

Legitimation von Fürstendynastien in Polen und dem Reich. Identitätsbildung im Spiegel schriftlicher Quellen (12.–15. Jahrhundert), edited by Grisca Vercamer and Ewa Wólkiewicz, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2016, 400 pp., Deutsches Historisches Institut Warschau. Quellen und Studien, vol. 31

The present publication contains the proceedings of a conference organized in December 2012 by the German Historical Institute in Warsaw. The papers included in it are devoted largely to strategies for identifying and legitimizing territorial rule both in Poland and in Germany from the twelfth until the early sixteenth century, with a special emphasis being placed on demonstrating comparable or individual strategies of local rulers seeking to legitimize their power through written evidence like chronicles and documents. The need to have a written history of the origins of one's family stemmed from the fact that many late medieval families, like the Hohenzollerns, the Habsburgs or the Luxembourgs, had very modest beginnings and, consequently, initially played an insignificant, at best regional role. The need was not as strong in Poland, because the various duchies were ruled by representatives of the House of Piast, who were able to draw on the idea of natural lords; yet here, too, dukes tried to set themselves apart from other rulers, to emphasize the importance of their territorial domains and legitimize their power. Among the many meanings of the term 'legitimization', its most important aspect in this specific case is the fact that it symbolized a continuation of the rightful dynasty, which was key to maintaining peace and order in the country. On the other

hand, when it comes to the notions of 'identification' or 'identity', it should be noted that in the Middle Ages people felt more attached to the area in which they lived than to some supraregional entity. In order to create it, terms like house, country or origin were used. A special role in the process was played by the term 'domus/house'. In the late Middle Ages it comprised not only ducal families but also their subjects, which led to the emergence of a collective identity of sorts.

The papers included in the present volume are grouped under three unnumbered headings. The first group ('Überblicksbeiträge') is devoted to general problems and is to explain the structural background of the subject indicated by the title. The papers included under the second ('Historiographie und Legitimation/Identität von Fürstendynastien im Reich') and third heading ('Historiographie/Urkunden und Legitimation/Identität von Fürstendynastien in Polen') tackle specific legitimization strategies of a given dynasty, first in Germany and then in Poland.

The first group opens with a paper by Jörg Rogge ('Identifikation durch Diskurs? Kommunikation über Gleichheit, Brüderlichkeit und Haus', pp. 21–27), who, using the Houses of Wettin, Wittelsbach and Habsburg as examples, demonstrates that in the late Middle Ages a discussion was started about a transpersonal dynastic motive, a discussion that pushed aside reflection on the deeds of the various representatives of these houses. In the next paper ('Eine Dynastie oder mehrere? Herrschaft und ihre Legitimation in der politischen Kultur Polens (12.–13. Jahrhundert)', pp. 29–54) Marcin Pauk argues that in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the Piasts used three methods in particular to visualize and immortalize their rule: a) through documents and coins, b) through transfer of family names (for example Bolesław/Boleslaus) and c) through the cult of saints, with two elements being quite specific to Poland — first of all, a lack of a saint among the members of the ruling family and, secondly, the dynamism and innovation in the growth of Silesia, which stemmed from the fact that it drew on models from the territory of the German empire. Like J. Rogge, Jan Hirschbiegel ('Herr, Hof und Herrschaft. Zur Begegnung von Dynastie und Land', pp. 55–69) points to the consolidation, in the late Middle Ages, of the notion of 'domus/house', which at this point encompassed not just a specific dynasty but also the country and its inhabitants. To end this group of papers, Steffen Schlunker ('Territorialisierung und Dezentralisierung von königlichen Rechten im Spätmittelalter im Prozess der Territorialstaatsbildung', pp. 71–94) outlines the historical legal framework of the development of German principalities, from the times of Frederick Barbarossa until the beginning of the early modern period, stressing that regalia were associated precisely with these principalities and that they could not be seen as allodial titles of a given family. In addition, the scholar notes that the passing of regalia to ecclesiastical or secular magnates was not a disaster or sale of the ruler's powers, but was a prerequisite for exercising them in the first place.

The second group of papers, devoted to legitimization strategies in Germany, begins with Grischa Vercamer's paper ('Die Welfen in der "Historia Welforum":

Ihre Identifikation mit der süddeutschen Region und ihre Verortung im Reich', pp. 97–129) showing Bavaria and Swabia as the central region of the House of Welf, with Saxony being left completely on the sidelines. When it comes to the attitude to the king/emperor, it is possible to distinguish three stages in the chronicle devoted to this family: a) free family not bound by any feudal allegiance, with a status equal to that of the royal family; b) the main family in the country, ruling its territory without any hindrance, subordinated to the emperor of its own accord; and c) justification of the family's disobedience to the king/emperor in the eleventh and twelfth centuries as defence of its sovereignty. Oliver Auge ('Der Beitrag der mittelalterlichen Chronistik zur Legitimation der Herzöge von Pommern und Mecklenburg', pp. 131–57) examines the question of the unity of the Pomeranian House of Griffins, the country and its population as represented by Ernst von Kirchberg, Albert Kranz, Johannes Bugenhagen and others. Attempts were made at the time to counterbalance the relatively late Christianization of Pomerania by disseminating the legend that Wolin had been founded by Julius Caesar and even that the ruling dynasty descended from one of Alexander the Great's commanders. On the other hand, the tradition giving the ruling family Slavic roots, was being replaced with the legend linking the rulers to the Vandals or the Herules. The royal status attained in the past, family links to emperors and good relations with them were to make up for the rather late rise of the Griffins to the rank of Princes of the Holy Roman Empire and to thwart the Hohenzollers' designs. In the next paper ('Legitimation durch Kontinuität: Die Geschichtsschreibung über die Wittelsbacher und das Herzogtum Bayern im Spätmittelalter', pp. 159–73) Joachim Schneider begins his analysis from the accusation, formulated by Otto of Freising, of treason by one of the Wittelsbachs' ancestors, treason that in 955 enabled the Hungarians to penetrate deep into the Kingdom of the East Franks. In response, in addition to explaining the reasons behind the deed, the Wittelsbachs were linked to the Carolingians. The motive, later expanded, linked the Wittelsbachs to Bavaria on the imperial level, while Veit Arnpeck (1440–1496) did it on the regional level, seeing in the Wittelsbachs descendants of the Luitpoldings. Katrin Bourrée's paper ('Die Meistererzählung von den "treuen Diensten": Legitimationsstrategien und Selbstvergewisserung der Hohenzollern während des 15. Jahrhunderts', pp. 175–94) provides an interesting parallel to O. Auge's reflections, demonstrating — on the basis of Frederick II of Brandenburg's 1464 instructions for counsellor Hertnid von Stein, who was to use them in negotiations with the emperor — how the Hohenzollerns justified their claims to Szczecin Pomerania and how they defended themselves against the accusations of only recently rising to the rank of Princes of the Holy Roman Empire, accusations levelled by representatives of the Pomeranian dynasty. André Thieme ('Die inszenierte Dynastie und ihr Held. Zur fürstlichen Identität der Wettiner im späten Mittelalter', pp. 195–223) presents attempts by the House of Wettin, split into smaller branches, to create their

own history, with a substantial role being played in the process by the memory of Frederick's victorious battle against King Albert at Lucka in 1307. Ending this group, in his paper ('Strategien der Herrschaftslegitimation am unteren Rand des Fürstenstandes: Das Beispiel der Markgrafen von Baden', pp. 225–45) Heinz Krieg presents a family that rose to the rank of Princes of the Holy Roman Empire only in 1362. Before that the Margraves of Baden had described themselves in documents and on seals as Margraves of Verona, and stressed their fidelity to the House of Staufen in Italy. Towards the end of the thirteenth century they dropped all references to Verona from their titles, which denoted a considerable lowering of their rank. The Margraves of Baden were able to make up for their losses in this respect only in the fifteenth century, when they became linked to the Habsburgs by marriage.

The last group of papers, devoted to Poland, opens with a paper by Wojciech Mrozowicz ('Die Polnische Chronik (Polnisch-Schlesische Chronik) und die Chronik der Fürsten Polens (Chronica principum Poloniae) als Mittel zur dynastischen Identitätsstiftung der schlesischen Piasten', pp. 249–62), whose starting premise is that the political ambitions of the Silesian Piasts were limited almost exclusively to Poland and to accession to the throne in Cracow. These ambitions were hindered by, among others, the fact that the Silesian Piasts were commonly regarded by the other members of the family as traitors to their homeland. To improve their reputation and justify their national ambitions, the Silesian Piasts used historiographic works like the *Chronicon Polono-Silesiacum* from the late thirteenth century and *Chronica principum Poloniae* written one hundred years later. Piotr Rabiej ('Die Legitimierung der Herrschaft Bolesławs des Schamhaften, Herzog von Krakau und Sandomierz, im Lichte seiner Urkunden', pp. 263–76) describes the techniques found in Boleslaus the Chaste's documents and used to legitimize his rule before and after coming of age — in 1234–43 he used the title of Duke of Sandomierz, and then, consistently, Duke of Cracow and Sandomierz. Wojciech Drelicharz ('Dux Cracoviae oder künftiger rex Poloniae? Die Legitimation von monarchischer Herrschaft in der Krakauer Geschichtsschreibung des 13.–14. Jahrhunderts', pp. 277–303) draws in his analysis on the annals and chronicles that referred to the *vitæ* of St Stanislaus by Wincenty of Kielcza. The authors of these works expressed their hope that entire Poland would one day be ruled by Boleslaus the Chaste. A parallel was provided by the *Chronicon Polono-Silesiacum*, with its emphasis on Poland's dependence on the empire, and the *vitæ* of St Adalbert, presenting Poland's independence from the empire from 1000. However, these ideas were not continued. On the other hand, in the early fourteenth century authors of later annals and Dzierzwa saw only the Cuyavian line of Piasts as entitled to rule whole Poland, especially when it came to Ladislaus the Elbow-High, who was even perceived as a personification of King David. In her paper ('*Ego, qui principis ordine dego*. Das Problem der fürstlichen Titulatur der Breslauer Bischöfe im 14.–15. Jahrhundert', pp. 305–18) Ewa Wólkiewicz wonders whether Heinrich von Würben, Bishop of Wrocław, really had the

right to use the title of prince in his document. Given the relations in Germany, she concludes that this was by no means a case of usurpation, because the bishop did indeed have the right to use the title and, moreover, the title was not an expression of any claim to rule a specific territory. In the last paper in this group ('Die Legitimierung der Herrschaft in Masowien im Lichte der Urkunden und Korrespondenz der masowischen Herzogin Anna Radziwiłłówna', pp. 319–48) its authors, Marta Piber-Zbieranowska and Anna Supruniuk, examine all acts of power by Anna Radziwiłł after the death of her husband Conrad III the Red in 1503. No historiographic evidence or works legitimizing her rule have been found for the period until she yielded power to her sons in 1518 — instead, we have Duchess Anna's various foundations (for example expansion of her residence in Warsaw and attempts to make Warsaw the seat of a bishopric).

As G. Vercamer notes in the conclusion, dynasties regarded as rightful stressed the legitimacy of their rule generally through its long continuation. However, there were also other strategies employed for the purpose, for example, stressing the ancient origins of the ruling family, services to the current monarch, right to refuse obedience despite basic loyalty to the God-anointed king or emperor as well as a particularly fine victory on the battlefield, which was associated with one member of the family being hailed as its hero.

Jarosław Sochacki
(*Ślupsk*)

(Translated by Anna Kijak)