent Ph.D. project which investigates the emotional history of German minorities in Britain and France during and after the First World War.<sup>2</sup> Another example is Michael Czolkoß-Hettwer's detailed study on German deaconesses in London between 1846 and 1918. It is the published version of a Ph.D. thesis written at the University of Oldenburg and concentrates on a hitherto understudied cohort of female migrants. Indeed, the author frames his study as a distinct contribution to gender history. Those young women who joined German Protestant sisterhoods entered a world of social confines, shedding their family names and being subjected to a strict dress code and behavioural rules. At the same time, however, the author argues convincingly that the act of joining and their subsequent posting to London allowed them to take on responsibilities within a professional nursing environment which would otherwise not have been open to them – hence the title of the study, which can best be translated as 'transnational spaces of opportunity'.

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Panikos Panayi, *German Immigrants in Britain during the Nineteenth Century, 1815–1914* (Oxford, 1995); Margrit Schulte Beerbühl, *Deutsche Kaufleute in London: Welthandel und Einbürgerung (1660–1818)* (Munich, 2007); Ulrike Kirchner, *Aspekte deutsch-britischer Expansion: Die Überseeinteressen der deutschen Migranten in Großbritannien in der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> Mathis Gronau, 'Surrounded by Enemies? The Experience of German Minorities in France and Britain between 1914 and 1924' (Ph.D. thesis, University College London, 2022).

The deaconesses were first trained in their German home institutions and then employed either within Germany or abroad. London was an important foreign destination, not least because it hosted the German Hospital in the (then) suburb of Dalston. This was the main place of work for deaconesses, although some pastoral activity within the growing German-speaking Protestant congregations was added towards the end of the century. The German Hospital was founded in 1846 and is a telling case study of a transnationally operating institution. It mostly catered for German-speaking patients who were underserved by the rudimentary British health infrastructure, although the hospital was also open to British patients. Most of the funding came from wealthy members of the German immigrant community, such as the Schröder banking family. Christiane Swinbank has highlighted the hybrid character of the German Hospital as a migrant institution which constantly had to adapt and negotiate its position between two cultures.<sup>3</sup>

These processes, which often developed in conflictual ways, are also thoroughly analysed by Czolkoß-Hettwer. One example concerns the transnational recruitment channels. In its early phase, nurses for the hospital were exclusively recruited from the 'mother house' (*Mutterhaus*) in Kaiserswerth, near Düsseldorf. Its director, Theodor Fliedner, aspired to keep a firm grip on the practices and behaviour of those deaconesses who had been sent abroad, but his principles were not always compatible with different cultural environments. He criticized, for example, that there was too much socializing between deaconesses and doctors, and that deaconesses accepted small Christmas gifts from hospital board members as tokens of appreciation. This, he suggested, only contributed to their 'vanity'. When he wanted to dismiss the head nurse, Christiane Bürger, in 1857, the hospital board decided to terminate its agreement with Kaiserswerth. The deaconesses took the bold step of separating from their German 'mother house' and carrying on, employed directly by the German Hospital. Thereafter, recruitment agreements

<sup>3</sup> Christiane Swinbank, 'Medicine, Philanthropy and Religion: Selective Intercultural Transfers at the German Hospital in London, 1845-1914', in Stefan Manz, Margrit Schulte Beerbühl, and John R. Davis (eds.), *Migration and Transfer from Germany to Britain, 1660-1914* (Munich, 2007), 119-30.



were negotiated with the Elisabethenstift in Darmstadt, and then from the 1890s with the Sarepta Deaconess Institute in Bielefeld.

The number of deaconess nurses at the German Hospital in London rose steadily from four in 1846 to twenty-two in 1914, and then fell to fourteen in 1918. Despite these relatively small numbers, Czolkoß-Hettwer manages to demonstrate the wider significance of the Kaiserswerth model and the German Hospital. The expansion and professionalization of nursing was, indeed, a transnational affair pushed by transnationally operating actors. These included the social reformer Elizabeth Fry, whose Institution of Nursing Sisters, founded in 1840, was in essence a secular version of the Kaiserswerth institute, and Florence Nightingale, possibly the most influential nurse in history. Nightingale was introduced to Theodor Fliedner by the Prussian envoy to Britain, Baron von Bunsen, who was an important facilitator of British-German intercultural transfer. She paid regular visits to the German Hospital in London, joined the doctors on their rounds, and had friendly professional exchanges with the deaconesses. She used all these experiences when she set up her own nursing institute in 1860. In contrast to the Kaiserswerth model, however, her approach was, like Fry's, a secular one. Professionalization rather than religious and social norms stood at the forefront. As her approach spread across the English-speaking world and beyond, the significance of religious sisterhoods for nursing gradually decreased.

As a microhistorical study, Czolkoß-Hettwer's book is much concerned with deaconesses' individual life trajectories and thus successfully differentiates notions of a collective cohort. The women used their 'spaces of opportunity' in very different ways. For those from a lower middle-class background, working as a deaconess granted higher social status and financial independence. Those from a middle-class background were more likely to move into leadership positions, which they often asserted in conflicts with male hospital staff. Spatial distance from the German 'mother houses' lessened the degree of discipline and surveillance. The board of the German Hospital was more interested in pragmatic management than in the normative ideals emanating from Kaiserswerth. When deaconesses left their employment at the German Hospital, some stayed in England and kept on working in their profession, often in leading positions. All the

women covered in the study managed to build a socially accepted – and respected – career outside the traditional female space of family and home, at least for the time they worked at the German Hospital.

The First World War was a major caesura in the history of the hospital. Although the institution and its staff avoided the Germanophobic attacks that swept through Britain, internment and repatriation of German ‘enemy aliens’ decimated the migrant community. In the immediate post-war years, most of the patients in the hospital were actually British. Some rejuvenation came in the early 1930s, leading to a new building in 1936. After the outbreak of the Second World War, however, the position of the hospital proved to be untenable. Twenty-seven of the fifty-six deaconesses returned to Germany and the remainder were interned on the Isle of Man. After the war the hospital was integrated into the National Health Service and finally closed down in the 1980s.

Although the study is generally well researched and written, some critical remarks are necessary. An online data collection which accompanies the book contains a table with deaconesses’ raw biographical data, but no attempt has been made to analyse these with quantitative methods. The author draws broad conclusions from individual biographies whose selection criteria are not comprehensively explained. Cohort data such as fluctuation, income, or the relationship between social background and position within the hospital remain unclear without a quantitative basis. At times, this lack of synthesis renders the author’s arguments less convincing. For a contribution to gender studies, for example, more data-based observations on career trajectories after leaving employment at the German Hospital would have been desirable. Potential gaps in the sources can be legitimately problematized. More synthesis would also have been desirable in the narrative. For what it covers, the book is simply too long at 458 pages. Many passages contain interesting background information but are not stringently framed by arguments or wider points.

These critical remarks, however, do not detract from the overall value of the book. It is the first detailed study of this female group of migrants and manages to link its microhistorical findings to current historiographical trends. The transnational character of institutions (the German Hospital, Kaiserswerth) and individual biographies is

well explained. The book is therefore not only a valuable contribution to German, or German diasporic, history, but also to British history. It is very much to be hoped that the author will publish an article version in English which sums up the main findings.

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KIRA THURMAN, *Singing Like Germans: Black Musicians in the Land of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2021), 368 pp. ISBN 978 1 501 75984 0. \$32.95

For the current production of the Bayreuth Festival's *Tannhäuser*, director Tobias Kratzer invented two additional, non-singing companions for Venus, the anarchic and amorous adversary to Princess Elisabeth, who stands for established social norms and ethics. A person of short stature and the drag artist of colour Le Gateau Chocolat made up 'Team Venus' which, on stage, visibly embodied Richard Wagner's early motto: 'Free in wanting, free in action, free in enjoyment'. While the production as a whole had a largely positive response, Le Gateau Chocolat was the only character to be booed by the audience after the premiere, which prompted the queer artist to comment on this incident on social media. In an open letter beginning 'Dear Bayreuth', he wrote that the audience's behaviour 'says a lot about who you (still) are' and, by invoking soprano Grace Bumbry, the first Black woman to sing at Bayreuth, who took the role of Venus in the same opera in 1961, he proudly inscribed himself into a historical process that, in his own words, 'oughtn't be a provocation'.<sup>1</sup>

It obviously was, and has been for the last 150 years. This, in a nutshell, is one of the core findings of Kira Thurman's timely account of Black musicians' performances in the German lands (Austria is also considered) from the Wilhelmine era to the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961, plus several excursions into more recent times. Thurman uses these performances as a heuristic lens because they 'caused a listening public to work out the ties between music, race, and nation' (p. 3). Adopting a *longue durée* perspective to study the contexts in which Black musicians performed in the lands of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms, along with the reactions to them, allows her to grasp continuity and change in the meanings of such performances, in the discourses they produced, and, ultimately, in German constructions of 'Germanness', 'Whiteness', and 'Blackness'. Apart from this research agenda, it is the explicit purpose of the book to give Black classical

<sup>1</sup> See Le Gateau Chocolat's statement at [<https://www.facebook.com/130391560883/posts/10158742287640884/>], accessed 30 Aug. 2022.

musicians present in German musical life between 1870 and 1960 a voice and to write them into German history. In doing so, *Singing like Germans* not only makes a very welcome contribution to music history, but also adds to the growing field of Black German studies.

The book is divided into three chronological parts, each of which has three chapters. Part one sets out the transatlantic network of musical connections between Black America and the German Empire (chapter one) and details Black migration to Germany in the second chapter. Chapter three introduces the 'sonic color line' that emerged in the last third of the nineteenth century in Central Europe. Skipping the First World War, the second part covers both the Weimar Republic (chapter four) and the Nazi regime including the Second World War (chapter six), separated by a case study on the performance and reception of (German) lieder by outstanding singers Roland Hayes and Marian Anderson (chapter five). The third part, covering the period from 1945 to 1961, examines the involvement of African Americans in US musical denazification measures in chapter seven, sheds light on Black opera singers in West Germany with a special focus on Bumbry's Bayreuth debut in chapter eight, and finally discusses Black musicians' appearances in the 'promised land' of the German Democratic Republic in chapter nine.

Thurman's account is cleverly set out and her overall argument well made. The initial question addressed is how and why Black Americans became interested in German classical music. The answer has much to do with the emergence of Black institutions of higher learning such as Fisk University, Howard University, and many others that were founded during the Reconstruction era. For these Black universities and their students, the alleged universalism of German music was as attractive as its strong connection with middle-class values. To perform Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms was seen as a means of climbing the social ladder and crossing the colour line. Unlike White Americans, White German musicians migrating to the United States were ready to support such ambitions. In some cases, they were even involved in the foundation of mixed-race but White-majority conservatoires such as Oberlin College, which became the most important music education institution for African Americans. Overall, studying German music let Black Americans dream of a better future in Central Europe, beyond

the rules of Jim Crow and White supremacist America. Many of those who realized their dream experienced it as part of their 'self-liberation' (p. 54), as Thurman puts it.

Indeed, one crucial takeaway for readers is that Black performers repeatedly reported experiencing a better life in Europe. Europe was not devoid of racial discrimination, but they were considerably better off than they would have been in the USA. Thurman's testimony that musicians feared nothing more than encountering White Americans speaks volumes about the fundamental differences in race relations on either side of the Atlantic in the decades before and after 1900. Even when W. E. B. Du Bois attended the Bayreuth Festival in 1936, he complained about a wealthy White American sitting in front of him but remained silent about the Nazi crowd.

One does not have to follow all of Thurman's interpretations to appreciate that a great strength of the study lies in how she carves out the many layers of race perceptions that shaped musical encounters in the German lands, from well-intentioned but essentializing racial description to racial prejudice, hidden cultural racism, and overt biological racism. Many tropes which established themselves in German musical discourse in the decades before 1900 are meticulously traced to the 1960s and beyond. To name but a few: to German and Austrian music critics, Black voices sounded 'melancholic', 'natural', 'animalistic', and 'dark'. In opera, Black female singers, no matter how excellent their voices, were only to be hired, if at all, for 'exotic' roles in 'exotic' operas such as *Aida*, *Porgy and Bess*, and so on. There was a great desire among music critics to synchronize sight and sound as well as racial prejudice and character – hence the oft-heard opinion that Black musicians were best suited to performing their 'own' music, such as spirituals, but should leave German classical music alone. Finally, superstars such as Anderson and Hayes were often 'Whitened' in order to keep intact the allegedly eternal axiom that German music was 'White' music and 'Germanness' was 'Whiteness'.

Despite these continuities, Thurman at the same time crafts an instructive narrative of change. Dominant reactions to Black musicians in Germany switched from 'exoticizing' their performances in imperial Germany and experiencing them as 'threatening' during the 1920s to outright and sometimes even riotous repudiation under Nazi

rule. By contrast, after 1945, African American singers and conductors were employed by the American military to implement its denazification and re-education measures, which, as Thurman rightly points out, was ironic given that the military was itself a highly racist institution. Likewise, for the American government, Black musicians became a means of cultural diplomacy in the imminent Cold War, as exemplified by the funding of an American production of George Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* in West Germany in the early 1950s. Finally, after the war, audiences in both the Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic embraced the performances of Black musicians as never before. The former put Black musicians in the service of distancing the nation from the Nazi past, repressing any memories of a highly racialized state and society, while the latter celebrated the musicians as an expression of their official policy of anti-fascism, anti-imperialism, and anti-racist solidarity.

This narrative, however, highlights the perceptions and political uses of Black performances by White people, while it largely keeps silent about developments among African American musicians themselves. Of course, this is partially due to a lack of sources. Nonetheless, I would have liked more information about the changing numbers of Black classical musicians touring and living in the German lands. The only figure Thurman gives is an estimate of 3,000 Black people living in the Weimar Republic, which would imply no more than 60 to 100 Black musicians living in Germany during the period, touring musicians excluded. Such considerations would not only have added another explanatory layer to the persistent practice of 'exoticizing' Black classical musicians; it would also have sharpened even more the specific profile of this group as a tiny Black elite who managed to cross the Atlantic, often, as Thurman shows, with the help of White patrons. Their exclusivity is mentioned here and there, for example, when they avoided meeting Black popular musicians, apparently perfectly internalizing the ideological message of classical music as a gateway to the German bourgeois world. However, Thurman's espousal of the notion of classical music as a part of bourgeois culture that was strictly separate from the lower-class world of popular music, rather than reflecting on the often contradictory entanglement of race and class, feels to some extent like a missed opportunity.

In addition, it might have been rewarding to delve more systematically into Black musicians' own views about the complex triangular relationship between race, nation, and music. Juxtaposing Roland Hayes's conviction that his Blackness mattered as much onstage as off with Marian Anderson's largely unpolitical approach towards her artistry suffices to illustrate the broad spectrum of possible attitudes. Thurman reports these and other statements, but stops short of linking them to the larger issue that Du Bois famously called the 'problem of the color line'.<sup>2</sup> How to address and solve this problem was always contested among African American intellectuals. Given that Du Bois and Booker T. Washington – prominent opponents in this debate – make several appearances in the book (Washington somewhat ironically in the role of a patron-father funding his piano-playing daughter Portia), it would have made for an even more compelling account if Black musicians' varying ideas about race and music had been contextualized and historicized by connecting them to wider debates in African American thought on racial recognition, equality, and harmony.

Finally, not everyone may agree with Thurman's basic methodological assumption that published music criticism reflects the perceptions and attitudes of audiences. She is often quick to generalize from a concert review to 'the audience' or even 'the Germans'. Taking the history of music criticism – including its professional development – into account might have resolved this problem to some extent. Another solution might have been to read these reviews more systematically for depictions of audiences' reactions.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, the thick description of recurrent tropes about Black musicians increases the plausibility of her generalizations.

These points of criticism notwithstanding, Thurman's book has already become the benchmark for any further research on Black

<sup>2</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois, 'To the Nations of the World (1900)', in Adom Getachew and Jennifer Pitts (eds.), *W. E. B. Du Bois: International Thought* (Cambridge, 2022), 18–21, at 18. Online at [<https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108869140.002>].

<sup>3</sup> See Hansjakob Ziemer, 'Konzerthörer unter Beobachtung: Skizze für eine Geschichte journalistischer Hörertypologien zwischen 1870 und 1940', in Netzwerk 'Hör-Wissen im Wandel' (ed.), *Wissensgeschichte des Hörens in der Moderne* (Berlin, 2017), 183–206.



musicians—classical or otherwise—in the German lands in modern history, not least because of a whole slew of additional insights and observations that are worth following up. For one thing, the significance of Black musicians for Germans working through their Nazi pasts in early West Germany goes beyond the world of music and adds a particularly interesting dimension to recent discussions in Germany about how to achieve a more multidirectional public memory without losing sight of the Holocaust. Ultimately, Le Gateau Chocolat's recent experience at Bayreuth sadly illustrates the continuing relevance of Thurman's account—a must-read for anybody interested in German history and classical music.

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BETTINA BROCKMEYER, *Geteilte Geschichte, geraubte Geschichte: Koloniale Biografien in Ostafrika (1880–1950)*, Globalgeschichte, 34 (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2021), 401 pp. ISBN 978 3 593 51287 7. €45.00

The biographical approach has been used to good effect in several recent studies of German colonialism.<sup>1</sup> These have shed further light on, among other things, the mechanics of colonial rule, the violence of the colonial project, and German colonial careers. Typically, such studies have tended to focus on German members of the colonial administration, particularly prominent officials and military officers. Bettina Brockmeyer's *Geteilte Geschichte, geraubte Geschichte*, the published version of her German habilitation thesis, similarly focuses on colonial biographies—in this case in order to examine an 'entangled' colonial history which links Tanzania, Germany, and the United Kingdom. Her choice of lesser-known and seemingly quite different subjects is unusual, and adopting the historian Natalie Zemon Davis's model of following three life stories enables her to investigate multiple perspectives of European colonial rule as well as colonial memory and the issue of German colonial amnesia. The result is a wide-ranging study which makes important contributions not simply in terms of its coverage, but also its imaginative use of sources.

At the forefront of Brockmeyer's work are three individuals, all born within a generation, who have largely been ignored in the existing historiography: Sapi Mkwawa, son of the Tanzanian Hehe leader Mutwa Mkwawa and himself a future chief during the period of British rule; Magdalene von Prince, German settler, writer, and wife of colonial officer Tom Prince; and Severin Hofbauer, a German missionary in the service of the Benedictine order who lived and worked in Tanzania for much of his life. Although the three would appear to

<sup>1</sup> Among many examples, see Peter J. Hempenstall and Paula Tanaka Mochida, *The Lost Man: Wilhelm Solf in German History* (Wiesbaden, 2005); Eckard Michels, *'Der Held von Deutsch-Ostafrika': Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck. Ein preußischer Kolonialoffizier* (Paderborn, 2008); Katharina Abermeth, *Heinrich Schnee: Karrierewege und Erfahrungswelten eines deutschen Kolonialbeamten* (Kiel, 2017); Heiko Wegmann, *Vom Kolonialkrieg in Deutsch-Ostafrika zur Kolonialbewegung in Freiburg: Der Offizier und badische Veteranenführer Max Knecht (1874–1954)* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 2019).

have little in common, they were united in several key ways. For example, they experienced the German military conquest of Tanzania; they held prominent positions within colonial society; and all three were known to one another. Further uniting the three biographies is the shared space of Iringa, which forms the geographical focus of the study. As the author outlines at various times, Iringa was a centre for the Hehe population, a key site of African resistance for the German colonial administration, a missionary base for the Benedictine mission, and an important region during the period of British mandate rule. The time period the study covers extends roughly from the immediate pre-colonial period in Tanzania to encompass German colonial rule over the territory as well as the period of British mandate control. By following the lives of her protagonists over this longer duration, Brockmeyer is able to engage with debates over the exceptionality of German colonialism, which she challenges through acknowledging both the differences and the continuities between German and British colonial practices.

As Brockmeyer concedes, picking rather obscure biographies to examine poses potential difficulties in terms of the scarcity of traditional research materials available, the content of these materials, and whose voice can or cannot be heard. The construction of the colonial archive and its Eurocentric nature, which erases African agency, is, however, one of the key processes which she seeks to demonstrate throughout. At the same time, she suggests strategies to overcome these research barriers. Building on the work of the historian of modern Africa Richard Reid, she adopts a method of combining a wide, eclectic range of public and private materials from national, regional, and family archives in Tanzania, Germany, and the United Kingdom. This includes photographs, objects, published and unpublished sources, and ego-documents. Complementing as well as challenging these forms of evidence are informal interviews Brockmeyer carried out primarily in Tanzania, but also in Germany. These talks with members of both the Mkwawa and Prince families brought to the surface alternative forms of knowledge, in particular memories, rumours, and stories passed down within families, as well as new information and insights. Brockmeyer employs this combination of sources throughout, often to great effect, in order to offer potential

alternative readings of selected events, relationships, and processes, which bring into question the dominant European narratives of this entangled history.

The work is split into three broadly based thematic sections on travel, work, and memory, which are organized chronologically. A real strength of the study is the way in which Brockmeyer anchors her subjects in time and space by offering considerable contextual detail, which then enables her to widen her focus and engage with multiple sub-themes. In the first section on travel, for example, she follows Sapi Mkwawa's movements, first to Dar es Salaam, and provides a brief but rich overview of the development and spatial segregation of the city, including the sights Mkwawa would likely have been confronted with. Later in the section she focuses on his travels to Rome and then St. Ottilien Archabbey in Bavaria, reconstructing elements of these stays. Overall, this focus on Mkwawa's travels serves to provide a broader discussion of African mobility, the degree to which it should be seen as forced or voluntary, and its absence from both the archival record and the historiography. At the same time, this section on travel is also about the movement and transfer of ideas. Brockmeyer charts how over a longer period, beginning in the pre-colonial era, European representations of Iringa and the Hehe became self-reinforcing in producing a romanticized representation of a landscape ripe for European exploitation and inhabited by an attractive, but warlike population. These not only informed both German and British policy and practice towards the Hehe, but she also argues that elements of these constructs survived long beyond the end of the colonial period and continue to influence European writing on the region and on the Hehe.

The long section on work is similarly expansive. Here, among other things, Brockmeyer examines interesting aspects of everyday colonial practices, including violence (a theme throughout) and the tensions between local representatives of the colonial administration and missionaries on the ground. The bizarre case of the missionary Hofbauer examining the sperm of a Hehe man is taken as an example of this friction, which also caused considerable annoyance to the Benedictine mother house in Bavaria. In his zeal to convert members of the local population, Hofbauer intervened in their private lives

to a degree that was deemed unwanted and politically dangerous by German officials. In turn, Brockmeyer shows how African women, in turning to Hofbauer for support, could use these tensions to their own advantage to escape unhappy relationships, without necessarily feeling any long-term commitment to Catholicism. This is one of a number of examples where the author's close reading of her sources allows for African agency to be demonstrated. A further key example in this section is her interpretation of Sapi Mkwawa's removal as chief and his deportation in 1940, following an incident in front of the British administrative buildings. Dismissed at the time as a drunken outburst by British officials, Brockmeyer analyses eyewitness testimonies, Mkwawa's reported words, and the greater context to build a convincing case that his actions can instead be seen as a form of resistance. The incident further serves to highlight both the precarious role of African intermediaries within European colonial projects and practices of British indirect rule.

Work is also understood to include the active involvement of her protagonists, primarily Magdalene von Prince, in shaping colonial memory. Over all three sections Prince emerges as an unreliable eyewitness who in her writings, both public and private, consciously sought to cultivate an image of herself and her husband as colonial pioneers in the service of the German colonial project. Yet, as Brockmeyer argues, the romanticized image of benevolent, successful settlers the Princes wished to portray outwardly was far from the reality. Instead, the couple attempted to impose a feudal system on their plantations and Magdalene especially was physically violent towards her African workers. Economic success eluded them and they appeared to be facing financial ruin. Nonetheless, in Germany the constructed image of the Princes as colonial heroes survived well into the post-First World War period.

A discussion of colonial memory primarily in Germany and Tanzania is expanded upon in the final, shorter section of the book, which looks more closely at the process of memory making: what is remembered, by whom, why, and in what form. Brockmeyer first examines private memories by taking a family heirloom—a necklace said to contain a tooth taken from the body of Mutwa Mkwawa—alongside family stories to unpick suppressed and hidden memories of the

colonial past within the Mkwawa and Prince families. She then takes the better-known history of Mutwa Mkwawa's skull to consider the changing meanings it has held in German, British, and Tanzanian memory. These examples make clear that while the three countries are linked by a colonial past, the remembering (and silencing) of this past both privately and publicly has created less of a shared memory than one which is contested and divergent.

*Geteilte Geschichte, geraubte Geschichte* is a rich, complex, at times frustrating, but always rewarding and ultimately very impressive work. Given the wide-ranging nature of the study it is inevitable that not all the topics engaged with are treated in full. More could certainly have been said not simply about Africans who stayed at St. Ottilien, but also about how representative Sapi Mkwawa's stay was of African migration to Germany in general. At times, the treatment of the British side of this interwoven history feels underdeveloped, especially in the discussion of colonial memory, and not all the alternative readings presented are convincing. These minor criticisms aside, however, Brockmeyer makes multiple contributions not simply to the history of German colonialism, but to the history of empire in general. As she rightly stresses, despite its short duration, the German colonial project was part of a greater European one. Among many other things, she provides insight into the mechanics of everyday colonial rule and the centrality of violence, the construction of knowledge, African resistance, and the legacies of colonialism. In addition, she makes clear that colonial history is, to a degree, a shared one which, despite asymmetric relationships, impacts on and binds both the colonizing power and the colonized territory. At the same time, while this history might be shared, the study stresses that memories of colonialism often diverge and that African voices have frequently been silenced in the archival record and in the existing historiography. In creatively employing a wide range of disparate sources, in part to emphasize African agency, Brockmeyer crucially demonstrates the possibilities for recovering these hidden, suppressed memories of colonial rule, which can be used to challenge long-established European narratives of empire.

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JAMES KORANYI, *Migrating Memories: Romanian Germans in Modern Europe*, New Studies in European History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 340 pp. ISBN 978 1 316 51777 2. £75.00

One can safely state that there is hardly a national or ethnic group that did not suffer from the major crises of the turbulent twentieth century. The author of this book focuses on the history of the Romanian Germans and, more specifically, the emergence of their self-perception as a group in response to the key events shaping European and global history from the First World War. He argues that although there is a significant body of research dealing with shorter periods of Romanian German history and with specific events and their influence on the group identity, '[a] holistic approach, which deals with the wider developments throughout the twentieth century up until the present, has been largely absent' (p. 8). To fill this research gap, James Koranyi has examined an extensive body of sources, including memoirs, pamphlets, newspaper articles, personal letters, travel books, and even trade catalogues. As a result, the book presents a broad picture of national myths and stories passed from generation to generation, which ultimately shaped the distinctive self-image of the Romanian Germans that still persists today, despite all the dramatic changes and developments it went through. The book also pays considerable attention to interactions between Romanian Germans and the nationalities they were in closest contact with (mainly Germans living in Germany and Romanians), keeping account of both conflict and cooperation at different stages of history.

The first chapter looks at the origins of the Romanian German identity, starting with the emergence of Saxon and Swabian communities in Romania. It traces the establishment of three 'pillars' (p. 28) of Romanian Germanness, which were present throughout the whole period studied and are found – sometimes quite unexpectedly – in all the following chapters. These are a sense of Saxon superiority and exceptionalism, a feeling of being under constant threat from a hostile environment, and a Swabian narrative of ordeal and suffering. To illustrate the latter, Koranyi studies in detail Stefan Jäger's triptych of 1910, *Die Einwanderung der Schwaben*. In this painting Jäger, a renowned artist of Swabian origin born in Banat, portrayed the



collective myth of the sufferings of the Romanian Germans through depictions of the hardships the Swabian settlers faced on their way to Banat. The chapter ends by placing these narratives into a broader framework of reception in the interwar period, mainly by looking at exchanges and cross-references in writings originating from Romania, Germany, and Austria.

The second chapter deals with the 'Motherland' narrative of the Romanian Germans and their search for a place of belonging. It looks at various ways in which they attempted to establish, renew, or maintain their ties with the countries which could be called their 'other homeland', from the First Austrian Republic to the Federal Republic of Germany. Koryani argues that although emigration across the Iron Curtain became the path of choice for many Romanian Germans, it did not sever their ties with Romania – on the contrary, the constant flow of correspondence and packages to those left behind, as well as the popularity of holiday trips back to Romania, helped maintain a group identity even after their return to the 'historic Motherland'. Here Koranyi consciously avoids mentioning their ties with Nazi Germany, which are examined in the next chapter, along with the other narratives and themes of the Second World War period. The author claims that the focus of Romanian German collective memory during and after the war was not the group's collective responsibility for the atrocities of war, but the tragedy of 23 August 1944. On this day Romania succumbed to the USSR, which led to decades of suffering under the Communist yoke and deportations of Romanian Germans to Siberia. Once again, the theme of victimhood was reflected in a painting by Stefan Jäger, this time suitably called *Das Tragische Triptychon*. Through visual symbols and allegories, suffering is displayed as the dominant characteristic of Romanian German history during and after the war. Koranyi argues that the victimhood component of group memory gave the Romanian Germans an almost subconscious way of making peace with their controversial past: their participation in the war on the Nazi side and the official but largely unaccepted narrative of the events of the 1940s provided by the Communist regime.

Chapter four investigates the complex and multilayered relationship between the Romanian Germans and the Communist regime in Romania. Koranyi illustrates the transformation of collective attitudes

to the period through the case of Eginald Schlattner, one of the defendants in the infamous authors' trial of 1959. Schlattner (then a student) made a confession under torture which led to the sentencing of the dissidents on trial. In 2001 he published a novel entitled *Rote Handschuhe*, fictionalizing his experiences during the trial. This opened a fierce discussion on the degree to which Romanian Germans collaborated with the dictatorship, once again juxtaposing narratives of victimhood and guilt/responsibility. However, the film adaptation of the novel made only nine years later sparked little or no political debate, demonstrating that the Romanian Germans and Romanian society in general were weary of searching for historical justice, as the contemporary issue of widespread corruption in all political matters had gradually become much more relevant.

The final chapter examines the Romanian Germans' attempts to retain their identity in a new Europe after the fall of the Iron Curtain. Although a mass emigration from Romania took place in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Romanian Germans did not immediately integrate into a united Germany or any other destination, but reinvented themselves as bridge-builders with a mission to reunite Europe once the threat from the East was gone. The idea that Romanian Germans safeguarded 'Western' values and freedoms throughout their existence as a group, even under the threat of multiple hostile environments, became prominent in the early twenty-first century. It also led to Romanian Germans strongly opposing the inclusion of Romania in European integration until 2007, since they believed that their former motherland simply could not have adopted Western standards (which they themselves allegedly never abandoned) in such a short period of time. The chapter ends with a detailed account of how Romanian Germans have attempted to defend their historical and cultural uniqueness in recent decades, while simultaneously stressing the role that their heritage played in building the Romania—and, ultimately, Europe—of today.

The book under review here gives an excellent overview of the history of the Romanian Germans, requiring little to no prior knowledge of the subject. Thus it could serve as a starting point for anyone wanting to research the topic in more detail. Another clear advantage of the book is its focus on the personal stories of Romanian Germans, which make it possible to trace the evolution of a number of narratives through the

numerous turning points of the twentieth century. By quoting the personal accounts of individuals instead of relying on more generalized narratives provided by media or official reports, the author is able to share a unique insight into the Romanian German community, which still remembers the stories and myths of past generations despite being scattered all over the European continent.

It could be argued that the ambitious goal the author sets himself in the introduction prevents him from studying the issue in depth. Koranyi has clearly attempted to include as many themes and subjects in his book as possible. This results in him dealing rather superficially with some topics, the in-depth analysis of which would clearly require several volumes. However, this multidimensional description of the Romanian German community is also one of the book's advantages, as it might catch readers' attention and encourage further independent research. Readers might also feel that research on Romanian Germans could benefit from studying how outsiders (at the very least, Germans and Romanians) saw this distinct group; this theme is barely touched on here. However, this was clearly not the author's intention and might be the subject of a completely different research project.

To sum up, Koranyi's aim to give a comprehensive account of the whole formation process of myths and themes in the self-perception of Romanian Germans is largely met in this book. The methodology he uses—namely, gathering accounts of key historical events from numerous official and private sources—has proved to be useful in studying the collective memory of different groups. This makes his book a welcome addition to the vast body of research on Central and Eastern European nationalities.

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LUCY WASENSTEINER (ed.), *Sites of Interchange: Modernism, Politics and Culture between Britain and Germany, 1919–1955*, German Visual Culture, 8 (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2022), xxii + 314 pp. ISBN 978 1 789 97391 4. £56.65

When did modernism come to Britain? Writing in 1936, the German–British art historian Nikolaus Pevsner had a simple answer to this question: it was already there. In his well-known book *Pioneers of the Modern Movement*, which has since been republished in several editions, he asserted that there was a ‘historical unit’ between William Morris and Walter Gropius, based on an aside by Gropius in 1923.<sup>1</sup> This argument is contradicted by another narrative that locates the influence of modernism much later, that is, after 1933. In recent years, various publications have appeared that examine the exodus of German artists, architects, and designers to Britain after the rise of the Nazis.<sup>2</sup>

To find its own answer to the opening question and add nuance to the picture, a conference was held at the Courtauld Institute in 2018 alongside the exhibition ‘London 1938’.<sup>3</sup> The anthology under review brings together fourteen contributions to that conference. As the editor, Lucy Wasensteiner, director of the Liebermann Villa am Wannsee in Berlin, states in her introduction: ‘Modernist culture was not only present in mainland Europe after 1919, it did not arrive in Britain with the émigrés after 1933’ (p. 3). And the transfer did not stop after 1945, as the last three essays show. Moreover, the volume emphasizes that the influence was not unidirectional, but a reciprocal relationship between the two countries.

<sup>1</sup> Nikolaus Pevsner, *Pioneers of the Modern Movement from William Morris to Walter Gropius* (New York, 1949; 1st pub. 1936), 19.

<sup>2</sup> To name only a few examples: Marian Malet, Rachel Dickson, Sarah MacDougall, and Anna Nyburg (eds.), *Applied Arts in British Exile from 1933: Changing Visual and Material Culture* (Leiden, 2019); Andreas Schätzke, *Deutsche Architekten in Großbritannien: Planen und Bauen im Exil 1933–1945*, ed. Meike Schultz (Stuttgart, 2013); Jutta Vinzent, *Identity and Image: Refugee Artists from Nazi Germany in Britain (1933–1945)* (Weimar, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> Lucy Wasensteiner and Martin Faass (eds.), *London 1938: Defending ‘Degenerate’ Art / Mit Kandinsky, Liebermann und Nolde gegen Hitler* (Wädenswil am Zürichsee, 2018).

The essays appear in more or less chronological order, but are grouped around topics such as applied and fine arts, photography, and architecture. The first four contributions spotlight the interchange between Germany and Britain before 1933. Artemis Yagou analyses the toy industry and the 'ongoing cross-fertilisation' between the two countries in the first half of the twentieth century (p. 29). Two essays deal with the activities of, first, a private gallery owned by Dorothy Warren (Ulrike Meyer Stump) and, second, the Anglo-German Club (Lee Beard). Both operated between London, Berlin, and Hamburg during the transition from the Weimar Republic to the National Socialist regime. The Anglo-German Club was founded in 1931 as a platform of exchange between the two countries, but ran into difficulties after 1933 and consequently renamed itself the D'Abernon Club in 1934 (p. 69). Designer and gallerist Warren is revealed to be a hitherto underestimated pioneer who was strongly committed to promoting German art in Britain and British art in Germany; however, she also closed her gallery in 1934. In the fourth essay of this pre-1933 section, Valeria Carullo discusses how the 'New Photography' was introduced to the British public in the journal *Architectural Review* in the early 1930s.

Yet the main focus of the book is on the period from 1933 to 1945, which shows that for researchers, the Nazi takeover remains a decisive factor in the relationship between Germany and Great Britain, not least because of the arrival of numerous artists and intellectuals. Early among them were Lucia Moholy, who published *A Hundred Years of Photography* in Britain in 1939 (discussed here by Michelle Henning), and László Moholy-Nagy, whose widespread artistic activities during his London exile and photographic contributions to British visual culture in 1935-7 are examined by Leah Hsiao. Karen Koehler discusses the subtle connection between two important, near-simultaneous publications by Herbert Read and Walter Gropius on *Art and Industry* (1934) and *New Architecture and the Bauhaus* (1935) respectively. Burcu Dogramaci complements this by pointing out two crucial intellectual meeting places for emigrants in London: Ernő Goldfinger's house (1937) and the nearby Isobar in the Lawn Road Flats (1934). And Antonia Behan's essay critically examines the relationship between weaving and modernity, evaluating statements

by the dedicated weaver Ethel Mairet and her involvement with the Bauhaus and its members. Mairet met Gropius in London, exchanged ideas with former Bauhaus weavers in Germany and Switzerland, and made extensive research trips to handweaving schools and workshops throughout Europe. In fact, she developed her very own take on the future of weaving in a fruitful union between the past and the modern. Volker M. Welter examines how architectural forms from Berlin and the Baltic island Hiddensee came to Britain through the designs of the émigré architect Ernst L. Freud. The last contribution in this group, by Ina Weinrautner, highlights the case of Carlton House Terrace, until 1945 the seat of the German embassy in London. It was the scene of a costly and extensive Nazi remodelling under Ambassador Ribbentrop.

Dirk Schubert examines post-1945 reconstruction in London and Hamburg through the concepts of decentralization and the creation of neighbourhoods. The next case study, by Shulamit Beer, deals with the fate of the expressionist Ludwig Meidner, who was not rediscovered in Germany until well after 1945. All the more prescient, therefore, are the early articles and writings about him by the Czechoslovak-British art theorist Joseph Paul Hodin, whom Meidner met during his London exile. Keith Holz's essay on Oskar Kokoschka's post-war London period then concludes the volume.

The book covers a wealth of topics and reveals new levels of British-German exchange, all of which certainly deserve closer examination. Of course, it is difficult to prove and measure this exchange, since it often involved very different encounters, whether of a personal nature or through the influence of the media. In addition, the question arises – and this is certainly clear to the editors – as to what extent the emigrants' 'German' influence can be separated from that of other nations; after all, Goldfinger and Moholy-Nagy came from Hungary, Hodin from Czechoslovakia, and Kokoschka from Austria. Their case studies could thus stand in for other nations, as the emigrant scene in London was distinctly multinational.

The most interesting examples are precisely those that question the linear narrative of modernism versus non-modernism. After all, what does 'modernity' mean for each of the different genres of photography, painting and graphic art, and architecture? Because of

the complexity of the term, there is no single answer to this question. The authors do not always provide a specific definition, but it is clear from the essays that modernity can be understood stylistically, technologically, or even procedurally, through collaboration. In what way is the redesign of the German embassy a modern project, for example? Its highly modern kitchen design is certainly inconceivable without prior technological developments in the Weimar Republic, while the tasteful furnishings, wallpaper, carpets, and lighting produced by the Vereinigte Werkstätten in Munich drew heavily on concepts from the beginning of the twentieth century in a 'showcase of German craftsmanship' (p. 224). Art historical research has recently established a new orientation towards a concept of multiple modernities.<sup>4</sup> It may therefore have been unnecessary for *Sites of Interchange* to include the word 'modernism' in its subtitle, because this obscures rather than reveals the richness of the exchange and the diverse levels of contact between Britain and Germany in the tense period of 1919–55.

<sup>4</sup> Klaus Tragbar (ed.), *Die Multiple Moderne / The Multiple Modernity* (Berlin, 2021).

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ALEXANDRA LLOYD, *Defying Hitler: The White Rose Pamphlets* (Oxford: Bodleian Library Publishing, 2022), 160 pp. ISBN 978 1 851 24583 3. £15.00

Alexandra Lloyd, a researcher in German and cultural studies, has produced a comprehensive book on the German resistance group known as the White Rose. She describes the actions of this student initiative knowledgeably and evocatively, placing it in the historical context of National Socialism and the Second World War. She accurately outlines the key facts relating to the group's resistance to the Nazi dictatorship, vividly introduces its protagonists, and presents and explains the main statements made in its pamphlets. The latter were the White Rose's primary medium of resistance. They rightfully take up a prominent place in the book, with all six of them published here in English translation. In a separate chapter on 'The Legacy of the White Rose Today', Lloyd traces the development of the memory culture surrounding the group and the various forms it now takes. Unlike with other resistance groups, this culture began to form immediately after the end of the war in 1945, and in Germany it has been shaped by changing attitudes to recent history.

The book is published by the Bodleian Library, which has already called considerable public attention to the White Rose through its 2018 exhibition 'The White Rose: Reading, Writing, Resistance'. This presented literature on the group published since 1945 alongside books that had been particularly influential on the circle of friends who made up its membership.

*Defying Hitler* is partly a product of the extensive 'White Rose Project' which Alexandra Lloyd launched at the University of Oxford in 2018–19 in her capacity as lecturer in German studies, and now leads. During this project Lloyd worked with students to translate the White Rose pamphlets into English and has also organized exhibitions and events on the group's resistance activities. The new translations were published alongside facsimiles of the German originals and in-depth accompanying texts in a 2019 book called *The White Rose: Reading, Writing, Resistance*, edited by Lloyd herself.<sup>1</sup> The volume under review

Trans. by Jozef van der Voort (GHIL)

<sup>1</sup> Alexandra Lloyd (ed.), *The White Rose: Reading, Writing, Resistance* (Oxford, 2019).



here is thus part of a wider effort to communicate the history of the White Rose to English-speaking audiences.

Lloyd's expertise allows her to explain in detail the events that led to the death sentences handed down to the group members just a few days after their arrest, which were swiftly carried out. The pamphlets circulated by White Rose members were particularly contentious because the group's resistance activities and arrests coincided with increasing concern among the wider population over news of the desperate situation on the Soviet front on the one hand, and mounting repression on the part of the Nazi dictatorship on the other. The regime sought to strengthen the loyalty of its followers in view of recent military developments, especially so after it was announced that the last units of the sixth army had surrendered in Stalingrad. The city had been contested for several months, with heavy losses, but the fighting came to an end on 2 February 1943. When the news became public, parts of the population saw the writing on the wall and understood that the war was no longer winnable. In response, the sixth White Rose pamphlet, written in early February, printed in 3,000 copies, and distributed until 18 February, began with the dramatic words: 'Our people look on deeply shaken at the defeat of our men at Stalingrad.' It unmistakably singled out Hitler as the main culprit for the 'death and ruin' of 330,000 German soldiers, adding that his 'day of reckoning' had come (p. 119).

The Nazi regime evidently felt compelled to quickly stage a spectacular show trial of the Scholl siblings and Christoph Probst in Munich in order to prevent resistance ideas from spreading further through the population. The four-day interval between arrest and trial was unusually short even by the standards of legal proceedings at the time. As a general rule, ninety-nine days should also have elapsed between sentencing and execution; however, in this case the death sentences were passed on 22 February and carried out on the same day. Documents reveal that politicians had informally agreed in advance that the death penalty should be applied. Newspapers published reports on the trial and executions the very next day.

Alexandra Lloyd skilfully embeds these events into the wider political context and connects them to the parlous state of the German war effort in February 1943. She describes the propaganda coup of

the Sportpalast speech on 18 February 1943, in which Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels eloquently declared a 'total war' before an audience of 14,000 selected party loyalists—a war that needed to be 'more total' than any that had been fought before in order to be brief and victorious (pp. 1–2). Goebbels's two-hour speech secured the loyalty of the Nazi fanatics assembled in the Sportpalast and was broadcast to millions over the radio. Excerpts were subsequently published in state-controlled newspapers.

A whole chapter is dedicated to the key figures in the White Rose: Sophie and Hans Scholl, Christoph Probst, Alexander Schmorell, Willi Graf, and Professor Kurt Huber. Lloyd provides biographical sketches of each of these figures and shows what brought them together in resistance. She also makes clear that this core group received plenty of help in distributing their pamphlets from their wider circle of friends, which meant that the leaflets made it to Ulm, Saarbrücken, Freiburg, Hamburg, Berlin, and Stuttgart. Interestingly, Lloyd introduces her readers to the little-known Hans K. Leipelt, who continued the group's resistance activities after February 1943. He worked together with his friend Marie-Luise Jahn to carry White Rose pamphlets to Hamburg, where they were copied out and distributed among other friends. The two were arrested in October 1943 and, at his third trial before the People's Court, Leipelt was sentenced to death on 12 October 1944. He was then executed on 29 January 1945. Marie-Luise Jahn was sentenced to twelve years' imprisonment and was freed by the Americans at the end of April 1945.

Lloyd also considers the difficult question of what motivated Kurt Huber and his young comrades to engage in their acts of resistance. Where did their courage come from? The students had grown up 'in a state which ruthlessly gags all freedom of expression', as they put it in their sixth pamphlet (p. 119). With the exception of Willi Graf, they had all been exposed to indoctrination in the Hitler Youth, but they still gradually came to adopt a critical attitude towards the National Socialist dictatorship and its criminal methods of waging war. Lloyd points to how the young members of the group had been shaped by their upbringing, emphasizing their love of reading from an early age and their intense discussions of literature. They got to know each other through their shared interests in literature, philosophy, music,

nature, and sport. Lloyd argues that they had a clear understanding of the crimes committed by the dictatorship and wanted to put an end to them, along with the hopeless war. Each of the 'White Rose pamphlets' (only the first four carry this name) shows that the group counted on the discernment and responsibility of every person in society and therefore appealed to them to act, calling for sabotage and non-cooperation.

Lloyd also mentions that Hans Scholl explained the choice of the name 'White Rose pamphlets' during his interrogation by the Gestapo. According to the records of his interview, on 20 February 1943 he said that 'for the pamphlets to be effective propaganda the name would need to sound good and suggest that there was something of a manifesto behind it' (p. 14)—a remark that reveals a certain instinct for politics. The name 'White Rose' was meant to indicate to the readers of the first four pamphlets that they had been written by a bigger group. In reality, however, they were written by Hans Scholl and Alexander Schmorell in the summer of 1942, before being copied 100 times each and posted to people who might help to disseminate them.

As combat medics in training, Scholl, Schmorell, and Willi Graf, who also joined the White Rose, were required to provide medical support during the university holidays. They were thus sent to the Soviet front, near Moscow, for three months on 23 July 1942, along with other friends from the Munich Medical Company. Scholl and Schmorell resumed their resistance activities on their return to Munich, this time with firm and active support from Sophie Scholl and Willi Graf. Professor Kurt Huber joined the group at the end of December 1942. The individual comrades now established links beyond Munich, for instance, with friends in Ulm, Saarbrücken, Freiburg, Stuttgart, and Chemnitz, in order to persuade them to join the resistance. Their next action was designed to make the oppressors believe that there was a large-scale resistance movement across Germany.

The fifth pamphlet, this time entitled 'An Appeal to all Germans!' (p. 115), was published in early January 1943. Thanks to the group's expanded circle and increased financial support, 10,000 copies were produced. A new duplicating machine allowed pamphlets to be copied in greater quantities, and all of the group members helped to buy

master sheets for the duplicator, paper, and stamps. In order to distribute the pamphlets, the group copied thousands of addresses from books in the library of the Deutsches Museum in Munich. In January 1943 Sophie Scholl, Willi Graf, and Alexander Schmorell undertook extremely perilous trips to cities such as Ulm, Saarbrücken, Stuttgart, and Vienna in order to give copies of the pamphlets to friends for onward distribution, or to post them themselves. The costs were shared, and Eugen Grimminger, a Stuttgart-based friend of Hans and Sophie's father Robert Scholl, also provided a substantial sum of money.

The fifth pamphlet is written more clearly than its predecessors and dispenses with the quotations from world literature used in previous pamphlets. The words 'Hitler cannot win the war; he can only prolong it!' (p. 115) are emphasized with letterspacing in the first paragraph. The pamphlet is an ardent appeal to end the dictatorship and war before it is too late. It also sketches out ideas for a political order after the collapse, asserting that the Germany of the future must be federalist and that the ground must be prepared for cooperation between the peoples of Europe. 'Every nation, every person has a right to the goods of the world!', the authors state, before demanding what are now well-established civil liberties, along with protection from the 'despotism of criminal and violent states'. These liberties are 'the foundations of the new Europe', they add (p. 117). Once again, the authors condemn the murder of the Jewish population, a subject that they had already forcefully addressed in the second pamphlet, which laments the murder of Polish Jews: 'Here, we see the most horrific crime against human dignity, a crime unparalleled in all of human history' (p. 98).

The sixth pamphlet is addressed to students in Munich and demands 'true scholarship and real freedom of the mind' on their behalf (p. 120), before calling to the youth of Germany to finally rise up, 'smite [their] tormentors, and found a new intellectual Europe' (p. 121). It refers to the fierce student protests against Gauleiter Paul Giesler on 13 January 1943 after he made lewd jibes about female students during a mass gathering and emphasized their domestic role. Professor Kurt Huber wrote the initial draft of this pamphlet, which had originally contained positive statements about the Wehrmacht.

These were removed by Scholl and Schmorell, as we learn from their interview records. The pamphlet was copied around 3,000 times and distributed (or in some cases physically strewn) throughout Munich from 9 February onwards. The Scholls were arrested while handing out copies in the city's Ludwig Maximilian University on 18 February 1943. The sixth pamphlet proved particularly effective thanks to its use by the British Royal Air Force, which added a preface and air-dropped millions of copies over northern Germany in the summer of 1943. It had reached the UK and the USA via Norway.

Lloyd provides the most important details about each pamphlet as well as Christoph Probst's draft of a seventh text, written in late January 1943, which condemns the murder of Jewish people and the military fiasco in Stalingrad. The draft was discovered during Hans Scholl's arrest and sealed Probst's fate, since it provided evidence that he was actively involved in the White Rose.

The politically sensitive nature of the pamphlets is made clear by the excellent English translations, which are published in full here. Pleasingly there are also facsimiles of the German originals, which make the historical context tangible. Typed out on a mechanical typewriter with used ribbons, resulting in uneven lettering, they are simple sheets of A4 paper that were sent by post, copied, and distributed under mortal peril. Their historical resonance remains significant even today. The pamphlets are appeals to personal responsibility and the courage to take action, even at great personal risk; they call for readers to speak out against a criminal dictatorship and a murderous war. This contrasts with the simplicity of the plea at the end of each pamphlet: 'Please duplicate and redistribute!' (p. 113). The pamphlets' basic demand for freedom seems more urgent to us today than at any time in the previous decades.

*Defying Hitler* thus offers many useful lessons to readers, as Alexandra Lloyd demonstrates with impressive clarity why the history of the White Rose is so moving and resonant for us today. She has deliberately chosen not to write a work of academic history, aiming instead to introduce a broad British audience to the German resistance and to persecution under National Socialism. With her 2019 publication *The White Rose: Reading, Writing, Resistance*, she has already contributed to the small body of English-language literature on the group.

## BOOK REVIEWS

For that reason, I very much hope that this book finds a wide readership – and so, in the spirit of the pamphlets themselves: Please read and recommend to others!

HILDEGARD KRONAWITTER has a degree in economics and a Ph.D. in economic and social history, and is the Chair of the White Rose Foundation. Based in Munich, the foundation manages the White Rose Museum in the main building of the Ludwig Maximilian University Munich, organizes travelling exhibitions on the White Rose, and works with educational institutions on projects to raise historical awareness.

PETER HOWSON, *Britain and the German Churches, 1945–1950: The Role of the Religious Affairs Branch in the British Zone*, Studies in Modern British Religious History, 43 (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2021), 305 pp. ISBN 978 1 783 27583 0. £80.00

In 2003, regime change was one of the most prominent and publicly promoted aims of the controversial military campaign by the United States and the United Kingdom to topple the Iraqi dictatorship and install a new democratic government, which aimed to transform a former 'rogue state' into a new liberal–democratic nation. With hindsight, we can see the shortcomings of both the military campaign and the political reorganization that came afterwards. Some now even regard Iraq as a failed state in a worse condition than it was before the war.

Regime change is the prism through which the theologian-turned-historian Peter Howson examines the transformation of post-war Germany under the British administration. He focuses on the Religious Affairs Branch in the British zone, a unique organization in the occupation system of the Allied powers in Germany. It mainly dealt with administrative questions, such as coordinating meetings with German clergy, maintaining communication channels with the churches in Germany, and organizing trips between Britain and Germany for clergy. Interestingly, it was established not least because the archbishop of Canterbury felt it necessary to have an organization that dealt with religious questions. It was evidently believed that the ideological reorientation of the German population required the cooperation of the Christian churches, which would create a Christian foundation for rebuilding a democratic state.

Howson's study connects with several current debates in contemporary history. It is obviously of interest to researchers seeking to understand how the occupation regimes in post-war Germany functioned. Howson's case study illustrates the kinds of issues the occupation authorities dealt with and in how much detail they attempted to address particular topics. However, he also shows how limited their room for manoeuvre could be and what resistance they encountered in a previously hostile country. Here, the study allows interesting conclusions to be drawn about the functioning of occupation regimes and regime change.

Interestingly, the British authorities' limited scope for action was not due to resistance from groups that were still committed to the National Socialist regime. Rather, according to Howson, it was partly the opposite: British interest in the politics of the churches after 1945 was perceived, not least by Catholic clergy and especially by Bishop Clemens August Graf von Galen, as intrusive and unnecessary for Germany's ideological reorientation. Von Galen, who had been one of the most open critics of the regime within the Catholic Church during National Socialism, did not hold back with his censure of the British occupiers, criticizing attacks by the military on the civilian population and rejecting the imputation of German collective guilt. One of the main arguments put forward by critics of the British occupation was that National Socialism had disappeared almost overnight after the defeat. Nationalism, however, still seemed to be present, including among the clergy—but how could this be distinguished from National Socialism?

Dealing with the German past also proved challenging in relation to the Protestant churches, partly because it was not easy for the British occupation authorities to grasp the complex organizational and political structures of Protestantism in Germany, and partly because the Protestant churches were more politically entangled with National Socialism. However, this made it possible to strive for a political reorientation in German Protestantism, which was successfully reflected in the Stuttgart Declaration of Guilt in 1945.

Findings such as these place the study in a context that goes beyond the everyday difficulties of an occupation regime in a formerly totalitarian country. In both Britain and Germany, the post-war years saw a partial renaissance of organized Christianity. Callum Brown (among others) has shown this impressively for the British context,<sup>1</sup> and for West Germany, Kristian Buchna has asked how far the 1950s can be described as a 'clerical decade'.<sup>2</sup> In his magisterial study of the Oldham Group, the historian of religion John Wood demonstrates the extent to which even intellectual agnostics felt society should be based on

<sup>1</sup> Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation, 1800–2000*, 2nd edn (London, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Kristian Buchna, *Ein klerikales Jahrzehnt? Kirche, Konfession und Politik in der Bundesrepublik der 1950er Jahre* (Baden-Baden, 2014).



Christian foundations in order to prevent it from slipping into following dangerous totalitarian integrative ideologies.<sup>3</sup> In Germany itself, the debate continues to this day and is known as the Böckenförde dilemma.<sup>4</sup> Only at first glance is it surprising that the occupation regime by a country which undoubtedly went on to become one of the most secularized societies in Europe relied on significant help from the Christian churches in the late 1940s to bring about a successful regime change. Britain was still a very Christian country at this time, and until the late 1980s the Church of England played an unusually strong political role compared to that of churches in other European nations.

Unfortunately, the relevant debates in Great Britain and in the British occupation zone sometimes play a rather incidental role in Howson's investigation. Howson himself points out that many British files from the occupation are no longer available. However, the fact that debates often play a secondary role in Howson's book is also related to the tasks of the Religious Affairs Branch, which were primarily administrative in nature. There is a lot to learn in Howson's study about the specific problems of German bishops' trips abroad or the organization of the visit to Germany by the bishop of Chichester, George Bell. But here, despite its otherwise impressive precision and meticulous evaluation of sources, the study sometimes gets lost in technical detail. Nor do the very long source quotations, sometimes extending over more than one page, contribute very much to the coherence of Howson's argument. Careful reading is required to avoid overlooking interesting observations amid the detailed descriptions of everyday life and the long source extracts that are not always interpreted and fully explained.

Howson is obviously concerned with doing justice to his object of research by assiduously describing and documenting its activities. He seeks to assess the practical role of the Religious Affairs Branch in facilitating cooperation between British and German clergy and in

<sup>3</sup> John Wood, *This is Your Hour: Christian Intellectuals in Britain and the Crisis of Europe, 1937–49* (Manchester, 2019).

<sup>4</sup> Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde, 'Die Entstehung des Staates als Vorgang der Säkularisation', in id., *Recht, Staat, Freiheit*, 2nd edn (Frankfurt am Main, 2006), 92–114, at 112: 'The free, secular state lives by preconditions that it cannot guarantee itself. That is the great risk it has taken for the sake of freedom.'

enabling Christian life in post-war Germany – not least because the organization's work has gone largely unnoticed until now. In any case, Howson succeeds in demonstrating the importance assigned to church structures and Christian thought in British occupation policy. The influence of certain individuals also becomes clear, such as George Bell, but also August Marahrens, the bishop of Hanover, who stood for a Protestant church that had cooperated with the regime under National Socialism and partly followed its ideology. In describing personal encounters and differences between these two churchmen, Howson notes important details: for example, Bell's biting remark about Marahrens that there would have been no ecclesiastical resistance if all church officials had behaved as he did.

This is a study that could make an important contribution to understanding the role of religion in transitional societies and the processes behind the founding of the Federal Republic. In any case, it is a valuable contribution to the ongoing debate on the foundations of a Western-style liberal democracy. Yet how important a role the Religious Affairs Branch played in establishing a democratic mentality based on Christianity is not easy to deduce from Howson's observations. There is no doubt that the organization could make only a small contribution on its own. Reading Howson's book, however, leaves one somewhat sceptical even of that limited role. In the end, perhaps the practical experience of an economically successful democracy was more important for the establishment of a democratic society and culture than the external attempt to promote the reconstruction of a Christian-oriented culture.

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FELIX FUHG, *London's Working-Class Youth and the Making of Post-Victorian Britain, 1958–1971*, Palgrave Studies in the History of Subcultures and Popular Music (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), xiii + 441 pp. ISBN 978 3 030 68967 4. £109.99

ANNA BRAUN, *Von 'Art School' bis 'Underground Club': Räume der Interaktion von visueller Kunst und Popmusik im London der 1960er Jahre*, Populäre Kultur und Musik, 31 (Münster: Waxmann Verlag, 2021), 512 pp. ISBN 978 3 830 94239 9. €49.90

Much writing on contemporary British history follows a generational logic. Each decade tends to be revisited thirty years after its passing: the 1960s were popular at the turn of the millennium, the 1970s in the late noughties and early 2010s, and the 1980s in the later 2010s and early 2020s.<sup>1</sup> The two monographs by Felix Fuhg and Anna Braun demonstrate that it need not be thus. Much can still be learned from revisiting the once-iconic 1960s, the decade when the post-war social democratic settlement brought forth remarkable currents of cultural renewal. Indeed, the current debate about the long shadows of Britain's imperial past makes a critical re-evaluation of the years when Britain self-consciously embraced a post-imperial conception of national identity especially timely.<sup>2</sup> Both monographs are based on Ph.D. theses that were successfully defended at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. In the attention to empirical detail, the level of methodological reflection, and, not least, the choice of subject matter outside the authors' immediate lived experience, the studies serve as a welcome reminder of what is good about the German higher education system. Their considerable length will come as a surprise to some British readers; and sadly, Braun's study will, in all likelihood, remain inaccessible to most scholars of a historiographical field that,

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c.1958–c.1974* (London, 1998); Lawrence Black, Hugh Pemberton, and Pat Thane (eds.), *Reassessing 1970s Britain* (Manchester, 2013); Matthew Hilton, Chris Moores, and Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite (eds.), *New Times Revisited: Britain in the 1980s*, special issue of *Contemporary British History*, 31/2 (2017).

<sup>2</sup> Erik Linstrum, Stuart Ward, Vanessa Ogle, et al., 'Decolonizing Britain: An Exchange', *Twentieth Century British History*, 33/2 (2022), 274–303.

global pretensions notwithstanding, has largely closed itself off from any impulses published in languages other than English.

British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan's famous 'Wind of Change' speech in 1960 and Winston Churchill's death in 1965 serve as the starting points for Fuhg's wide-ranging and innovative study. At its most basic, his book is interested in the reconceptualization of Britain's national identity after the loss of empire. Taking his cues from the 'spatial turn', Fuhg fuses urban and cultural history. The long 1960s, he argues, mark the moment when Britain left behind the trappings of its imperial past and embraced a 'post-Victorian' national identity. Nostalgia for a lost past was replaced by the joy of living in the 'swinging' present; a culture of deference gave way to the celebration of irreverence and self-actualization. This change was driven by the urban working class, and in particular its youthful subcultural sections. In emphasizing the agency of 'ordinary' men and women, Fuhg offers a welcome corrective to some recent accounts that tend to view working-class culture as a repository of crass stereotyping and obsolete social values. As Fuhg reminds us, the process of transformation was not without its contradictions, nor was it completed by the end of the decade. The embrace of the future entailed a reconfiguration of the past: the 1960s were, to use Fuhg's term, 'a liminal period' in which the old and the new existed side by side (p. 7).

The book takes popular culture seriously, and although the author distances himself from the Birmingham School of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in the introduction, his approach is clearly indebted to the centre's pioneering work (pp. 10–12). (Sub)cultural practices – the musical tastes, sense of style, and transgressive leisure activities embraced by some working-class youths – may not count as 'rituals of resistance', as Stuart Hall and collaborators posited in the 1970s.<sup>3</sup> But they clearly carried meaning, driving as well as reflecting broader socio-cultural changes. In the process, London, the former imperial centre, was reinvented as the capital of pop. In eight substantive chapters, divided into four parts labelled 'Society', 'City', 'Pop', and 'Space' respectively, Fuhg traces these changes with diligence and care.

<sup>3</sup> Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (eds.), *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain*, 2nd edn (London, 2006; 1st pub. 1975).

Indeed, the book's great strength lies in the close attention that it pays to the concrete spaces in which cultural change manifested itself: the workplace, the estate, the street, the bar, and the club. The author's re-evaluation of the post-war housing estate, often taken as exemplifying the erosion of 'traditional' community values, is particularly welcome. As Fuhg demonstrates, modern housing estates could function as places of belonging just as much as the back-to-back terraces that they had replaced. The same goes for the neighbourhood street. Despite the advent of television, Fuhg shows, the street retained an important place in the mental cartography of working-class youths.

Some aspects of the study could have been developed further. There is, first of all, the problem of copy editing. The book features some high quality black and white illustrations. Unfortunately, however, neither the publisher nor the series editors appear to have deemed it necessary to proofread the manuscript. This is a shame because some sentence constructions and turns of phrase will strike many readers as rather unidiomatic. Second, and perhaps more importantly, some of the study's central concepts are introduced without careful definition. This applies above all to the use of the term 'Victorian'. Can the Britain of the 1950s, or for that matter, of the 1920s and 1930s, really be classified as Victorian, as the study implies? If so, what was the essence of Victorianism? Was it the empire? Was it a culture of deference? Finally, the study makes frequent references to famous youth subcultures such as the Teddy boys, the mods, and the skinheads. But despite their importance for the overall narrative, their various practices and modes of conduct are treated rather cursorily.

These caveats notwithstanding, Fuhg's overall argument holds up well. It is usefully summarized in the conclusion. In the 1960s, British national identity was remade by urban working-class youths whose modes of sociability and pop cultural tastes radiated from London across urban Britain, the Western world, and beyond. 'The cultural awakening of the capital, driven and pushed by working-class youth, reinvented Britain as a country that no longer ruled the world in politics but the world of fashion, music and lifestyle', as Fuhg concludes (p. 427). The book demonstrates that culture can serve as a driver of change, as well as a reflector. More broadly, it illustrates that much

can be gained from taking seriously the links between the spatial, the social, and the cultural. In probing the cross-currents between the post-imperial and the youth cultural, the book opens up a pathway for much needed further research.

Where Fuhg uses a broad brush to paint a picture of post-Victorian Britain with bold strokes, Anna Braun deploys a fine pencil to sketch out the nodal points that made London swing. Her study, a revised Ph.D. thesis in art history, is no less fascinating for that. Like Fuhg, Braun is interested in the relationship between social change, culture, and space. Her central argument is that to understand London's rise as Europe's, and the world's, pop cultural capital in the 1960s, we need to take into consideration the impact of the visual arts on a generation of young pop musicians. Braun takes iconic moments of 1960s pop culture – Pete Townshend's onstage guitar destruction; the Beatles' release of the *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* album; the light shows of Soft Machine and Pink Floyd – as starting points for her exploration of the spaces that made this interaction possible. The art school, the art gallery, and the music club form the basis of the three substantive chapters that comprise her study.

Chapter one shows how art schools functioned as an environment in which aspiring musicians, often from working-class backgrounds, could develop their creativity, meet fellow musicians, and be inspired by the latest developments in the visual arts. The list of famous British musicians who attended art school in the post-war decades is long and impressive indeed, including Ronnie Wood and Keith Richards (the Rolling Stones), John Lennon (the Beatles), Pete Townshend (the Who), Freddie Mercury (Queen), Cat Stevens, Eric Clapton, Brian Eno, and Joe Strummer (the Clash), amongst others (p. 53, n. 95). As Braun shows, this development was based on the reform of the art school curriculum in the 1950s, with a move away from the teaching of artisanal skills in canonical subject areas and a prioritizing of free expression, intuition, and creativity. In particular, the introduction of the 'basic design' foundation course was crucial. It did not matter that music was not even taught as a subject. What mattered was that the art schools offered an environment in which experimentation and creative expression were valued over technical aptitude. Here, as elsewhere, the cultural revolution of the 1960s took inspiration from the

European avant-garde of the interwar years, in particular the Weimar Bauhaus and Dadaism, as Braun reminds us.

Chapter two likewise traces cultural innovation back to spaces, showing how a new type of gallery fostered social interaction and cultural exchange. Galleries such as Robert Fraser Gallery at 69 Duke Street and Indica Gallery at 6 Mason's Yard were not so much places where art was exhibited for commercial trading. Rather, they functioned as meeting places for the cultural avant-garde. It was here that art of a new kind, including everyday objects and installations—'whatever you put a frame around' (p. 258)—was shown. It was at these galleries that visual artists such as Mark Boyle, David Medalla, and Lourdes Castro staged famous (and controversial) exhibitions and creative fusion occurred between pop musicians and visual artists. Creative fusion also stood at the centre of the music clubs and art labs which form the subject matter of chapter three. As Braun demonstrates in two illuminating case studies of the UFO Club and the Drury Lane Arts Lab, space was reconfigured to create a laboratory for artistic creation and expression.

Braun's study is meticulously researched and engagingly written. It offers a persuasive overall argument while making many fine observations along the way. Her recreation, in great detail, of the artistic partnership between performance artist Yoko Ono and Beatles star John Lennon offers a case in point. Ono was virtually unknown in the UK when John Dunbar, the founder of Indica Gallery, agreed to put on her exhibition 'Unfinished Paintings and Objects' in November 1966. The colour white dominated the exhibition; most exhibits were unfinished in the sense that they contained instructions for the audience to participate in artistic creation. In one installation, nails and a hammer were placed next to a white painting; in another, called *Add Colour Painting*, a brush and paint pots were placed next to a white frame. John Lennon, who was given a private tour of the exhibition, was particularly impressed by the installation *an answer without a question*, which invited visitors to climb up a ladder to look at a white painting that had been fixed to the ceiling. Only with the help of a looking glass did the word 'yes', written in tiny black letters, become visible (pp. 279–97). As Braun demonstrates, impact did not depend on longevity. Indeed, many of the artistic spaces that are examined in the study were exceptionally short-lived. Indica Books and Gallery opened in late November 1965



and closed less than two years later, in September 1967. The UFO Club lasted less than a year, from December 1966 to October 1967. Yet, as was the case with Yoko Ono and John Lennon, the artistic and personal relationships that were formed in these places would reverberate in popular culture for decades to come.

Braun's study is based on a broad range of archival material, much of it uncatalogued. The archival sources are handled with diligence and care. They are complemented by interviews that the author conducted with eyewitnesses and visual artists, although not musicians, in the early 2010s. Braun's difficulty in getting access to musicians points to a certain imbalance of power in the exchanges and partnerships that were formed in the 1960s. Whereas musicians such as Pete Townshend, Paul McCartney, and John Lennon were propelled to superstardom, many visual artists remained relatively obscure. These imbalances are acknowledged but not taken as a cue for exploring what might be called the darker side of the 1960s. Following the oral testimony, the underground scene is presented as an exceptionally creative milieu in which transgressions such as excessive drug use and sexual liberties became the natural bedfellows of the creative process. In such a perspective, more ambivalent aspects of the scene, such as, for example, the self-destructive dimension of substance abuse, are left unexplored. Potential gender and race imbalances, as illustrated by the biographical sketches in a contemporary newspaper article, 'Who's Who in the Underground', also remain outside the study's analytical gaze (pp. 338–9).

Fuhg and Brown have written innovative studies that make a significant contribution to the existing historiography. They demonstrate that the spatial turn helps to enhance our understanding of the 1960s and, more broadly, of the conditions in which cultural innovation thrives. In doing so, both studies hold lessons for anyone who is interested in, and concerned about, the future of the creative arts in the climate of fiscal austerity and puritanical righteousness that seems to define our present. They deserve a wide readership.

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CRAIG GRIFFITHS, *The Ambivalence of Gay Liberation: Male Homosexual Politics in 1970s West Germany*, Studies in German History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 256 pp. ISBN 978 0 198 86896 5. £72.00

This study by Craig Griffiths is a stellar case in point for the old historians' joke that only two kinds of historiographical truth exist: it started earlier – and it's more complicated than that. By placing gay men's ambivalence about themselves, their desires, their politics, and the society in which they lived at the heart of his book, Griffiths complicates the standard narrative of gay liberation, disturbing 'a well-told story of shame giving way to pride, subjugation transforming into freedom, and fear blossoming into hope' (p. 9). He foregrounds continuities instead of ruptures and consequently challenges 1968–9 – the pinnacle of the West German students' movement and the year of homosexual law reform – as marking a sharp historical divide. The book under review is not only the first in-depth English-language study of male homosexual politics in 1970s West Germany, but also an engaging read and a successful attempt at queering the history of the gay movement and of the 1970s in West Germany.

In the introduction, Griffiths situates his study in the German history of homosexual emancipation. He discusses his use of terminology, respecting contemporary usage of terms such as 'gay' or 'homosexual', but also considering men who desired other men but did not identify through their sexuality. He also theorizes the central term of his study – ambivalence – drawing on recent work in queer affect studies as well as classic psychoanalytical theory. Griffiths runs the axes of pride/shame, normal/different, and hope/fear through the histories of West Germany and German homosexual emancipation to develop a working model of ambivalence for his purposes.

In chapter one, 'The West German Gay World after Homosexual Law Reform', Griffiths argues that gay liberation's 'struggle for space, language, and communication: for a public' (p. 31) began with the other two effects of law reform: the emergence of a commercial gay press and of a gay scene that was also mostly commercial, including bars, cruising sites, and travel. He points out the limits of law reform: despite the 1969 and 1973 reforms, gay activists continued to be banned from public spaces, the age of consent remained higher for sex

between men, and although according to polls fewer people regarded homosexuality as a sin, a growing number viewed it as an illness. He thus concludes compellingly that liberalization left homosexuals with much to be desired, and that historians' interpretations of sexual law reform as 'a deep socio-cultural caesura' 'simply do not hold water when one focuses on homosexuality' (p. 39). Griffiths's analysis of the gay press shows the ambivalent terrain that publications like *him* and *du&ich* navigated between the pre-1969 homophile culture and the post-law reform world that was just emerging. In their denigration of rent boys and feminine gay men, they continued homophile respectability politics. But the commercial gay press was now also openly critical of mainstream society. The gay scene expanded rapidly after law reform, and guidebooks soon helped those interested in orienting themselves in the gay venues of various West German cities. Despite activists' criticism of the commercialism of the gay scene, Griffiths concludes, both activism and commercial ventures helped men find their place in the gay world.

In chapter two, Griffiths traces the emergence of gay liberation in the years from 1969 to 1973. During this period, homophile and gay activism overlapped and contended over whether and how to attempt to change mainstream attitudes towards homosexuality. Griffiths characterizes the politics of this moment as 'exceedingly fraught', engendering an 'ambivalence [that] ran through the very heart of organizations, publications, and individuals themselves' (p. 59). The chapter's analysis draws on media coverage of homosexuality from mainstream as well as homophile and gay media, such as two television documentaries that ran in 1970 and 1972, two cover stories of mainstream weekly *Der Spiegel* dedicated to homosexuality from 1969 and 1973, and the discussions and repercussions following Rosa von Praunheim's famous 1971 film *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse, but the Society in Which He Lives*. Griffiths describes the differences in strategies and self-presentation between the bourgeois International Homophile World Organization – whose name belied its character as a West German national body – and the gay action groups that began forming in the early 1970s. He is careful not to replicate the gay students' rejection and mockery of the 1970s homophile activists, who, despite their cautious politics, faced the public before any gay action

groups existed. Griffiths argues that the tense relationship between the two groups, which became most publicly pronounced during the podium discussion following the 1973 broadcast of Praunheim's film on national television, had to do with a mutual suspicion of each other's politics and lifestyle.

The third chapter, 'Gay Liberation, "1968", and the Alternative Left', contextualizes the gay politics of the 1970s through the 1960s new left and the 1970s alternative left. Griffiths argues that the perspectives and spaces opened up by the West German student movement, commonly referred to by the cipher '1968', profoundly influenced the homosexual politics that emerged in the ensuing decade. This influence did not come about through the students' concern with homosexual politics, which they largely dismissed in much the same way as feminist politics. However, they 'bequeathed to the gay left a foundational scepticism about the nature of liberalization in capitalist societies' (p. 95). If no good could come from a structurally rotten order, progressive reforms were futile since they fell short of revolutionary politics. Griffiths traces this dividing line between the gay left and more conservative homosexuals right back to '1968'. As a consequence, the gay left remained sceptical of homosexual law reform or dismissed it altogether, along with the politics of the social-liberal government coalition between 1969 and 1982 and liberalization in general. As Griffiths points out, the gay left's criticism of liberalization meant that they felt right at home within the alternative left in the 1970s, which rejected both the capitalist system and Soviet Communism. Apart from ideological proximity, the alternative left crucially provided the gay left with a space for political work and a (counter)public to address.

In the fourth chapter, Griffiths unpacks the pink triangle and the complicated ways in which it served to link past and present persecution, explaining how '[t]he most radical exclusionary act committed against homosexuals in German history became, 40 years on, a key means of their inclusion' (p. 128). He provides a convincing reading of the reclaimed symbol originally used by the Nazis to identify homosexual camp inmates and adopted by gay activists in the 1970s, first in Germany and then internationally. Although they were aware immediately after 1945 that homosexual men had been imprisoned in

camp, neither historians nor the homophile press showed any interest in the issue or the survivors until the 1970s, when the 1972 publication of Heinz Heger's memoir *The Men with the Pink Triangle: The True Life-and-Death Story of Homosexuals in the Nazi Death Camps* sparked what Griffiths calls a 'transnational "memory boom" in homosexual politics' (p. 126). Gay liberation activists adopted the pink triangle for different purposes: as a symbol that could increase gay visibility and act as an expression of solidarity by those gays who did not want to confront the public in drag, and as a symbol of shared oppression. The author contextualizes the activists' rhetoric of a looming repetition of the Nazi persecution of homosexuals in their own West German society as not only an expression of the 'Weimar symptom'—the fear that the young Federal Republic might suffer the same fate as the Weimar Republic—but also an instance of comparing present injustices with Nazi crimes, a practice that had become common in the 1960s among both leftists and conservatives. Griffiths suggests 'focusing on victimization [as] less a tactical move than an almost instinctive emotional and ideological response to a contemporary society that was experienced as oppressive' (p. 149). Rather than replacing gay pride with victimhood, the pink triangle could thus stand for both, Griffiths concludes, while at the same time allowing activists to make the 'extremely powerful claim' to the West German state and society '[t]hat gay liberation was a necessary part of "coming to terms with the past"' (p. 162).

The fifth chapter, 'Thinking and Feeling Homosexuality', discusses the role of effeminacy, sex and desire, and emotional politics for the gay left in the 1970s. Long-standing conflicts over gay male effeminacy erupted during the so-called *Tuntenstreit*, a strategic debate within the gay left concerning the value of drag and gender transgression. In it, the Homosexual Action Group West Berlin and other gay liberation groups argued about whether to form an alliance primarily with the women's movement on the basis of a gay identity or with the workers' struggle in prioritizing the socialist revolution. In discussing the role of sex and desire in gay politics, Griffiths highlights the fraught relationship between gay politics and the gay scene, with the latter more often than not being denigrated as a distraction from political goals. This antipathy, he argues convincingly, 'resembled an important point of

connection between gay action groups and organizations that still used the term “homophile” (p. 165). Griffiths’s account of the emotional politics of gay liberation is based on his analysis of discussions of the gay scene in different gay action groups and self-help groups as well as therapeutic work. He concludes that emotions such as fear and shame had not disappeared, but instead constituted important emotional continuities throughout the decade.

In the conclusion, the 1979 ‘Homolulu’ convention and the 1980 podium discussion on gay politics with representatives of West Germany’s political parties in Bonn serve as springboards for Griffiths’s discussion of developments that accompanied gay politics throughout the 1970s, but became more pronounced in the 1980s. These were a turn to parliamentary politics, to a language of civil and human rights, and to state funding. He leaves readers with the conclusion that ambivalence about the meaning of gay desire and homosexuality itself can be considered ‘a structural feature of gay liberation’ (p. 216).

Griffiths’s book was the first to appear among a number of recent studies in queer German contemporary history, with Benno Gammerl’s *Anders fühlen* and Samuel Huneke’s *States of Liberation* following shortly after. With these studies, as well as Magdalena Beljan’s 2014 *Rosa Zeiten*, there is now a solid historiography of West German gay male politics and subjectivities in and beyond the 1970s.<sup>1</sup> Though this scholarly achievement is nothing less than thrilling, the continuing dearth of studies of lesbian, trans\*, and other non-normatively sexual and gendered politics and subjectivities is becoming increasingly egregious. While we do not wish to admonish any single historian for this, it is urgent that the field address this imbalance.

In his focus on ambivalence and its repercussions in questioning narratives of pride overcoming shame, Griffiths shares a key interest with Benno Gammerl, who in his 2021 landmark study *Anders fühlen* called for ‘the historical and biographical significance of ambivalent

<sup>1</sup> Benno Gammerl, *Anders fühlen: Schwules und lesbisches Leben in der Bundesrepublik. Eine Emotionsgeschichte* (Munich, 2021); Samuel Clowes Huneke, *States of Liberation: Gay Men Between Dictatorship and Democracy in Cold War Germany* (Toronto, 2022); Magdalena Beljan, *Rosa Zeiten? Eine Geschichte der Subjektivierung männlicher Homosexualität in den 1970er und 1980er Jahren der BRD* (Bielefeld, 2014).

feelings' to be acknowledged.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, both Gammerl and Griffiths argue that the perspective of homosexual history revises standard narratives of West German contemporary history, such as the paradigm of liberalization, an argument similarly put forward by Samuel Huneke in his recent *States of Liberation*. Despite its references to affect, Griffiths's book is a carefully argued movement history rather than an emotional history. One of its key contributions may be to make affect studies productive for a political movement history.

The book is also a comprehensive and critical historiography that is as keenly aware of existing narratives as it is eager to deconstruct them. More precisely, Griffiths demonstrates compellingly how a focus on gay history changes standard narratives of contemporary history, such as liberalization. The author carefully and convincingly analyses an impressive number and range of sources, including activist paraphernalia, oral history interviews, gay travel guides, works of literature, the commercial gay magazines *him* and *du&ich*, and coverage of gay liberation in the alternative left as well as the mainstream press. His lucidly written account extends beyond West Berlin, also taking into consideration a number of smaller West German cities and thus contributing to a much-needed geographical widening of the country's gay movement. He also notes the increasingly global range of West German gays and points out colonial continuities in gay male fantasies and travels, which reinforced long-standing racial stereotypes (pp. 54–5).

Some questions remain after reading Griffiths's engaging account. First, while he turns to psychoanalysis for his definition of ambivalence—'a window into the juncture between the psychic and the social, in that while the individual psychic conflict is significant, the individual is more or less susceptible to ambivalence depending on their social situation' (p. 18)—why does psychoanalytic theory not resurface in the rest of the book? Second, particularly in the discussion of the *Tuntenstreit*, we could ask how a trans\* historical perspective (rather than a merely gay political framework) would change our analysis of the meaning of non-normative embodiments of gender? Griffiths states that 'there is no clear evidence that *Tunten*

<sup>2</sup> Gammerl, *Anders fühlen*, 138; translation by the reviewers.

in this debate perceived their gender identity as at odds with the sex assigned to them at birth' (p. 168). But do we need 'clear evidence' to seriously consider this possibility? Griffiths himself quotes a contemporary observer who 'came away with the impression that *Tunten* saw themselves as women and as victims of the oppression of women' (p. 175), giving some indication that the line between 'gender fuck' and 'transsexual or transgender' (p. 168) may not be as cleanly drawn. Third, Griffiths could have gone into greater depth in his account of the dubious alliances that many gay action groups held with paedosexual groups. He points out the 'wide support within gay liberation for the liberation of childhood sexuality [which] often coincided with a measure of tacit or explicit support for the rights of self-defined paederasts or paedophiles' (p. 207), but in light of Jan-Hendrik Friedrichs's recent work on the entanglements between homosexual and paedosexual politics, these could have been more central to Griffiths's analysis.<sup>3</sup>

All in all, Griffiths offers a comprehensive and convincing account of the gay movement of the 1970s. His critical lens allows him both to deconstruct an often mystifying decade and highlight its significance in a longer history before and beyond the 1970s. His study advances queer history through not only its overview of male homosexual politics in 1970s West Germany, but also its critical appreciation. Most importantly, his interpretation of the period as a 'thoroughly unstable blend of competing conceptions and feelings about what being gay meant and involved, alongside contrasting analyses of what liberation stood for and how this might be reached' (p. 30) represents nothing less than a queering of the legacy of gay liberation.

<sup>3</sup> Jan-Henrik Friedrichs, "'Verbrechen Ohne Opfer?' Die "Pädophiliedebatte" der 1970er Jahre in Sozialwissenschaft und Schwulenbewegung aus macht-theoretischer Perspektive: Essay', *Jahrbuch Sexualitäten* (2021), 62–84.



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KATRIN SIEG, *Decolonizing German and European History at the Museum*, Social History, Popular Culture, and Politics in Germany (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2021), 326 pp. ISBN 978 0 472 07510 2. \$80.00

The debate on Europe's imperial past and colonial legacies has intensified in recent years, and museums have become the subject of—and a site for—such discussions. Katrin Sieg provides an overview. Approaching 'Europeanization as a condition of decolonizing postnational community' (p. 11), she looks at local, national, and European museums, mostly in Western Europe, and especially in Germany. *Decolonizing German and European History at the Museum* paints a vivid picture of interventions by activists, scholars, curators, and artists in these institutions. As well as addressing the workings of 'colonial aphasia',<sup>1</sup> it draws attention to the agency and resistance of those who were subjected to exploitation, subjugation, and extermination. Discussing several exhibitions, Sieg shows how they 'have activated colonial history for new tales of international, cross-racial connections and cooperations' (p. 37). In essence, museums, exhibitions, and artworks became the ground on which decolonizing efforts are taking place, with culture as 'an arena of struggle over meanings and power' (p. 64).

Following the rich introduction, chapter two presents the main actors involved in initiating decolonizing processes in museums. Delving into the protagonists' endeavours, Sieg distinguishes between two groups. One group advocated changing institutional structures and codes. The other challenged the racial injustice and triumphalist stories that are still prevalent in museums. In both cases, collecting and exhibiting human remains were the most contentious practices of objectification in museums.

Chapter three takes as its subject one example of a museum intervention: the project 'Kolonialismus im Kasten' ('Colonialism in a Box', CiB) at the German Historical Museum (Deutsches Historisches Museum, DHM) in Berlin.<sup>2</sup> Sieg elucidates how the Hegelian philosophy

<sup>1</sup> Ann Laura Stoler, 'Colonial Aphasia: Race and Disabled Histories in France', *Public Culture*, 23/1 (2011), 121–56.

<sup>2</sup> For more information on the project (2011, ongoing), see their website at [<https://www.kolonialismusimkasten.de>], accessed 13 Dec. 2022.

of history that positioned Europe as ‘the vanguard of history’ (p. 17) underpinned the design and layout of the DHM’s permanent exhibition. She argues that this approach permeates history museums in Europe, and that by using the method of contrapuntal reading, CiB not only contested grand narratives, but also challenged the museum’s narrow framing of Germany. Sieg unpacks this by making connections between the issues raised by CiB, such as colonial violence against the Herero people, the need for more inclusive institutional practices, and the museum’s potential to play an active role in addressing historical justice. In Germany, these questions became even more pertinent once the decision was made to build the Humboldt Forum, a structure resembling the former imperial palace on whose site it stands in Berlin. In response to the debate the Humboldt Forum triggered, the DHM mounted a special exhibition on German colonialism. Titled ‘German Colonialism: Fragments Past and Present’, the exhibition was shown for seven months, from October 2016 to May 2017.

Sieg discusses in detail three sections of this special exhibition in the ensuing three chapters. Starting with the portrayal of historical colonialism (1885–1918), she explains in chapter four that the exhibition moved beyond deconstructive approaches and provided a model that could be adopted by national museums in their efforts to decolonize national history. Invoking Paul Gilroy’s ‘planetary humanism’,<sup>3</sup> she argues that the exhibition featured a ‘cosmopolitanism from below’ which ‘offered glimpses of anti-imperial worldmaking’ (p. 118). Her point resonates with Adom Getachew’s conception of worldmaking as subaltern cosmopolitanism.<sup>4</sup> Though Sieg praises the project for showcasing such endeavours, she indicates that this part of the exhibition – and the glimpses it offered – missed the chance to address critically the economic and political dimensions of colonial violence and their implications for the current world order.

Chapter five brings to the fore Black perspectives and the ways in which Black German curators and community members contributed to the exhibition’s section on ‘Decolonization and Divided Remembrance’.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Gilroy, *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line* (Cambridge, Mass., 2000).

<sup>4</sup> Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking After Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Princeton, 2019).

'Divided remembrance' points to two distinct decolonization processes in East and West Germany. While acknowledging that local communities and activist voices were included in the exhibition, the chapter suggests a limited understanding of colonialism's legacies and how it works nowadays. Sieg foregrounds ways in which the subject of people of colour was reduced to that of Black Germans, sidelining framings of racism that do not follow the colour line. She also mentions the scepticism shown by Black German activists who approach projects such as the DHM's exhibition cautiously because in many instances 'post-colonial Africans' (p. 132) are excluded from them.

Following up on this point, chapter six is concerned with the presentation of 'postcolonial Africans' in the 'German Colonialism' exhibition. Sieg posits that their limited involvement impacted on the way in which the subjects this section tackled – such as education, development, and trade relations – were addressed. She shows how this arrangement resulted in the imperial presence being only partially captured because the effects of neocolonialism were neglected. Looking elsewhere in Germany, Sieg introduces two exhibitions that used video installations and, she argues, captured the imperial presence more compellingly. These are 'Heikles Erbe: Koloniale Spuren bis in die Gegenwart' ('Fraught Heritage: Colonial Traces in the Present') at the State Museum of Lower Saxony in Hanover (October 2016–February 2017) and 'Rum, Schweiß und Tränen: Flensburgs koloniales Erbe' ('Rum, Sweat and Tears: Flensburg's Colonial Legacy') held at the Maritime Museum in Flensburg from June 2017 to March 2018. 'Through its *mise-en-scène*', Sieg suggests, 'Fraught Heritage' emphasized 'the eminent importance of attentive listening for the unlearning of Eurocentrism' (p. 164). By juxtaposing the three exhibitions, the chapter brings to the fore an array of ways in which (neo)colonial relations are organized transnationally, with Flensburg's case proving this pattern most vividly. As a binational port city, Flensburg was presented as entrenched in the history of slavery.

The House of European History (HEH) in Brussels is the subject of chapter seven, making Europe – and in particular the European Union – its primary focus. Unpacking the content and design of its permanent exhibition, Sieg critically evaluates the HEH's adherence to what she classifies as Hegelian historiography. She asserts on p. 203 that:

A museum that lives up to the young Hegel's apprehension of freedom would either salvage the moments in which freedom was being actualized, if only fleetingly; Europeans would only play a small part in it. Or it would be a history of European political experiments; the moments when people seized hold of freedom and equality would occupy only a small part of the floorplan. And yet either project could inspire our own decolonizing struggles today.

Artists' contributions to the project of decolonizing museums are a focal point of the book's penultimate chapter, which illuminates how their work differs from the practices of activists and historians. Acclaiming the decentralized structures that the art world developed in the second half of the twentieth century, Sieg elevates artists to experts in deconstructing Eurocentric structures. To support her argument, she draws on David Joselit's analysis of artists as interlocutors of museums and contributors to undoing Eurocentrism.<sup>5</sup> Museums became a target of criticism from artists questioning their attempts to deal with racial injustice, for example. Yet several instances of artists partnering with museums in decolonization projects illustrate how this kind of collaboration might yield positive results. As one such example, Sieg presents the 'Research Workshop on Colonialism' held in Berlin's Schöneberg Museum in 2017. Reflecting on its content and form, she applauds the project for incorporating all the essential elements needed to decolonize the museum, with reparatory justice starting in the institution and possibly continuing elsewhere.

Sieg's monograph makes a valid contribution to the ongoing debate on decolonizing museums. As it is concerned primarily with Western Europe, however, the title does not accurately reflect its geographical scope. The book would have benefited from a broader focus on other parts of the continent. Moreover, while the practices of activists, historians, and artists have been central to the project of decolonizing museums, the contributions and voices of representatives from other fields and disciplines, including anthropology, could have been foregrounded more effectively.

<sup>5</sup> David Joselit, *Heritage and Debt: Art in Globalization* (Cambridge, Mass., 2020).

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Decolonizing German and European History at the Museum* offers extensive insights into how museums deal with colonial legacies. It comes at an important time when the subject seems more apposite than ever.

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## CONFERENCE REPORTS

*Family and Disability: Comparing British and German Histories of Care for the Disabled.* Conference organized by the Department of Modern History at Kiel University and the German Historical Institute London, with support from the Fritz Thyssen Foundation, held online, 2–4 December 2021. Conveners: Christina von Hodenberg (GHIL) and Gabriele Lingelbach (Kiel University).

This conference took an interepochal and comparative approach to domestic care for people with disabilities in Britain and Germany from the Middle Ages to modern times. It had originally been planned for 2020 as an in-person event to be held at the GHIL, but after various postponements, it took place online at short notice due to increased Covid restrictions in the United Kingdom.

After a brief welcome by Christina von Hodenberg, Gabriele Lingelbach opened the conference. In her introduction she emphasized the paradoxical development of domestic care arrangements, pointing out that in spite of changing gender norms, caring for people with disabilities in most cases remains a female task. Lingelbach also argued that research on care for people with disabilities should take an intersectional perspective. She highlighted that the conference would ask whether caring for people with physical, sensory, cognitive, or mental disabilities followed divergent patterns. From the perspective of disability history, she said, it was equally important to assess whether people with disabilities could claim agency in establishing their care arrangements and shaping the conditions they lived under.

Bianca Frohne (Kiel University) opened the first panel, chaired by Raphael Rössel (Kiel University, now FernUniversität in Hagen) and dedicated to investigating home care for people with disabilities in premodern times. Frohne's talk focused on concepts of time in medieval and early modern German households that included members with disabilities, and her analysis was based, among other source

material, on reports of miracles (*Mirakelberichte*), household financial accounts, and diaries. She explained that care and labour duties within the household were fundamentally restructured in response to disability and chronic disease. This forced household members to rethink plans for their futures and made them choose new reference points when writing about their own lives. Highlighting the relationship between concepts of 'care' und 'cure', Frohne showed that household members often believed that the time they spent caring for their relatives would be limited, and emphasized that family members often imagined periods of care as distinct phases of their lives.

David Turner (Swansea University) looked at the effects that the disability of one family member had on the social status of coal miners' households during the Industrial Revolution in Britain. Turner refuted the previously dominant thesis that disability led to the direct exclusion of the disabled person from the household and resulted in institutionalization. In fact, people with disabilities often remained active household members, as Turner showed in his analysis based on ego-documents and social security data. At the same time, middle-class social reformers such as Henry Mayhew publicly praised and idealized the seemingly selfless care practices in working-class households. However, working-class families who too readily agreed to place their disabled members in a residential institution could legally be charged with neglecting their household duties.

In his keynote lecture, Andreas Gestrich (formerly GHIL) developed a systematic approach to historicizing family care and proposed four basic themes. First, he pointed to the changing patterns of organizing care work across generations. Second, he argued that the motives for doing care work or not required historicization, and hinted at possible interconnections with the emerging field of the history of emotions. Third, Gestrich encouraged studies that looked at the importance of gender in care arrangements. And fourth, he emphasized that social welfare needs to be studied in a comparative perspective. International sociographic analyses provide particularly promising source material for such projects. Gestrich introduced the Eurofamcare study on family care arrangements in different states of the European Union as one example.



The second day of the conference began with a panel on the relationship between institutional and family care in the twentieth century. Rachel O'Driscoll (University of Oxford) focused on scholarships granted to blind or deaf schoolchildren and those with other physical disabilities in early twentieth-century London. She looked in particular at the demands made of parents by local authorities in regard to nurturing these children during their scholarships. The central sources for her biographical analysis were minutes from London County Council meetings and documents from the process of allocating the scholarships.

Christian Kintner (University of Münster) complicated the meaning of concepts such as 'care' and 'family' in his analysis of the lives of the cognitively disabled residents of an anthroposophical farm community in Westphalia. Kintner's ethnographic talk was based on interviews with these residents and the couple heading the farm complex, the so-called 'house parents'. Kintner concluded that they and the residents declared themselves a 'family' in order to distinguish their way of life from that pursued in residential institutions.

Ulrike Winkler (Universität der Bundeswehr München) spoke about the influence of parents and other family members on the architecture of residential institutions in the Federal Republic of Germany. The often remote homes had traditionally been designed as unwelcoming places, Winkler pointed out, referring to their characteristically high fences and massive brick walls. According to Winkler, this kind of architecture was intended to mark the institution as a heterotopic counterworld in which the authority of the management was unquestioned. With continued scandals surrounding homes from the 1950s onwards, parents challenged this institutional inaccessibility. Overall, Winkler argued, homes increasingly shed their unwelcoming character not only because of pressure from activists or from the wider public, but also because of individual family interventions.

Andreas Gestrich chaired the third panel, in which the speakers compared the gendered allocation of care duties in twentieth-century Germany and Britain. Raphael Rössel argued that unlike families with non-disabled children, nuclear families with disabled children could not be seen as a traditional form of household organization in West Germany. Directly after the Second World War, female household

members faced an abundance of care duties in West Germany. Caring for wounded ex-servicemen—husbands, fathers, and brothers—in most cases took precedence over caring for a disabled child. A tendency towards institutionalizing disabled children emerged particularly with regard to children with cognitive and psychological deviations. Only the establishment of parental organizations stopped this trend. Against the background of revelations about maltreatment in residential homes and media attention after the thalidomide scandal, more and more parents changed their minds and advocated for domestic family care, which they believed to be more affectionate than institutional care. Such arguments, however, put pressure on mothers in particular, who were nudged away from paid work and often felt unable to address either logistical and financial difficulties or the stress that goes hand in hand with their care work because it might have given the impression that they wanted to place their children in an institution.

Pia Schmäuser (Kiel University) addressed similar issues in the German Democratic Republic. Schmäuser argued that East Germany's infrastructure for rehabilitation was (even) more inadequate than that in the Federal Republic. In the socialist dictatorship, parents were unable to form associations that could have applied pressure to state officials. Most residential institutions in the GDR were in the hands of the (Protestant) church. From the 1970s, local churches initiated seminars for parents at which mothers in particular were given a chance to voice their daily concerns. While East German parents could not form clubs or associations like those in the FRG, they were, according to Schmäuser, able to establish networks within church seminars. Parents in these circles were empowered, as mothers (and occasionally fathers) became increasingly willing to address supply shortages or the weak infrastructure for rehabilitation during the meetings.

Julie Anderson's (University of Kent) talk concluded the second day of the conference, looking at the Sunshine Homes that were established in the interwar period in Britain. These institutions took in blind newborns and infants, most of whom had been born into working-class families. Anderson contrasted the public discourse on maternal care by mothers of visually impaired children and of non-disabled children. While maternal bonding was seen as the prerequisite for

successfully raising a (non-disabled) child, state officials questioned whether working-class parents of blind and visually impaired children were able to care for their children at all. They argued that blind children should be educated by trained experts, with nurses to provide necessary female bonding.

A panel on state measures supporting family care arrangements opened the third and final day of the conference. It consisted of a talk given by Steven Taylor (University of Kent), who examined the importance of middle-class family ideals for charity initiatives directed at disabled adolescents in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Britain. Based on an analysis of texts by Victorian social reformers such as Samuel Smiles, Taylor showed that specific gender roles were deemed a prerequisite for sustainable family life. The philanthropic organizations at the core of Taylor's talk differentiated between those seen as 'worthy' and 'unworthy' of public support. Taylor examined to what extent working-class families with disabled children were deemed 'worthy' of such support. He stressed that they were often declared deserving if the household had a bourgeois lifestyle, for instance, with the father as sole provider and the mother not taking paid work in favour of nurturing the child.

The conference ended with an open discussion chaired by Christina von Hodenberg. A major point of discussion were the regional differences that emerged in various talks – for instance, how disabilities and class boundaries showed greater interconnections in the United Kingdom than in Germany. Striking interepochal continuities were also highlighted, such as the tendency to allocate care duties according to gender. At the conclusion of the discussion, various participants called for an expansion of the focus to include the whole of Europe.

RAPHAEL RÖSSEL (FernUniversität in Hagen)

*Economic Narratives in Historical Perspective*. Workshop organized by the German Historical Institute London and held at the GHIL, 28–9 April 2022. Conveners: Jeremy Adelman (Global History Lab, Princeton University), Laetitia Lenel, and Alexander Nützenadel (German Research Foundation Priority Programme ‘Experience and Expectation: Historical Foundations of Economic Behaviour’ at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin).

When Nobel laureate Robert J. Shiller published his book *Narrative Economics* in 2019,<sup>1</sup> he triggered a discussion among economists on the effects that narratives have on economic behaviour. Remarkably, Shiller introduced his thesis neither by reflecting on narratology, nor by giving a contemporary example. Instead, he took a historical example, one that dates from the Roaring Twenties.<sup>2</sup> This alone illustrates the vast heuristic potential that historical perspectives might contribute to this issue.

At a two-day workshop held in London in April 2022, economic historians gathered to discuss the role of narratives in economic decision-making. As the title indicates, the organizers suggested flipping the focus from narrative economics to the economic narratives themselves. Emphasizing that the causal processes behind stories and their ability to shape the behaviour of economic agents has so far received only scant attention, they invited contributions that investigate how economic narratives were constructed in the past, how they were transmitted and circulated, how they informed choices and behaviour, and what their social or economic consequences were. In their opening remarks, the organizers pointed out that economic narratives often revolve around the same concepts. They therefore decided to structure the workshop and the contributions around three dichotomies that have proved to be particularly important in history: namely, development/underdevelopment, crisis/recovery, and growth/decline.

In his opening lecture, William H. Sewell (University of Chicago), reflected upon the concept of ‘narrative’ and how to adapt it to economic history. Sewell defined narratives as key tools for handling

<sup>1</sup> Robert J. Shiller, *Narrative Economics: How Stories Go Viral and Drive Major Economic Events* (Princeton, 2019).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. ix.

complexity which necessarily simplify reality. This, however, causes numerous epistemological problems. Narratives, he claimed, can be proved to be definitely false, but not definitely true. Historians in particular face a dilemma in that 'successful' narratives usually stick to contemporary claims. Their analyses therefore risk either being anachronistic or failing to capture the public interest. This, Sewell argued, poses a particular challenge for economic history, since its objects are narratives emerging from economics, and therefore often claim to be timeless. Examples of such narratives, according to Sewell, are the idea of business as an exchange of commodities and that of business cycles. In order to avoid giving the impression of what he called a 'pastlessness of the past', Sewell suggested focusing on the historical changes that narratives undergo. How do narratives shape economic processes and how do the ensuing changes feed back into the narratives themselves? Here Sewell pointed particularly to the significance of economic narratives for capitalism and the close relationship between the economic profession and capitalism.

Following a comment by Frank Trentmann (Birkbeck, University of London), the discussion revolved around the relationship between economic narratives, capitalism, and what Sewell called capitalism's restlessness, something that might be triggered by the directional dynamic of narrative thinking. Trentmann and Laetitia Lenel also discussed the importance and implications of other, non-sequential narrative forms, while Mary A. O'Sullivan (University of Geneva) alluded to economic historians' role in creating and circulating sequential narratives about men glorified for their contribution to economic development and technological progress. On a more general note, Trentmann pointed to the important bifurcation in the 1960s and 1970s between economic knowledge production and the social sciences. How, Trentmann asked, might we bridge that gap to bring culture back into economics? This point was taken up repeatedly over the next day.

Margarita Fajardo (Sarah Lawrence College) opened the session on 'Development and Underdevelopment', which was chaired by Jeremy Adelman. Fajardo's talk on the twentieth century as a century of development identified the Global West and the Global North (mainly the Soviet Union) as protagonists of a golden era of development.

She pointed out that the roots of neoliberalist scholarship lie in the pursuit of economic development. Since the state-directed economy of the Communist bloc did not produce prosperity, deregulation was regarded as a key to wealth. This narrative has shaped economics to the present day. Fajardo explained how Latin American economists and policymakers created their own narratives of development. Bringing in their voices, she argued, might change the grand narrative.

Vanessa Ogle (University of California, Berkeley) explored how the narrative of development shaped concrete economic practices. In the 1950s and 1960s the British Crown allowed several Caribbean islands under its control to become tax havens. One of the main reasons for this was that these colonies were loss-making, as they could not export natural resources or any other goods of value. Ogle demonstrated how the institutions in charge made use of the narrative and ideology of development to deregulate tax on the islands. According to this narrative, these economically underdeveloped territories should be allowed to establish themselves as tax havens to attract companies and investors. This would benefit the people living there and take them off the foreign-aid budget. This narrative, Ogle argued, was 'assertive' but ultimately false: offshore companies did make the islands less costly to the Crown, but they were not favourable to development.

The following talk by Anne Ruderman (London School of Economics and Political Science) examined how the capitalist narrative of a world consisting of 'goods' (both immaterial and material) contributed to the economic underdevelopment of the African continent. Ruderman outlined how seventeenth- and eighteenth-century companies knew what goods to take to Africa in order to purchase slaves. She also drew attention to our own stories as economic historians and the questions we do not ask, highlighting how our own narratives may reinforce those of the actors involved. By asking whether slavery caused the Industrial Revolution or capitalism, Ruderman claimed, economic history tends to ignore how the mechanisms of trade contributed to underdevelopment, and also leaves out African actors.

Laetitia Lenel opened the second session on 'Crisis and Recovery', chaired by Mary O'Sullivan. Lenel explored how surveys, a new forecasting tool developed in the 1940s, prompted the emergence of the

concept of rational expectations, and how this understanding led to a new narrative of how different economic actions were linked in time. In the context of the crises of the late 1980s and early 1990s, this new narrative motivated the Federal Reserve to become more transparent, enabling the formation of rational expectations in the first place. Lenel drew attention to how economic narratives emerge and how they come to shape economic actions, highlighting particularly the role of crises. She identified crises as pacemakers of the transformation of narratives, and argued for a focus on the reciprocity of crises and narratives. Narratives, she argued, not only play a causal role in the unfolding of crises, with crises also transforming our narratives, but our notions of crisis are themselves products of earlier economic attempts at sense-making.

While Lenel focused on dominant narratives within the economic community, Tiago Mata (University College London) provided an overview of the genesis of narratives of crisis in the popular media. He introduced his reflections by considering the example of the journalist John McDonald, who moved to New York during the Great Depression and later became the ghost writer of Alfred P. Sloan's memoir, *My Years with General Motors*.<sup>3</sup> Mata demonstrated how McDonald used game theory as a universal pattern to produce thrilling stories on abstract economic topics. As another example, closer to the present, Mata took a Pulitzer Prize-winning series of articles on 'America and the World a Decade after 9/11', published by the *New York Times* in 2011 under the headline 'The Reckoning'. The series reconstructed crucial decisions leading up to the global economic crisis of 2008–10. But, Mata argued, in spite of the title, there was no reckoning in the economic sense. The articles stuck to common political narratives instead of using economic ones to explain the origins of the crisis to a wide audience.

In the final talk of the session, Mary Morgan (London School of Economics and Political Science) addressed the history of business cycle research. By the late nineteenth century, economists had started thinking about periods of crisis and recovery of five to ten and fifteen

<sup>3</sup> Alfred P. Sloan, Jr., *My Years with General Motors*, ed. John McDonald with Catharine Stevens (New York, 1963).

to twenty-five years. Morgan pointed out that visual presentations of economic narratives were nationally distinct. But although each nation developed its own graphs to represent the dynamics of business cycles, all of them were predictive as well as 'retro-understanding'. By emphasizing supposedly repetitive processes, they indicated 'where we stand, where we come from and – maybe – where we go'. Morgan highlighted that the role of narratives in general, and especially of business cycle models used by agents whose aim is to change the economy, is so far under-researched, emphasizing the vast potential of exploring the relationship between economic decision-making and nationally distinct visual representations of economic ideas.

Trevor Jackson (George Washington University) opened the third session on 'Growth and Decline', chaired by Alexander Nützenadel, asking how economic narratives such as 'growth and decline' migrated to other spheres. Jackson showed that recovering the theological aspects of economic narratives may illuminate when and why narratives stick, emphasizing particularly the importance of economic narratives for capitalist imaginations. He compared, for instance, the narrative of economic growth to narratives of religious redemption, and drew parallels between the economic and theological connotations of terms such as 'deservingness'.

In some respects, the report by Stephen Macekura (Indiana University Bloomington) on economic growth as a narrative carried on from Jackson's talk. Macekura outlined different types of growth narrative that proved to be particularly powerful in economic history, with some of them illustrating the theological aspects of the idea of economic growth outlined by Jackson: growth as a promise of future gain and a means to create consensus; growth as a narrative that helped to define the Cold War; growth as the justification for a particularly Whiggish interpretation of Western narratives of development; and growth as an escape from natural and environmental constraints. In his concluding remarks, Macekura raised the question of how the growth narrative was challenged by current problems as it relied on an energy regime of cheap fossils.

Sebastian Schwecke (Max Weber Forum for South Asian Studies) spoke on the conditions governing lending in contemporary India. He defined lending as a way to 'turn "unpresent" future expectations into



present money'. To this day, Schwecke stressed, the Indian government decides the conditions of creditworthiness. To enforce this and prevent 'unqualified' people from taking out loans, India has exempted credit contracting from the rules of contractual law, one of the cornerstones of liberalism. However, a system of private moneylending has emerged, which provides loans to supposedly 'unqualified' people. Since the government has failed to stop this, it consistently challenges governmental predictions that otherwise might be self-fulfilling.

Mary O'Sullivan closed the session, speaking on the relations between economic practice and economic discourse. She particularly addressed the concept of profit as an analytical and a historical lens. Focusing on European textiles in the early modern period, O'Sullivan compared how profits were understood and generated operationally with how they were constructed intellectually.

In her closing presentation, Mary Morgan showed how scientists use narratives first as a sense-making technology; second as a form of representation; and third as an inference. After giving an account of the three different roles, which she illustrated by reference to reflections from the history and sociology of science, Morgan explored how economic actors make sense of the economy by narrativizing, and how these narratives are transformed by events. These points were taken up in the final discussion, which focused on the relationship between economic narratives and economic practices, and the role of economic experts. On a more self-reflexive note, participants discussed the relationship between our own narratives as economic historians and the narratives of our actors, and why it is just now, in the era of fake news and framing, that narrative figures prominently in the work of scholars in different disciplines. It was discussed whether scholars have turned to the topic because grand narratives have recently been challenged, demonstrating once again the importance of reflecting on the constructedness of the world.

VIVIAN YURDAKUL (University of Wuppertal)

*Violence against Women: Historical and Comparative Perspectives.*

A joint workshop of the Humboldt Foundation Anneliese Maier Award and the German Historical Institute London, held at the GHIL, 14–16 July 2022. Conveners: Christina von Hodenberg and Jane Free-land (GHIL), Sylvia Walby (City, University of London), and Karen Shire (University of Duisburg-Essen).

This interdisciplinary conference brought historians and social scientists together to explore gender-based violence and its variations over time and place through the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. A particular focus was on British and German contexts, with many papers adding comparisons with other nations, and additional contributions addressed Spain, France, Ghana, Japan, and Mexico. Bridging macro- and micro-level analyses, the conference explored the relationship between changes in gendered violence and the development of variations in gender regimes. It also asked about strategies of feminist resistance, either working autonomously or in alliance with other forces. Papers were delivered on the conceptualization of and relationship between gender regimes and violence, how sexual violence was made (in)visible and responded to in post-conflict contexts, the role of gendered violence in state-making and the governance of violence through gender regimes, the role of feminist strategies and struggles in challenging violence, gendered violence in the legal system and law-making, and comparative global perspectives on sexual violence and injustice.

Sylvia Walby's opening keynote lecture posed four key challenges for approaches to gendered violence: the theory of gender regimes, the concept of violence, their variations across different contexts, and the role of feminist strategies of resistance. She argued that a shared language and conceptual framework needed to be developed in order to both research and reduce gendered violence across diverse contexts. In Walby's macro-level theory of 'domestic' (premodern) and 'public' (modern) gender regimes, these vary historically and geographically across the four institutional domains of the polity, economy, civil society, and violence. 'Public' gender regimes can be further differentiated into neoliberal and social democratic regimes. Walby thus positioned violence not merely as a tool of power but as

an institutional domain in itself. To facilitate interdisciplinary and comparative research on violence, she proposed a shared conceptualization of interpersonal and intergroup physical violence as distinct from wider forms of exploitation and injustice. She also asked what role feminist movements have played in shifting gender and violence regimes, and in particular whether strategies for reducing gendered violence have been more successful through women's autonomous movements or through coalition-building.

The first session addressed national, religious, and socio-political framings of sexual and intimate-partner violence in post-conflict and post-colonial conflict contexts in Germany, Spain, and Ghana in the twentieth century. Anne-Laure Briatte (Sorbonne University) analysed tribunal and clergy records of sexual violence perpetrated by French forces in occupied Germany in 1945 and explored the shaming of victims of sexual violence. Such violence was framed through victim-blaming narratives which identified the nation, not individual women, as the victim of these crimes in the context of a reshifting of the (West) German gender regime. Miguel Alonso Ibarra (UNED) also explored changing gender regimes in authoritarian contexts, focusing on sexual violence and women's survival strategies in Francoist Spain, whereby the regulation of violence shifted from rape as a weapon of war to sexual violence as a repressive mechanism of social control in the new national political environment. The reassertion of a domestic gender regime within a militarized and authoritarian setting saw fascist masculinities and feminized domesticity deployed in tribunal judgements of victims and perpetrators. Gender regimes in transition were also addressed through Stephen Baffour Adjei's (Akenten Appiah-Menka University) proposed conceptual framework for understanding the role of masculinities and communal personhood in intimate-partner violence in Ghana. Adjei compared pre- and post-colonial settings and emphasized the roles of religion and cultural norms in how the dialogue between masculinity and communal personhood justified, incited, restrained, or condemned gendered violence.

The second session explored processes of state-making and implications of policy changes for gendered violence, focusing on Britain's economic and border regimes since the mid twentieth century. Michele

Lloyd (independent) analysed the implications of neoliberal and social democratic welfare regimes after 1945 for how gendered violence was regulated through gendered policy reforms, new models of femininity, and the building and restricting of support services for victims. Contrasting the post-war emergence of a social democratic gender and welfare regime with the increasing entrenchment of a neoliberal gender regime under Thatcher and beyond, Lloyd demonstrated the significance of gender regimes for state approaches to gendered violence through coercive and progressive strategies. Turning to more recent history, Hannah Manzur (City, University of London) examined the impact of 'austerity' and 'hostile environment' policies as gender, economic, and border regimes on the governance of violence in the UK in the early twenty-first century. Using a quantitative analysis of violence prevalence at the intersection of gender and migrant status and repositioning the 'border' as an institutional sub-domain, she showed how neoliberalized gendered economic regimes and hardened gendered border regimes have undermined efforts to reduce inequalities and violence in the United Kingdom.

The papers in session three mapped the development of feminist struggles through European and global comparative studies, investigating practices of legislative change and feminist debates on strategies to tackle gendered violence. Catherine Davies (University of Zurich) explored the politics of coalition-building within the West German anti-rape movement in the 1980s, focusing specifically on progressive feminist debates on the role of the state in reducing violence and inequalities. The internal debates and tensions around lowering the minimum sentence for marital rape were underpinned by deeper ideological stances on whether the coercive power of the state should be used to protect women from sexual violence. Ana María Miranda Mora (National Autonomous University of Mexico) compared Mexico and Germany in regard to the historical and transnational manifestations of femicide. She pointed to the different national and political framings of gender and violence and their intersections with multiple inequalities. In challenging the essentialization and feminization of violence, she critiqued the heteronormative and racialized coding of women as pre-victims and men as pre-perpetrators by contrasting feminist struggles to criminalize and mobilize against femicide. In the

next paper, Julia Spohr (University of Kassel) attempted a historicization of the #MeToo movement, comparing its sentiments and debates with two state-organized conferences in West Germany and France during the 1970s.

Strategies to tackle gendered violence often entail varying forms of legislative change. Session four addressed the role of the legal system and law-making in regulating violence, from domestic abuse in divorce courts to cross-national frameworks of sexual exploitation regulations. Jane Freeland examined how domestic violence was addressed in divorce cases in East German family courts in the 1970s and 1980s. She positioned domestic violence at the boundary of the personal and the political in the context of socialist ideals and shifting gender regimes. Socialist ideals of masculinities, femininities, and the family intertwined with legal reforms regarding domestic violence, yet met with growing challenges as a result of their inconsistencies with the everyday realities of life in the GDR. Next, Ginger Frost (Samford University) investigated references to domestic violence in British divorce cases involving interracial couples in the early twentieth century. She stressed how intersections of race and gender were used to judge both victims and perpetrators in the magistrates' courts. Gendered, racialized, and class-based discourses of shame, morality, and barbarity were embedded in legal practices and sensationalized in the mass media. In contrast to these micro-level analyses of court cases, Karen Shire and Sylvia Walby then discussed a macro-level framework for understanding the regulation of sexual exploitation across historical variations of national gender regimes. They focused on prostitution, but sidestepped the polarized debate on whether this counts as gendered violence or work. Asking which of its components were criminalized and what policy areas and institutions were involved in its regulation, they proposed a model for relating prostitution to distinctive gender regimes.

Session five engaged with gendered violence in conflict settings and its legacies. Juliane Röleke (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin) looked at the activism of Northern Irish 'peace women' during the Troubles in the 1970s and 1980s, and its reception by West German feminists. She highlighted practices of scandalizing state violence against women and the tensions between the state-friendly, conservative, maternalist

approaches of the peace women and the anti-imperialistic, state-critical approaches of republican women. Regina Mühlhäuser (Hamburg Foundation for the Advancement of Science and Culture) explored the gendered silences, voices, and (in)visibilities of sexual violence in areas conquered by the German and Japanese armies during the Second World War. She engaged with the ways in which feminist activists, victim-survivors, perpetrators, and political actors navigated, challenged, or entrenched these silences. She also addressed how knowledge of sexual violence was produced, disputed, and used in collective hierarchies of victimhood, and was always dependent on the diversity and specificities of sexual violence in national contexts of war and violence.

In her keynote, '(In)Justice: Global Reflections on Sexual Violence', Joanna Bourke (Birkbeck, University of London) emphasized the diversity of sexual violence in war and peace around the globe. Bourke addressed multiple conceptual and empirical challenges: how can we define and quantify sexual violence in a way that accounts for its breadth, depth, and diversity, without undermining its specificity? How can we recentre victims' voices and experiences while accounting for their diversity, complexities, and vulnerabilities? Strategies for reducing violence vary in their success over time and across countries, but each offer insights into new solutions. Bourke proposed four key tenets for understanding and addressing sexual violence, nestled in the concept of transversalism: that voices and resources should be given to activists at the local level; that justice should be locally relevant, culturally variable, and inclusive of men and boys; that political attempts to address sexual violence must begin with cisgender men; and that we should not apply White, Anglosphere-centred models of feminism to all communities.

In the final discussion, Christina von Hodenberg summarized areas of consensus and contestation, drawing on the depth of discussion throughout the conference. On the one hand, she encouraged historians to attempt macro-level narratives more often, and to enable temporal and spatial comparison by introducing more clearly defined social science terms such as 'gender regime' and 'violence'. On the other hand, she suggested social scientists could engage more deeply with longer historical trajectories, the overlapping layers of temporalities

at any given moment, and the languages and perspectives available to contemporary historical actors. There was consensus among conference participants about the relationship between rising inequalities and increased violence, and also the productivity of intersectional perspectives. The racialization of male perpetrators, the role of class and poverty in making groups vulnerable to violence, and the silencing and exclusion of multiply marginalized victims of gendered violence were common to many of the papers presented. It was also agreed that the concept of 'family' could be detrimental to the understanding of diverse forms of social and familial structures in relation to gender regimes, even more so as the term has historically been used to justify permissive or victim-blaming approaches to domestic and sexual violence. A further recurrent theme of the conference were practices of silencing and speaking out, and the conditions under which victims could communicate either in private or public settings. In this regard, von Hodenberg also linked changing gender regimes to modernity's processes of mediatization and the scientization of the social. She pointed to the role of media (both mass media and feminist counter-media) as well as experts (such as social workers, doctors, bureaucrats, and scientists) in defining, debating, reducing, and persecuting gendered violence.

Throughout the conference, participants engaged with the question of how to understand violence in gender regimes under authoritarian conditions, such as colonial rule, armed conflict, dictatorships, and occupied territories. The suggestion was made to consider the introduction of an 'authoritarian' regime type into Walby's framework in order to emphasize situations of legal uncertainty. It was also discussed whether there was a need to differentiate even more between different variants of modernity, or between domestic gender regimes in premodern, early modern, and modern contexts. Another thread running throughout the conference was the role of agency and resistance in the face of structures of inequality. Successful challenges to the invisibility and inevitability of gendered violence were possible, it was agreed, but historical differences persisted in regard to the role of the state, coalitions and alliances formed around intersecting inequalities, and the strategies and mechanisms for tackling violence through feminist activism. In the final discussion, the need for the further

inclusion of LGBTQI+, non-Eurocentric, and alternative feminist perspectives and studies was noted.

Taken together, sociological perspectives offered macro-level structural frameworks for understanding what violence and gender regimes mean, and how they function in systems of multiple inequalities. In contrast, historical perspectives concentrated on meso- and micro-level analyses of cases of violence rooted in particular historical periods, geographical sites, and gender regimes. In bridging these disciplinary perspectives, this conference laid the ground for future spatial and temporal comparisons of variations in gender regimes and gendered violence, and an interdisciplinary dialogue about ways of countering both the prevalence, invisibility, and portrayed inevitability of gendered violence.

HANNAH MANZUR (City, University of London)



*The Politics of Iconoclasm in the Middle Ages.* Conference organized by the German Historical Institute London in collaboration with the Warburg Institute, School of Advanced Study, University of London, and the Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe (GWZO), and held at the GHIL and the Warburg Institute, 1–2 Sept. 2022. Conveners: Marcus Meer (GHIL), Len Scales (Durham University), and Sarah M. Griffin (Warburg Institute).

Image-making ages always appear to be image-breaking ones as well, as Len Scales stressed in his welcome and introduction, referring to current instances of overtly political attacks on images. As such, we would expect the Middle Ages, as a decidedly visual age, to be no different. Yet existing scholarship, Scales continued, suggests that image-breaking was alien to the medieval period. Perhaps because medieval images were so often religious in content and the Middle Ages are so often viewed as an era of faith, the relative (though not absolute) lack of religiously motivated iconoclastic action throughout the Middle Ages is mistaken for proof that there was no noteworthy destruction of visual material, and certainly not for political reasons. Scales thus called for comparative and systematic research to further flesh out the topic.

This impression is reinforced because the period lies in the shadow of two peaks of image-breaking – Byzantine iconoclasm and the Reformation – which dwarf the medieval evidence for image-breakers with diverse motivations. As Leslie Brubaker (University of Birmingham) reminded us in her keynote lecture, however, the Byzantine struggle over images, looming as large in scholarship as it always has done, produced little actual iconoclasm. That term, in fact, was rarely used, and mostly in a pejorative way to delegitimize its representatives, with ‘iconomachy’ being the more common expression to denote the conflict. While questions of political power were involved, especially outside the Empire, what was at stake was primarily a question of representation, that is, whether Byzantine visual theory should continue to embrace the idea that images and icons can provide access to the divine, or whether it should begin to reject this. As the orthodox position ultimately triumphed, this access was guaranteed to all, elevating icons above the role for images imagined by Pope Gregory

the Great, for example. Concerning their proper place in Christian worship, he had relegated images to the realm of education for the illiterate. At the other extreme, namely the European Reformation(s), Norbert Schnitzler (formerly University of Bamberg) revisited his seminal work on fifteenth- and sixteenth-century iconoclasm and urged us to look beyond the potential of aesthetic, political, and religious motivations for iconoclastic action. Instead, he suggested, iconoclasm should be considered on its own terms, and not just as a part of other fields of historical scholarship. Much research still needs to be done, for instance, on theological conceptions of *imago* which were fundamental to medieval and early modern attitudes towards image-making and image-breaking. Schnitzler stressed that looking at iconoclasm as a historical phenomenon centred on the Reformation alone risks obscuring its medieval antecedents, which were at the heart of subsequent presentations.

One emerging thematic strand concerned the relationship between overtly religious attacks and their potentially political dimensions. Thus Matthias Hardt (GWZO) tackled the power politics of the Slavic revolts of 983 and 1066, when opposition to Ottonian and Salian rulers who sought to conquer Slavic areas also played out in the field of visual culture. Based on archaeological findings, Hardt's paper showed that sites of worship—both Christian and pagan—and their monuments, such as cult statues and reliquaries, were targeted by destructive attacks as control over territories changed. Although damaging in nature, this approach to the enemy's religious visual culture also produced new forms of imagery. Overthrown idols could be reintegrated into the victor's visual culture, as Hardt underlined with regard to cult images which are now part of Christian churches on the island of Rügen. Kateřina Horníčková (Palacký University Olomouc) explored forms of iconoclasm during the Hussite Revolution, a very diverse and long-term phenomenon which is hard to pin down. Focusing on events in Prague between 1419 and 1432, Horníčková argued that assertions of political power and moral superiority were at the heart of attacks on churches and their visual and material contents, seeking to strip the enemy of their social and religious points of reference. Images were regarded as problematic not only in theological terms, but also because they symbolized the

enemy's pride and riches, which were at odds with ideas of charity and clerical poverty. Thus iconoclastic actions in Prague were close to what Girolamo Savonarola, for instance, did in Florence. Strikingly, while attacks on representations of ecclesiastical and aristocratic figures occurred, royal symbols do not appear to have suffered the same fate. Tombs proved to be a prominent target for attacks, as Ondřej Jakubec's (Palacký University Olomouc) continuation of the story of iconoclasm during the Hussite Revolution demonstrated. Placing a sadly still current phenomenon, the desecration and vandalizing of graves, into a broader historical perspective, Jakubec argued that their conflation with the deceased's identity made it possible to extinguish the dead person's imagined 'real presence' in the collective memory as the warring factions attempted to represent – and establish – their dominance in the contested spaces. Such attempts were not limited to tombs, but extended to other representations of identity, as when the head of the Hussite leader Jan Žižka was broken off the coat of arms of the city of Tábor, mounted above the city's gate, in around 1516. Like Hardt, Jakubec also discussed cases of adaptation, in which monuments were preserved and acquired a new meaning.

The variety of the material targets of iconoclastic action made up a second thematic strand of the conference. Samuel K. Cohn (University of Glasgow) found attacks on similar objects in urban revolts in Renaissance Italy. In addition to the famous example of the Medici arms, which were 'purged' from Florence in 1527, chronicles and court records reveal iconoclasm as a popular strategy to reclaim spaces occupied by symbols that signalled (former) powers. These included statues such as that of Pope Julius II, which was decapitated and its head given to children as a plaything during an uprising in Bologna in 1511. Besides these show trials of visual representations, another form of iconoclasm mainly driven by social class was the exclusion of 'lower' people from the commission and display of artworks in the urban space. Marcus Meer (GHIL) likewise focused on cities as stages for an extensive repertoire of anti-visual expressions of discontent, which ranged from defacement and destruction to the replacement of contentious images and objects in conflicts fought in English-speaking and German-speaking cities. Meer stressed that any visual, material object could become the target of iconoclastic action if it was ascribed

with a meaning that related to questions of power and embodied a sense of identity, including the Perron of Liège, a monument that was 'abducted' by Charles the Bold and sent to Ghent in 1467.

Jan Dumolyn and Jeroen Deploige (Ghent University) argued in their presentation that other landmarks ascribed and conflated with notions of identity became targets of iconoclastic action, as the *droit d'arsin/droit d'abbatis* in Flemish cities of the high and late Middle Ages illustrate. Whether as an official punishment or a weapon in feuds and revolts, under these laws houses were defaced or destroyed to hammer home statements about their owners. These acts often went hand in hand with other forms of punishment, such as exile or confiscation. Kate Heard (Royal Collection Trust) drew attention to yet another material example in her investigation of the theft and destruction of vestments. Instances of damaging, stealing, and confiscating vestments in late medieval England suggest that they had a purpose beyond their use in divine services. Besides their potentially immense monetary value, liturgical vestments also pointed towards the office of their users and donors, so that repeated instances of damaging bishops' mitres can be read as attacks on a sartorial symbol of power and the person wielding it, as accusations against rebel leader Wat Tyler in the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, for example, suggest. Many of the paraments in question were essential requisites for liturgical services, so that infringing upon their use could prevent their rightful owners from celebrating mass properly.

Gerald Schwedler (Kiel University) looked at the *damnatio memoriae* of Emperor Louis IV (1282-1347) imposed by adversaries of the House of Wittelsbach, who attempted not only to destroy visual representations but also to prevent media from shaping political discourse, erasing texts issued by him or relating to him. Such 'graphoclasms', Schwedler argued, should be added to a larger conceptual understanding of 'negative media policies' that sought to control the reproduction of memory. Dyan Elliott (Northwestern University) traced one such policy from Pope Stephen VI's moves against his predecessor Pope Formosus to the eleventh-century age of church reform, focusing on the role of the corpse in struggles for papal authority. In the case of Formosus, the *damnatio* not only took the form of removing his name from inscriptions and destroying

statues, but also led to the infamous Cadaver Synod of 897, which saw the deceased pope exhumed and put on trial for alleged abuses. Here, Elliott argued, the human cadaver served as a template for delineating interaction between the holy and the unholy. The treatment of another deceased opponent inspired the presentation by Martin Bauch (GWZO). He suggested that the absence of visual and material trappings from performative settings in a wider sense can be seen as a political and iconoclastic attack on predecessors insofar as they also dismantled the 'image' of a king. While Günther XXI of Schwarzburg (1304–49) was afforded a funeral by his victorious competitor for the Roman–German throne, the deceased Charles IV was conspicuously denied the rites and location typical of the burial of a king. This reinvention and adaptation was necessary to put an end to Günther's illegitimate reign, for he had not formally renounced his claim while still alive. In this regard, Bauch, Elliott, and Schwedler echoed a point raised by Cohn, who had suggested that top-down moves against commemorative art commissioned by peasants and burgesses in urban churches were a kind of manipulation of the visual for the purpose of socio-political exclusion.

Parallel to material diversity, a third emerging thematic strand concerned questions surrounding the ambiguity of iconoclastic actions. Lorenz Hindrichsen (Copenhagen International School) observed that illuminations in manuscripts that depict non-White figures often show marks of partial or complete erasure, pointing to a fundamental change in the perception of skin colour and attitudes towards race in the fifteenth century. Turbans, for example, seem to have provoked hostile, exclusionary reactions, although other interpretations are possible. Erasure might also result from excessive touching, in an inclusionary attempt to engage in acts of 'tactile worship' of venerated non-White figures such as St Maurice. Indeed, it is known that people ate manuscripts in order to – rather literally – internalize their sacred contents, which Hindrichsen suggests seeing as 'iconoclashes' in the sense proposed by the late Bruno Latour rather than as 'iconoclasts'. Allie Terry-Fritsch (Bowling Green State University) took up the question of equivocation and consumption as she explored the eating of food decorations made for banquets. In a cultural context that celebrated the Eucharistic host, other food items also served as

icons that pointed indexically to a referent and captured the essential quality of what they represented. The iconoclasm involved in food consumption, it was suggested, should be seen as a creative, performative process that placed those taking part in banquets (as well as in divine services) into a dynamic relationship with each other, which was essential for the construction of community.

The medievalists' perspective in the preceding presentations was contrasted with a closing round-table discussion involving Brubaker, an expert on the Byzantine period, and two art historians with early modern and modern interests respectively, Ludmilla Jordanova (Durham University) and Arnold Bartetzky (GWZO). All three noted the clear interdisciplinary interest shown by medieval historians and their pursuit of microhistories, but questioned whether either 'politics' or 'iconoclasm' were suitable terms for future research. They rightly pointed out that medievalists are often at pains to stress that 'politics' cannot divest itself from 'religion' in the Middle Ages (and perhaps not even now), so that the interconnections between religious and political motivations must not be artificially severed, as Horníčková and Jakubec argued, for example. As the presentations demonstrated, the term 'iconoclasm' fails to encompass the wide range of targets discussed, which went beyond images and statues to include various visual and material representations of individuals and institutions – anything that, as Jordanova stressed regarding the example of portraiture, was seen to stand for 'something more than itself'. But using the term 'iconoclasm' might also risk reducing to practices of breaking what in fact also included practices of defacing, replacing, and censoring. Another problem with the term is its pejorative use to vilify the motives of those who engaged in it; as all three discussants stressed, it has produced an ill-advised focus in scholarship and in public debate on whether a specific act of iconoclasm can be regarded as justified or not. What these forms of opposition and violence towards visual material had in common, however, as Brubaker highlighted, was not only the fact that something always remains – whether broken fragments or a conspicuous gap – but also a shared intention to shape the past, present, and future through decisions concerning what may be allowed to be visible. This testifies to the hold that 'the visual' still has on people, as Bartetzky stressed, and

## THE POLITICS OF ICONOCLASM

contrasts with Martin Warnke's 1973 conclusion that modernity no longer has any need for iconoclasm.<sup>1</sup>

STEPHAN BRUHN AND MARCUS MEER (GHIL)

<sup>1</sup> Martin Warnke, 'Bilderstürme', in id. (ed.), *Bildersturm: Die Zerstörung des Kunstwerks* (Munich, 1973), 7-13, at 7-8.

*Democratization, Re-Masculinization, or What? Masculinity in the Twentieth Century and Beyond.* Conference organized by the German Historical Institute London and the London School of Economics and Political Science and held at the GHIL, 22–3 September 2022. Convener: Martina Kessel (Bielefeld University).

This conference, which brought together scholars working on masculinity in Europe in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, asked what impact democratization processes since the 1900s have had on constructions of masculinity, given that democracy in modern societies rarely meant gender democracy to begin with. Instead, ‘modern’ Western societies often used heteronormative, binary notions of masculinity and femininity and organized other structures, such as the state, the economy, and education, in gendered and hierarchical ways, even though masculinities and femininities were always articulated in many different ways. Processes of democratization therefore affected not only constructions of femininity and the lives of women, but also understandings of masculinity and the positioning of (individual) men, as they might have to share rights, power, privilege, and status.

The first panel focused on different strategies for performing masculinity on television and in live history re-enactments. Haydée Mareike Haass (Institute for Contemporary History, Munich) opened the panel by examining two hugely popular crime series shown on West German television in the 1970s and 1980s: *Der Kommissar* (1969–76) and *Derrick* (1974–98). Both distanced the main character from outright violence, thereby successfully positioning a non-violent masculinity as desirable in public perceptions. However, replacing military drill and bullets with listening and empathy came at the cost of presenting the lead characters as paternalistic figures and representing society and crime as still requiring interpretation by a subtly superior male figure. In the second presentation, Juliane Tomann (University of Regensburg) argued that historical re-enactments, often seen as offering a more democratic approach to understanding history than classical academia, reaffirmed violence as a marker of masculinity and clear-cut gender roles in general, with women mostly in non-combatant roles. The paper ended with the open question of



whether cross-dressing as soldiers by people defined as female destabilizes a dominant masculinity performed by actors defined as male.

The debate underlined that the study of masculinity needs to remain connected to questions of gendered power. This applies to relations between men, asking how competing masculinities are acted out and how younger men need to be represented so that they can be imagined as future paternalistic leaders themselves or as figures who might change hierarchical patterns. It fundamentally also applies to relations between masculinity and femininity, as TV shows from periods often defined as profoundly democratic continued to represent women who choose their own lovers as a threat to motherhood and family.

The second panel discussed connections between citizenship, suffrage, conscription, and the imagined nation in Scandinavian countries. Ann-Catrin Östman (Åbo Akademi University) examined how the notion of a masculine citizen was both extended and contained in Finland in the 1920s and 1930s. With the idea of social cohesion becoming paramount after the country gained independence in 1917, academic elites made peasant society discursively visible for the first time. They inscribed its male members with civic values and capacities defined as masculine and projected democracy as having been created from below by men living in idealized local communities. At the same time, legislation on voting and social and land reforms allowed more men than ever before to qualify for citizenship. In response, the intellectual elites ethnicized masculinity to preserve hierarchies between men by distinguishing the rural new citizens from their urban betters, and by contrasting allegedly civilized and backward forms of agriculture. In the second paper, Anders Ahlbäck and Fia Sundevall (Stockholm University) also emphasized differences created between men through restrictions on voting after universal male suffrage was introduced in Sweden in the early twentieth century. With both suffrage and conscription contentious topics in the 1900s, universal conscription was established first, in time-honoured fashion, in 1901, with universal male suffrage held out as the prize. Yet when this came in 1909, voting rights were withheld if men had not done their military service, had received welfare payments, or had not paid any taxes. Military service

as a precondition was only abolished in 1922, not contemporaneously with the introduction of women's suffrage in 1921, but after it, apparently to appease conservatives who had resisted universal male suffrage.

The panel threw into stark relief how much energy male elites in modern societies invested in negotiating and controlling the extension of rights to men and women formerly excluded. More generally, it remains to be asked whether those who had to share privileges and rights felt the need to change their self-understanding of their masculinity – and if so, how – or whether they shifted elsewhere the notion of honour, which had been tied to military service and a masculinized idea of citizenship. Different sources also remind us to look for cracks in the discursive silencing of femininity while extending symbolic or real citizenship to men, as photographic visuals made women visible both in voting contexts and as irreplaceable figures in idealized agricultural work.

While visions of a cohesive society in the Nordic countries tended to hide property and economic power as signatures of elite masculinity, the third panel turned to markets as an arena for the (re)positioning of masculinity. Priska Komaromi (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin) discussed sex tourism in Hungary from the late 1960s to the 1980s. She showed how Western European clients turned it into a practice of masculinity, as men in a marginalized position at home temporarily changed their status with the help of favourable exchange rates and the possession of consumer goods such as Western cars. Others framed their commercial encounters in terms of conventional emotional relationships, claiming a superior masculinity compared with other clients. Both attitudes relied on denying or ignoring collective and individual claims to women's emancipation by stereotyping Hungarian women as sexy and willing. In the second paper, Chiara Juriatti (Leiden University) outlined the recent development of a digital art market in non-fungible tokens – allegedly forgery-proof digital artworks stored on a blockchain. Rejecting the claim that this market is more democratic than conventional art markets, Juriatti argued that by shifting the value of an artwork from the aesthetic dimension to its purely economic value and making this dependent on the artist's intersubjective standing, this new arena also called for practices

conventionally still defined as masculine, such as networking and the willingness to make risky financial investments. Whether this in fact favours men or reinforces the gendered stereotyping of behaviour remains to be seen, as the market appears to have stalled after an initial gold rush.

The last panel focused on connections between masculinity and religion. While research on Ashkenazi Jews has often highlighted a gentle masculinity in contrast to a non-Jewish aggressive masculinity as the dominant model around 1900, Marius Kałczewiak (University of Potsdam/University of Warsaw) maintained that young Polish-Jewish orthodox students in the *yeshiva*, the traditional Jewish educational institution, displayed a masculinity that did not differ from other religio-cultural contexts in Western Europe. These young men defined religious education not as an end in itself, but as a road to resources and the status of a socially needed and appreciated man. This turned the *yeshiva* into a space where they recognized each other as respectable and successful, and fulfilled their yearning for like-minded male friends. Beyond the basic problem that nothing saved Jews from being turned into the ultimate other, one might ask how these young men thought about the resolution of conflict, given that peacefulness was key to the notion of a gentle masculinity. Michael Zok (German Historical Institute Warsaw) did not use masculinity as a lens. Instead, he described how the Communist espousal of gender equality and the definition of women as workers did not fundamentally change gendered education or gendered structures on the job market. Detente with Pope John Paul II, Zok suggested, only revived the influence of the Catholic church demanding a conventional stay-home attitude.

The final paper went back to paternalistic notions of masculinity, which are recurring in present-day Germany. Jacob Lypp (London School of Economics and Political Science) problematized the issue of how today's state-funded Christian civic educational programmes teach young Muslim men about sex and gender. Drawing on the Heroes' Programme that wants to 'combat oppression done in the name of an honour culture', Catholic and Protestant organizations identify the father figure in Islamic culture as a double-edged problem. This figure is both too strong, in the sense of authoritarian, and

too weak, in allegedly not offering an effective model of masculinity – for example, by being economically unsuccessful or by not speaking German. As a result, it is alleged that young Muslim men do not integrate sufficiently into German culture. Lypp convincingly argued that by supposedly problematizing heteronormative patriarchy, Christian men working for these institutions in fact reinforce it by acting as father figures aiming to re-masculinize young Muslim men.

Despite the specificity of the topic, all of the papers reflected larger processes. The granting or withholding of specific constructions of masculinity disciplined men of different social, religious, or national backgrounds, while elites and other powerful mediators of modern culture claimed to be appropriate identity models and interpreters of gendered hierarchy. The desire to cushion processes of transformation by keeping or reinforcing paternalistic notions of masculinity indicates more broadly how differently societies deal with phenomena of pluralization by framing them as an inherent element of modernity, as a problematic but manageable development, or as an allegedly existential threat to the social fabric. The discussions also demonstrated the importance of being aware of analytical methods and conceptual tools. A precise definition of what is meant by ‘democratization’ or ‘modernization’ as interpretative categories allows us to assess more clearly the possibly aporetic nature of societies describing themselves as democratic or as in favour of establishing gender equality. And as has often been stated, a sensitivity to conflicting or co-existing masculinities does not do away with the need to inquire about subtle but pervasive structures of gendered power and the (non-)acknowledgment of the historical impact of femininities. Homosocial contexts beyond the military (in its all-male form), such as the yeshiva in the early twentieth century and Christian educational provision for young Muslim men in the early twenty-first century, tacitly drew upon and reinforced gendered and hierarchized social structures and mentalities, either by self-evidently projecting young men as future leaders, or by suggesting a demure woman as the prize for disciplining their masculinity along paternalistically proffered lines – a woman never given her own voice. The irritating desire or willingness to essentialize religion, also in gendered terms, continues today, still suggesting insurmountable difference in societies self-defining as democratic.

## DEMOCRATIZATION, RE-MASCULINIZATION, OR WHAT?

Finally, among the important problems which still need to be raised are the impact on gender of ideologies – socialism, (welfare) capitalism, or neoliberalism; whether they differ in terms of gendering power; and how gender serves to construct ideologies. Today anti-democratic historical actors in different political systems are again drawing on masculinity either to stop democratization within societies, or to attack democracy as a political system per se.

MARTINA KESSEL (Bielefeld University)

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### Scholarships Awarded by the German Historical Institute London

Each year the GHIL awards a number of research scholarships to German postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers to enable them to carry out research in Britain. The scholarships are generally awarded for a period of up to six months depending on the requirements of the research project. Scholarships are advertised on [www.hsozkult.de] and the GHIL's website. Applications should include a CV, educational background, list of publications (where appropriate), and an outline of the project, along with a supervisor's reference confirming the relevance of the proposed archival research. Please address applications to Dr Stephan Bruhn, German Historical Institute London, 17 Bloomsbury Square, London WC1A 2NJ, or send them by email to [stipendium@ghil.ac.uk](mailto:stipendium@ghil.ac.uk). **Please note that due to the United Kingdom leaving the EU, new regulations for research stays apply. Please check the scholarship guidelines for further information.** If you have any questions, please contact Dr Stephan Bruhn. German scholars present their projects and the initial results of their research at the GHIL Colloquium during their stay in Britain.

In the first round of allocations for 2023 the following scholarships were awarded for research on British history, German history, and British-German relations:

*Patrick Becker-Naydenov* (Leipzig University): The Wide Gaze: Oratorios and the University in Nineteenth-Century Britain

*Deborshi Chakraborty* (Freie Universität Berlin): Bengali Muslims' Quest for National Identity: Emotions, Politics, and Literary Imaginations

*Kim Embrey* (Goethe University Frankfurt): From Miracle to Menace: Opium and Coca in Victorian Britain

*Sarah Maria Noske* (Justus Liebig University Giessen): Koloniale Mikrowelten: Orte kommerzieller Intimität im Pazifik (ca. 1860s–1920)

*Flemming Falz* (KWI Essen): Oppositionserfahrungen: Wohnungspolitik und sozialdemokratische Erneuerung in Deutschland und Großbritannien, 1979–98

*Dana Hollmann* (Universität Hamburg): Die Zuckerraffinerien Londons als Ziel deutscher Migration (1780–1830)

*Nokmedemla Lemtur* (University of Göttingen): Labour in the High Himalayas: Experiences of Work and Skill in Mountaineering Expeditions (1890s–1950s)

*Lea Levenhagen* (University of Bayreuth): The London Moment: Financing Europeanism and Europeanizing Finance. Financial Experts in Exile during the Second World War 1939–45

*Albert Loran* (Heidelberg University): ‘The Fleet of the Future’: Eisen-schiffbau und technische Expertise in Großbritannien und dem Deutschen Kaiserreich, ca. 1860–1914

*Frieda Ottmann* (LMU Munich): A European Leap? The History of EC/EU Environmental Policy, 1980–2000

*Felicitas Remer* (Graduate School Global Intellectual History, Berlin): Globalization, Nation, Mobility, and Conflict in the Urban History of Tel Aviv–Jaffa, 1908–55

*Juliane Röleke* (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin): ‘Weißt du, dass da Krieg ist?’ Nordirland und die Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Eine transnationale Konfliktgeschichte 1968–98

*Ana Carolina Schweitzer* (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin): Photography, Empire, and Work: Colonial Economy and Visual Knowledge during German Colonialism in Africa (1884–1918)

*Julian zur Lage* (Universität Hamburg): Freier Handel, unfreie Arbeit: Hamburg in der globalen Wirtschaftsordnung des 19. Jahrhunderts

### **Prize of the German Historical Institute London**

The Prize of the German Historical Institute London is awarded annually for an outstanding Ph.D. thesis on:

- German history (submitted to a British or Irish university),
- British history or British colonial history (submitted to a German university), or

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- British–German relations or British–German comparative history (submitted to a British, Irish, or German university).

The Prize is 1,000 euros and will be presented on the occasion of the GHIL's Annual Lecture on 3 November 2023.

To be eligible, applicants must have successfully completed doctoral exams and vivas between 1 August 2022 and 31 July 2023.

### *Application Details*

To apply, send one copy of the thesis with:

- a one-page abstract,
- examiners' reports on the thesis,
- a brief CV,
- a declaration that the work will not be published before the judges have reached a final decision, and
- a supervisor's reference

to reach the Director of the German Historical Institute London by 31 July 2023. Applications and theses should be sent by email as a PDF attachment to: [prize@ghil.ac.uk](mailto:prize@ghil.ac.uk).

If the prize-winning thesis is on British history, British colonial history, British–German relations, or British–German comparative history, it may also be considered for publication in one of the GHIL's publication series.

## **Forthcoming Workshops and Conferences**

*Priests in a Changing World: Local Clerics in Western Europe, 900–1050.* Workshop to be held at the German Historical Institute London on 16 June 2023. Conveners: Steffen Patzold (University of Tübingen) and Charles West (University of Sheffield) in co-operation with Stephan Bruhn (GHIL).

This workshop explores what it meant to be a local priest in the period 900–1050. Its participants will share their research into the property of priests, their family ties, expertise, and collective action. Rather than being merely an interlude between the Carolingian reforms and the Investiture Contest, this era saw the proliferation of local priests in



villages and settlements across Western Europe, and they exercised a vital influence on the shape of institutionalized religion. The workshop brings together experts from Germany and the UK.

*Medieval History Seminar*, organized by the German Historical Institute London and the German Historical Institute Washington, to be held at the GHIL, 5–7 October 2023. Conveners: Fiona Griffiths (Stanford University), Michael Grünbart (University of Münster), Jamie Kreiner (University of Georgia), Simon MacLean (University of St Andrews), Len Scales (Durham University), and Dorothea Weltecke (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin).

The seminar is designed to bring together Ph.D. candidates and recent Ph.D. recipients (2022/23) working in the field of medieval history at American, Canadian, British, Irish, and German universities for three days of scholarly discussion and collaboration. They will have the opportunity to present their work to their peers as well as to distinguished scholars from both sides of the Atlantic. The Medieval History Seminar will discuss papers on all areas of medieval history. Participation is not limited to historians working on German history or German-speaking regions of Europe. Nor is a particular epoch or methodological approach preferred. The seminar is bilingual, and papers and discussions will be conducted in both German and English.

### **Thyssen Lecture Series**

*Science, Knowledge, and the Legacy of Empire*. The Thyssen Lecture Series to be held at the German Historical Institute London, 2022–25. Organized by the GHIL and the Fritz Thyssen Foundation.

The series consists of two lectures each year, in May and October, which will be delivered by distinguished international scholars. Initially given at Bloomsbury Square, each lecture will be repeated at a British university outside Greater London.

The imperial and colonial contexts in which modern science and scholarship came of age haunt us to this day. Be it the origin of museum collections, the Eurocentrism of history textbooks and academic curricula, or the lack of minority ethnic university staff—the shadows of an imperial past loom large. This lecture series will engage with the field of ‘science and empire’ and the analytical category of ‘colonial knowledge’. Postcolonial studies has long identified ‘colonial knowledge’ as a hegemonic tool of empire-building. Drawing on this conceptual frame, but also questioning it, we at the GHIL see the production and circulation of knowledge in colonial settings as an unsettled and fractious process that challenged and destabilized colonial state power as often as it supported it. We are interested in examining the relationship between localized sites of knowledge production and wider, inter-imperial, and potentially global networks of circulation. We ask how such forms of circulation affected the nature of knowledge thus produced, and the power relationships that have long informed our understanding of colonial knowledge and structures of domination and subordination. Most importantly, we are keen to explore the afterlife of colonial knowledge and imperial science in recent, twenty-first-century history in Britain, Germany, and beyond. How do imperial legacies shape present-day academia and knowledge production? How are the colonial past, and obligations arising from it, debated today? How do these figure in memory cultures, and what role do they play in political relations within Europe, and in Europe’s relations with the non-European world?

*Previous Thyssen Lectures*

Sumathi Ramaswamy (Duke University), ‘Imagining India in the Empire of Science’, held on 11 October 2022 at the GHIL and on 13 October at Cardiff University.

Sebastian Conrad (Freie Universität Berlin), ‘Colonial Times, Global Times: History and Imperial World-Making’, to be held on 15 May 2023 at the GHIL and on 16 May 2023 at the University of Manchester.

Third Lecture: Frederick Cooper (New York University), 'Understanding Power Relations in a Colonial Context: Top-Down, Bottom-Up, In-Between', to be held on 23 October 2023 at the GHIL and on 24 October 2023 at the University of Glasgow.

Some years ago, historians reacted to the elite bias of much historical writing by advocating a 'bottom-up' approach focusing on peasants, workers, the urban and rural poor, racial minorities, women, and others of subordinate status in their social contexts. Doing so is not only to bring out the violence, exploitation, and suffering to which people at the bottom of a social order were subjected, but to look beyond the categories of knowledge through which dominant elements in society operate and to explore alternative conceptual schemes. The resulting scholarship has enriched different fields of history, not least my own field of African history and colonial and postcolonial studies more generally. Of course, some people are on the bottom because others are at the top, so bottom-up and top-down histories need each other.

In this talk I will approach the study of power from a different angle, inspired by categories developed by the Senegalese politician, poet, and political thinker Léopold Sédar Senghor. Starting in 1948, Senghor began in his writing and speeches to distinguish two forms of political solidarity: horizontal solidarity, defined by people sharing a common culture or position in the social order; and vertical solidarity, the relationship between top and bottom. As an African political leader challenging French colonial rule, Senghor used the concept of horizontal solidarity to call on Africans across the continent to act in unison to turn Africa's vertical relationship with France into claims for resources. Horizontal solidarity by itself meant unity in poverty, vertical solidarity by itself the continuation of colonialism, but the two together could transform an exploitative but intimate relationship into a dynamic one. The vertical relationship would offer postcolonial France a continued existence as a great world power and postcolonial Africans the resources for social and economic development. One can contrast Senghor's conjugation of vertical and horizontal solidarities with Frantz Fanon's evocation of the biblical phrase, 'the last shall be first', an insistence that the only alternative to colonial domination was its complete reversal.

My talk uses the concepts of vertical and horizontal solidarities to explore ways in which one can conceptualize power relations in colonial and postcolonial contexts. Since decolonization, vertical solidarity has manifested itself on a global scale in the concept of 'development'. States at the bottom of the global hierarchy have tried to develop solidarity among themselves to demand changes in the world order, as in the Afro-Asian movement of the 1950s or proposals for a New International Economic Order in the 1970s. A coalition of poorer states at the 2022 Climate Change Conference (COP 27) called for reparations from rich states for damage to their environment caused in part by imperial dominance and the exploitative extraction of resources. The talk will ask how we can think about power relations that are unequal, but still relations, pulled and pushed in different directions. It will thus challenge some of the most common frameworks used by historians and social scientists to understand colonial power relations and their post-colonial afterlives.

Frederick Cooper is Professor Emeritus of History at New York University. His research has focused on twentieth-century Africa, empires, colonization and decolonization, and citizenship. Among his books are *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (2005); *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (with Jane Burbank, 2010); *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945–1960* (2014); *Africa in the World: Capitalism, Empire, Nation-State* (2014); *Citizenship, Inequality, and Difference: Historical Perspectives* (2018); and *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present* (2nd edn, 2019).

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