

Tomasz Gromelski, Christian Preusse, Alan Ross, and Damien Tricoire (eds.), *Frühneuzeitliche Reiche in Europa. Das Heilige Römische Reich und Polen-Litauen im Vergleich. Empires in Early Modern Europe. The Holy Roman Empire and Poland-Lithuania in Comparison*, Harrassowitz Verlag, Deutsches Historisches Institut Warschau, Wiesbaden, 2016, 264 pp.; series: Quellen und Studien, 32

Resulting from a 2011 conference held at the Polish Academy of Sciences' Centre for Historical Research in Berlin, this volume opens with Christian Preusse's introduction, 'Towards a comparison of the Holy Roman Empire and Poland-Lithuania in the early modern period – potentials and pitfalls'. The very first sentence already makes clear that the editors' aim was not to produce a complete comparative overview of the structures and functions of the Polish-Lithuanian Republic and the Holy Roman Empire in the modern period, but rather to indicate the potential of comparative research on them. Attempts at research on modern 'composite states' always run the risk seeming deceptively simple, while much depends on choosing appropriate questions and correctly setting their scope. These same problems apply to research on the two states explored here. The editors set out three central spheres of research: political assemblies; executive power – monarchies and noble courts; and, finally, relations between politics and religion. While risky, particularly in relation to institutions, this choice is well-justified. Beyond outlining the aims and scope of the research, Christian Preusse also presents a comprehensive overview of existing literature. He indicates the most evident structural similarities in both states, while also summarizing the contents of the essays in this edited volume. He concludes by highlighting the problems involved in comparative research, while also stressing the volume's preliminary nature.

The first part, titled 'Political Assemblies and constitutional debates', opens with Julia Burkhardt's essay, 'Spätmittelalterliche Reichsversammlungen in Polen und Deutschland' [Late Medieval imperial diets in Poland and Germany]. Following the introduction, where the author presents the comparisons of both states' political systems made in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, there comes a methodological outline and a literature review. This is followed by Burkhardt's description of the functioning of Polish and German parliamentarianism in the fifteenth century. The expansive outlines of both systems contrast with the limited comparative elements. The author reaches some rather obvious conclusions, arguing that the increasingly clear divergence between both systems, and in particular the increasing role of the Polish nobility since the end of the Middle Ages, influenced the cementation of the differences between the functions and roles performed by the Polish Sejm and German Reichstag.

Maciej Ptaszyński's contribution, 'Zwischen Gemeinwohl und Staatsraison. Das Widerstandsrecht in den Ständedebatten der polnisch-litauischen Republik im 16. Jahrhundert' [Between the common good and *raison d'état*. The right to resistance in debates in the estates in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the sixteenth century], also analyses the development of Polish political culture. The author explores a question that has not been dealt with in great detail by Polish historiography, despite the existence of a substantial Western European body of literature. By applying findings on late medieval developments relating to the right of subjects to resist, Ptaszyński focuses on the formation of attitudes towards the right to resist in the Reformation period and the age of constructing noble democracy in Poland. Particularly interesting here are the author's views on the thought of Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski and the influence of Calvinist ideas on Polish political culture. A central issue at stake here is how to explain the conditions during the *interregnum* following the death of King Sigismund Augustus in 1572 surrounding the genesis and enactment in the basic legal regulations of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (the Henrician Articles, the *pacta conventa* and the King's oath) of the right of the nobility to resist the future monarch should he not recognize the limitation of power imposed on him by representatives of the estates. In his conclusion, Ptaszyński rightly stressed the moderation of noble politicians and the significance of a mythologized version of noble ideology, which played such a crucial role in shaping the *ius de non praestanda oboedientia* under Sigismund III Vasa.

Horst Carl's contribution, 'Föderale Reichsstrukturen in vergleichender Absicht. Das Exempel des Heiligen Römischen Reiches mit Blick auf Polen-Litauen' [A comparative perspective on federal imperial structures. The Holy Roman Empire and Poland-Lithuania], focuses on questions relating to the federal tradition in German political culture. This is a very broad issue that is also of contemporary relevance, thus it comes as no surprise that the author has restricted his presentation of the matter to an overview of contemporary German historians' views. He begins by restating Reinhart Koselleck's position on the subject of the genesis and development of German federalism, before outlining the views of historians including Karl Otmar von Aretin, Otto von Guericke, Peter Blickle and Heinz Schilling. He pays particular attention to those historians who find the origins of the relational structures of the Reich in late-medieval agreements aiming at guaranteeing public peace, i.e. *Landfrieden*. These local pacts offering mutual guarantees of peace in the modern era evolved into state-wide regulations and even acquired international standing, first at the Peace of Augsburg in 1555 and then with the Treaties of Westphalia in 1648. Carl also gives some indication of the relations between the medieval federal tradition and the ideology of modern republicanism, as well as the opposition between Protestant and Catholic interpretations of the Reich's legal code in the seventeenth and eighteenth

centuries. His study lacks, however, significant comparative elements, although the author does note in conclusion that in Polish political thought, federalist ideology played a significantly smaller role than in the Reich.

Edward Opaliński's laconically-titled contribution, 'Confederation and *rokosz*', explores questions that have been at the margins of his long-standing interest in the political culture of the Polish nobility. Beginning with an outline of the two fundamental modes of power in the Commonwealth, namely *regnum* – under a ruling king – and *interregnum*, he proceeds to present rule by noble confederations in the period between the death of a monarch and the election of a successor. The legal order established in three successive *interregna*, following the death of Sigismund Augustus in 1572, Henry Valois' abdication in 1576, and the death of Stephen Báthory in 1586, was disrupted in the early seventeenth century by the *rokosz*, or a confederation formed during the king's lifetime and directed against his authority. Opaliński follows with an extensive discussion of the 1606 Sandomierz *rokosz* aimed against Sigismund III Vasa. He depicts its origins, actions and ideology, arguing that this third mode of power, which competed against the *regnum*, was a rebellion. The concluding part of the study features some interesting analogies to similar structures in the Holy Roman Empire from the thirteenth century until the Czech Confederation of 1619. Readers interested in the subject might find that there is insufficient information provided to enable differentiation of the Sandomierz *rokosz*, which Opaliński correctly identifies as exceptional in the history of the Commonwealth, from other noble confederations organized in the second half of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

The final contribution to this section of the book comes from British-based historian Jerzy Lukowski. 'Polish enlightened republicanism. The *Project for the Form of Government* – the official constitutional reform programme of the Four Years Sejm' presents a brief outline of one of the most important late eighteenth-century political projects, which was developed in 1790 and preceded the formulation of the Government Act, i.e. the 3 May Constitution of 1791. The Project's authors' primary goal was stabilizing Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth's political system. They sought to achieve this through political reforms, the most significant of which was the ultimate abolition of the *liberum veto*. Beyond the outline of the political reforms, Lukowski also recalls the plan for Enlightenment-inspired social and educational reforms. These foresaw an improvement in the political position of the burghers and raised the standards demanded of the nobility (education requirements), while, relatively speaking, offering peasants under feudal control the least. In spite of this, the Project was seen by the nobility in dietines (Pol.: *sejmiki*) as being too radical and was thus questioned. In conclusion, Lukowski presents a cautious thesis on the relationship between the reform-oriented proposals of the Project and the ideas of the German *Allgemeines Landrecht* of 1794.

The second part of the book, 'Monarchy, administration, and the royal court,' concentrates on institutions of power. It begins with Wojciech Krawczuk's short contribution, 'Die Kanzlei der Herrscher – reine Instrumente der Macht?' [The rulers' chancelleries – pure instruments of power?]. The author begins with details of existing research on the subject of the role of the chancelleries of Polish and German rulers, noting that as a result of reforms in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries they acquired the status, in a way, of 'central organs of public administration.' Krawczuk also suggests including Polish historians in research on the German Imperial chancellery, noting that until 1742 matters pertaining to Silesia came under the jurisdiction of the Czech chancery court. His study also features a comparison of sixteenth-century German and Polish chancellery reforms together with an outline of problems for further research emerging from the dispersal of the records of the chancellery of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Krawczuk ends on a discussion of the existing literature on the Polish crown chancellery and restates the need for research on 'private' and 'secret' chancelleries of contemporary rulers, while drawing attention to the modernization of the crown chancellery under Saxon rule in Poland.

Joanna Kodzik's study 'Zeremoniell und politische Ordnung in den Beziehungen zwischen Polen-Litauen und dem Heiligen Römischen Reich am Ende des 17. Jahrhunderts im Spiegel des Vermählungszeremoniell' investigates the issue of the 'visualization of power' in the Baroque. She argues, rightly, that public ceremonies at noble courts were a tool of the legitimization of power. She follows with a comparison of rituals in the Commonwealth and the Holy Roman Empire based on case studies of the marriage of Michael Korybut Wiśniowiecki to Eleonora Habsburg of Austria in 1670 and that of Maximilian II Emanuel to Teresa Kunegunda Sobieska in 1695. In conclusion, Kodzik highlights that despite the differing political objectives of both marriages, there are clear similarities on the symbolic level in both ceremonies. These resulted not only from the fact that they were Polish-German relationships, but also from the evident need to make reference to the dominant and legible 'code' for interpreting court rituals that permeated the entire European Baroque culture.

The final essay in this part of the book is Peter Collmer's '*L'ordre qu'on déteste*. Die königliche Tafel als sächsischer Brückenkopf in Polen-Litauen' [The royal board as a Saxon bridgehead in Poland-Lithuania]. Concealed behind this somewhat enigmatic title is an interesting study of the influences of Saxon administrative culture on managing crown property (tabular estates) in the Commonwealth under Saxon rule. Collmer presents evidence from as yet under-researched documents in Warsaw's Archiwum Kame-ralne (Chamber Archive) and archives in Dresden. Following an analysis of the work of the administrative apparatus, by then dominated by Saxon specialists, managing the crown tabular estates within the Commonwealth, Collmer presents interesting conclusions regarding the scope of administrative

power and the freedom of decision-making in early-eighteenth-century court administration in the Commonwealth, while also offering insight into the influence of the Saxon Chamber (the Saxon bridgehead mentioned in the essay's title) on projects and practices of modernizing Polish-Lithuanian state administration. In conclusion, Collmer states that the Saxon system of estate management must have been sufficiently modern, since it was adopted after 1763 by Stanislas Augustus Poniatowski, who was designing structural reforms of the Polish-Lithuanian state.

The third part of the book, 'Religion, Kirchen und Politik. Religion, churches and politics', opens with Jürgen Heyde's contribution, '*Ad cautelam defensionis contra iudeos. Juden als Thema politischer Debatten im Königreich Polen in der ersten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts*' [Jews as the subject of political debates in the Kingdom of Poland in the early sixteenth century]. The author underscores the importance of this theme, noting that in the sixteenth century both states saw the emergence of principles that would for a long time determine the conditions under which Jewish communities would function. He also restates the obvious need to differentiate rhetoric from social and political realities, before moving onto an outline of the debates, dividing participants into three groups. Beginning with the discourse among burghers, he notes that the most important role was played by inhabitants of large cities – Lviv, Cracow and Poznań, which was countering Jewish economic competition. The position of the nobility, meanwhile, was centred on political-legal aspects while also stressing the economic threat posed by the growing significance of Jewish trade. At the same time, noble discourse adopted many elements legitimizing the traditionally anti-Jewish attitude of the Catholic Church which, ultimately, took up a moderate position in this polemic, limiting itself to supporting burghers' demands. In conclusion, Heyde underscores how a traditionally anti-Jewish attitude prevailed among all participants in the debates, whose practical effects were shaped by political conditions and the estate-based differences in interests.

Igor Kąkolewski's contribution, '*Toleranz oder Tolerierung? Das Problem der Toleranz von Christen gegenüber Juden in Polen-Litauen vor dem Hintergrund des Alten Reiches vom 16. bis zur Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts*' [Tolerance or Toleration? The question of Christian tolerance of Jews in Polish-Lithuania in the context of the Holy Roman Empire from the sixteenth to mid-seventeenth century], begins with the observation that the question posed in the title of his essay was inspired by the way Polish-Jewish relations were framed in the project for the exhibition at POLIN, the Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw. He contrasts the traditional idealized image of Polish-Jewish relations in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (*paradisus Judaeorum*) with findings from research into practices of tolerating 'others' in modern European culture, leading him to enquire into the real place of Jews in the tolerant Polish political system. The concluding part of Kąkolewski's text

outlines the opinions existing on the subject of potential cohabitation versus merely tolerating Jews as expressed by the leading thinkers in Europe at the time. Here the author stresses strongly the need to overcome established stereotypes on this point.

In her contribution, 'Provinzialsynoden in den politischen Ordnungen des Alten Reiches und der polnisch-litauischen Adelsrepublik' [Provincial synods in the political orders of the Holy Roman Empire and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth], Elke Faber analyses one of the most important questions when investigating the system of Church-state relations, namely the influence of Catholic canon law on the way political systems worked. She begins with an analysis of the way Polish and German provincial Catholic synods functioned, while paying some attention to the influence of secular authorities on their discussions and legislation. Further on in the essay, she focuses on the Polish case, in particular relations between the synods and the Sejm. She stresses the role of synods in defending the interests of the Catholic clergy in the Commonwealth, primarily in relation to the contested subject of the taxation of clergy. The conclusion features fairly limited comparative analysis of the role of German and Polish provincial synods.

An interesting subject for future research is indicated by Damien Tricoire's chapter, 'Beyond the fundamentalism and tolerance narratives. Catholic representations of political-religious order and policy-making in the Holy Roman Empire and Poland-Lithuania (1620s–1640s)'. He aims to depict the views of supporters of the call to build a Catholic state in the Commonwealth and Holy Roman Empire at this time. This is a key issue given the thesis regarding the destructive influence of this idea on the Commonwealth's political system, where calling into question religious tolerance and the culture of political compromise disrupted the equilibrium that had been the foundation of noble democracy since the mid-sixteenth century. The author presents a short comparison of the Catholic political factions in the two states in the early seventeenth century, before focussing on the situation in the Holy Roman Empire, followed by his interpretation – drawing on Polish sources – of the religious policy of Ladislas IV Vasa and his political supporters. In contrast to many other contributions to this volume, Tricoire's is a genuinely comparative study.

Klemens Kaps' study, 'Aufklärung, religiöse Toleranz und Nützlichkeit. Die Neudefinition von Ordnungskonzepten des Judentums in Polen-Litauen und der Habsburgermonarchie (1770–92) – von Vergleich zum Transfer' [Enlightenment, religious tolerance and practicality. The redefinition of order in relation to Jews in Poland-Lithuania and the Habsburg monarchy (1770–92) – from comparison to transfer], completes the volume. Kaps attempts a comparison of Enlightenment-era conceptions of regulating the situation of Jewish populations in the Commonwealth and the Habsburg monarchy in the late eighteenth century. This apparently simple task, given the common reference point of Enlightenment ideology, proves difficult in practice, owing to the fundamental

differences in social structures and political systems. His investigation begins with a depiction of the historical context, i.e. the legal position of Jews, which leads into an outline of projects for 'Jewish reform' that made reference to the idea of tolerance or assimilation, while also stressing the need to 'socialize' Jews. In conclusion, the author explores in greater detail the question of the so-called 'productivization' of the Jewish population, which stressed the significance of economic motivations in reformist thought. It must be said that Kaps seems much more proficient in discussing the question of Jews under Habsburg rather than Polish rule, while some doubt must be cast on his findings given that he has failed to use the basic source of knowledge on Polish reformist discourse on the 'Jewish question', namely the collection *Lud żydowski w narodzie polskim* (Warszawa, 1994).

In conclusion, this is clearly an uneven collection, which is typical of conference-based edited volumes. A basic problem is the lack of comparative elements in many contributions, some of which make only a superficial attempt at comparison. Nevertheless, it could also be argued that those studies where the authors have conducted genuinely comparative investigations could form the foundation for discussions that might result in formulating a methodology for conducting this kind of analysis.

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