

## EARLY MODERN GERMAN HISTORY, 1500–1790: FOURTEENTH TRANSATLANTIC DOCTORAL SEMINAR IN GERMAN HISTORY

Seminar at the Free University Berlin, May 28–31, 2008. Jointly organized by the GHI, the BMW Center for German and European Studies of Georgetown University, and the Free University Berlin. Conveners: Roger Chickering (Georgetown University), Claudia Ulbrich (Free University Berlin), Richard F. Wetzell (GHI). Faculty mentors: Ronald G. Asch (University of Freiburg), Susan C. Karant-Nunn (University of Arizona), Anthony J. LaVopa (North Carolina State University), Ulinka C. Rublack (Cambridge University). Participants: Kristina Bake (University of Halle), Annette Cremer (University of Giessen), Christina Gerstenmayer (University of Trier), André Griemert (University of Marburg), Simon Grote (University of California, Berkeley), Phillip Nelson Haberkern (University of Virginia), Tilman Haug (University of Bern), Erik Heinrichs (Harvard University), David Horowitz (Columbia University), Karen Lynn Hung (New York University), Britta Kägler (University of Munich), Vera A. Keller (Princeton University), Sebastian Kühn (Free University Berlin), Stefanie Walther (University of Bremen), Jennifer Welsh (Duke University), Colin F. Wilder (University of Chicago).

This year's Transatlantic Doctoral Seminar in German History was hosted by the Free University Berlin and dedicated to early modern history. The Harnack-Haus and its Gästehaus in Berlin-Dahlem provided great meeting space and pleasant accommodations, which undoubtedly contributed to the seminar's congenial atmosphere, as did our academic host, Professor Claudia Ulbrich. As usual, the seminar brought together sixteen doctoral students—eight from Europe and eight from North America—to discuss their dissertation projects with one another and with four faculty mentors from both sides of the Atlantic. This year's seminar was remarkable for the strong presence of intellectual history, the history of science, and legal history, which together accounted for half the papers.

The first panel was devoted to the history of religion in the sixteenth century, focusing on the instrumentalization of religious symbols. Jennifer L. Welsh examined "Sanctity and Social Change in the Cult of St. Anne, 1450–1750." She argued that previous historical analyses of the rise in St. Anne's popularity in the late Middle Ages focused on her cult as an expression of late medieval popular piety, thus neglecting or ignoring the continued importance of the cult of St. Anne during the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. Her paper explored one aspect of St. Anne's cult,

the "Heilige Sippenschaft" and its role as a useful model for pre-Reformation laity. Phillip Haberkern's paper, "The Presence of the Past: Historia, Memoria, and the Making of St. Jan Hus," dealt with the commemoration of the Bohemian priest Jan Hus during the 1530s. Executed by the Council of Constance in 1415, Hus became a central figure in the polemical exchange between Lutheran and Catholic authors over the legitimacy of a church council as an arbiter in the German religious schism. Haberkern's paper focused on the composition of polemical plays by authors on both sides of the confessional divide, and how they represented disparate readings of the moral lessons contained in the death of Jan Hus.

The second panel was devoted to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century art history. Karen Hung's paper, "More than Meets the Eye: Uncovering the Surfaces of Hans Thoman's Carved Sculptures, 1500–1525," studied the early modern phenomenon of monochromy (*Holzichtigkeit*) in the carved limewood sculptures of the Swabian sculptor Hans Thoman (ca. 1500–25). Hung argued that closer examination of Thoman's polychrome and monochrome sculptures reveals that their present appearance is not necessarily a reflection of their appearance in the fifteenth century, but rather of changing tastes and aesthetic inclinations over the centuries. Kristina Bake's paper, "Spiegel einer christlichen und friedlichen Haushaltung: Ehevorstellungen und Geschlechterrollen in deutschsprachigen illustrierten Flugblättern des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts," examined the social disciplining effect that broadsheets about marriage had on both men and women. The abundance and wide dissemination of such broadsheets, she suggested, should be read as indicators of increased attempts of the authorities to regulate marriage, as well as popular reactions to this social pressure. Especially satirical broadsheets reveal the normative pressures of a society being transformed by the process of confessionalization.

The third panel explored the role of networks in seventeenth-century political culture. Tilman Haug's paper, "Amis et Serviteurs du Roi: Netzwerke Ludwigs XIV. im Heiligen Römischen Reich, 1648–1678," studied the network of relations between the French crown and the representatives of particular *Reichsfürsten* that played a central role for French policy within the Holy Roman Empire in the decades after 1648. In maintaining these relations, the French crown used patronage and interconnections in ways that were similar to the networks that stabilized the absolute monarchy internally. Instead of relying solely on the ethically charged norms of patronage, these relations were founded on "calculating trust" based on self-interest on the part of the cooperating partners in the Reich. While such entanglements with the French were tolerated for several decades, they became criminalized in the course of

the Reich's involvement in the Dutch wars in the 1670s. Britta Kägler's paper, "Politische Handlungsspielräume und kultureller Einfluss der adeligen Frauen am Münchner Hof, 1651/52–1756," examined the role of networks between the Munich and Turin courts. Her analysis of the correspondence between Munich's Kurfürstin Henriette Adelaide and her Turin relatives traced the gradual cooling of relations as the lack of direct interaction made it difficult to resolve misunderstandings, thus supporting the thesis of the letter as a distancing medium.

The fourth panel was devoted to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century intellectual history and the history of science. Both papers used biographical approaches. Vera Keller's paper, "Cornelis Drebbel: Fame and the Making of Modernity," examined the career and reception of the engraver, inventor, alchemist, and natural philosopher Cornelis Drebbel (1572–1633). Almost forgotten today, Drebbel enjoyed immense fame throughout the German lands during his lifetime and long thereafter. While recent historiography has characterized Drebbel as a skilled mechanical practitioner, Keller focused on Drebbel's claim to the status of natural philosopher. His widespread fame, she argued, demonstrates that an early respect for "maker's knowledge" is more accurately situated in Central Europe than in Bacon's England. Erik Heinrich's paper, "Caspar Kegler: Proprietary Medicine, Alchemy, and the Popular Press in Early Modern Germany," investigated the significance of the Leipzig physician Caspar Kegler, a largely unknown figure of German medical history. Kegler's life and work, he argued, reveal how the printing press, economic innovation, and socio-cultural exchange transformed academic medicine from an elite discipline of ancient texts and cures to one more open to the public, new medicines, and manual experimentation.

The fifth panel explored seventeenth- and eighteenth-century German-Jewish history through the lens of legal history. Andre Griemert's paper, "Arm der Kayserlichen Gewalt: Jüdische Prozesse vor dem Reichshofrat unter Ferdinand III. (1637–1657) und Franz I. Stephan (1745–1765)," investigated court cases involving Jews at the Imperial Aulic Council in Vienna, which, alongside the Reichskammergericht in Wetzlar, was the highest imperial court of the Holy Roman Empire. Presenting the results of a quantitative analysis of all such court cases in the periods 1637–1657 and 1745–1765, Griemert demonstrated the quantitative importance of litigation between Jews and the authorities and a connection between these court cases and imperial politics. David Horowitz's paper, "Fractures and Fissures in Jewish Communal Autonomy in Eighteenth-Century Hamburg," used the tools of legal history to examine Jewish-Gentile relations at the local level. Horowitz argued that the system of Jewish legal autonomy in Hamburg became contested in the eighteenth century as Jews were granted the status of permanent

residents of the city. Through a close reading of two cases from the 1730s, he showed how this new status allowed individual Jews to bring their grievances to the attention of Hamburg's Senate, which was forced to intervene with the Jewish authorities.

The sixth panel examined gender relations in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century nobility. Stefanie Walther's paper, "Vom 'Venus-Kriege': Die (Un-)Ordnung der fürstlichen Ehe anhand eines Fallbeispiels aus den sächsisch-ernestinischen Herzogshäusern," investigated marital conflicts in the high nobility, in particular the deviance from secular and religious norms involved in extramarital affairs. Walther demonstrated that these marital conflicts were always more than emotional disputes, and had strong political ramifications. In her paper "Mon Plaisir: Monarchische Machtdarstellung im Miniaturformat," Annette Cremer argued that the "Puppenstadt" (doll city) of Princess Auguste Dorothea of Thüringen must not be understood as a faithful representation of its time, but as a conscious presentation of Auguste Dorothea's claim to political power, and thus played a crucial role in her fight for her due as a widow.

The seventh panel was devoted to eighteenth-century intellectual history. In his paper "Beleidigung und verletzte Ehre: Über Rituale der Unhöflichkeit von frühneuzeitlichen Gelehrten," Sebastian Kühn investigated the function that rituals of impoliteness had in scholarly communication. Courtesy and impoliteness, Kühn showed, were complementary parts of a system of communication, in which impoliteness served specific functions, such as advancing communication, staking claims, and defending interests. Hence impoliteness was a sign of epistemic pluralization. Simon Grote discussed "Moral Education and the Origins of Modern Aesthetics in Eighteenth-Century Scotland and Germany." The use of the word *aisthesis* by Halle Pietists in early eighteenth-century debates over biblical hermeneutics and moral education, Grote argued, strongly suggests that Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten shared important elements of his Pietist teachers' view of moral education and saw an ethical purpose in the "aesthetic" philosophy whose development he called for when he coined the term *aesthetica* in 1735.

The eighth and final panel dealt with different aspects of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century legal history. Colin Wilder's paper, "Real Property Rights and Legal Indeterminacy in Hesse, 1648–1806," set out the fundamental categories for his work on property rights in German history. Contrary to Thibaut (1801) and other authors, Wilder argued that a fief (*Lehn*) was something over which a landlord claimed a right of escheat (*Heimfall*); possession (*Besitz*), by contrast, was the set of rules governing peaceful enjoyment and transfer. In her paper "Gauner- und Räuberbanden am Beispiel des Kurfürstentums Sachsens im 18. Jahrhun-

dert: Erscheinungsformen—Verfahren—Wahrnehmung," Christina Gerstenmayer analyzed the social history, criminal trials, and public perception of electoral Saxony's robber bands. Her study revealed the prominence of kinship bonds within the robber bands, which greatly affected their behavior in court.

The concluding discussion reflected on the prominence of intellectual history, the history of science, art history, legal history, and gender history at this seminar. Even though the selection of papers at the transatlantic doctoral seminar is never fully representative of the landscape of current research, the strong representation of intellectual history among the American projects and of work on the princely courts among the German ones was seen to reflect current research trends. The seminar also reflected changes in the nature of interdisciplinary historical work, namely the historical profession's turn to anthropology, literary studies, and visual studies. The use of visual sources, in particular, was discussed at several panels. The papers dealing with art-historical topics seemed to indicate a rapprochement between art history and intellectual-cultural history, with art history becoming more interested in historical context and intellectual history taking more interest in visual sources and art. Notable by their absence were economic and military history, as well as work on confessionalization. Recurring questions that came up across different panels included: What counts as political and what counts as private at an early modern court? How does one define the premodern vs. modern divide? What are the turning points? How useful is the distinction? Another prominent theme was that of communication networks (at court, between courts, among academics, among robbers, etc). Finally, there was vigorous discussion of the dangers of presentism and the historian's proper attitude toward the past. Whereas some argued that historians ought to keep careful hermeneutic distance, others suggested that while historians ought to be transparent about their viewpoints, they should interpret and judge the past.

*Richard F. Wetzell (GHI)*