

Zitierhinweis

Duerloo, Luc: Rezension über: Torsten Hiltmann / Miguel Metelo de Seixas (eds.), *Heraldry in Medieval and Early Modern State Rooms*, Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2020, in: *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* (ZHF), 49 (2022), 2, S. 259-261, <https://recensio-stag.lorax.syslab.com/r/bd9a3ba6cee64999ae3316ecd76c3209>



copyright

Dieser Beitrag kann vom Nutzer zu eigenen nicht-kommerziellen Zwecken heruntergeladen und/oder ausgedruckt werden. Darüber hinausgehende Nutzungen sind ohne weitere Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber nur im Rahmen der gesetzlichen Schrankenbestimmungen (§§ 44a-63a UrhG) zulässig.

reichen, die prinzipielle Offenheit der Geschichte ein für alle Mal festzustellen, wonach sich die Geschichtswissenschaft guten Gewissens selbst aufheben könnte? Und ließe sich ein solches Unterfangen wirklich noch als Historiographie beschreiben?

Wer sich auf die von „Diesseits der Geschichte“ aufgeworfenen Fragen einlässt, wird nicht immer zu denselben Schlussfolgerungen kommen wie der Autor dieses Bandes. Doch gehört dies gerade zu den Stärken des Buches. Die spielerische Offenheit der Formulierungen und die gezielten Verunsicherungen laden dazu ein, gemeinsam über die grundsätzlichen Fragen unseres Fachs nachzudenken. Gerade seine gezielten Provokationen machen dieses Buch zu einem der spannendsten, die dieser Rezensent seit langem gelesen hat.

Theo Jung, Halle a. d. S.

Hiltmann, Torsten / Miguel Metelo de Seixas (Hrsg.), Heraldry in Medieval and Early Modern State Rooms (Heraldic Studies, 3), Ostfildern 2020, Thorbecke, 324 S. / Abb., € 65,00.

The study of heraldry is primarily conducted by gathering and analysing the evidence that has come to us on parchment or paper. This does not, however, reflect the full wealth of heraldic display during the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period. As the present volume of essays rightly argues, heraldry abounded in all sorts of buildings, ranging from lofty palaces to well-to-do burghers' houses. Interpreting these displays confronts the historian with several methodological questions. Presenting a wealth of case studies, the sixteen essays in this volume explore ways in which such displays of coats of arms can be interpreted.

The 16th-century Sala dos Brasões in the Sintra Palace ranks among the most impressive heraldic displays that have survived the centuries. With reason the editors of the volume take the magnificent décor of this stately room as the starting point for their introductory remarks. They argue that the heraldic display of a given room can only be understood by putting it firmly in a plurality of contexts. The function of the room in question should obviously be taken into account, as well as that of the adjoining spaces. Not all heraldic displays have come to us in their original state. Some parts may have subsequently been embellished, overpainted, or defaced. The location of the coats of arms in the room, their interaction with other decorative elements, and the heraldic programme itself merit equal consideration.

In the first of three essays dealing with palaces, James Hillson draws on heraldic displays that were executed at the royal site of Westminster in the 13th and 14th century. While the ones in the Abbey largely remain to this day, those that adorned the former Palace are reconstructed with great care. Less convincing, at least to this reviewer, is the way in which the author seeks to interpret these displays into the frame of thought of Ernst Kantorowicz' often quoted "The King's Two Bodies". Radu Lupescu's contribution retraces how the ambitions and achievements of the Hungarian military leader John Hunyadi and of his son King Matthias Corvinus were reflected by the heraldry in their mighty castle of Hunedoara in present-day Romania. When adapting Zaragoza's Aljafería to the needs of their itinerant court, the Catholic Kings Ferdinand and Isabella set up relatively few of their coats of arms compared to a multitude of para-heraldic devices. María Narbona Cárcelos argues that this marked difference from the profusion of royal arms in their Castilian residences, stems from the very different constitutional relationships prevailing in the Crowns of Castile and Aragon.

For centuries the elites of the lands of the House of Savoy used heraldry to affirm their status. Luisa Clotilde Gentile notes that any heraldic display should always be read in

conjunction with the other decorative features of the room. As time progresses, three shifts came to the fore. The horizon marked out by the arms included in the programme shrunk from international to regional. The importance of the genealogical narrative increased. During the Renaissance, “imprese” and kindred emblems seemed set to take over from purely heraldic depictions, yet the latter prevailed toward the end of the Early Modern period. Audrey M. Thorstad draws attention to the different messages that the display on one coat of arms could carry. The first two Tudor kings used their arms as a narrative that spread their legitimacy. For their part, some of their noblemen set up the royal arms in their homes to associate themselves with that narrative, thereby spreading it even further. Surveying the use of heraldry in the noble dwellings of Rome and Latio, Andreas Rehberg echoes some of the above conclusions. All ranks within the elites sought to mirror their status through heraldic decorations, turning the Eternal City and its hinterland into what the author calls a “laboratory for heraldry”.

By no means ready to be outdone by the nobility, urban communities lavished sequences of coats of arms on the wall of their town halls. Comparing some such displays in English and German town halls, Marcus Meer makes an excellent point on how heraldry recounted a master narrative on a city’s past, its links with royal lines and its gratefulness to benefactors. In doing so, Late Medieval town halls became places of memory. Giampaolo Ermini draws on a case study of the Palazzo Comunale of Orvieto to demonstrate that in the political turbulence of 13th-century Central Italy, the display of personal arms in public buildings was seen as a danger to the republican political order. Basking in the sun of the reign of Emperor Charles V, the intermediate castellanies of Flanders reconstructed their “Landhuizen”. By comparing three of these ensembles, Pierre Courtault shows that the horizons of their programmes could vary from local, to dynastic or even imperial.

Asserting status was also central to heraldic displays in the houses of urban patricians. Aptly called “Facebook avant la lettre”, Sabine Sommerer’s contribution captures how the urban elites of Zurich, Bern and Basel flaunted their connections, real or imaginary, to their visitors by means of coats of arms. Laura Ceccantini and Delphine Grenet draw similar conclusions for the south of France. Specific spaces in patricians’ homes were used to assert ambitions and express identities.

Entering into the sphere of ecclesiastical buildings, Matteo Ferrari delivers a thorough study of overlapping heraldic decorations preserved in a part of the abbey of Nanteuil-en-Vallée. Several possible interpretations are considered, including the recollection of a royal visit. The records of a sequence of arms in the subsequently demolished Dominican convent of Poitiers allow Laurent Hابلot to prove how such ensembles could evolve over time. What might have started off as a memory of the participants of the battle of 1356, would later be reappropriated to assert the status of local dignitaries. The Early Modern dynastic state meets the church in Steven Thiry’s chapter on the shifting definitions of the political community during the Dutch Revolt. The Dukes of Burgundy and their Habsburg successors had used collegiate churches to stage important rituals, such as chapters of the Order of the Golden Fleece, and leave commemorative gifts marking their territory. These reminders acquired new meanings in the rapidly changing political situation during the Dutch Revolt.

Illustrating the wide diversity of this collection of essays, the final chapter deals with how the legacy of medieval heraldic display inspired Augustus Pugin in the decoration of Eastnor Castle. Then, as in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period, a heraldic display was an exercise in constructing an identity, recounting a narrative, and asserting status. While often difficult to read and at times ambiguous as to their meaning

and purpose, these decorative programmes provide us novel pathways to study and understand these processes.

Luc Duerloo, Antwerp

Boucoyannis, Deborah, *Kings as Judges. Power, Justice, and the Origins of Parliaments*, Cambridge [u. a.] 2021, Cambridge University Press, XIV u. 386 S., £ 29,99.

Comprehensive studies on the reasons why political representation emerged only in Europe, albeit with regional variation, have been desiderata for generations. The American political scientist Deborah Boucoyannis takes up the issue of the emergence as well as the absence in a dozen polities. She studies an impressive quantity of secondary sources (319–380), mainly in English but also in various other languages (not in German, alas). She concentrates on the conditions for the emergence of ‘parliaments’ at the level of polities, which are defined as political communities under a central ruler with effective judicial power. Most attention is paid to Western Europe, Hungary and Poland. Italy and the Empire are poorly treated (158–163, 227–229). In contrast, much space is awarded to the counties of Flanders and Holland (163–177), while the neighbouring duchy of Brabant is completely ignored, though the emergence of a solid constitutional tradition of its estates since the mid-13th century has long been well-known. Here, the author fails to consequently apply her focus on “polity-wide representative institutions”. In order to test her hypothesis concerning the relevance of property rights, individualism, and the formation of coherent estates, she includes in-depth comparisons with the brief period of ‘representative’ activity in Russia between 1550 and 1650, and with the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century (231–301).

From the first page (XI) onwards, the author asserts that her book’s “main conclusion is that much of the conventional narrative about the West is predicated on some misleading premises”. She points to the analytical weaknesses in current generalizations. Her main foes are the theories of the school of the New Institutional Economics which focus on the protection of private property rights; in addition, she refutes taxation and the needs of warfare as the primary motivations to call assemblies. Instead, she defines necessary conditions for the emergence of polity-wide representation by estates: royal control over land and the exercise of justice, conditionality of grants of land, and a uniform judiciary system through the whole polity. The dependent variable is defined as “polity-wide representative institutions emerged as central organs of governance” (33). By implication, she eliminates the widespread “local assemblies [...] in villages, cities, city-leagues, and principalities”, thus excluding the earliest assemblies of estates identified by Thomas Bisson in Languedoc around 1200, as well as those in numerous other largely autonomous principalities which historians have treated as polities. It also led the author to a disqualification of the Swiss Confederation as “not a truly representative regime [...] beyond the local level” (177). However, the studies by Andreas Würgler have demonstrated how this representative system functioned regularly until 1798, on the local, cantonal, and confederal levels.

An alarm bell sounds when the author points out that “only England displayed the functional layering and institutional functioning that was critical for a polity-wide representative institution” (58). The self-evident effect is that the case-studies presented in the following 260 pages time and again point out the differences to the English model. By discarding principalities, composite states, and confederations from the analysis, the author misses most of Europe’s historical reality. Most polities weren’t islands where successive invading rulers needed to impose their sovereignty by military means. As John Watts has demonstrated in “The Making of Polities” (2009, 237), representative institutions emerged simultaneously with the formation of states, while