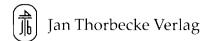Thorsten Huthwelker/Jörg Peltzer/Maximilian Wemhöner (eds.)

Princely Rank in Late Medieval Europe

Trodden Paths and Promising Avenues

Introduction[1]

Jörg Peltzer

This volume is the result of a workshop held at Heidelberg in September 2009. The meeting was organised by the research group 'Rang und Ordnung'/RANK as part of its working programme on the formation and visualisation of princely rank in late medieval Europe. The workshop brought together scholars from England, Germany and France to discuss princely rank in England, the Holy Roman Empire and to a lesser degree France in the late Middle Ages with special emphasis on past, present and future approaches to the subject. A major purpose of this gathering was to stimulate international exchange and to stress the usefulness of a comparative approach to the study of late medieval aristocracies.

Comparative history has been on the agenda of medieval historians for a long time. Even in 1928, when Marc Bloch used a lecture held at the twenty-eighth International Congress of Historians to launch his now famous call for more comparative history, it was not entirely new. In Bloch's own words 'elle n'est plus à inventer'.[2] His contemporaries were aware of the potential of comparative work. In Germany, for example, Otto Hintze researched the 'typologies' of pre-modern European constitutions, a work he published in 1930.[3] For Bloch's compatriot Charles Petit-Dutaillis, the usefulness of comparative history required no explanation or justification. In his study on the French and English feudal monarchies published in 1933, he spent not a single line on theorising

2   M. BLOCH, 'Pour une histoire comparée des sociétés européennes', *Revue de synthèse historique*, 46 (1928), pp. 15–50, at p. 15. The translation of Bloch's article into English and German has certainly done much to disseminate its ideas. English: M. BLOCH, 'A Contribution towards a Comparative History of European Societies', in M. BLOCH, *Land and Work in Mediaeval Europe. Selected Papers* (London, 1967), pp. 44–81; German: M. BLOCH, 'Für eine vergleichende Geschichtsbetrachtung der europäischen Gesellschaften', in M. MIDDELL/S. SAMMLER (eds.), *Alles Gewordene hat Geschichte. Die Schule der ANNALES in ihren Texten 1929–1992* (Leipzig, 1994), pp. 121–167.

3   O. HINTZE, 'Typologie der ständischen Verfassungen des Abendlandes', *Historische Zeitschrift*, 141 (1930), pp. 229–253.

the advantages and drawbacks of his approach.[4] But even if Bloch's lecture did not put comparative history on the agenda of historians, it certainly marked it up with red ink. Indeed, as in the present case, Bloch's remarks have become a commonplace for historians of all periods to refer to when writing about comparative history.[5] More importantly, medievalists since Bloch have not just recognized the benefits of comparative studies, they have acted upon them. Robert Brentano's work on the development of the church in England and Italy in the thirteenth century (1968), James Given's comparison of the conquest of northern Wales by the English with that of the Languedoc by the French in the thirteenth century (1990), or Martin Kaufhold's work on political reform and institutional change in Germany, England and at the papal curia in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (2008) are but three examples of comparative work by historians of subsequent generations.[6]

It is however still true to say that the comparative approach has not dominated the agenda of medieval historians. In 1996, in an important collection of essays on comparative history, the modernists Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka stated quite correctly that medievalists had been taking the comparative approach much less frequently than their colleagues working on ancient or modern/contemporary history.[7] It is only in recent years, notably in Germany, that medieval historians have been showing an increasing interest in comparative work. In 1998 Michael Borgolte successfully initiated the foundation of the Institute for a Comparative History of Medieval Europe at the Humboldt

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4   C. Petit-Dutaillis, *La monarchie féodale en France et en Angleterre, X^e–XIIIe siècle* (L'évolution de l'humanité) (Paris, 1933).

5   To quote two German examples: H.-G. Haupt/J. Kocka, 'Historischer Vergleich: Methoden, Aufgaben, Probleme. Eine Einleitung', in H.-G. Haupt/J. Kocka (eds.), *Geschichte und Vergleich. Ansätze und Ergebnisse international vergleichender Geschichtsschreibung* (Frankfurt/Main, 1996), pp. 9–39, passim; M. Borgolte, 'Vorwort', in M. Borgolte (ed.), *Das europäische Mittelalter im Spannungsbogen des Vergleichs. Zwanzig internationale Beiträge zu Praxis, Problemen und Perspektiven der historischen Komparatistik* (Europa im Mittelalter 1) (Berlin, 2001), pp. 9–10, at p. 9. On the 'genealogy' of comparative history, see J. Paulmann, 'Internationaler Vergleich und interkultureller Transfer. Zwei Forschungsansätze zur europäischen Geschichte des 18. bis 20. Jahrhunderts', *Historische Zeitschrift*, 267 (1998), pp. 649–685, at pp. 650–651.

6   R. Brentano, *Two Churches: England and Italy in the Thirteenth Century* (Princeton, 1968); J. Given, *State and Society in Medieval Europe. Gwynedd and Languedoc under outside Rule* (Ithaca, 1990); M. Kaufhold, *Die Rhythmen politischer Reform im späten Mittelalter. Institutioneller Wandel in Deutschland, England und an der Kurie 1198–1400 im Vergleich* (Mittelalter-Forschungen 23) (Ostfildern, 2008).

7   Haupt/Kocka, 'Historischer Vergleich', pp. 20–21. The methodological discussion on comparative history is still dominated by modernists. For a recent summary, see H.-G. Haupt, 'Historische Komparatistik in der internationalen Geschichtsschreibung', in G. Budde/S. Conrad/O. Janz (eds.), *Transnationale Geschichte. Themen, Tendenzen und Theorien* (Göttingen, 2006), pp. 137–149.

University of Berlin.⁵ To some extent Borgolte was following up on the initiative launched by Haupt and Kocka when, at a conference held in 1999, he invited medievalists to take the comparative approach. The conference proceedings published in 2001 present comparative history in three ways that had already been mapped out by Bloch: diachronic, transcultural and bilateral (intra-cultural).⁹ A decade later, these are still valid heuristic categories, despite the evident difficulties of distinguishing between intra- and transcultural compari-sons or defining what constitutes the smallest unit of a bilateral comparison.¹⁰

The present volume sets out to prepare the ground for a classic bilateral comparison. It focuses primarily on two realms, England and the Holy Roman Empire, in the late Middle Ages. Anglo-German comparisons have aroused greater interest in recent years. Besides Kaufhold's study, Frank Rexroth's work on the deposition of kings or Björn Weiler's book on rebellions in the first half of the thirteenth century have taken the comparative approach.¹¹ Today, no medi-evalist in England or Germany would deny the potential fruitfulness of com-parative work. If these studies are still the exception rather than the norm, this is due less to fundamental methodological reservations than to the continuing attractiveness of other approaches¹² (comparative history is not *per se* the better history) and to practical problems. Even though today the logistic challenges may be less formidable than they were in the past, other difficulties remain or have become even greater.¹³ Comparisons based on empirical work are facili-tated by ease of access to the source material. With late medieval England or

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8   Cf. http://ivgem.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/site/lang__de-DE/3810/default.aspx (last visit: 25 March 2011).

9   BORGOLTE, *Das europäische Mittelalter im Spannungsbogen des Vergleichs*. BLOCH, 'Pour une histoire', pp. 16–20; M. BLOCH, *La société féodale. La formation des liens de dépendance* (2 vols., Paris, ²1948), ii, pp. 249–252; J. OSTERHAMMEL, 'Transkulturell vergleichende Geschichts-wissenschaft', in HAUPT/KOCKA, *Geschichte und Vergleich*, pp. 271–313, at p. 237.

10   On trans- and intracultural comparison, see, for example, OSTERHAMMEL, 'Transkulturell vergleichende Geschichtswissenschaft', pp. 274–277; more recently, from the point of view of a medievalist, W. DREWS, *Die Karolinger und die Abbasiden von Bagdad. Legitima-tionsstrategien frühmittelalterlicher Herrscherdynastien im transkulturellen Vergleich* (Europa im Mittelalter 12) (Berlin, 2009), pp. 22–37. On the relationship between comparative history, entangled history and *histoire croisée*, see J. KOCKA, 'Comparison and Beyond', *History and Theory*, 42 (2003), pp. 39–44.

11   F. REXROTH, 'Tyrannen und Taugenichtse. Beobachtungen zur Ritualität europäischer Königsabsetzungen im späten Mittelalter', *Historische Zeitschrift*, 278 (2004), pp. 27–53; B. WEILER, *Kingship, Rebellion and Political Culture. England and Germany, c. 1215–c. 1250* (Medieval Culture and Society) (Basingstoke, 2007).

12   Cf. from the modernists' point of view J. KOCKA, 'Historische Komparatistik in Deutsch-land', in HAUPT/KOCKA, *Geschichte und Vergleich*, pp. 47–60; G. CROSSICK, 'And what should they know of England? Die vergleichende Geschichtsschreibung im heutigen Groß-britannien', ibid., pp. 61–75.

13   Cf. also PAULMANN, 'Internationaler Vergleich und interkultureller Transfer', pp. 651–664.

Germany this, however, is not necessarily the case. While at the royal level the historian can draw upon the admirable calendars of the massive output of the English royal chancery and the documents published in the *MGH Constitutiones* and the *Reichstagsakten* (even though they provide anything but a complete picture), at the level of the earls and *principes imperii* extensive archival work is indispensable. This, however, requires substantial investments of time and money.

Another practical problem is indicated by the fact that Kaufhold, Rexroth and Weiler are all native German speakers. Adequate language skills are imperative for comparative history. German, however, is not a language of preference for English history students. This is not just a current or very recent problem, but one that has had an impact on Anglo-German comparisons for quite some time, as Nicholas Vincent shows in his article below. As a consequence, late medieval German history, with its sources and literature mainly written in German, enjoys the reputation of a somewhat exotic subject. It is against this background that I decided that the German contributions to this volume should be translated into English.[14] This, it seems, is the most promising way to introduce Anglophone historians to German historiography and to encourage them to take up German for themselves. A proper comparative discourse on England and the Empire needs input from both historiographical traditions, otherwise the comparison runs the danger of becoming an add-on to the existing national narratives rather than developing into a discourse in its own right.

The theme of this volume is princely rank. Princely, it is important to stress, refers in this context to earls and imperial princes and not necessarily just to members of the royal family. Rank means their position within society. Rank is defined on two levels, a) on the collective level, that is the membership of a certain group, in this case a group of earls or imperial princes, and b) on the individual level, that is the place occupied within this group. Rank, therefore, can be regarded as the social identity of the individual.[15] As such, rank is the product of successful communication of self-perception by an individual or a group. For rank to become real, to develop the properties attributed to it, it needs to be recognized by others. The rank of the group in question needs to be accepted by the other groups of society, the position of the individual within his/her group needs to be acknowledged by its other members.[16] How did

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14   The exception (for reasons of time) is Heinz Krieg's study on the margraves of Baden.

15   B. Röttger-Rössler, *Rang und Ansehen bei den Makassar von Gowa* (Kölner Ethnologische Studien 15) (Berlin, 1989), pp. 9–11.

16   A. Faudemay, *La distinction à l'âge classique. Emules et enjeux* (Geneva, 1992), pp. 45–47; N. Luhmann, *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft* (2 vols., Frankfurt/Main 1997), ii, pp. 685–686.

imperial princes and earls attempt to achieve this?[17] Given that social and political pre-eminence were closely knit together in the stratified societies of late medieval Europe, studying princely rank also means analysing the role of the princes in the political fabric of their respective realms. The social pre-eminence of the electoral princes in the Empire, for example, cannot be understood without looking at their political function.

The late medieval aristocracies of England and the Empire have received little comparative attention. Fritz Trautz's short but suggestive article of 1977 on the *Noblesse allemande et Noblesse anglaise. Quelques points de comparaison*[18] is a solitary exception to the rule. Yet, such work is promising. These aristocracies shared what Werner Paravicini has identified as 'an essentially identical (if far from uniform) aristocratic culture'[19] and experienced processes of social differ-

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17　Strategies in the display of rank are discussed by D. Crouch, *The Image of Aristocracy in Britain, 1000–1300* (London, 1992); P. Coss/M. Keen (eds.), *Heraldry, Pageantry and Social Display in Medieval England* (Woodbridge, ²2003); M. Gosman/A. Macdonald/A. Vander-jagt (eds.), *Princely Culture 1450–1650* (Studies in Intellectual History 118/1–2) (2 vols., Leiden, 2003–2005); K.-H. Spiess, 'Rangdenken und Rangstreit im Mittelalter', in W. Paravicini (ed.), *Zeremoniell und Raum. 4. Symposium der Residenzen-Kommission der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen veranstaltet gemeinsam mit dem Deutschen Histo-rischen Institut Paris und dem Historischen Institut der Universität Potsdam, Potsdam, 25. bis 27. September 1994* (Residenzenforschung 6) (Sigmaringen, 1997), pp. 39–61; K.-H. Spiess, 'Kommunikationsformen im Hochadel und am Königshof im Spätmittelalter', in G. Alt-hoff (ed.), *Formen und Funktionen öffentlicher Kommunikation im Mittelalter* (Vorträge und Forschungen 51) (Stuttgart, 2001), pp. 261–290; J. Peltzer, '*Personae publicae*. Zum Ver-hältnis von fürstlichem Rang, Amt und politischer Öffentlichkeit im Reich des 13. und 14. Jahrhunderts', in M. Kintzinger/B. Schneidmüller (eds.), *Politische Öffentlichkeit im Spätmittelalter* (Vorträge und Forschungen 75) (Ostfildern, 2011), pp. 147–182. In recent years, early modernists have looked at rank in detail, cf. B. Stollberg-Rilinger, 'Zere-moniell als politisches Verfahren. Rangordnung und Rangstreit als Strukturmerkmale des frühneuzeitlichen Reichstags', in J. Kunisch (ed.), *Neue Studien zur frühneuzeitlichen Reichsgeschichte* (Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung. Beiheft 19) (Berlin, 1997), pp. 91–132; B. Stollberg-Rilinger (ed.), *Vormoderne politische Verfahren* (Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung. Beiheft 25) (Berlin, 2001); M. Füssel, *Gelehrtenkultur als symbolische Praxis. Rang, Ritual und Konflikt an der Universität der frühen Neuzeit* (Symbolische Kommunikation in der Vormoderne) (Darmstadt, 2006); M. Füssel/T. Weller (eds.), *Ordnung und Dis-tinktion. Praktiken sozialer Distinktion in der ständischen Gesellschaft* (Symbolische Kommu-nikation und gesellschaftliche Wertesysteme 8) (Münster, 2005); T. Weller, *Theatrum praecedentiae. Zeremonieller Rang und gesellschaftliche Ordnung in der frühneuzeitlichen Stadt: Leipzig 1500–1800* (Symbolische Kommunikation in der Vormoderne) (Darmstadt, 2006).

18　F. Trautz, 'Noblesse Allemande et Noblesse Anglaise. Quelques points de comparaison', in G. Duby/J. Le Goff (eds.), *Famille et parenté dans l'occident médiéval. Actes du colloque de Paris (6–8 juin 1974)* (Collection de l'école française de Rome 30) (Rome, 1977), pp. 63–84.

19　Quotation: W. Paravicini, 'Gab es eine einheitliche Adelskultur Europas im späten Mittelalter?', in R. C. Schwinges/C. Hesse/P. Moraw (eds.), *Europa im späten Mittelalter. Politik – Gesellschaft – Kultur* (Historische Zeitschrift. Beihefte N.F. 40) (Munich, 2006), pp. 401–434, at p. 433: '[...] wenn nicht einheitliche, so doch grundsätzlich identische Adelskultur'.

entiation in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The dukes became the new top category of the English aristocracy, while the electoral princes established themselves as the elite group in the Empire. What were the mechanisms of these processes and which strategies of rank did earls and dukes, imperial and electoral princes deploy? Comparison between earls and imperial princes is made even more interesting by the fact that they operated in realms which, in the thirteenth century, developed different modes of royal succession. While in England the hereditary principle established itself (even though the barons retained a strong sense of their power to make a king), the electoral principle established itself as the predominant one in the Empire. Moreover, the Roman king could become emperor and thus reach a level of rank not accessible to the English king. What did these differences mean for the role of the magnates in the socio-political orders of England and the Empire? To what extent did these orders differ? This volume does not claim to answer these questions, nor does it seek to provide a comparative study in its own right. Instead it aims at providing points of reference for such work.

The first articles present an overview of the research undertaken on the imperial princes and the earls.[20] According to Karl-Heinz Spieß lay princes have been the subject of historical analysis and interpretation almost since their own times. In this context, he referred to the monastic chronicles written on the history of princes in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. A new quality of princely history emerged in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries when humanists were commissioned by princes to engage with the subject. Their major purpose was to demonstrate the legitimacy of the ruling house and its inseparable connection with the territory it ruled over. The panegyric character of these works may have diminished in the subsequent centuries, but dynastic history remained a strong focus of historiographical activity in Germany. Only with the end of World War I and the dissolution of the principalities did this kind of history come to an end. In fact, the princes were so radically discredited as a subject that for almost two generations they disappeared altogether from the agenda of medievalists. It was not until the 1980s that the princes staged a successful comeback. Since then this topic has flourished and still continues to do so.

The renewed interest in individual princely dynasties has also refreshed our awareness of the imperial princes as a group. The monumental study by Julius Ficker on the order of the imperial princes dating from the second half of the nineteenth century and mainly taking a legal-historical approach is still the starting point for anyone interested in the subject.[21] But the recent socio-

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20   On comparative historiography as a subject in its own right, see C. Lorenz, 'Comparative Historiography: Problems and Perspectives', *History and Theory*, 38 (1999), pp. 25–39.

21   J. Ficker, *Vom Reichsfürstenstande. Forschungen zur Geschichte der Reichsverfassung zunächst im 12. und 13. Jahrhunderte* (2 vols. in 4, reprint Aalen, 1961).

historical approach taken notably by Karl-Heinz Spieß and his team in Greifswald has significantly improved our understanding of what it actually meant to be an imperial prince. Accordingly, the present volume is fully in line with current developments in German historiography.[22]

The upsurge in work on the imperial princes in the last thirty years cannot disguise the fact that it has mainly focused on lay princes. Ecclesiastical princes, by contrast, have received relatively little attention. Given that the bishops and imperial abbots clearly outnumbered the lay princes, this is all the more surprising: on average there were usually about ninety ecclesiastical princes to thirty or so lay princes. Where bishops have been subjected to analysis, as Andreas Bihrer points out, the studies tend to focus either on the bishop as a prince or as a pastor and hence either on his territorial lordship or his diocesan administration. Reflecting on potential ways of gaining a more balanced view of the late medieval bishop in the Empire, Bihrer makes a strong case for a comprehensive analysis of the episcopal court, the heart of the bishop's activities. Such socio-historical work, he hopes, may ultimately lead to a comparison of episcopal courts both within and beyond the Empire.

Turning to England, Chris Given-Wilson's article outlines how English scholarship has viewed social differentiations of the aristocracy. In this context, the earls have received their fare share of attention, even if the central focus seems to have been directed towards the larger group of the peers, i.e. those summoned to parliament. As early as the 1820s, the House of Lords created a special commission to investigate the question of what it was that made the dignity of a peer.[23] In the 1950s, the research into the processes of social differentiation received important new impetus from the work of K. B. McFarlane. He showed how this group of peers, numbering roughly fifty to sixty people, established itself as the social elite in late medieval England. His argument, however, that they formed the nobility has received much modification. Today, historians see little reason to exclude members of the gentry from what was considered noble. Nobility, in other words, was not dependent on being summoned to parliament. It was possible to become part of this nobility and to rise within its ranks. In fact post-Black Death England saw a relatively high degree of social mobility. Given-Wilson suggests that this may have been the reason behind attempts to define status more clearly towards the end of the fourteenth century.

The strategies deployed by earls, barons and knights in displaying their rank have attracted the attention of historians, particularly in the last two decades. David Crouch's monograph on the image of the aristocracy in Britain

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22 Cf. also the studies by Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger and her team at the University of Münster on rank in the early modern period, above n. 17.

23 See, for example, *Reports from the Lords Committees Touching the Dignity of a Peer of the Realm: with appendixes* (London, 1829).

between 1000 and 1300, published in 1992, has played a pioneering role in this. Others have followed suit[24], but there is still room for much more work. In this particular context, the earls of late medieval England have been less well served than the imperial princes.

The historian cannot, or at least should not, invent his sources. He has to work with the material available and, as a consequence, the direction of his research is very much dictated by the sources. This is a trivial truth, but when looking at two historiographical traditions it is worth while considering it more closely. The articles by Oliver Auge and Nicholas Vincent suggest that in terms of sources the basis for a study of earls and imperial princes is not radically different. Cartularies, charters, seals and chronicles existed on both sides of the Channel. Accounts, too, were kept by earls and princes alike, even though the impression we have is that more of them have survived on the English than on the German side. In this respect, the situation in the Empire improved markedly in the fifteenth century. For this period it is much easier to study the financial resources a prince had at his disposal than in the centuries before when only snippets of his accounting survive. This is not the only difference between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Auge shows that towards the end of the Middle Ages the dukes of Mecklenburg were very actively engaged in producing material communicating their rank. Perhaps, just like the English elite towards the end of the fourteenth century, they now felt a greater need to state their rank than they had done before. At all events, his article makes it clear that the sources to be drawn upon for the study of princely rank at the end of the fifteenth century are quite different from those of the thirteenth or even fourteenth centuries.

For all the similarities between the English and German source material, there is, as Nicholas Vincent emphasises, one major difference between them: the royal archive. While in Germany the documents relating to princely families are kept in regional archives across the country, and in a number of cases as a distinct *Hausarchiv*, in England many of them have become part of the archives of the crown, today the National Archives. There they sit next to a huge mountain of royal documentation dwarfing not only the evidence about the earls but also the sources left by any Roman king prior to 1400. The sheer scale of the surviving charter, patent and close rolls etc. invites, indeed almost forces the historian to make extensive use of them. So any historian looking at earls in late medieval England is bound to look at his subject through royal lenses to an extent almost unimaginable in work on the imperial princes.

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24   M. VALE, *The Princely Court. Medieval Courts and Culture in North-West Europe 1270–1380* (Oxford, ²2003); Coss/KEEN, *Heraldry, Pageantry and Social Display*; P. Coss, 'An Age of Deference', in R. HORROX/W. M. ORMROD (eds.), *A Social History of England, 1200–1500* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 31–73.

Turning from the image of the prince created by the sources he has left and his administration to the understanding of the term *princeps* by contemporary thinkers, Karl Ubl shows that there is no straightforward answer to this. The term had changed its meaning since late antiquity. First, since the fall of Western Rome, the title *princeps* was no longer restricted to the emperor. It could refer to a multitude of greater and lesser lords. Second, the academic engagement with Roman law in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries led to the definition of *princeps* as a legal category that referred to supreme power as such and not to a specific individual. What further complicated matters was that key authorities in late medieval political thought, such as the Bible, Roman law, Seneca or Aristotle, used *princeps* in a variety of contexts. As a consequence the term carried multiple meanings. It therefore comes as no surprise to see that post-Aristotelian thinkers did not use the term in any one specific sense when they were discussing the structures of medieval polities. Thomas Aquinas, for example, distinguished neatly between the *princeps* in the singular and the *principes* in the plural. The former referred to the legal concept of the *princeps* as the highest authority of a polity, the latter to the Aristotelian idea of the *principes* as lower officials. The Italian Tolomeo of Lucca in his turn used the term only to designate the group of aristocrats ranking between the king and the city authorities. By contrast, Engelbert of Admont did not wish to distinguish between kings and princes. Writing for the Habsburg dukes Otto and Albrecht of Austria after their father King Albrecht I was murdered in 1308, he was eager to keep the dukes on the royal level, particularly since Albrecht's successor as Roman king, Henry VII, was clearly inferior to the dukes in terms of lands and wealth.

Rolls of arms offer a very different perspective on princely rank and contemporary ideas on the structure of aristocratic societies. Their compilers were confronted with the challenge of imposing order on the usually large number of individual coats of arms. The rank of their bearers was clearly one criterion to keep in mind, but to what extent it influenced or even dominated these compilations is as yet an unanswered question. The motifs of the coats of arms also deserve further study in relation to rank. It is still an open question to what extent colours stood for rank and whether certain motifs indicated a specific status. Against this background, Adrian Ailes and Torsten Hiltmann were asked to review the past and present scholarship on English and continental rolls of arms. They show that historians only started to pay attention to the armorials in recent decades and that they have made quite different uses of them. It has proved fruitful, for example, to analyse rolls drawn up in the context of military operations to better understand the make-up of armies. Others have looked at armorials to gain insight into the development of the social status of knights in England. Yet, despite such studies and the increasing number of rolls edited, armorials are still very much a mysterious source. We know

relatively little about the authorship of the rolls and the precise circumstances of their compilation. Moreover, as Hiltmann so correctly points out, a large number of them have not survived in their original form. This, of course, raises the question of how truly the extant copies reflect the original ordering of the coats of arms. These are serious problems, but they should not serve as an excuse to shy away from a detailed study of the rolls. Both articles suggest that the possible gains from such an enterprise clearly outweigh the difficulties.

After this consideration of medieval views of princely rank, the last five articles in this volume turn to the activities undertaken by the princes themselves to defend, maintain and improve their status. These articles also underscore the necessity for interdisciplinary work. Today, art history and history form two distinct academic disciplines with academic discourses that are very much their own. The study of rank, however, requires both disciplines to work closely together and to combine their strengths in analysing an historical phenomenon of equal interest to them both. This is particularly important when looking at one central way of communicating social status: architecture. Here, Robert Liddiard and Matthias Müller focus on castles. Liddiard shows that English scholarship concentrated almost exclusively on the military functionality of castles and hence viewed the later Middle Ages as a period of decline. As part of the general shift towards a socio-historical approach to the study of the aristocracy, however, a more holistic view of castles has come to the fore. While on occasion the debate still centres on military function vs. chivalric ornament, most researchers now share the more balanced view that, in principle, both elements could co-exist and even reinforce each other.

Scholars on both sides of the Channel agree that the castle was instrumental in conveying the rank of its owner. But quite how it did so is less easy to answer. There existed no norms specifying how castles should be built in order to correspond to a certain rank. The English sumptuary law of 1363, placed in its context by Chris Given-Wilson, had no equivalent for castle-building. The lord had his castle constructed according to his designs and financial resources. It is therefore impossible to link certain architectural features directly to a certain rank. However, as the greater magnates usually had more resources at their disposal than the other aristocrats, they could aim at greater architectural sophistication. Dunstanburgh, for example, was not a castle that any English baron would have been able to finance. It needed a magnate of the calibre of Thomas of Lancaster to do so. In architecture, as in many other aspects of princely behaviour, social practice set the norms. In the Empire this became particularly obvious around 1500, when a major shift in castle architecture meant that the new fashion could only be realised by the wealthiest of princes. Taking the example of Albrechtsburg Castle owned by the dukes of Saxony, Müller shows that what he describes as the new 'integrated castle architecture' no longer perceived the castle as a space accommodating various buildings, but

as a unit. This unit needed to be given a design that facilitated the management of the day-to-day affairs of a princely residence and communicated the rank of its lord. In developing such a design, the architects did not simply copy the latest Italian or French renaissance model. Clearly, the latest developments in western secular architecture, in particular in France, left their imprints on Albrechtsburg Castle. But there is also evidence that its architects continued to use traditional German elements dating back not only to Gothic but even to romanesque days. By bringing together the old and the new, they created a specifically German answer to recent architectural developments in France and Italy.

Other princely strategies are explored in three case studies by David Crouch, Heinz Krieg and Martin Aurell. Here the focus on England and the Empire has deliberately been widened to encompass France. The three analyses consider families who occupied different positions within the respective realms. Heinz Krieg studies the margraves of Baden, who throughout the late Middle Ages struggled to be numbered among the imperial princes. David Crouch looks at the Warenne earls of Surrey, whose status among the leading group of the English aristocracy remained a reality over two centuries. Finally, Martin Aurell concentrates on the counts of Anjou and the counts of Barcelona. They both achieved royal status, the former as kings of the English, the latter as kings of Aragon. Despite these differences, some of their strategies for demonstrating rank were not dissimilar.

For both the earls of Surrey and the margraves of Baden, proximity to the king and his family was critical. In England, as Crouch points out, the king was present throughout his realm. Magnates always had to reckon with him when devising their policies. In the Empire, royal power was not so ubiquitously perceptible. In fact, large areas of the empire, in particular in the north, hardly ever saw the king or his representatives at any time during the late Middle Ages.[25] This, however, did not mean that the king was a distant figure for all imperial princes and magnates. Those who were situated in the vicinity of the lands of the reigning family were rather more familiar with the royal presence. It is no accident that the margraves of Baden leaned closely towards the king when they found him as territorial neighbour in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (the Staufen, Rudolf of Habsburg) and again in the fifteenth (the Habsburgs).

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25   P. Moraw, 'Franken als königsnahe Landschaft im späten Mittelalter', *Blätter für Deutsche Landesgeschichte*, 112 (1976), pp. 123–138, at p. 125; P. Moraw, *Von offener Verfassung zu gestalteter Verdichtung. Das Reich im späten Mittelalter 1250 bis 1490* (Propyläen-Geschichte Deutschlands 3) (Frankfurt/Main, 1985), p. 175; E. Schubert, *König und Reich. Studien zur spätmittelalterlichen deutschen Verfassungsgeschichte* (Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte 63) (Göttingen, 1979), p. 70.

Another obvious parallel between the earls of Surrey and the margraves of Baden concerned the marital strategies they employed: the higher the social status of the bride/groom, the better. This, of course, as Hugh Doherty pointedly remarked during the discussion, was true of about every single knight in Latin Christendom and thus no strategy exclusive to princes. It would be interesting, however, to compare the younger brothers and sisters of the earl and the margrave in this respect. Could they attract partners of the same social quality as the earl or the margrave themselves? The answers to these questions may well show up differences between the Warennes and the Badens as they applied different inheritance patterns. While in England a primogenital system created a clear hierarchy among brothers – the eldest received the bulk of the estates and the title[26] – the margraves tended to divide their lands among all their sons, who all bore the title of margrave and then devised familial strategies to prevent gradual and irreversible separation of the individual lordships. This policy kept differences in rank between brothers to a minimum. Just how important it could be to keep all the sons happy, particularly if the father had amassed a large number of territories, is revealed by the family history of the Angevin and Barcelonese counts. Once they had become kings, the sons' frustrated desire to be endowed with a lordship commensurate with their ambitions resulted in almost constant feuding. One's rank, it seems, was a good reason to wage war.

On the whole, princes tried to avoid situations in which they became the vassals of landholders whom they regarded as being of equal rank. The public ceremony of doing homage, genuflection before the lord of the fief and the subsequent acknowledgment of his superiority, was not exactly something that most princes relished. In some cases, however, the situation was not easily avoided. In 1462, margrave Karl of Baden was beaten and captured by Count Palatine Frederick at the battle of Seckenheim. Among his many concessions, the margrave was compelled to hold the town of Pforzheim, which the margraves had planned to make their main residence, as a fief of the count palatine. It may also be questioned whether the Angevin kings really had any other option than to pay homage to the French king for their continental possessions. It has been pointed out that this had been the tradition (at least for Normandy) and that it established their right to the lands in question.[27] It should also be taken into account that Anjou and Normandy were the heartlands of the

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26   A good overview of inheritance patterns in late medieval England and their consequences for land transfer is given by B. M. S. CAMPBELL, 'The Land', in HORROX/ORMROD (eds.), *A Social History of England*, pp. 179–237, at pp. 197–198; cf. S.L. WAUGH, *The Lordship of England. Royal Wardships and Marriages in English Society and Politics 1217–1327* (Princeton, 1988).

27   On this and on measures taken to compensate for the difference in rank introduced by the act of homage, see K. VAN EICKELS, *Vom inszenierten Konsens zum systematisierten Konflikt. Die englisch-französischen Beziehungen und ihre Wahrnehmung an der Wende vom Hoch- zum Spätmittelalter* (Mittelalter-Forschungen 10) (Stuttgart, 2002).

Angevins. They were not easily surrendered. In this respect, their situation seems to have been different from that of the Barcelonese counts. They too faced the claims of the Capetians to be their overlords for lands in southern France. These territories were of some importance, but they had been additional gains and did not constitute their heartlands. Compared to the Angevins, they may have felt it easier to renounce these possessions and thus to spare themselves the act of homage. At all events, they considered it a price well worth paying in return for their acknowledgement as equals to the French king.

Heinz Krieg and David Crouch show that princes operated on several levels to communicate their rank. One level was their own lordship. The margraves of Baden held their own court. Here, they set themselves up as the pinnacle of the local aristocracy. Another level was the wider realm. Here, in particular at the royal court or the parliament, the margraves and the earls of Surrey entered into direct competition with other imperial princes and earls. It should be noted, however, that not all imperial princes appear to have taken part in that contest. It was a conscious decision, to be either taken up or refused. The attractiveness of the royal court varied over time.[28] A third level was the court of a neighbouring prince of higher rank. The margraves attended the court of the counts palatine. Here, the pecking order of an entire region was shaped and mastered. The European level existed, too, but only occasionally came into play. Crusades or the conciliar meetings of the first half of the fifteenth century provided occasions for magnates from across Europe to associate and, as a consequence, to display and demarcate their rank.[29] But in general, it mattered little for the Warennes and the margraves how they ranked in respect

28 On varying attendance at royal diets in the Empire in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, see T. M. Martin, *Auf dem Weg zum Reichstag 1314–1410* (Schriftenreihe der Historischen Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 44) (Göttingen, 1993), pp. 335–368; G. Annas, *Hoftag – Gemeiner Tag – Reichstag. Studien zur strukturellen Entwicklung deutscher Reichsversammlungen des späten Mittelalters (1349–1471)* (Schriftenreihe der Historischen Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 68) (2 vols., Göttingen, 2004), ii.

29 Cf. the dispute between Richard I and Duke Leopold of Austria on the third crusade, K. Görich, 'Verletzte Ehre. König Richard Löwenherz als Gefangener Kaiser Heinrichs VI.', *Historisches Jahrbuch*, 123 (2003), pp. 65–91; on the crusades to Prussia, see W. Paravicini, *Die Preußenreisen des europäischen Adels* (Beihefte der Francia 17/1–) (so far 2 vols., Sigmaringen, 1989–), i, pp. 143–190; ii, pp. 138–139; on conflicts about precedence at church councils, in particular at the Council of Basel, see J. Helmrath, 'Rangstreite auf Generalkonzilien des 15. Jahrhunderts als Verfahren', in Stollberg-Rilinger, *Vormoderne politische Verfahren*, pp. 139–173; R. Vaughan, *Philip de God. The Apogee of Burgundy* (London, 1970), pp. 207–209; H. Heimpel, 'Eine unbekannte Schrift über die Kurfürsten auf dem Basler Konzil', in L. Fenske/W. Rösener/T. Zotz (eds.), *Institutionen, Kultur und Gesellschaft im Mittelalter. Festschrift für Josef Fleckenstein zu seinem 65. Geburtstag* (Sigmaringen, 1984), pp. 469–482; J. Toussaint, *Les relations diplomatiques de Philippe Le Bon avec le concile de Bâle (1431–1449)* (Louvain, 1942), pp. 49–67.

to each other. They normally played out their political ambitions on different fields, each with its own specific rules defining social status.

Only very seldom did men of their social standing enter the competition in two different polities. Margrave William of Juliers (Jülich) (d. 1361) was one such exception. Located in the lower Rhineland, he operated in a region where French, English and Imperial interests overlapped. He was related to Emperor Louis IV and King Edward III, who were both married to sisters of his own wife, Joan of Hainault. In the course of his career, he served both Louis and Edward, and in the mid 1330s he was a crucial figure in the formation of the Anglo-German alliance against France. William knew the socio-political orders of the English and German polities perhaps better than any of his contemporaries. He understood that both realms had their own rankings with specific titles and powers. Membership of these different princely elites required the acquisition of the corresponding positions. In this task William was extremely successful. He received the highest reward available in both realms. In the Empire he was elevated to the rank of an imperial prince in 1336 by Louis IV, while in England he was made earl of Cambridge and a peer of the realm by Edward III in 1340.[30] William would certainly have been the ideal person to give testimony on issues of princely rank in England and the Empire in the fourteenth century.

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30   A summary of his career is provided by W. Janssen, 'Wilhelm von Jülich (um 1299–1361)', *Rheinische Lebensbilder*, 6 (1975), pp. 29–54. On William's elevation to the rank of an imperial prince, see *Urkundenbuch für die Geschichte des Niederrheins oder des Erzstifts Cöln, der Fürstenthümer Jülich und Berg, Geldern, Meurs Cleve und Mark, und der Reichsstifte Elten, Essen und Werden*, ed. T. J. Lacomblet (4 vols., reprint Aalen, 1960), iii, no. 307; on his English promotion, see *CChR*, iv (1327–1341), p. 471.

31   Reference number: PE 1515/2–1.

32   Reference number: FP7/2007–2013; ERC Grant agreement no. 204905 (RANK).

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33 No attempt has been made to standardize the spelling of personal names. Some occur in their German form (e. g. Albrecht), others follow the English usage (e. g. Frederick). In order to maintain clarity 'Castle' has always been added to the name of a German castle, even if it might appear to be superfluous (e. g. Albrechtsburg Castle).