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Abstracts of the articles

From Imperial Liberty to Loyalty to the Kaiser: Bremen's Town Hall as a Site of City-State Self-Representation.

By Konrad ELMSHÄUSER

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The relationship between city-state and general state and between republic and monarchy can be seen in Bremen under the aspect of self-representation using the example of the architecture and furnishings of the town hall as the most important secular building in the city. Kaiser and empire constituted both prior to and following the granting of imperial immediacy in 1646 the frame of reference for the political self-conception of the municipal elites among councillors and merchants – although Bremen had never been the location of monarchical visits during the Holy Roman Empire. In the Imperial Germany of the Hohenzollerns, by contrast, the town hall constituted the representative frame of reference vis-à-vis the empire and now indeed became a regular meeting place in the city for the monarch. Using the example of an unusual visit by the Kaiser in 1901, this article exemplifies a relationship that was not always free from tension.

Sovereign Self-portrayal between the Divine Right of Kings and the Monarchical Principle: Representative Rooms in the Royal Palaces of Hanover, Brunswick and Oldenburg in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century.

By Heiko LAß

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Using the example of the palaces in Oldenburg, Hanover and Brunswick, the distribution and use of royal palaces in Europe in the first half of the nineteenth century will be illustrated. At that time, the construction of palaces was fundamentally renewed. Almost every royal palace was rebuilt between 1800 and 1850, expanded with new series of rooms or revamped with regard to such rooms. The reasons were the shift in court ceremonials and a new type of sovereign self-portrayal, which was directed at the subjects with a mind to effective publicity. A functional separation of rooms took place and with it an avoidance of multiple use. Individual chambers were consolidated in state, feast, assembly and private rooms, according to their respective functions. A novelty in Central and Western Europe was the throne apartment with the throne room. The series of rooms are an expression of a specific conception on the part of the builder. This was characterised until 1848/50 by the self-conception of a divinely ordained ruler. Expenditure and scope were dependent not only on status but also on the self-conception of the monarch and the organisation of his court.

Monarchical Scope of Action in the Kingdom of Hanover (1814–1866).

By Gerd VAN DEN HEUVEL

p. 63

Under the terms of the personal union with Great Britain, the Hanoverian kings acted until 1837 as protagonists and representatives in two divergent political systems. Severely restricted in its competences by the British parliament, they embodied in Hanover the monarchical principle, i.e. full state authority in accordance with Art. 57 of the Final Act of the Viennese Conference of Ministers. The reform course pursued since the constitution of 1833 and directed towards a constitutional monarchy ended abruptly in 1837 with the end of the personal union and the violation of the constitution by King Ernest Augustus. In the long term, however, and especially under George V, the recovery of the fullness of autocratic power and freedom of action proved to be a pyrrhic victory for the monarchy. The king's loss of reality, which manifested itself in historically justified caricatures of monarchical competences, among other things, led to the demise of the Hanoverian monarchy in 1866 and its descent into insignificance.

Altered Scopes of Action and a New Self-Conception? German Monarchs in the Nineteenth Century.

By Hans-Werner HAHN

p. 83

Even if the nineteenth century has been characterised as the century of the bourgeoisie and it was above all bourgeois forces that advanced economic, societal and political shifts, the monarchy still remained the dominant form of rule in Europe. The rise of bourgeois forces and the economic changes resulting from the beginnings of industrialisation, however, confronted the monarchical form of rule with new challenges. The bourgeoisie demanded political participation guaranteed by the constitution and ultimately promoted as a major reform pledge the idea of the nation state, by means of which an egalitarian social order, political participation and economic affluence were to be achieved. This was regarded by many German monarchs as a threat to their position as sovereign. This article poses the question as to how the German monarchs reacted to the new challenges, why many of them succeeded for a long time in stabilising their position and why the monarchy in Germany nonetheless abruptly disappeared from the political stage in autumn 1918.

The Card Index of the Political Police / Gestapo Office in Osnabrück, 1929–1945.

By Sebastian WEITKAMP

p. 107

The Gestapo was among the most important organs of repression under National Socialism for the implementation of the regime's measures of terror against the populace and for the stabilisation of the regime. In contrast to its importance, substantiated, comprehensive accounts on the workings and composition of this state police force are rare in the literature, especially where the local state police offices are concerned. This is above all a result of a lack of source material. Owing to wartime losses and the intentional destruction of files, the availability of archival documents on the Gestapo is meagre. Alongside very few collections with case files, only six central card indexes have survived in Germany. Among the largest of these is that of the Osnabrück Gestapo with approximately 50,000 cards. Sebastian Weitkamp explains its structure and nature, as well as the functions of the card index. For the Gestapo officials, it constituted an essential tool for recording tendencies 'hostile to the state' and, in this way, for controlling the populace. The card index can help scholars to reconstruct the activities of the Gestapo in the field.

Memories of the Allied Air War in Hanover: A Local Analysis in European Comparison.

By Corinne BOUILLLOT

p. 129

Contrary to the theory that the air attacks on Germany had long since been forgotten and repressed, new academic studies were able to demonstrate in European comparison that the cities affected recalled the air war intensely and indeed already at an early stage. With reference to this research and by means of an analysis of memorial events and sites, as well as press reports, this article provides a case study on Hanover. The narrative of the 'rebirth' of the city after the 'catastrophe', which was already supplied under National Socialism and rediscovered during the period of reconstruction, the establishment of the destroyed Aegidius Church as a memorial to the air war in the 1950s and the mobilisation of memories of the bombing war for pacifist purposes, especially at the time of the conclusion of the city partnership with Hiroshima, are examined here. Long before the 'boom of memory' over the past twenty years, the memorialisation of the air war in Hanover, as in other European and German cities, shaped local identity.

The Institutional and Staffing Reconstruction of Lower Saxon Labour Jurisdiction after the Second World War.

By Werner KIND-KRÜGER

p. 147

Starting with the legal foundations provided in Control Council Law No. 21 from 30 March 1946, the institutional reconstruction of labour jurisdiction in Lower Saxony as an independent specialised jurisdiction outside the framework of the regular courts is first of all portrayed. By evaluating surviving personnel files, the biographical backgrounds of the 36 labour judges appointed in the years 1946 to 1952 or envisaged for appointment by the federal state government are then established. This yields a clear heterogeneity regarding school education, qualifications and previous employment history, especially for the early years. An analysis of incrimination under National Socialism revealed that among those labour judges appointed in 1946 only a few were former members of the NSDAP, whereas almost all of those judges appointed after 1947 had belonged to the NSDAP. Incrimination under National Socialism beyond Party membership, however, can only be established in individual cases on the basis of the files.

The Founding of the Lower Saxony Foundation, 1986/87: Structural Politics vs Cultural Sponsorship in the Albrecht Era.

By Thomas VOGTHERR

p. 191

The article describes and analyses the circumstances surrounding the founding of the Lower Saxony Foundation by the Lower Saxon Governor Ernst Albrecht (1976–90). The foundation was created with the proceeds from the sale of the federal state's shares in the Oldenburg Regional Bank and was intended to allocate funds for the promotion of science, research, art and education. It began its activities in 1987. This had been preceded by intensive debates, above all between the Ministry of Economics and the Ministry of Science, regarding the practical orientation of the foundation, which could be constructed on the basis of files held so far by the institutions concerned and which allow for insights into the motives of those politically responsible at the time. Due to its alleged proximity to the ruling CDU, the foundation initially remained politically not uncontroversial, but was subsequently able to consolidate itself as the cultural foundation of the federal state.