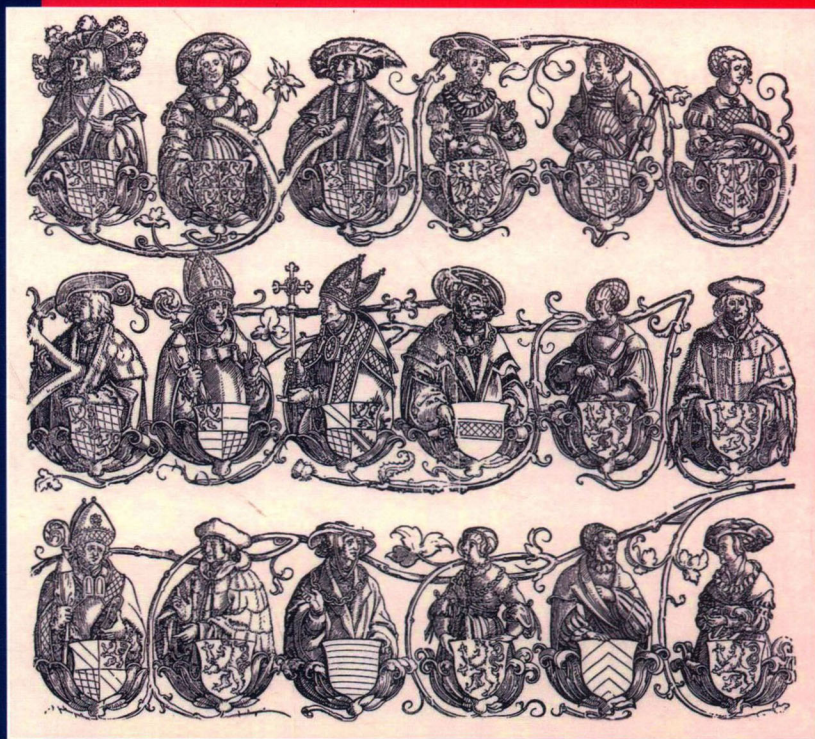


STUDIES IN MEDIEVAL AND REFORMATION TRADITIONS

A House Divided
Wittelsbach Confessional
Court Cultures in
the Holy Roman Empire,
c. 1550-1650



Andrew L. Thomas

Andrew Colin Gow

SERIES EDITOR

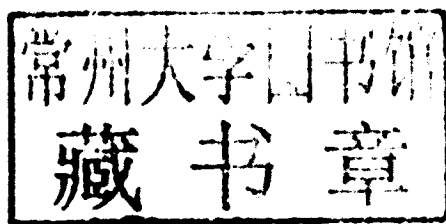
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A House Divided

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By

Andrew L. Thomas



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VOLUME 150

To Sarah, Hannah, Jon, and Rachel

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INTRODUCTION

"Sick, without land, without money, I can truly compare myself with Job, the man of sorrows."¹ In this quote Elector Karl Albrecht of Bavaria makes a comparison between his plight during the War of Austrian Succession (1740–1748) and the sufferings of the biblical Job. However, as the historian Ludwig Hüttl noted, a better comparison than Job would be with that of Frederick V of the Palatinate during the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648): both Wittelsbach rulers lost their lands shortly after their attempts to challenge Habsburg supremacy over the crown of Bohemia in the early modern era. Indeed, both believed that their claims to the Bohemian crown were legitimate.² In order to understand the rationale behind these actions, one has to recognize the cultural values that influenced them.

This book examines the intersection between religious belief, dynastic ambitions, and late Renaissance patronage found in the court cultures of the main branches of Germany's most storied ruling house, the Wittelsbach dynasty. Through a comparative history of the two major branches of the Wittelsbach dynasty, this book addresses fundamental questions about the significance of the Protestant and Catholic Reformations on the Wittelsbach dynasty. It explores how dynastic self-perception in this era renewed late medieval dynastic ambitions. It also investigates how confessional identity influenced the development of distinctly confessional court and territorial cultures through late Renaissance court patronage.

In exploring the significance of confessional identity on Renaissance court culture in particular, this book answers the appeal made by the renowned court historian John Adamson for an interdisciplinary perspective on court culture.³ Thus, this monograph has concentrated on

¹ Karl Albrecht quoted in Ludwig Hüttl's "Die bayerische Erbansprüche auf Böhmen, Ungarn und Österreich," in *Die Böhmisches Länder zwischen Ost und West*, ed. Ferdinand Seibt, (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1983), 88 [original quote from Michael Doeberl, *Entwicklungsgeschichte Bayerns* II, Michael Doeberl (1912), 177]; all English translations are my own unless translator indicated.

² Ibid.

³ John Adamson, "Introduction. The Making of the Ancien-Régime Court 1500–1700," in *The Princely Courts of Europe. Ritual, Politics and Culture under the Ancien Régime 1500–1750*, ed., id. (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999), 7–41, esp. 8–9.

three broad approaches to the primary sources relating to the confessionalization of Wittelsbach court cultures: first, an examination of dynastic ambitions reflected in the political testaments and correspondence between the Bavarian and Palatine branches of the Wittelsbach dynasty as well as with their cadet branches; second, a comparison of their patronage of humanist trained literati as educators for their children, as authors of mirror of prince literature, wedding and funeral sermons, dynastic histories, panegyrics, and devotional literature for the court; third, an investigation of ambassadorial reports, travel accounts, broadsheets, and memoirs, in order to understand how foreign contemporaries perceived the Wittelsbach courts.

Following Jeroen Duindam's lead, this monograph also takes a comparative approach to contending court cultures over an extended time frame in order to examine differences in court dynamics.⁴ Concomitantly, it follows the *long durée* approach to historical causation found in *Princes and Princely Culture 1450–1650* edited by Martin Gosman, Alasdair MacDonald, and Arjo Vanderjagt.⁵ It also reflects the importance that Heiko Oberman placed on the social history of ideas and the late medieval inheritance in shaping confessional identities.⁶ Likewise, it recognizes the significance of Pierre Bourdieu's "cultural capital" in understanding the relationship between power and patronage for the Wittelsbachs' courts in their efforts to promote their confessionalized court agendas.⁷ Also, it buttresses Wolfgang Weber's argument that the nexus between princely education, dynastic identity

⁴ Jeroen Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles: The Courts of Europe's Major Dynastic Rivals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁵ Martin Gosman, Alasdair MacDonald and Arjo Vanderjagt, eds., *Princes and Princely Culture 1450–1650* 2 vols. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2005).

⁶ Heiko Oberman, *The Two Reformations. The Journey from the Last Days to the New World*, ed. Donald Weinstein (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003); Thomas A. Brady jr., et al. eds., *The Work of Heiko A. Oberman. Papers from the Symposium on his Seventieth Birthday* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2003); see also Heiko Oberman, "Die Gelehrten die Verkehrten: Popular Response to Learned Culture in the Renaissance and Reformation," in *Religion and Culture in the Renaissance and Reformation*, ed. Steven Ozment (Kirkville: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1989), 43–62; reprinted in H. Oberman, *The Impact of the Reformation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 201–224; id., "The Shape of Late Medieval Thought: The Birthpangs of the Modern Era," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 64 (1973): 13–33.

⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, "Ökonomisches Kapital, kulturelles Kapital, soziales Kapital," in *Soziale Ungleichheiten*, ed. Reinhard Kreckel 183–198 (Göttingen: Otto Schwartz, 1983), 83–198; an English translation is also available, see Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. J. Richardson (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 241–258.

and honor, and territorial security became an important catalyst for early modern state-building.⁸ Furthermore, to a significant degree, it supports Heinz Schilling and Wolfgang Reinhard's macro-historical model for interpreting early modern European history referred to as the "confessionalization" paradigm.

According to the "confessionalization" paradigm, the period in Europe from 1550 to 1650 was shaped by the process of confessionalization in which rulers created state churches and used the resources of the churches, such as schools and monasteries, in efforts to further increase their own control over their subjects as well as demonstrate their commitment to their respective faiths.⁹ This monograph corroborates the confessionalization paradigm in regards to the *intent* of the rulers to create state churches, but it also underscores the limitations and mixed success of their efforts. Likewise, it recognizes the validity of Marc Forster and Lee Palmer Wandel's claim that religious reform in this era could also reflect grassroots movements that did not require "top-down" confessionalization.¹⁰ As Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia has also demonstrated, confessionalization and popular culture were not mutually exclusive. His works have convincingly illustrated both the importance of the "common man" on creating a popular form of devotion in the late Middle Ages, as well as confessionalizing factors during

⁸ Wolfgang Weber, "Dynastiesicherung und Staatsbildung: Die Entfaltung des frühmodernen Fürstenstaats," in *Der Fürst: Ideen und Wirklichkeiten in der europäischen Geschichte*, ed. idem (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1998), 91–136; idem., "Honor, fama, gloria. Wahrnehmungen und Funktionszuschreibung der Ehre in der Herrschaftslehre des 17. Jahrhunderts," in *Ehrkonzepte in der Frühen Neuzeit: Identitäten und Abgrenzungen*, eds., Sibylle Backmann, et al. (Berlin: Verlag GmbH, 1998), 70–98; idem., *Prudentia gubernatorial: Studien zur Herrschaftslehre in der deutschen politischen Wissenschaften des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1992).

⁹ Heinz Schilling, *Religion, Political Culture and the Emergence of Early Modern Society: Essays in German and Dutch History* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992); Wolfgang Reinhard, "Reformation, Counter-Reformation, and the Early Modern State: A Reassessment," *The Catholic Historical Review* 75 (1989): 383–404; for an excellent overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the confessionalization paradigm, see also Thomas A. Brady, Jr. "Confessionalization—The Career of a Concept," in *Confessionalization in Europe, 1555–1700. Essays in Honor and Memory of Bodo Nischan*, ed. John Headley, 1–20 (Aldershot, 2004).

¹⁰ Marc Forster, "With and Without Confessionalization: Varieties of Early Modern German Catholicism," *Journal of Early Modern History* 1 (1997): 315–343; Lee Palmer Wandel, "Ranke Meets Gadamer: The Question of Agency in the Reformation," in *Politics and Reformations: Histories and Reformations. Essays in Honor of Thomas A. Brady, Jr.*, eds. Christopher Ocker, et al. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2007), 63–78.

the sixteenth century.¹¹ In fact, confessionalization was least successful in the regions where the majority of the populace did not share the same confessional vision with the Wittelsbach rulers. This book also adheres to Robert Bireley's approach of examining the diverse perspectives within confessionalizing agents themselves regarding the use of force and defining the proper relationship between church and state.¹² This monograph constitutes the only book-length treatise comparing the impact of confessionalization on both halves of the Wittelsbach dynasty.

John Adamson argues that the court most likely had more impact than any other single institution from 1500–1700 in areas dealing with political, religious, and cultural life. He reminds us that a court was not just a group of buildings, but a complex network of relationships connected with the sovereign's household. In turn this meant that the influences of the consorts, heirs, and important administrators were also significant in shaping the cultural landscape and qualifying the meaning of absolutism.¹³ This treatise is the only work offering an extensive comparative treatment of the Wittelsbach courts and their impact on the confessionalization of Renaissance humanism. Furthermore, this is the only expansive examination of the critical role of Wittelsbach consorts in the confessionalization process.

This monograph contends that the Wittelsbachs were not simply shapers of confessional identities and cultures; they themselves were also shaped by prevailing ideas of rulership inherited from their late medieval and Renaissance past that had been transformed by the events of the Protestant and Catholic Reformations. Likewise, the Wittelsbachs were a dynasty—a ruling family—and as such, both gen-

¹¹ Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia, "Die Sakralisierung der Gesellschaft: Blutfrömmigkeit und Verehrung der Heiligen Familie vor der Reformation," in *Kommunalisierung und Christianisierung: Voraussetzungen und Folgen der Reformation 1400–1600*, eds. Peter Blickle and Johannes Kunisch (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1989), 57–75; see also id., *Social Discipline in the Reformation: Central Europe 1550–1750* (London: Routledge, 1989).

¹² Robert Bireley, *The Jesuits and the Thirty Years War: Kings, Courts, and Confessors* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

¹³ Adamson, 7–8, 12; in this broader sense of the court, Norbert Elias's definition of the princely court as "the central organ of the entire state administration, the government" still has considerable validity, see Norbert Elias, *The Court Society*, trans. Edward Jephcott (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), 1. Nevertheless, the limits of court influence are well articulated in Jeroen Duindam's *Myths of Power: Norbert Elias and the Early Modern Court* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1994).

ders played important parts in the development of confessional court cultures and territories that grew out of a family feud originating in the late Middle Ages. Also, the role of Wittelsbach patronage of the arts, education, and religious-political causes contributed significantly to the confessionalization of Renaissance humanism in this era. Their court cultures reflected the symbiotic relationship created between confessional identities and dynastic ambitions that played an important part in setting the stage for the Thirty Years' War. Wittelsbach court patronage served as both the critical link binding the countryside to the court, and the catalyst for the creation of confessional frontiers between the Palatine and Bavarian lands that predated the Thirty Years' War. Furthermore, the marriage alliances along religious lines deepened the divide between the major Bavarian and Palatine branches of the Wittelsbach dynasty, and these marital alliances contributed significantly to the development of the Thirty Years' War.

The first major battle of the Thirty Years' War, the Battle of White Mountain (1620), was just as critical for the Bavarian Wittelsbachs' ability to claim dynastic leadership over their Palatine cousins as it was for the Austrian Habsburgs to secure greater control over the Bohemian crown lands. The battle also demonstrates how the Bavarian Wittelsbachs were able to benefit from their marital alliances with the Austrian Habsburgs and the Palatine cadet branch at Neuburg. The actions of the Palatine court following the Palatine defeat at White Mountain also reflect how the Palatine Wittelsbachs managed to continue their dynastic claims for the Palatinate throughout the Thirty Years' War, thanks to their marital ties with the houses of Orange and Stuart. Finally, the Wittelsbach dynastic disputes and related struggles during the Thirty Years' War marked the peak of confessionalized Renaissance humanism in the Empire as literati articulated Wittelsbach claims through various mediums to an international audience. Indeed, Wittelsbach influence on European affairs reached their apex in the confessional age and touched many shores from the 'coast' of Bohemia to Boston.

Several scholars have written important books about the confessionalization process on the Wittelsbachs, but they have concentrated on

either the Bavarian¹⁴ or the Palatine branches.¹⁵ These works by such fine scholars as Claus-Peter Clasen and Philip Soergel are outstanding for their insights of the inner dynamics of the Palatine and Bavarian confessional identities respectively. Volker Press, Dieter Albrecht, and Jürgen Steiner have addressed with acumen the dynastic motivation behind the Bavarian Wittelsbachs' obtaining the electoral title from their Palatine cousins.¹⁶ There have also been a number of important monographs examining the conquest of the Palatinate and its confessional implications.¹⁷ In his book on the Thirty Years' War, Ronald

¹⁴ Dieter Albrecht, *Maximilian I. von Bayern, 1573–1651* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1998); Philip Soergel, *Wondrous in His Saints: Counter-Reformation Propaganda in Bavaria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Kurt Malisch, *Katholischer Absolutismus als Staatsräson: ein Beitrag zur politischen Theorie Kurfürst Maximilians I. von Bayern* (Munich: R. Wölfl, 1981); Michael Kaiser, *Politik und Kriegführung: Maximilian von Bayern, Tilly und die Katholische Liga im Dreissigjährigen Krieg* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1999); Andreas Kraus, *Maximilian I. Bayerns Großer Kurfürst* (Graz: Verlag Styria, 1990); Karl-Ludwig Ay, *Land und Fürst im alten Bayern: 16–18. Jahrhundert* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1988); Dietmar Heil, *Die Reichspolitik Bayerns unter der Regierung Herzog Albrecht V. (1550–1579)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998); Englebert Maximilian Buxbaum, *Petrus Canisius und die kirchliche Erneuerung des Herzogtums Bayern 1549–1556* (Rome: Institutum Historicum S.I., 1973); Robert Bireley, *Maximilian I. von Bayern, Adam Contzen S.J. und die Gegenreformation in Deutschland 1624–1635* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975); Franziska Neuer Landfried, *Die Katholische Liga: Gründung, Neugründung und Organisation eines Sonderbundes 1608–1620* (Munich: Verlag Michael Lasslaben Kallmünz Opf., 1968).

¹⁵ Volker Press, *Calvinismus und Territorialstaat: Regierung und Zentralbehörden der Kurpfalz, 1559–1619* (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1970); Claus-Peter Clasen, *The Palatinate in European History, 1559–1660* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1963); Frank Konersmann, *Kirchenregiment und Kirchenzucht im frühneuzeitlichen Kleinstaat. Studien den herrschaftlichen Grundlagen des Kirchenregiments der Herzöge von Pfalz-Zweibrücken 1410–1793* (Cologne: Rheinland Verlag, 1996); Winfried Dotzauer, *Der historische Raum des Bundeslandes Rheinland-Pfalz von 1500–1815: der fürstliche Politik für Reich und Land, ihre Krisen und Zusammenbrüche* (Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, 1993); Erika Kossol, *Die Reichspolitik des Pfalzgrafen Phillip Ludwig von Neuburg (1547–1614)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976); Andreas Edel, *Der Kaiser und Kurpfalz: eine Studie zu den Grundelementen politischen Handels bei Maximilian II (1564–1576)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997); Paul Münch, *Zucht und Ordnung: Reformierte Kirchenverfassungen im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert (Nassau-Dillenburg, Kurpfalz, Hessen-Kassel)* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1978).

¹⁶ Volker Press, "Bayerns wittelsbachische Gegenspieler-Die Heidelberger Kurfürsten, 1505–1685," in *Um Glauben und Reich: Kurfürst Maximilian I. Beiträge zur Bayerischen Geschichte und Kunst 1573–1651*, ed. Hubert Glaser (Munich: Hirmer Verlag, 1980), 24–39; Dieter Albrecht, *Maximilian I. von Bayern, 1573–1651* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1998), 578; Jürgen Steiner, *Die pfälzische Kurwürde während des Dreissigjährigen Krieges (1618–1648)* (Speyer: Pfälzische Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaften, 1985).

¹⁷ Most recently, Trevor Johnson, "Defining the Confessional Frontier: Bavaria, the Upper Palatinate and Counter-Reformation 'Historica Sacra'," in *Frontiers and*