DE GRUYTER
OLDENBOURG

PRIVACY IN EARLY MODERN SAXONY

PERSPECTIVES ON ARCHITECTURE, CULTURE, HEALTH, LAW, AND RELIGION

Edited by Natacha Klein Käfer, Paolo Astorri, Søren F. Jensen, Natalie P. Körner, and Mette Birkedal Bruun

DE G

Privacy in Early Modern Saxony

Privacy in Early Modern Saxony

Perspectives on Architecture, Culture, Health, Law, and Religion

Edited by
Natacha Klein Käfer, Paolo Astorri, Søren Frank Jensen, Natalie Patricia Körner, and Mette Birkedal Bruun

DE GRUYTER
OLDENBOURG

The publication was funded bei the Danish National Research Foundation (DNRF138) and the Royal Danish Academy – Architecture, Design, Conservation.

ISBN 978-3-11-126384-7
e-ISBN (PDF) 978-3-11-126477-6
e-ISBN (EPUB) 978-3-11-126525-4
DOI https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111264776

Library of Congress Control Number: 2024943408

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the internet at http://dnb.dnb.de.

Cover image: The manuscript: Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden, Loc. 10311/13, fol. 14v.; the cityscape: Matthäus Merian, Topographia Superioris Saxoniae, Thüringiae, Misniae et Lusatiae, Frankfurt, 1650; https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dresden_1650_Merian.jpg
Typesetting: Integra Software Services Pvt. Ltd.
Printing and binding: CPI books GmbH, Leck

www.degruyter.com

Acknowledgements

Privacy in Early Modern Saxony was produced at the Centre for Privacy Studies (PRIVACY), funded by the Danish National Research Foundation (DNRF138), a Centre of Research Excellence established in September 2017 and housed at the Faculty of Theology, University of Copenhagen, in collaboration with the Royal Danish Academy – Architecture, Design, Conservation. The volume was fostered by the interdisciplinary research environment at PRIVACY within the Dresden case team and has received the help of colleagues and researchers at the Centre from its inception. We would like to extend our gratitude to Sebastian Felten, Stephan Hoppe, Katrin Keller, Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, and Dustin Neighbors, who participated in the activities of the Dresden case team and contributed with important discussions regarding privacy in early modern Saxony. We would like to thank the Head of Administration, Maj Riis Poulsen, for the logistical support, research assistant David Lebovitch Dahl for his proofing skills, and Angana Moitra for the copy editing. Most of all, this book would not have happened without the openness of the authors, who engaged fully with the lens of analysis proposed by PRIVACY. *Privacy in Early Modern Saxony* is also deeply in debt to the external reviewers who evaluated the book. Finally, we would like to thank the team at De Gruyter for all their help.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111264776-202

Contents

Acknowledgements —— V

List of Figures —— IX

Natacha Klein Käfer, Paolo Astorri, Søren Frank Jensen, and Natalie Körner
Power, Concealment, and Knowledge: An Introduction to Privacy in Early Modern Saxony —— 1

Alisha Rankin
From Private Ritual to the Public Good: Childbirth and Midwifery in the Writings of Anna of Saxony (1532–85) —— 15

Søren Frank Jensen and Natacha Klein Käfer
Privacy and Healing between Public Discourse and Daily Practice: The Case of Anna of Saxony and Nikolaus Selnecker —— 41

Ariane Bartkowski
Alchemy and Privacy at the Court of Saxony in Dresden during the Sixteenth Century —— 59

Tara Nummedal
Intimate Entertainments: Andreas Orthelius' *Opera Philosophica* and Private Alchemical Practice —— 77

Natalie Körner
Privacy, Extraction, and Extreme Environments: The Miner, the Hermit, and the First Architect —— 97

Jan Siegemund
On Problems of Distinguishing Private from Political Libels: Three Cases from Electoral Saxony —— 129

Paolo Astorri
Private Marriages: A Case from the *Consultationes Constitutionum Saxonicarum* (1599–1601) —— 159

Mette Birkedal Bruun and Natalie Körner
Tracking Privacy in Early Modern Saxony: An Epilogue —— 175

List of Contributors —— 187

Index —— 189

List of Figures

Figure 1 Elector August of Saxony - Lucas Cranach the Younger (1515-1586), about 1565, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (SKD), Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, signature/ inventory No: 1947, SLUB Dresden/Deutsche Fotothek —— **62**
Figure 2 Electress Anna of Saxony, SLUB/ Deutsche Fotothek —— **65**
Figure 3 Emergency Money, Annaburg, 1921, private collection —— **68**
Figure 4 Annaburg Castle, author's picture —— **70**
Figure 5 Maier, Michael, "Atalanta fugiens (1618). Brown Olio. Brown Digital Repository. Brown University Library. https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:760169/ —— **84**
Figure 6 Annaberger Bergaltar of 1521, painted by Hans Hesse in 1521 on the back of the altar of St Anne's Church in Annaberg-Buchholz, Saxony (https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Annaberger-Bergaltar2.jpg) —— **100**
Figure 7 Woodcut depicting targeted fire, Agricola, De Re Metallica, 120, Wikimedia Commons (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fire-setting.jpg) —— **104**
Figure 8 Woodcut depicting descent into the mine, Agricola, De Re Metallica, 213, Wikimedia Commons (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Die_verschiedenen_Arten_der_Fahrung.png) —— **105**
Figure 9 Silver mining in Kutná Hora, 1490s, Illumination, Wikimedia Commons (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Silver_mining_in_Kutn%C3%A1_Hora_1490s.jpg) —— **107**
Figure 10 Woodcut depicting the miner below ground, Agricola, De Re Metallica, 104, Wikimedia Commons (File:Georgius Agricola De re metallica, tr. from the 1st Latin ed. of 1556, with biographical introduction, annotations and appendices upon the development of mining methods, metallurgical processes, BHL20212941.jpg - Wikimedia Commons) —— **108**
Figure 11 Woodcut depicting machine used for drawing water, Agricola, De Re Metallica, 199, Wikimedia Commons (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Agricola1.jpg) —— **119**
Figure 12 Antonio Averlino Filarete – Adam in Vitruvius: On the origins of architecture, c.1465 —— **122**
Figure 13 Bruun's heuristic zones of privacy —— **176**

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111264776-204

Natacha Klein Käfer, Paolo Astorri, Søren Frank Jensen,
and Natalie Körner

Power, Concealment, and Knowledge: An Introduction to Privacy in Early Modern Saxony

Privacy, here understood in the broad sense as a need to limit and control access to oneself, can be seen as an aspect of human life that has been sought across different periods and cultures.[1] The specificities of how humans experience privacy is, however, tied to particular social, legal, political, and personal circumstances. Especially when investigating privacy from a historical perspective, researchers need to account for shifting, malleable, and sometimes contradictory understandings of how 'privacies' manifested themselves in the past. While connecting to the broad human need to regulate interactions and access to information and resources, historical studies can use privacy as a catalyst to understand the particular dynamics of lived experiences.[2] Striking this balance between the contextual instances of privacy and its broader human need is a challenge not only for historians, but also for contemporary researchers in law, sociology, and psychology.[3] As such, focusing on privacy within regional studies can be revealing of how people have historically engaged with it in particular settings.

Early modern Saxony presents the perfect case for this exploration of a regional historical study of privacy. Throughout the sixteenth century, Saxony rose to prominence in the broader European context through the influence of its princes. Flourishing under the cultural and social influence of Electoral Prince Moritz (1521–1553) and subsequently that of his brother August (1526–1586) and August's wife, Anna of Saxony (1532–1585), Saxony – in particular, the capital city of Dresden – became a vibrant civic hub where scientific knowledge, religious identities, political power, and scholarly discourse intersected. Saxony is an emblematic

1 Kirsty Hughes, "A Behavioural Understanding of Privacy and Its Implications for Privacy Law," *The Modern Law Review* 75, no. 5 (September 2012): 806–36; Stephen T. Margulis, "Privacy as a Social Issue and Behavioral Concept," *Journal of Social Issues* 59, no. 2 (July 2003): 243–61.

2 Mette Birkedal Bruun, "Towards an Approach to Early Modern Privacy: The Retirement of the Great Condé," in *Early Modern Privacy: Sources and Approaches*, eds. Michaël Green, Lars Cyril Nørgaard, and Mette Birkedal Bruun (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2022), 12–60.

3 Susan C. Lawrence, *Privacy and the Past* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2016).

Note: Centre for Privacy Studies, University of Copenhagen. This research was supported by the Danish National Research Foundation (DNRF138).

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111264776-001

context to explore notions of privacy in the early modern period as the region underwent a range of transformations – religious, political, legal, and cultural – that reconfigured the thresholds between the private and the public.

Sixteenth-century Saxony witnessed the regulation and reorganisation of state and household in accordance with Lutheran ideals. This process is visible in the architecture of Dresden's castle and the life at court,[4] the social tissue of the electorate,[5] and the political-theological climate.[6] In the immediate post-Reformation era, the political centre in Dresden developed rapidly with impressive representational architecture. Confessionally fraught situations influenced the public and private spheres – for example, in the reformatory front against Catholics and the anti-Calvinist purges in the late sixteenth century. The case of Saxony also highlights the tension between legal protection of individuals and the community in the witchcraft trials issued by August and his councillors. Further attempts at defining or blurring the boundaries between public and private can be found in August's taxation of his subjects, his instructions for the *Geheimerat* (1574), and the guidelines for ducal and other households offered by the court preachers.

Accordingly, Saxony is a rich historical environment for interdisciplinary approaches. Court historians have dedicated careful studies to the Dresden court, examining Electoral correspondence and cartularies.[7] Religious and legal specialists have explored the confessional and normative transformations and controversies taking place in this region which witnessed precarious connections and powerful alliances with other Protestant principalities, the Holy Roman Empire,

4 Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, *Court Culture in Dresden: From Renaissance to Baroque* (Hampshire & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Renate Franke, *Das Dresdner Schloss: Monument sächsischer Geschichte und Kultur* (Dresden: Dresden Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, 1989).

5 Matthias Meinhardt, *Dresden im Wandel: Raum und Bevölkerung der Stadt im Residenzbildungsprozess des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2009).

6 Wolfgang Sommer, *Die lutherischen Hofprediger in Dresden: Grundzüge ihrer Geschichte und Verkündigung im Kurfürstentum Sachsen* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2006).

7 Pernille Arenfeldt, "The Political Role of the Consort in Protestant Germany, 1550–1585: Anna of Saxony as 'Mater Patriae'" (PhD diss., European University Institute, 2006); Katrin Keller, "Kommunikationsraum Altes Reich: Zur Funktionalität der Korrespondenznetze von Fürstinnen im 16. Jahrhundert," *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 31, no. 2 (2004): 205–30; Katrin Keller, "Die sächsischen Kurfürstinnen in der zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts—Familie und Politik," in *Die sächsischen Kurfürsten während des Religionsfriedens von 1555 bis 1618*, ed. Helmar Junghans (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2007), 279–96; Katrin Keller, *Kurfürstin Anna von Sachsen (1532–1585)* (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 2010); Katrin Keller, "Die Kurfürstin im Alten Reich: Korrespondenz und Klientel im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert," *Neues Archiv für sächsische Geschichte* 83 (2012): 189–206; Watanabe-O'Kelly, *Court Culture in Dresden*; Dustin M. Neighbors and Natacha Klein Käfer, "Zones of Privacy in Letters between Women of Power: Elizabeth I of England and Anna of Saxony," *Royal Studies Journal* 9, no. 1 (June 2022): 60–89.

and other European territories.[8] The Electoral alchemical endeavours, especially under Anna and August of Saxony, are subjects of historical fascination, considered exemplary of the courtly importance of alchemy in the early modern period.[9] The architectural developments, especially regarding the Saxon palaces, have attracted scholarly attention.[10] Given this multiplicity of possible angles to explore early modern privacy in its religious, political, social, and intellectual elements, this volume can highlight the value of zooming in on a particular context,

8 Irene Crusius, "'Nicht calvinisch, nicht lutherisch': Zu Humanismus, Philippismus und Kryptocalvinismus in Sachsen am Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte—Archive for Reformation History* 99, no. 1 (January 2008): 139–174, https://doi.org/10.14315/arg-2008-0108; Irene Dingel, "'Controversia et Confessio'—The Culture of Controversy Leading to Confessional Consolidation in the Late Sixteenth Century" *Tidsskrift for Teologi og Kirke* 80, no. 4 (January 2010): 266–76, https://doi.org/10.18261/ISSN1504-2952-2009-04-03; Hans-Peter Hasse, *Zensur theologischer Bücher in Kursachsen im konfessionellen Zeitalter: Studien zur kursächsischen Literatur- und Religionspolitik in den Jahren 1569 bis 1575*, Arbeiten zur Kirchen- und Theologiegeschichte 5 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlaganstalt, 2000); Hans-Peter Hasse and Guenther Wartenberg, *Caspar Peucer (1525–1602): Wissenschaft, Glaube und Politik im konfessionellen Zeitalter* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlaganstalt, 2004); Robert Kolb, *Caspar Peucer's Library: Portrait of a Wittenberg Professor of the Mid-Sixteenth Century* (St Louis: Center for Reformation Research, 1976).

9 Pernille Arenfeldt, "Wissensproduktion und Wissensverbreitung im 16. Jahrhundert: Fürstinnen als Mittlerinnen von Wissenstraditionen," *Historische Anthropologie* 20, no. 1 (January 2012): 4–28, https://doi.org/10.7788/ha.2012.20.1.4; Ariane Bartkowski, *Fürstliche Laborpartner in der alchemistischen Praxis: Das Netzwerk des Kurfürstenpaares August (1526–1586) und Anna (1532–1585) von Sachsen* (Görlitz: Verlag Gunter Oettel, 2017); Bruce T. Moran, "German Prince-Practitioners: Aspects in the Development of Courtly Science, Technology, and Procedures in the Renaissance," *Technology and Culture* 22, no. 2 (April 1981): 253–74, https://doi.org/10.2307/3104900; Tara Nummedal, *Alchemy and Authority in the Holy Roman Empire* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Alisha Rankin, "Becoming an Expert Practitioner: Court Experimentalism and the Medical Skills of Anna of Saxony (1532–1585)," *Isis* 98, no. 1 (March 2007): 23–53, https://doi.org/10.1086/512830; Alisha Rankin, "Empirics, Physicians, and Wonder Drugs in Early Modern Germany: The Case of the Panacea Amwaldina," *Early Science and Medicine* 14, no. 6 (November 2009): 680–710, https://doi.org/10.1163/138374209X12542104913920; Alisha Rankin, *Panaceia's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

10 André Fester, Rosemarie Pohlack, Claudia Kemna, Heinrich Magirius, and Norbert Oelsner, eds., *Das Residenzschloss zu Dresden: Die Schlossanlage der Renaissance und ihre frühbarocken Um- und Ausgestaltungen*, vol. 2 (Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2019); Matthias Müller, *Das Schloss als Bild des Fürsten: herrschaftliche Metaphorik in der Residenzarchitektur des Alten Reichs (1470–1618)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004); Stephan Hoppe, "Anatomy of an Early 'Villa' in Central Europe: The Schloss and Garden of the Saxon Elector Frederick the Wise in Lochau (Annaburg) according to the 1519 Report of Hans Herzheimer," in *Maisons des champs dans l'Europe de la Renaissance*, ed. Monique Chatenet (Paris: Picard, 2006).

such as Saxony, to tease out how people were able to develop, negotiate, or violate privacy in the past.

Therefore, this specific historical context enables this volume to situate Saxony on the map of growing interest in studies of privacy in the early modern period. In the wake of the publication of the *Histoire de la vie privée*,[11] the seminal study on the long-term history of the private edited by Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby, scholars such as Lena Cowen Orlin and Michael McKeon have revived discussions on the 'private sphere' in the early modern period with their studies on privacy in Tudor London and the history of domesticity respectively.[12] Recent works have displayed a significant shift in focus from a sharp division between a public and a private sphere to a broader understanding of privacy as a dynamic and intrinsic part of human experience and practice.[13] Moreover, the study of privacy has greatly benefited from adopting an interdisciplinary approach, pioneered by such works as the 2018 *Handbook of Privacy Studies*[14] and by such initiatives as the Centre for Privacy Studies based at the University of Copenhagen.[15]

Following these interdisciplinary approaches, this volume will address religious, legal, spatial, and intellectual aspects of privacy in early modern Saxony. Focusing on this context subject to confessional, political, and environmental crises, we aim to dissect how people negotiated or challenged forms of privacy and how the idea of the 'private' was adapted to address particular processes, events, and cultural trends.

1.1 Privacy and Religion in Early Modern Saxony

Early modern Saxony offers a rich case for exploring the thresholds between public worship and private devotion in the aftermath of the Lutheran Reformation. Saxony embodies the overarching religious transformations of the period, and the case allows us to study particular sources that shed light on how individuals navigated a confessional landscape that was continually reshaped as theological

11 Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby, *Histoire de la vie privée*, 5 vols. (Paris: Seuil, 1985).

12 Lena Cowen Orlin, *Locating Privacy in Tudor London* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).

13 Margulis, "Privacy as a Social Issue," 244; Hughes, "Behavioural Understanding of Privacy," 6.

14 Bart van der Sloot and Aviva de Groot, *The Handbook of Privacy Studies: An Interdisciplinary Introduction* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018).

15 The Centre for Privacy Studies was created in 2017 and is funded by the Danish National Research Foundation (DNRF138). For more information, see https://teol.ku.dk/privacy/, accessed 28 June 2024.

ideals intersected with court politics, print industry, and the everyday lives of, for instance, midwives, court preachers, and alchemists.

In the course of the sixteenth century, Elector John Frederick protected Martin Luther and supported the Reformation, Elector Moritz fought alongside the emperor against his confessional allies in the Schmalkaldic War (1546–1547), and Elector August was a key driver in the process that led to the Formula of Concord (1577). At the universities in Wittenberg and Leipzig, students were prepared for pastoral offices and doctrinal issues were hotly debated. The printing presses in Wittenberg and Leipzig churned out thousands of religious publications that simultaneously articulated religious ideals and aspired to regulate religious discourse and practice.[16] Some of these books were large and intended for congregational worship whereas others contained all the religious knowledge that was necessary to facilitate the devotional life of the Lutheran household. Still others were of a smaller format, which indicates that they were read in private.[17] Independent of the materiality of the volumes, these publications are replete with examples that cut across any simple division between public and private. In their reading, the solitary reader might become part of a community of believers; conversely, however, the heart of the participant in the midst of congregational worship remains inaccessible to public scrutiny. Religious prints render the boundaries between public and private worship and between individual and communal permeable.[18] In this volume, we will see how people from different spheres of early modern society sought religious privacy while navigating a confessional landscape in constant flux.

16 The Reformation has been described as a "media event." See Berndt Hamm, "Die Reformation als Medienereignis," *Jahrbuch für biblische Theologie* 11 (1996): 137–166.

17 For a recent study that emphasises the importance of materiality in print culture, see Thomas Kaufmann, *Die Mitte der Reformation: Eine Studie zu Buchdruck und Publizistik im deutschen Sprachgebiet, zu ihren Akteuren und deren Strategien, Inszenierungs- und Ausdrucksformen* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019). See also Margaret Ashton, "Lap Books and Lectern Books: The Revelatory Book in the Reformation," *Studies in Church History* 38 (2004): 163–189.

18 Mette Birkedal Bruun, "Privacy in Early Modern Christianity and Beyond: Traces and Approaches," *Annali dell'Istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento/Jahrbuch des italienisch-deutschen historischen Instituts in Trient* 44, no. 2 (2018): 43. See also Søren Frank Jensen, "Nikolaus Selnecker's *Psalterbuch*, 1563–1623: Addressing the Public—Voicing the Private" (PhD diss., University of Copenhagen, 2023).

1.2 Legal Understandings of Privacy and the Private in Early Modern Saxony

The Lutheran Reformation reshaped the distinction between public and private. Starting from Lutheran social, legal, and political theory, a new emphasis was placed on the household, the public authority, and the church. According to Luther, God created two realms or kingdoms – the spiritual kingdom and the earthly kingdom. The spiritual kingdom was ruled by Jesus Christ through the Word revealed in scripture. It was a kingdom of faith and love, and it was invisible. People joined the spiritual kingdom through faith. On the other hand, the earthly kingdom was ruled by the prince or magistrate, and it was based on the law and the sword.[19] Every Christian was both citizen of the earthly kingdom and the spiritual kingdom. On the one hand, a citizen was redeemed by faith. On the other hand, he was submitted to the authority of the magistrate and other institutions of the earthly kingdom. In the earthly kingdom, God ordained three orders or governments – the *ordo economicus* (family), *ordo politicus* (political authority), and *ordo ecclesiasticus* (ecclesiastical authority).[20] The three orders represented God's authority in the earthly kingdom and reflected God's power to preserve life and order in the world.

In this context, the ruler, the parents, and the pastors assumed a special role as manifesting God's authority in the world. As 'public' authorities, they would rule over and educate the 'private' citizens. In broad terms, the association between public and divine became stronger than previously. For example, in the medieval period, the adjective *publicus* could be attributed to the Pope and to the emperor while *personae privatae* referred to their subjects. The church no longer had any jurisdiction, priestly hierarchy was abolished, and many of the ecclesiastical functions passed on to the State. The magistrate remained the only public authority with jurisdictional powers. The office or function of the magistrate was divinely instituted to govern the world. Therefore, the subjects – the so-called *privati* – should obey him.[21]

By principle, the *pater familias* was the leader of the household and exercised his jurisdiction on his children, servants, and his wife. He was also a public authority and all members of the household had to obey him. His consent was a crucial element for

19 William J. Wright, *Martin Luther's Understanding of God's Two Kingdoms: A Response to the Challenge of Skepticism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010); A. Carty, *God and Government: Martin Luther's Political Thought* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017).

20 John Witte, Jr., *Law and Protestantism: The Legal Teachings of the Lutheran Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 89–94.

21 Paolo Astorri and Lars Cyril Nørgaard, "Publicus–privatus: The Divine Foundations of Authority in Dietrich Reinking," *Journal of Early Modern Christianity* 9, no. 1 (2022): 93–119.

contracting a new marriage.[22] However, his jurisdiction was limited to his household and only covered small offences. Serious crimes were to be denounced to the magistrate.[23] The relationship between the individual and God was formerly based on the role of the priests. Conversely, for the Lutherans, a person was responsible for their actions in front of God without any decisive intermediation of priests. Persons were strictly dependent on their conscience as the source of their decisions.[24] In this volume, the interplay between religion and law will be highlighted since it shaped what people understood as private and regulated people's behaviours, both in public matters, such as reputation, and in private issues, such as intimate relationships.

1.3 Spatial Privacy in Early Modern Saxony

Early modern society was structured along presence – face-to-face interaction – and the aim of proximity to persons of power.[25] There was a high degree of spatial and social proximity to a host of co-creators of everyday life activities, such as domestic staff, labourers, neighbours, or courtiers. The spatial thresholds, such as doors and windows, "flexible in their degree of permeability – were an important tool for regulating co-presence."[26] During the early modern period, the stylised trope of the desert father, portrayed as solitarily withdrawn into a simple chamber or hut, became a model for many professional and social groups that sought to carve out space and time away from the collective.[27] The study and the closet for private use became increasingly common room typologies.[28]

---

22 Paolo Astorri, "The Redefinition of Clandestine Marriage by Sixteenth-Century Lutheran Theologians and Jurists," *Law and History Review* 41 (2023): 65–92.

23 Paolo Astorri and Lars Cyril Nørgaard, "A Little Republic: The Conceptualisation of the Household According to Henning Arnisaeus," in *Reformation and Everyday Life*, eds. Bo Kristian Holm and Nina J. Koefoed (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2024), 195–219.

24 Paolo Astorri, "Can a Judge Rely on his Private Knowledge? Early Modern Lutherans and Catholics Compared," *Comparative Legal History* 9, no. 1 (2021): 56–88.

25 Rudolf Schlögl, *Anwesende und Abwesende: Grundriss für eine Gesellschaftsgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit* (Constance: Konstanz University Press, 2014).

26 Natalie P. Körner and Johannes Ljungberg, "Experiencing Intrusion: Smashed Windows as Violations of Privacy in the University Town of Helmstedt, 1684–1706," *Architectural Histories* 11, no. 1 (December 2023): https://doi.org/10.16995/ah.9241.

27 Christine Göttler, "Realms of Solitude in Late Medieval and Early Modern European Cultures: An Introduction," in *Solitudo: Spaces, Places, and Times of Solitude in Late Medieval and Early Modern Cultures*, eds. Karl A. E. Enenkel and Christine Göttler (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2018), 1–28. See also Natalie P. Körner's contribution in this book.

28 Orlin, *Locating Privacy in Tudor London*.

However, people had to navigate the tensions between, on the one hand, the social obligations and desire to form an integral part of the collective and, on the other, to spend time alone – as, for example, in prayer or scholarly pursuits. In this volume, spatial privacy will be explored from bedchambers to the subterranean realm of the Saxon mines. Readers might be surprised to find that the spaces we tend to associate with privacy – such as bedrooms – were actually subject to a significant amount of public presence and scrutiny.[29] Conversely, spaces that we might consider public – such as parks and the outdoors – were the ones where people could carve out a modicum of privacy.[30] Therefore, how private a space could be depended on a variety of factors – time of day, temporary divisions, as well as how people sharing the area would allow each other privacy by not paying attention or shielding each other with their bodies or sounds.[31] Our contributions demonstrate the panoply of ways in which people could create, negotiate, and inhabit private spaces in early modern Saxony.

1.4 Privacy and Knowledge in Early Modern Saxony

Early modern Saxony, with the Electors' efforts to elevate their principality to the highest standards of the intellectual circles at the time, presents a perfect opportunity to investigate the entanglement between privacy and knowledge. Considering that knowledge usually only becomes validated when shared, it tends to be historically researched in its propagation through knowledge networks and within society. However, recent studies have highlighted the role of privacy in knowledge making.[32] Especially in the creation and testing stages, people – both today and in

29 Mathieu Laflamme, "Entering the Bedroom through the Judicial Archives: Sexual Intimacy in Eighteenth-Century Toulouse," in Green, Nørgaard, and Bruun, *Early Modern Privacy*, 194–212.

30 Sanne De Laat and Dan Harms, "'It's a Kind of Magic': Juggling Privacy and Prosecution for Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century English Magical Practitioners," *KNOW: A Journal on the Formation of Knowledge* 7, no. 1 (2023): 113–35.

31 Natacha Klein Käfer, "Dynamics of Privacy at Sea: An Introduction to Privacy Studies in Maritime History," in *Privacy at Sea: Practices, Spaces, and Communication in Maritime History*, ed. Natacha Klein Käfer (Cham: Springer International, 2024), 1–17.

32 Natália da Silva Perez and Natacha Klein Käfer, "Between Concealment and Disclosure: Approaches to the History of Privacy in Knowledge-Making," *KNOW: A Journal on the Formation of Knowledge* 7, no. 1 (2023): 1–9.

the past – usually prefer to have a level of privacy to rehearse, experiment, and fail in their knowledge pursuits.[33] In the Saxon Electoral court, this privacy could be achieved in libraries, studies, and laboratories, although these spaces were usually shared with other knowledge producers and workers. Less than isolated environments, these spaces at court enabled a controlled area where knowledge could be concealed or disclosed according to particular needs.

These dynamics of concealment and disclosure were, nevertheless, not created equal; status, gender, political and religious pressures, as well as personal relationships played a large role in how people could negotiate their privacy in knowledge production. In the early modern period, women had to abide by rules of decorum and gender expectations in order to have their knowledge recognised and to escape scrutiny in their scholarly and practical pursuits.[34] On the other hand, they could also leverage their knowledge of private information to influence political and intellectual networks.[35] Meanwhile, even the princes needed to keep some of their knowledge exercises in private in order to navigate the pressures of religious orthodoxy, confessional controversies, and competition in technological, economic, and intellectual fields.[36] In this volume, these strategies will be explored through the investigation of particular cases of alchemical experimentation, midwifery, mining, legal procedure, and those located at the intersection of medical and religious knowledge.

1.5 The Contributions to this Volume

Tracing notions of privacy in early modern Saxony requires that we take into account a variety of sources. The contributions to this volume investigate letters, inventories, treatises, iconography, pamphlets, sermons, medical and alchemical writings, and material culture. Careful readings of these sources reveal extant traces of how people experienced, negotiated, protected, or challenged privacy. This tapestry of sources indicates that our investigation of early modern privacy demands a multidisciplinary approach. In this volume, we are privileged to work with special-

33 Natacha Klein Käfer and Natália da Silva Perez, "Privacy and Knowledge Production in the Early Modern Period," *KNOW: A Journal on the Formation of Knowledge* 8, no. 1 (2024): 1–9.

34 Natacha Klein Käfer and Natália da Silva Perez, *Women's Private Practices of Knowledge Production in Early Modern Europe* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2024).

35 Neighbors and Käfer, "Zones of Privacy," 88.

36 Natacha Klein Käfer, "Excising Superstition from Knowledge: August of Saxony's Book of Healing Charms," *KNOW: A Journal on the Formation of Knowledge* 8, no. 1 (2024): 103–130.

ists in court, epistolary, alchemical, legal, religious, medical, cultural, and architectural history. Each of these scholars deploys the analytical methods and contextual frameworks of their distinct research fields. This variety implies that while this volume offers a multidimensional study of early modern Saxony, it also shows how the search for notions of privacy is conducted within different scholarly domains.

The volume opens with a thorough investigation of the complex relationship of Electress Anna of Saxony with the arts of midwifery. Alisha Rankin demonstrates how a powerful noblewoman and mother such as Anna had to navigate the expectations and stereotypes regarding midwifery in Saxony, acting both as a ruler concerned with the conditions of childbirth in her territory and as a childbearing woman who had to intimately deal with the act of giving birth, its rituals, and dangers. This manoeuvring of public expectations and private experiences shows how certain practices of childbirth were best kept out of the public eye.

Turning to privacy at the intersection of healing practices and Lutheran religious ideals, Søren Frank Jensen and Natacha Klein Käfer investigate the interactions between Anna of Saxony and the former court preacher, Nikolaus Selnecker. Anna was a recognised healer with extensive experience in alchemical, herbal, and experimental procedures while Selnecker was an influential theologian who preached devotion as a precondition for good health. In their correspondence, Selnecker stands by Anna's practices and requests her remedies for his own health concerns. Navigating the contentious confessional environment of sixteenth-century Saxony, both Anna and Selnecker had to make use of private exchanges to collaboratively deal with illness, faith, and the interplay between health and religion. Their interactions, in which private bonds played a central role, present the intricacies of religious devotion as public discourse in contrast to daily practice.

Next, Ariane Bartkowski focuses on Anna and August of Saxony, investigating the Electoral couple's alchemical networks and their connection to privacy. She digs deep into the circulation of knowledge, books, instruments, and substances at their court, probing the couple's use of secrecy to keep their alchemical endeavours private by looking at their inventories, book collections, residences, and laboratories. In this chapter, privacy is dissected in terms of its importance to knowledge pursuits. Privacy is also explored in its symbolic connection to secrecy as a way to add value and meaning to alchemical endeavours.

Looking further at the Electoral laboratories, this time under the rule of Elector Johann Georg I, Tara Nummedal explores how Andreas Orthelius connected privacy to his alchemical practice. His strategies of concealment of materials and substances simultaneously protected his activities and enhanced the value of his alchemical discoveries. Nummedal shifts from the scale of the alchemical flask to the broader Saxon landscape to show how privacy factored in alchemical work in seventeenth-century Saxony.

Natalie Körner's chapter uses an architectural lens to explore how privacy and mining intersected in early modern Saxony. It examines the idea of solitude in the mines, the remoteness of the mining expeditions, the architectural affordance of the miners' huts, and how the tensions of these environments were translated into encounters with the folkloric figure, the 'Wild Man.' This chapter also analyses the relationship between the miners' huts or the structure of the mine and the workers' bodily conditions, thus demonstrating the tension between private and public spaces in state-run mines.

People of all strata had to navigate the thresholds of public reputation and private life in early modern Saxony. Following the legal traces of libel litigations, Jan Siegemund presents the conflicting instances of private affairs brought to the public forefront when rumours entered public networks of communication. Addressing two representative cases – one in Dresden in 1569 and one in Zwickau in the 1590s – Siegemund demonstrates what people understood as public and what they wanted to protect as private in everyday life.

One of the most important aspects of the Reformation involved marriage law. The Reformers reshaped the dynamics between family and marriage. Clandestine/private marriages, which were condemned but considered to be valid by the Catholics, were now forbidden. New marriage ordinances issued by August of Saxony enforced the ideas of the Reformers. Paolo Astorri's chapter focuses on the problems created by this new legislation in the practice of the courts and how they were solved by the jurists. These problems reflect the tension between the aspiration of young couples for privacy and the increasing governance of marriage as a public institution.

The range of research gathered in this volume opens a window into the rich cultural and social landscape of early modern Saxony and reveals the nuanced and inextricable role played by privacy in manifold aspects of everyday life. It demonstrates how people were able to adjust their desires, expectations, and suspicions of privacy in an environment marked by political, religious, intellectual, and environmental changes. Here, the reader will encounter a multiplicity of experiences that highlight that privacy was a malleable, contentious, and relational notion which could be enforced or challenged within the unique circumstances that people in early modern Saxony had to face.

Bibliography

Arendt, Hannah, Danielle S. Allen, and Margaret Canovan. *The Human Condition*. 2nd ed. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2018.

Arenfeldt, Pernille. "The Political Role of the Consort in Protestant Germany, 1550–1585: Anna of Saxony as 'Mater Patriae.'" PhD diss., European University Institute, 2006.

Arenfeldt, Pernille. "Wissensproduktion und Wissensverbreitung im 16. Jahrhundert: Fürstinnen als Mittlerinnen von Wissenstraditionen." *Historische Anthropologie* 20, no. 1 (January 2012): 4–28. https://doi.org/10.7788/ha.2012.20.1.4.

Ariès, Philippe, and Georges Duby. *Histoire de la vie privée*. 5 vols. Paris: Seuil, 1985.

Ashton, Margaret. "Lap Books and Lectern Books: The Revelatory Book in the Reformation." *Studies in Church History* 38 (2004): 163–89.

Astorri, Paolo. "Can a Judge Rely on his Private Knowledge? Early Modern Lutherans and Catholics Compared." *Comparative Legal History* 9, no. 1 (2021): 56–88.

Astorri, Paolo. "The Redefinition of Clandestine Marriage by Sixteenth-Century Lutheran Theologians and Jurists." *Law and History Review* 41 (2023): 65–92.

Astorri, Paolo, and Lars Cyril Nørgaard. "A Little Republic: The Conceptualisation of the Household according to Henning Arnisaeus." In *Reformation and Everyday Life*, edited by Bo Kristian Holm and Nina J. Koefoed, 195–219. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2024.

Astorri, Paolo, and Lars Cyril Nørgaard. "Publicus–privatus: The Divine Foundations of Authority in Dietrich Reinking." *Journal of Early Modern Christianity* 9, no. 1 (2022): 93–119.

Bartkowski, Ariane. *Fürstliche Laborpartner in der alchemistischen Praxis das Netzwerk des Kurfürstenpaares August (1526–1586) und Anna (1532–1585) von Sachsen*. Görlitz: Verlag Gunter Oettel, 2017.

Bruun, Mette Birkedal. "Towards an Approach to Early Modern Privacy: The Retirement of the Great Condé." In *Early Modern Privacy: Sources and Approaches*, edited by Michaël Green, Lars Cyril Nørgaard, and Mette Birkedal Bruun, 12–60. Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2022.

Bruun, Mette Birkedal. "Privacy in Early Modern Christianity and Beyond: Traces and Approaches." *Annali dell'Istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento/Jahrbuch des italienisch-deutschen historischen Instituts in Trient* 44, no. 2 (2018): 33–54.

Carty, A. *God and Government: Martin Luther's Political Thought*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017.

Crusius, Irene. "'Nicht calvinisch, nicht lutherisch': Zu Humanismus, Philippismus und Kryptocalvinismus in Sachsen am Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts." *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte – Archive for Reformation History* 99, no. 1 (January 2008): 139–74. https://doi.org/10.14315/arg-2008-0108.

Dingel, Irene. "'Controversia et Confessio' – The Culture of Controversy Leading to Confessional Consolidation in the Late Sixteenth Century." *Tidsskrift for Teologi og Kirke* 80, no. 4 (January 2010): 266–76. https://doi.org/10.18261/ISSN1504-2952-2009-04-03.

Fester, André, Rosemarie Pohlack, Claudia Kemna, Heinrich Magirius, and Norbert Oelsner, eds. *Das Residenzschloss zu Dresden: Die Schlossanlage der Renaissance und ihre frühbarocken Um- und Ausgestaltungen*. Vol. 2. Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2019.

Franke, Renate. *Das Dresdner Schloss: Monument sächsischer Geschichte und Kultur*. Dresden: Dresden Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, 1989.

Göttler, Christine. “Realms of Solitude in Late Medieval and Early Modern European Cultures: An Introduction.” In *Solitudo: Spaces, Places, and Times of Solitude in Late Medieval and Early Modern Cultures*, edited by Karl A. E. Enenkel and Christine Göttler, 1–28. Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2018.

Habermas, Jürgen. *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*. Darmstadt: Luchterhand, 1962.

Hamm, Berndt. “Die Reformation als Medienereignis.” *Jahrbuch für biblische Theologie* 11 (1996): 137–66.

Hasse, Hans-Peter, and Guenther Wartenberg. Caspar Peucer (1525–1602): Wissenschaft, Glaube und Politik im konfessionellen Zeitalter. Leipzig: Evangelische Verlaganstalt, 2004.

Hasse, Hans-Peter. *Zensur theologischer Bücher in Kursachsen im konfessionellen Zeitalter: Studien zur kursächsischen Literatur- und Religionspolitik in den Jahren 1569 bis 1575*. Arbeiten zur Kirchen- und Theologiegeschichte 5. Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2000.

Hoppe, Stephan. “Anatomy of an Early ‘Villa’ in Central Europe: The Schloss and Garden of the Saxon Elector Frederick the Wise in Lochau (Annaburg) According to the 1519 Report of Hans Herzheimer.” In *Maisons des champs dans l’Europe de la Renaissance*, edited by Monique Chatenet, 159–70. Paris: Picard, 2006.

Hughes, Kirsty. “A Behavioural Understanding of Privacy and Its Implications for Privacy Law.” *The Modern Law Review* 75, no. 5 (September 2012): 806–36. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2230.2012.00925.x.

Jensen, Søren Frank. “Nikolaus Selnecker’s Psalterbuch, 1563–1623: Addressing the Public – Voicing the Private.” PhD diss., University of Copenhagen, 2023.

Kaufmann, Thomas. *Die Mitte der Reformation: Eine Studie zu Buchdruck und Publizistik im deutschen Sprachgebiet, zu ihren Akteuren und deren Strategien, Inszenierungs- und Ausdrucksformen*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019.

Keller, Katrin. “Die Kurfürstin im Alten Reich: Korrespondenz und Klientel im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert.” *Neues Archiv für sächsische Geschichte* 83 (2012): 189–206.

Keller, Katrin. “Die sächsischen Kurfürstinnen in der zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts – Familie und Politik.” In *Die sächsischen Kurfürsten während des Religionsfriedens von 1555 bis 1618*, edited by Helmar Junghans, 279–96. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2007.

Keller, Katrin. “Kommunikationsraum Altes Reich: Zur Funktionalität der Korrespondenznetze von Fürstinnen im 16. Jahrhundert.” *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 31, no. 2 (2004): 205–30.

Keller, Katrin. *Kurfürstin Anna von Sachsen (1532–1585)*. Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 2010.

Keulen, Sjoerd, and Ronald Kroeze. “Privacy from a Historical Perspective.” In *The Handbook of Privacy Studies: An Interdisciplinary Introduction*, edited by Bart van der Sloot and Aviva de Groot, 21–56. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018.

Körner, Natalie, and Johannes Ljungberg. “Experiencing Intrusion: Smashed Windows as Violations of Privacy in the University Town of Helmstedt, 1684–1706.” *Architectural Histories* 11, no. 1 (December 2023). https://doi.org/10.16995/ah.9241.

Kolb, Robert. *Caspar Peucer’s Library: Portrait of a Wittenberg Professor of the Mid-Sixteenth Century*. Saint Louis: Center for Reformation Research, 1976.

Lawrence, Susan C. *Privacy and the Past*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2016.

Margulis, Stephen T. “Privacy as a Social Issue and Behavioral Concept.” *Journal of Social Issues* 59, no. 2 (July 2003): 243–61. https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-4560.00063.

McKeon, Michael. *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005.

Meinhardt, Matthias. *Dresden im Wandel*: *Raum und Bevölkerung der Stadt im Residenzbildungsprozess des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2009.

Moran, Bruce T. "German Prince-Practitioners: Aspects in the Development of Courtly Science, Technology, and Procedures in the Renaissance." *Technology and Culture* 22, no. 2 (April 1981): 253–74. https://doi.org/10.2307/3104900.

Müller, Matthias. *Das Schloss als Bild des Fürsten: herrschaftliche Metaphorik in der Residenzarchitektur des Alten Reichs (1470–1618)*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004.

Käfer, Natacha Klein, and Natália da Silva Perez. *Women's Private Practices of Knowledge Production in Early Modern Europe*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2024.

Käfer, Natacha Klein. "Excising Superstition from Knowledge: August of Saxony's Book of Healing Charms." *KNOW: A Journal on the Formation of Knowledge* 8, no. 1 (2024): 103–130.

Käfer, Natacha Klein and Natália da Silva Perez. "Privacy and Knowledge Production in the Early Modern Period." *KNOW: A Journal on the Formation of Knowledge* 8, no. 1 (2024): 1–9.

Neighbors, Dustin M., and Natacha Klein Käfer. "Zones of Privacy in Letters between Women of Power: Elizabeth I of England and Anna of Saxony." *Royal Studies Journal* 9, no. 1 (June 2022): 60–89.

Nummedal, Tara. *Alchemy and Authority in the Holy Roman Empire*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Orlin, Lena Cowen. *Locating Privacy in Tudor London*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Perez, Natália da Silva, and Natacha Klein Käfer. "Between Concealment and Disclosure: Approaches to the History of Privacy in Knowledge-Making." *KNOW: A Journal on the Formation of Knowledge* 7, no. 1 (2023): 1–9.

Rankin, Alisha. "Becoming an Expert Practitioner: Court Experimentalism and the Medical Skills of Anna of Saxony (1532–1585)." *Isis* 98, no. 1 (March 2007): 23–53. https://doi.org/10.1086/512830.

Rankin, Alisha. "Empirics, Physicians, and Wonder Drugs in Early Modern Germany: The Case of the Panacea Amwaldina." *Early Science and Medicine* 14, no. 6 (November 2009): 680–710. https://doi.org/10.1163/138374209X12542104913920.

Rankin, Alisha. *Panaceia's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

Schlögl, Rudolf. *Anwesende und Abwesende: Grundriss für eine Gesellschaftsgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit*. Constance: Konstanz University Press, 2014.

Sloot, Bart van der, and Aviva de Groot, eds. *The Handbook of Privacy Studies: An Interdisciplinary Introduction*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018.

Sommer, Wolfgang. *Die lutherischen Hofprediger in Dresden*: *Grundzüge ihrer Geschichte und Verkündigung im Kurfürstentum Sachsen*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2006.

Warren, Samuel D., and Louis D. Brandeis. "The Right to Privacy." *Harvard Law Review* 4, no. 5 (1890): 193–220.

Watanabe-O'Kelly, Helen. *Court Culture in Dresden: From Renaissance to Baroque*. Hampshire & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Weintraub, Jeff. "The Theory and Politics of the Public/Private Distinction." In *Public and Private in Thought and Practice: Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy*, edited by Jeff Weintraub and Krishan Kumar, 1–42. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1997.

Whitman, James Q. "The Two Western Cultures of Privacy: Dignity versus Liberty." *The Yale Law Journal* 113, no. 6 (2004): 1151–221.

Wright, William J. *Martin Luther's Understanding of God's Two Kingdoms: A Response to the Challenge of Skepticism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.

Witte Jr., John. *Law and Protestantism: The Legal Teachings of the Lutheran Reformation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Alisha Rankin

From Private Ritual to the Public Good: Childbirth and Midwifery in the Writings of Anna of Saxony (1532–85)

In 1566, Electress Anna of Saxony wrote to the City Council of Zwickau with a request to set up a training program for midwives. She lamented a lack of "knowledgeable" and "competent" midwives in Saxony, which often caused "many honest Christian pregnant women and the fruit [of their wombs] to be harmed terribly or even lose their lives." In order to improve this dire situation, Anna explained that she had initiated a conversation with an old midwife from Zwickau who had the reputation of being very skilled. After a long discussion with the woman, she found this reputation to be well deserved – the midwife was very knowledgeable and had longstanding experience. She thus asked the Zwickau Council to see to it that she trained other midwives in her art and received financial compensation for it.[1]

Four years later, in December 1570, Anna wrote to Martin Pfinzing, a merchant and City Councillor in Nuremberg, to ask for his help with the midwifery problem. She described the current state of midwifery in Saxony as woefully inadequate and castigated the region's midwives as ignorant, overconfident, and prone to rushing labour. Very few "competent" birth attendants could be found in "my dear lord husband's lands," in her telling, and she pointed to a particular lack of midwives who knew what to do in difficult and dangerous labours. While this problem affected women of all walks of life, it was particularly acute for poor women, who were often left with no medical help when their lives were in danger. Anna then noted that "we, as the princedom's princess [*Landesfürstin*], would like to right these wrongs and, for the sake of the poor commoners, bring about better conditions." She turned to Pfinzing, with whom she had corresponded previously, because she had heard that Nuremberg had instituted an honourable council to oversee midwives. Anna assumed that the city would thus have a plentiful supply of skilled birth attendants. She requested that Nuremberg send her a "God-fearing, pious, humble midwife" who had experience in "all of the difficulties, problems, and ailments" that tended to afflict labouring mothers,

1 Anna of Saxony to the Zwickau city council, 10 January 1566, Sächsische Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden (hereafter SächsStA-D), Kop. 512, fols. 78v–79r.

Note: Open access courtesy of the Centre for Privacy Studies (DNRF138).

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111264776-002

and yet "in terms of age is not too decrepit and on death's door [*unvermöglich und vertötet*]." She wished to have this woman teach her craft in Saxony.[2]

Shortly thereafter, Pfinzing responded with a letter sympathising with her plight. Indeed, it was an issue dear to his own heart, "as someone whom God has blessed, along with my dear housewife, with a large number of children," and he wished that all women could come through labour safely. Regretfully, however, he could not meet her request to send a midwife. Despite his efforts to find such a woman, he could not find any birth attendant meeting Anna's specifications who was willing to move to Saxony, although he promised he would keep an eye out for one. For the moment, he sent a long description of Nuremberg's midwifery regulations, with the hope that they might be of use to her.[3]

The need for skilled midwives represented a consistent theme in German writings on midwifery from the fifteenth century onwards.[4] City councils in southern Germany instituted increasingly strict written regulations on the process of licensing midwives. Physicians, meanwhile, pushed to be involved in those regulations and wrote their own directives for midwives.[5] The overwhelming sentiment from these public-facing writings was the ignorance and incompetence of most midwives and the need for (male) authorities to intervene. Most famously, Eucharius Rößlin's enormously successful midwifery guide *Der Swangern Frauwen vnd Hebammen Rosengarten* (Rosegarden for Pregnant Women and Midwives, 1513), included an in-

2 SächsStA-D, Kop. 356, fols. 476r–477r. See also Karl von Weber, *Anna churfürstin zu Sachsen, geboren aus königlichem stamm zu Dänemark* (Tauchnitz, 1865), 415–16, https://books.google.com/books?id=GNSVzQEACAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_atb#v=onepage&q&f=false, accessed 28 June 2024; Pernille Arenfeldt, "The Political Role of the Female Consort in Protestant Germany, 1550–1585: Anna of Saxony as 'Mater Patriae'" (PhD diss., European University Institute, 2006), 285–92, https://cadmus.eui.eu//handle/1814/5815, accessed 28 June 2024.

3 Martin Pfinzing to Anna of Saxony, 2 January 1571, SächsStA-D, Loc. 8531/1, fols. 65r–69v.

4 For excellent historical scholarship on this topic, see Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *Working Women in Renaissance Germany* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1986), 69–73; Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, "The Midwives of South Germany and the Public/Private Dichotomy," in *Art of Midwifery: Early Modern Midwives in Europe*, ed. Hilary Marland (London: Routledge, 1993), 77–94; Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, "Early Modern Midwifery: A Case Study," *International Journal of Women's Studies* 6 (1983): 23–43; Petra Gerlach, "Von Hebammen, Ärzten und einem Accoucheur: Geburtshilfe in der Reichsstadt Esslingen," *Esslinger Studien* 37 (1998): 113–220; Eva Labouvie, *Beistand in Kindsnöten: Hebammen und weibliche Kultur auf dem Land (1550–1910)* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1999).

5 See, for example, Eucharius Rößlin, *Der Swangern Frauwen vnd Hebammen Rosengarten* (Strasbourg: Flach, 1513); Michael Ostendorfer, *Ordnung eines Erbarn Raths der statt Regenspurg Die Hebammen betreffende* (Regensburg: Hansen Khol, 1554); Adam Lonitzer, *Reformation, oder Ordnung für die Heb-Ammen, Allen guten Policeyen dienstlich: Gestelt an einen Erbarn Rath des Heyligen Reichs Statt Franckfurt, am Meyn* (Frankfurt: Christian Egenolffs Erben, 1573).

fluential diatribe against the incompetence of midwives. As Pernille Arenfeldt has noted, Anna's letter to Pfinzing directly echoed Rößlin's sentiment, likely intentionally.[6] Her correspondence with these civic leaders thus fit seamlessly into an existing genre of derogatory writings on midwives.

At the same time, Anna of Saxony was herself a childbearing woman who, by 1570, had already experienced at least twelve pregnancies. This made her rather unique among the voices clamouring for improved midwifery. Indeed, a very different view of midwives and childbirth emerged in the letters that Anna wrote to closer contacts. Far from dwelling on the problem of midwives' ignorance and incompetence, these letters instead portrayed midwives as valued and essential members of the birthing team. In Anna's correspondence to friends and family, concerns about the space of the birthing chamber tended to centre on logistics and duty – the midwife's competence was assumed. Anna took care to send respected midwives to befriend noblewomen, and the midwife appears occasionally in her papers as a source of trusted expertise. Even in her letters to Pfinzing and to Zwickau, the notion that *some* midwives were highly skilled remains a strong underlying theme. As viewed in her letters, the method to determine the line between competence and incompetence was a private conversation based on prior reputation.

This chapter examines Anna's dual role as *Landesfürstin* and as childbearing mother in her approach to midwifery and childbirth in Saxony. It argues that Anna exercised her public mission of improving the state of midwifery in Saxony in the context of an intimate, private approach to childbirth more generally. This more inward-looking approach was not necessarily gendered female, I argue, but rather based on the advice of trusted individuals, both male and female. For Anna and her correspondents, there was a clear separation between information deliberately kept from the public eye and information that was meant to be shared more widely. However, there was not a sharp line between these two categories, and correspondents frequently shared private information with Anna when seeking help or gossiping about matters that were intended to be private.

In pursuing this topic, I build on the work of Pernille Arenfeldt, whose doctoral dissertation included a careful study of pregnancy and childbirth in Anna's letters.

6 Arenfeldt, "Political Role of the Female Consort," 286. Rößlin's opening poem with its diatribe against midwives was one of the only original parts of his book, which otherwise represented a restatement of earlier works. See Britta-Juliane Kruse, "Neufund einer handschriftlichen Vorstufe von Eucharius Rößlin's Hebammenlehrbuch *Der schwangern Frauen und Hebammen Rosengarten* und des *Frauenbüchleins* Ps.-Ortolfs," *Sudhoffs Archiv* 78 (1994): 220–36; Monica H. Green, "The Sources of Eucharius Rösslin's 'Rosegarden for Pregnant Women and Midwives' (1513)," *Medical History* 53, no. 2 (April 2009): 167–92.

Arenfeldt specifically addressed Anna's efforts to improve Saxony's standard of midwifery as part of her public role as a female consort, which incorporated Lutheran concepts of midwifery as a civic duty.[7] This conclusion is consistent with Heide Wunder's observations on the centrality of the ruling couple in early modern Germany, which Katrin Keller has also examined in regard to Anna's correspondence.[8] At the same time, as Arenfeldt has also shown, Anna acted as a repository for childbirth knowledge in more intimate circles. As much as Anna embraced her public duty of finding competent midwives as a female consort, she clearly also had a private and personal interest in this topic.

Midwifery has long been seen as a profession that moved between the public and the private. Merry Wiesner-Hanks has argued that midwifery in early modern German both challenged and reified the idea of a growing public/private divide in early modern Europe.[9] On the one hand, childbirth in its ideal form was nearly always a female space, with a birthing mother surrounded by her close friends and relatives and attended by a midwife. On the other hand, midwifery was also a profession – one of the rare early modern professions that was all female and, as such, proved to be a particular focus of civic regulation. Even so, the attempts to regulate often went hand-in-hand with the recognition of midwives' authority and value in the birthing room. While German physicians and city councils exerted increasing interest in controlling midwifery, there was also a concurrent reliance on their expertise.[10] Indeed, Mary Lindemann notes that even in the eighteenth century, midwives' primary dealings were with their colleagues, apprentices, and patients rather than the civic or medical establishment –

7 Arenfeldt, "Political Role of the Female Consort," 285–92.

8 Katrin Keller, *Kurfürstin Anna von Sachsen (1532–1585)* (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 2010); Heide Wunder, "Considering 'Privacy' and Gender in Early Modern German-Speaking Countries," in *Early Modern Privacy: Sources and Approaches*, eds. Michaël Green, Lars Cyril Nørgaard, and Mette Birkedal Bruun (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2022), 63–78, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctv29sfvfg.9, accessed 28 June 2024.

9 Wiesner-Hanks, "Midwives of South Germany," 77.

10 Wiesner-Hanks, "Midwives of South Germany," 77–89. See also Monica H. Green, "The masculine birth of gynaecology," in *Making Women's Medicine Masculine: The Rise of Male Authority in Pre-Modern Gynaecology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 246–87; Wiesner-Hanks, *Working Women in Renaissance Germany*, 69–73; Hannah Murphy, *A New Order of Medicine: The Rise of Physicians in Reformation Nuremberg* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2019). On the authority of midwives see Cathy McClive, "The Hidden Truths of the Belly: The Uncertainties of Pregnancy in Early Modern Europe," *Social History of Medicine* 15 (2002): 209–27; Lianne McTavish, *Childbirth and the Display of Authority in Early Modern France* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005).

a warning against pigeon-holing midwifery into a narrative of increasing professionalisation and medicalisation.[11]

Anna's letters to the Zwickau Council and Martin Pfinzing encapsulate that push-and-pull regarding midwives' authority and expertise. While she criticised the current state of midwifery in Saxony, her solution did not lead in the direction of increased oversight by learned physicians, as was the case in most male-authored writings on midwifery and in resolutions passed by city councils. Instead, as this essay shows, she drew on the personal relationships that characterised her approach to childbirth more generally. Historians have questioned whether privacy is even relevant for royals like Anna, whose very existence served a public function.[12] Using the lens of childbirth – simultaneously the most intimate experience and the most public duty of any female consort to a ruling prince – we can see that privacy, in fact, played a central role even within the most public-facing responsibilities. Anna herself claimed no personal expertise in midwifery, which was entirely a profession of lower-class women in early modern Europe. Instead, she both pushed publicly for more skilled midwives and took private initiative to facilitate preferred midwives for family and friends and to provide general medical advice on pregnancy and post-partum care.

2.1 Childbirth between the Public and the Private

For a princely consort like Anna, childbirth was both a highly public and deeply personal event. On the one hand, each pregnancy brought with it possibilities for the State – a potential male heir or a daughter with whom to forge future political alliances. However, it also came entangled with the potential complications that every childbearing woman faced in early modern Europe – difficult childbirths,

11 Mary Lindemann, *Health & Healing in Eighteenth-Century Germany* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 195–96.

12 See, for instance, Lloyd Weinreb, "The Right to Privacy," in *The Right to Privacy*, eds. Ellen Frankel Paul, Fred Dycus Miller, and Jeffrey Paul (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 27–28. Early studies of privacy pinpointing a pivotal moment in the eighteenth century have especially contributed to this notion. See Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (New York: Urizen Books, 1978); Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Bürger and Lawrence Kert, Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989). Dustin Neighbors provides a succinct overview of productive ways to study early modern privacy in royal spheres. See Neighbors, "Beyond the Public/Private Divide: New Perspectives on Sexuality, Hospitality, and Diplomacy within Royal Spaces," *Royal Studies Journal* 9, no. 1 (June 2022): 1–17, https://doi.org/10.21039/rsj.356.

stillbirths, a newborn's illness, disability, or death, and the risk of losing one's own life. Anna herself bore sixteen children, although only four survived to adulthood. At the time of her letter to Martin Pfinzing in December 1570, she had recently lost a child – the infant August, who died in February 1570 after living for only four months. She would also have been newly pregnant, although she might not have been aware of this.[13] Her relationship with childbirth and midwifery thus moved from the intimate space of the birthing room (and, indeed, the even more intimate space of her hopes and fears regarding her pregnancies) to the necessarily public arena of producing an heir as well as her own chosen public interest in establishing better training for midwives. For Anna, childbirth intersected with every single one of Mette Birkedal Bruun's heuristic zones of privacy, a theoretical model which envisions privacy as a series of overlapping circles, ranging from the soul/mind/self to the body, the chamber, the home or household, the community, and the State. [See Figure 13].[14]

When Anna stipulated her desire, as a *Landesfürstin*, to improve midwifery in Saxony, the more intimate gradations of her interaction with childbirth lay in the background. Beate Rössler's metaphor of privacy as an onion is particularly insightful here, whereby one is still aware of the layers within when looking at the outer surface.[15] Anna's childbearing difficulties were well known. In 1576, Elisabeth von Lymarin, a noble lady of Warnsdorf, informed Anna that she had recently encountered a "very wise woman" who had heard at the imperial court in Vienna "that Your Electorly Grace has lost many young boys" and had given Lymarin "many secret" recommendations for things that might help.[16] This letter provides a multifaceted view of intersections between the public and the private in terms of childbearing, ranging from the "secret" to the very public. Importantly, it also demonstrates that Anna's personal childbearing woes were a matter of gossip at the German-speaking courts. Anna's male correspondents in Zwickau and Nuremberg would hardly have been unaware of her personal interest in having childbearing run smoothly when they received her requests.

13 Her next baby, Adolf, was born on 8 July 1571 and lived only eight months. See Detlev Schwennicke, *Europäische Stammtafeln, Neue Folge*, vol. I.1 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1998), Tafel 167. A thorough discussion of the meaning of Anna's pregnancies for Saxony can be found in Arenfeldt, "Political Role of the Female Consort," 191–266.

14 Mette Birkedal Bruun, "Towards an Approach to Early Modern Privacy: The Retirement of the Great Condé," in *Early Modern Privacy*, 12–60, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctv29sfvfg.8, accessed June 28 2024.

15 Beate Rössler, *The Value of Privacy*, trans. R. D. V. Glasgow (Cambridge & Malden, MA: Polity, 2005), 13.

16 Elisabeth Lymarin to Anna, 11 March 1576, SächsStA-D, Loc. 8534–2, fol. 220r.

In a recent study of Anna's epistolary exchange with Queen Elizabeth I of England, Dustin Neighbors and Natacha Klein Käfer have argued that personal and private details in the lives of the two women were essential to their diplomatic relations.[17] Similarly, I argue here that Anna's personal childbearing experience was embedded into her efforts to improve Saxony's midwifery. At the same time, this connection was implicit and subtle. No hint of any personal interest in the education of midwives appeared in her letters to Zwickau or Pfinzing. Quite to the contrary, she stated that she had observed the deficiencies "with pity" [*mitleidentlich*] and was moved to seek improvements out of "Christian love" for the poor women of Saxony, positioning herself as a sympathetic bystander rather than a participant. She wrote to Pfinzing chiefly as a political actor – as a *Landesfürstin* interested in the public good, not as a woman who had recently borne (and lost) a child. In this sense, her desire to improve Saxony's midwives fit closely into her broader public medical efforts.

2.2 Anna as Medical Administrator

Anna took her role as *Landesfürstin* seriously, as Keller and Arenfeldt have demonstrated convincingly.[18] The story of her long life as consort to Elector August I of Saxony (1526–86) is well-rehearsed. Born a princess of Denmark, she wed August – who was then a Duke – as a sixteen-year-old in 1548. Their marriage was famously harmonious – against usual custom in aristocratic households, they always shared a common bedroom, and Anna accompanied August on nearly all of his travels. Their combined efforts to shore up Saxony's industrial and religious landscape fostered the affectionate nicknames "Father August" and "Mother Anna," and Anna was known to hold great influence over her husband.[19]

Beyond her concerns with midwifery, medical activities more generally were central to the persona of "Mother Anna." As has been well established, Anna became known for her medical talents, especially her medicinal recipes and remedies. She oversaw distilling houses at the Electoral palaces in Dresden, Annaburg,

17 Dustin M. Neighbors and Natacha Klein Käfer, "Zones of Privacy in Letters Between Women of Power: Elizabeth I of England and Anna of Saxony," *Royal Studies Journal* 9, no. 1 (June 2022): 60, https://doi.org/10.21039/rsj.354.

18 This point has been established definitively by numerous historians. See the work of Keller, Arenfeldt, Schlude, and Rankin.

19 See especially Keller, *Kurfürstin Anna von Sachsen*, 72–111. Neighbors and Käfer have shown that the sway Anna held over August was important to Elizabeth I's political dealings with her. See Neighbors and Klein Käfer, "Zones of Privacy in Letters," 61.

Torgau, and Stolpern, the four places where she spent most of her time. Her most famous medicine was her *aqua vitae*, a strong distillate involving hundreds of ingredients, but she was also known for many other distilled waters as well as various powders, potions, and oils. An inventory of the Annaburg medical stores that Anna penned shortly before her death in 1585 listed 181 different types of distilled water, thirty-two medicinal oils, six vinegars, and two jars of rose honey.[20]

Anna's role as *Landesfürstin* appeared both directly and indirectly in her broader medical efforts. Her medicines, especially her *aqua vitae*, often served a very public purpose. They functioned, in particular, as diplomatic gifts. Every year, Anna would send her *aqua vitae* to a variety of friends and allies as New Year's gifts – she simply dictated a form letter and a list of recipients to her scribe.[21] She also drew directly on her status as *Landesfürstin* to make official medical requests to people under her own or her husband's jurisdiction. Many of these requests involved instructions to have people send her plants and other *materia medica* for use in her distilling house. She drew heavily on towns around Saxony for spring violets and lilies of the valley. In March 1577, for example, she sent formal letters to the tax collectors of twelve different towns and cities in Saxony and asked them to have people pick as many blue violets and lilies of the valley as possible and send her the blossoms, shorn of any stems or leaves, in clean baskets. Her letter emphasised her authority: "We wish and order you herewith, in your appointed office, to follow this order and instruction."[22] When towns dragged their feet on this (possibly onerous) request, she was quick to remind them. A letter from May 1585 chided the administrators for being late with the lilies of the valley blossoms, remarking sharply, "For what reason these remain missing from you is a mystery to us." She commanded the administrators to "follow your order" and reminded them once again to send

20 Verzeichnis der diesteliertenn wasser zo itzundt zu anneburgk verhanden sein 1585, SächsStA-D, Loc. 8032–2, fols. 22r–28v. On Anna's medicine more generally, see Alisha Rankin, "Anna of Saxony and Her Medical 'Handiwork,'" in *Panaceia's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 128–167; Alisha Rankin, "Becoming an Expert Practitioner: Court Experimentalism and the Medical Skills of Anna of Saxony (1532–1585)," *Isis* 98 (2007): 23–53; Arenfeldt, "Political Role of the Female Consort," 266–77.

21 See, for example, SächsStA-D, Kop. 515, fol. 105. See also Rankin, "Anna of Saxony."

22 Anna to the tax collectors of Dresden, Torgau, Eilenberg, Weissenfels, Leipzig, Liebenwerda, Meissen, Pirnau, Stolpen, Radeberg, Moritzburg, and Dippoldiswalde, March 1577, SächsStA-D, Kop. 520, fol. 13r. See also Arenfeldt, "Political Role of the Female Consort," 267–68. Anna nearly always mentioned the medical purposes for the flowers, noting in 1568 that she used violets for "candying and waters" and in 1577 that she needed "a large quantity" of violets and lilies of the valley "in our distilling house for medicine." See Kop. 513, fol. 26v; Kop. 520, fol. 13r.

the blossoms only, unnetted and in clean baskets.[23] In short, Anna expected assistance from Saxony's local administrators, thereby connecting her private interest in making medicines to her public-facing role as *Landesfürstin*.

Anna's stated concern for the poor women of Saxony as a motive for seeking more skilled midwives fits into another important aspect of her public-facing medical activities – charity for those less fortunate, in keeping with contemporary expectations for elite ladies.[24] She kept a special cabinet of medicines specifically for "sick poor people," and after her death, she was remembered particularly for her charitable healing.[25] These activities only rarely surfaced in her correspondence, but she occasionally mentioned the need to help the poor, and lower-class supplicants frequently wrote her to ask for help (and usually received it). In 1578, for example, she sent her apothecary and barber surgeon to visit a "poor woman" who had pleaded on behalf of her sick husband who was a weaver, promising to cover all medical costs.[26] A self-described "poor widow" named Katharina Wernerin sent her a collection of medicinal recipes in 1563, saying that she knew that Anna was "a lover of all good [medical] arts" and one who "shares them with poor people." Katharina then begged her "to graciously help me, poor abandoned old woman, with a gracious payment." Anna appears to have honoured the request, and she kept the recipe book.[27] In a succinct encapsulation of her perceived medical duties, she concluded a note about the vast amounts of *aqua vitae* she was giving away with the remark that "one must help out good friends and the poor."[28]

In at least one instance, Anna's charitable impulse also extended to local midwives. In 1572, a midwife named Mother [*Mutter*] Dorothea wrote to her regarding the death of another midwife, Mother Anna. Mother Dorothea knew that Anna was already aware of the death, and she wrote on behalf of Mother Anna's four children who now had no one to care for them. She noted that Mother Anna had expressed the dying wish that "Your Grace, out of inborn highly praiseworthy mild princely virtue, will not abandon her poor little children." Given that it now

23 Anna to the administrators and tax collectors of Eilenberg, Torgau, Liebenwerda, Meissen, Dresden, Pirnau, Stolpen, Radeberg, Moritzburg, Dippoldiswald, Haustein, and Tarant, 5 May 1585, SächsStA-D, Kop. 527, fol. 103r: "Auß was Ursachen aber solches bißhero von dir verblieben jst uns verborgen."

24 Charitable healing footnote

25 See the inventory of Annaburg, 1585, SächsStA-D, Loc. 8032/2, fol. 9r.

26 Anna of Saxony to Johann under den Linden, 5 August 1578, SächsStA-D, Kop.520, fols. 116v–117r.

27 Sächsische Landes-und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden (SLUB Dresden), Mscr.Dresd.B.201, fols. 1r–2r.

28 Anna of Saxony to Dorothea of Mansfeld, 25 January 1557, SächsStA-D, Kop. 509, fol. 28r–v.

fell on Mother Dorothea to care for the children – which she was ill-equipped to do – she begged Anna to take them on and see to it that they were educated, "especially the one boy, who has gone to school, and there is reason to hope that he might be suited for studying [at a university]."[29] The fact that both midwives considered Anna a likely recourse for help suggests that her reputation for charitable care was significant and that Anna kept tabs on midwives in Saxony. Anna's efforts to increase Saxony's number of skilled midwives thus fit closely into her general medical efforts as *Landesfürstin* – both the deft employment of her status to ask other towns and cities for help and her stated interest in helping the poor.

2.3 "Good Friends" and Birthing Advice

Anna stood at the centre of a web of women (and men) who looked to her for help in childbearing matters and reported on bodily details that were sometimes very intimate. The topic of pregnancy and childbirth surfaced frequently in Anna's letters in a variety of ways – announcements of births and/or deaths of children, requests for advice during pregnancy, discussion of pregnancy, birthing, or postpartum difficulties and, significantly, discussions about birth attendants, including midwives. As Barbara Duden has established, there was no firm concept of "pregnancy" among early modern women. Women "went pregnant" or had a "pregnant body," but the condition was liminal and subject to misinterpretations and interruptions.[30] Indeed, noblewomen were often reluctant to express surety as to whether they were carrying a child until very late in the process, and Arenfeldt's research has shown that the very fact of pregnancy was a closely guarded, private piece of information kept to a trusted circle, often until just two or three months before delivery.[31] The avid public interest in producing an heir – and therefore in noblewomen's pregnancies – appears to have caused a counter-reaction that held off the public gaze as long as possible.

At the same time, pregnancy was a constant source of interest and gossip, as we have already encountered in Elisabeth Lymarin's letter regarding Anna's pregnancy difficulties. Anna herself waited eagerly for maternal news from her daughter Elisabeth (1552–90), who had married the Calvinist-leaning Count Palati-

29 SächsStA-D, Loc. 8534–2, fol. 49r.

30 Barbara Duden, "Hoffnung, Ahnung, 'sicheres Wissen': Zur Historisierung des Wissengrundes vom Schwangergehen," *Die Psychotherapeutin* 13 (2000): 25–37; Arenfeldt, "Political Role of the Female Consort," 206.

31 Arenfeldt, "Political Role of the Female Consort," 211–13.

nate, Johann Kasimir (1543–92) in 1570.[32] Elisabeth and her ladies-in-waiting exchanged frequent letters with Anna regarding their hopes for an heir. In February 1572, Elisabeth's court mistress, Anna of Wolfersdorf, informed Anna that she believed God had finally blessed Elisabeth "with a fruit of the womb," because Elisabeth had not had "her time" for the last two months. However, she continued, Elisabeth herself had reported none of this, but rather "keeps it completely secret from me; I am not supposed to know about it, though others speak of it."[33] This statement underscores both the reluctance of noblewomen to announce a pregnancy and the fervent interest in the topic. Elisabeth's reticence in this case appears to have been wise, as there was no further news of any pregnancy until over a year later, in May 1573, when she was nearly six months along. In later pregnancies, Elisabeth was more forthcoming, regularly informing Anna when her period had stopped and for how many weeks.

Elisabeth continually looked to her mother for advice and support in her pregnancies. For example, she wrote to complain of persistent pains in her left side during her pregnancy in 1576, adding that she was unsure of how to treat them. She explained that her doctor, Wilhelm Rascalon, had recommended that she use juniper berry oil, "but it is so strong, I can barely tolerate the strong smell."[34] Anna replied that it was "dangerous to use anything internally or also outside the body, and we cannot recommend the juniper berry oil to your dearest," contradicting the doctor's advice. Instead, Elisabeth should "remember in a Christian spirit the common cross with which the dear Lord has laden all female persons and ask Him diligently to give her the power to endure such complaints with patience through his help and assistance." She did, however, suggest that Elisabeth avoid any foods that made her gassy, especially the melons that were just coming into season.[35] This recommendation was consistent with Anna's general approach to medical advice in pregnancy. Aside from sending her *Kinderbalsam* and *Kinderöl*, she often advised the parturient mother to trust in God and gave suggestions on specific foods to avoid.

Anna also helped provide medical remedies for the birth and lying-in period, and here we find more direct references to midwives. When Elisabeth was pregnant in 1578, she wrote to Anna asking her to send "the oil that Y[our] G[race]

32 For an extensive analysis of the letters on childbirth between Anna and Elisabeth, see Arenfeldt, "Political Role of the Female Consort," 205–41.

33 Anna von Wolfersdorf to Anna, Candlemas [2 February] 1572, SächsStA-D, Loc. 8532/4, fol. 140r–v.

34 Elisabeth of Saxony to Anna of Saxony, 6 May 1576, SächsStA-D, Loc. 8535/2, fol. 59r.

35 Anna of Saxony to Elisabeth of Saxony, 28 May 1576, SächsStA-D, Kop. 518, fol. 178v. See also Arenfeldt, "Political Role of the Female Consort," 238.

sent me for my first child, which Mother Este used, the same for the pills that YG sent me in the weeks [after childbirth], also the salve that YG sent me, so that I can smear myself." She also asked for "the recipes for all three things, and I want to promise YG that I will not teach it to any person, that is for sure."[36] Anna apparently responded by sending the medicines but not the recipes, since Elisabeth thanked her two months later for "the salve and the pills and the oil" but asked once again for the recipes "since it all works so well on me." In 1580, Elisabeth asked once again for "a description of the oil that the midwife uses and the pills that one uses in the weeks, also the salve with which I should smear myself."[37] These letters suggest that Anna recommended three standard medicaments in childbed – an oil for the midwife to use, pills to use during the lying-in-period, and a salve for the mother to use on herself, although whether this was to be used before, during, or after the birth (and on what part of the body) is unclear. Her apparent reluctance to send Elisabeth the recipes – and Elisabeth's promise not to teach the remedies to anyone – suggests that they were a closely guarded secret that Anna wanted to keep to a very close circle.

Although Anna safeguarded the recipes, she sent her pills and other advice to a number of women during their six-week lying-in period after childbirth. Dozens of her letters reference the lying-in period, usually referred to as "the weeks" or "the six weeks." Traditionally, these six weeks represented a time for women to be relieved of their housewifely duties (including sexual intercourse) and recover physically from the rigours of birth. Arenfeldt has shown that it did not necessarily mean a strict separation of the spouses, but rather a time for the mother of the house to stay out of the public eye. While post-partum recovery is rarely emphasised in printed works on childbirth, it looms large in Anna's letters, often in intimate detail. Both in letters written to Anna and in her responses, the physical and emotional toll of childbirth offers a window into understanding the private struggles of childbearing women. In 1569, Anna wrote to comfort her close friend, Dorothea of Schönburg, whose daughter (Margareta, wife of Count Wilhelm of Hohnstein-Vierraden) remained feverish in the weeks after childbirth. Anna assured her that she "need not be so downcast and disheartened, for experience has often shown that post-partum

36 Elisabeth to Anna, 11 March 1578, SächsStA-D, Loc. 8535/2, fol. 137r–v: "[. . .] hertzallerliebster frawmutter ich bitte EG gantz kindlichen EG wollen mir doch mehr des ohls schicken welchs EG mir zu meinem ersten kind geschickt haben welchs mutter este zu eine braucht des gleichen die pillen die EG mir auch in den wochen geschickt haben auch die salbe wie EG mir auch geschickt haben da ich mich mit schmiren solte gegen ein offen vnd wan ich erbitten konte das doch EG mir der 3 stuck recept wollen zu schicken ich wils EG zu sagen das ich keinem menschen lernen wil das sol gewis sein [. . .]."

37 Elisabeth of Saxony to Anna of Saxony, 11 March 1578, SächsStA-D, Loc. 8535/2, fol. 137r.–v.

women [*kindtbetterinen*] often spike a high fever and are then released with God's help." Along with her reassurance that God would help Margareta recover, Anna also sent "several pills, which we ourselves used in our childbed or six weeks." She explained that Margareta should take one or more pills for four or five days and also place a piece of whole rhubarb in water and drink from it. Anna cautioned Dorothea not to keep her daughter's diet too strictly limited "during her six weeks" but to give her whatever she wanted to eat "so that she does not lose her strength."[38] This letter is striking both for Anna's recognition of Dorothea's worry and stress regarding her daughter and for her reassurance based on her prior experience of post-partum care, including during her own lying-in period.

Anna's communications about post-partum help were not limited to women. In 1572, for example, one of the Dresden court physicians, Johann Neefe, wrote to Anna about the wife of the stablemaster Balthasar Wurm. His letter provides a fascinating insight into the most private details of childbirth recovery:

> Since she birthed her feminine burden, she has not yet had her feminine cleansing, pardon the mention, as the honourable women that she has around her have told me. Because of this, great heat followed, with a hefty pain in the right side, and because of the pain, she could not catch her breath. The honourable women lay little sacks on her and thereafter salved the place where the pains occurred with the proper oils, but nothing helped, and she was struck with a great constipation of the body, pardon the mention, from which her body swelled up, from which we all worried that she had a lot of wind in her. For this reason, we all wanted to see her take her dear departed mother's medicine with olive oil and warm beer, as Your Electorly Grace knows herself, but she said she could take nothing, as Your Electorly Grace knows mercifully how she tends to be when she is ill.[39]

Neefe ended this letter by asking Anna for something that would help provoke menstruation. On the face of it, Neefe wrote very bluntly about Frau Wurm's lack of menstruation and the problems that developed from it. At the same time, his letter suggests a certain discomfort with this topic. His repeated rhetorical use of the phrase "pardon the mention" [*mit gunst zu schreiben*] identified the subject as delicate, and he emphasised that it was the honourable women who had spoken to Frau Wurm about her menstrual cycle and applied remedies to her body. His frequent use of the term "we all" underscored that Frau Wurm's care was a collaborative endeavour. His decision to seek Anna's advice also demonstrates that he viewed her as the greater expert in the matter. In short, this remarkable letter suggests that Frau Wurm's condition was a sensitive and private topic that nonetheless had to be committed to writing since Anna's medical advice was needed.

38 Anna to Dorothea of Schönberg, 26 July 1569, SächsStA-D, Kop. 514, fol. 50r–v.

39 Johann Neefe to Anna of Saxony, 4 December 1572, SHStA Dresten, Loc. 8534/2, fol. 53r.

In another case, a similar request came to Anna through a chain of male intermediaries. Katharina of Kolowrat-Nowohradsky (d. 1583), the first wife of Wilhelm the Younger of Oppersdorf (d. 1598), was suffering from some unnamed feminine problems in 1582. From the context, it seems likely that she had suffered a miscarriage. Seeking Anna's assistance, Wilhelm explained the problem to August's marshall, Hans Georg von Krosigk, at the imperial court in Prague, and Krosigk then spoke to Anna (although he fell sick and died shortly afterwards). Anna subsequently wrote to Wilhelm and expressed great sympathy for Katharina's condition. She sent him several suggestions and medicaments – an electuary to take twice a day, a powder for fortification, a little glass of distilled water (a spoonful twice a week), and a plaster to put on her belly. She noted that "these medicines have helped many women" and requested that Wilhelm report on his wife's progress.[40] In contrast to the case with Dr. Neefe, there is no indication of the illness itself. Those details travelled by word of mouth. In her written letter, as was so often the case, Anna focused on the cures. However, these two examples show that the sensitive information about pregnancy and childbirth were not necessarily private secrets kept only among women; in fact, male practitioners, husbands, and even male servants could all be involved.

2.4 Rituals of Childbirth

One of the most prominent themes in Anna's communications around childbirth focused on the logistical aspects of the delivery itself – specifically, making sure that a skilled midwife and trusted fellow noblewomen would be available and present to help attend the birth. Upper-class birth attendants, sometimes referred to as "honourable women" [*ehrbare Frauen*], were not just a phenomenon of court culture. A number of German cities appointed panels of women from the patrician ranks to attend to births alongside midwives and oversee the midwives' duties.[41] While city statutes approached this issue as a matter of oversight, Anna's letters make clear the significant moral support these women provided at birth. Anna usually arranged to have her mother, Queen Dorothea of Denmark, present at her childbirths, and she frequently asked the grandmotherly Countess Dorothea of Mansfeld (1493–1578), her dear friend and mentor, to be present as well.

40 Anna to Wilhelm the Younger von Oppersdorff, 16 January 1582, SächsStA-D, Kop. 524, fols. 5v–6v.

41 Wiesner-Hanks, "Midwives of South Germany"; Wiesner-Hanks, "Early Modern Midwifery"; Wiesner-Hanks, *Working Women in Renaissance Germany*, 69–73.

She also helped arrange birth attendants for her own daughters and for close friends, family, and servants.

The psychological importance of mothers being present at their daughters' births shines through clearly in Anna's letters. She engaged in extensive diplomacy on behalf of her close friend Dorothea of Schönberg ahead of her daughter Margareta first delivery in 1569 (which led to the lying-in crisis mentioned earlier). Margareta's husband, Count Wilhelm, wanted her to give birth at their estate in Brandenburg, but Dorothea desperately wanted the couple to remain with her for the birth. Anna intervened (successfully, in this case), asking Count Wilhelm to imagine how upsetting it would be for Dorothea to miss her daughter's first delivery and "have to trust unknown people," and "how painfully it would go to her heart if it did not go well."[42] Anna had to come to terms with a similar situation during her daughter Elisabeth's first pregnancy in 1573. She told Elisabeth that she was eager for her to "have your childbed and six weeks here in Dresden so that we can look after you kindly and motherly," since "you are somewhat foreign out there in that country and do not have the people around you who you like to see for your first time."[43] Anna put intensive pressure on Elisabeth's husband, Johann Kasimir, to allow this, arguing that it would make Elisabeth "somewhat gloomy and fearful" to give birth "for the first time in a foreign land among unknown people." In an unsubtle use of her esteemed husband's name, she also noted that August "would be overjoyed no less than us if we could wait on our beloved daughter here, as His Grace is becoming a grandfather for the first time."[44] Despite these emotional appeals, Johann Kasimir refused to allow Elisabeth to travel while heavily pregnant.

If the expectant mother's mother could not be on hand for a birth, a second-best choice was to send trusted birth attendants. Anna assured her daughter that she would send "a diligent, good midwife and two honoured women from the nobility from these lands" if Johann Kasimir would not let her travel.[45] These arrangements, however, required significant advance planning. Anna noted that it would be difficult for the honoured women "to stay outside [of Dresden] for the whole time" until the birth, and Elisabeth should thus send her approximate due date so that "we can start working on securing the midwife and the honoured women."[46] Merely a month later, she wrote with the news that she had organised

42 Anna of Saxony to Wilhelm of Hohnstein-Vierradern, 29 April 1569, SächsStA-D, Kop. 514, fol. 26r.
43 Anna of Saxony to Elisabeth of Saxony, 6 June 1573, SächsStA-D, Kop. 517, fol. 53v.
44 Anna of Saxony to Johann Kasimir of the Palatinate, 6 June 1573, SächsStA-D, Kop. 517, fol. 54r.
45 Anna of Saxony to Elisabeth of Saxony, 6 June 1573, SächsStA-D, Kop. 517, fol. 53v.
46 Anna of Saxony to Elisabeth of Saxony, 6 June 1573, SächsStA-D, Kop. 517, fol. 53r.

a "skilled midwife, Mother Dorothea, who will help you to a happy birth" – likely the same Mother Dorothea mentioned previously – along with two young women and a matronly widow named Margareta von Schleinitz.[47] In 1585, Elisabeth noted that she had asked a trusted old family friend, Countess Anna of Hohenlohe, to attend her in childbed "because the dear God knows I [have difficult childbirths] and the good Countess is very helpful to me."[48]

The logistics of organising birthing attendants required first knowing the due date. Anna's letters are full of discussions about the method of determining when the child would arrive, often referred to as "the calculation." In October 1567, when Anna herself was heavily pregnant, she wrote to Dorothea of Mansfeld, asking her to come attend her in childbed. Explaining that "[w]e have put a needle in a calendar 14 days after St Martin's Day (11 November), but the calculation could be off by eight days," Anna requested that Dorothea come no later than eight days after St. Martin's Day or 19 November.[49] Her reference to the needle provides a tantalising glimpse of a possible private custom in childbirth calculations that has been otherwise lost. Whether or not the practice of using a needle to mark the due date was common, the fact that that Anna did not explain the method of her calculation to Dorothea suggests that she expected Dorothea would already know it.

Childbirth calculations were not always straightforward. Anna's calculations in the above case were just slightly off – she gave birth on 16 November, five days after St. Martin's Day, although Dorothea was unable to attend anyway. In May 1557, Dorothea had to delay a trip to visit Anna in Dresden just before Pentecost (19 May) because her daughter-in-law, Magdalena ("my son Hans Albrecht's wife") was close to her due date. Dorothea explained that she would probably deliver within the next two weeks, but "she is not sure of her calculation." She added a postscript to give Anna a sense of the timeframe based on Magdalena's calculations:

> Her first calculation started on the 25th of August [1556] following the conventions of our women, and I added eight days to that. But one cannot know, as Your Grace is well aware herself. According to the movement [*dem regen nach*], she will have lain eight days from

47 Anna of Saxony to Elisabeth of Saxony (draft letter), 7 July 1573, SächsStA-D, Loc. 8532–4, fol. 219r–v.

48 Elisabeth of Saxony to Anna of Saxony, 30 January 1585, SächsStA-D, Loc. 8535/2, fol. 261r–v.

49 Anna of Saxony to Dorothea of Mansfeld, November 2, 1567, SächsStA-D, Kop. 512, 275r. 8532/1 53r-v. For more on childbirth timing, see Alisha Rankin, "Telling Time Through Medicine: A Gendered Perspective," in *Gendered Temporalities in the Early Modern World*, ed. Merry Wiesner-Hanks (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press, 2018), 95–114.

> today. But I calculated for her that if the calculation did not follow the movement, she would not come before six or eight days after Pentecost.[50]

Dorothea's reference to "the conventions of our women" suggests that although childbirth calculations belonged to a private, female realm, there was also a regularity about the practice. The calculation "according to the movement" [*dem regen nach*] almost certainly referred to quickening. In Magdalena's case, it seems that the quickening gave a different answer than the original calculation (which began on 25 August) and may have referred to the date of her last period.

Acquiring the knowledge of how to do the calculations took time. In answer to Anna's question about her due date, Elisabeth responded that she thought the baby was due on St. Aegidius' Day (1 September), "or eight days before or eight days after." However, she continued,

> I do not understand the calculation well, and I beg that Your Grace does not look unkindly on me that I did not let her know [about the due date] earlier, but I was afraid that I could not tell Your Grace anything certain, considering that young women often miss the mark with the calculation.[51]

In later pregnancies, Elisabeth became more confident about calculating the due date based on the weeks since her last period and she also double checked it against the baby's movements, as Arenfeldt has noted.[52] The uncertainty she expressed in her first pregnancy, however, offers an insight into this practice as a learned process. The method of calculation itself is never spelled out in letters but instead was tacit knowledge that seems to have passed between women in private. It only spilled into letters when births happened at a distance and the question of the due date had to be expressed in writing.

2.5 A Trusted Midwife

These calculations were important not only to let aristocratic birth attendants know when their presence would be needed, but also to make sure a trusted midwife would be available – a matter of concern for local births as well as those happening at a distance. Anna had a personal midwife, a woman named Mother Marta, who attended most (if not all) of her births. Mother Marta appears to have

50 Dorothea of Mansfeld to Anna of Saxony, 3 May 1557, SächsStA-D, Geheimes Archiv, Loc. 8528/2, fols. 20–21r.

51 Elisabeth of Saxony to Anna of Saxony, 13 June 1573, SächsStA-D, Loc. 8532–4, fol. 208r.

52 Arenfeldt, "Political Role of the Female Consort," 214–18.

been known for her skill, and Anna fielded regular requests asking to lend her out, both from noblewomen and from her servants. In January 1557, for example, the *Burggräfin* Dorothea Catherina of Meissen wrote to Anna to ask whether she could borrow Mother Marta. Anna replied that she normally would be very happy to grant the request, but she needed to know exactly when Dorothea Catherina might require the midwife's help, because she herself would have need of her before too long.[53] The scheduling could get complicated around conflicting due dates. In January 1573, she promised that Mother Marta could attend the childbed of the wife of Hans Jenitz, August's secretary and scribe. The promise ran into complications when, just three days later, her physician Johann Neefe asked whether Mother Marta could attend the birth for the wife of a doctor named David Pfeiffer. Anna, however, reasoned that since Frau Pfeiffer was expecting to give birth imminently while Frau Jenitz was not expecting until Fastnacht, the midwife should be able to take care of both. She asked her servant Katharina Klein to help coordinate the logistics, apparently trusting the women's calculations well enough to commit to both.[54]

Anna also helped to arrange midwives for women who lived further afield or when Mother Martha was unavailable. She ended up sending a different midwife to Dorothea Catherina of Meissen, and she sent a midwife named Mother Walpp to attend to the wife of the court huntsman, Cornelius von Rüxleben, when Mother Marta was needed elsewhere.[55] As we have already seen, she was very active in finding a midwife for her daughter Elisabeth's births. Anna's reputation for finding skilled midwives reached well beyond Saxony. In 1571, the French noblewoman Anne de Montot implored Anna to help find a French-speaking midwife to attend her in Heidelberg, where she was living in exile with her Calvinist husband, Count Rocco Guerrini di Linari.[56] It is quite likely that Anna's daughter Elisabeth, who resided in Heidelberg, suggested that Anne contact her mother.

The emotional importance of having a trusted midwife emerges out of these documents. When Anna responded with hesitance, Anne pleaded that she needed a skilled midwife "more than just any woman," for "I am a foreigner abandoned

53 Anna gave birth to her sixth child that May. See Anna of Saxony to Dorothea Catherina of Meissen, 3 January 1557, SächsStA-D, Loc. 8528/1, fol. 60r.

54 Anna of Saxony to Katharina Kleinin, 17 and 20 January 1573, SächsStA-D, Kop. 517, fols. 15r–16v.

55 That occasion had an unfortunate conclusion when Mother Walpp arrived sick and later died. See Cornelius von Rüxleben to Anna, 22 February 1561, SächsStA-D, Loc. 8528/2, fols. 255–256.

56 Anne de Montot to Anna of Saxony, n.d. [likely June 1571], SächsStA-D, Loc. 8532/1, fols. 152r–153r.

by my friends (as is God's will) and do not know the language. It is therefore especially necessary to have a knowledgeable midwife, as I cannot in my need find one who will not leave me in my bodily need."[57] Anna agreed to her request, and Anne responded with "a small token of thanks, as is common in French Lyon."[58] In a series of letters from 1580, Elisabeth pushed her mother to secure birth attendants for her upcoming delivery. In August, she wrote, "Dearest mother, I ask Y[our] G[race] with filial affection that YG might send me *die Schleinitzen* [Margareta von Schleinitz] and the midwife again, as I don't know where to turn otherwise."[59] The importance she placed on having the two women present at her childbed comes through clearly in a letter written in October, in which she thanked Anna "with daughterly affection that YG has been so motherly to me and has convinced *die Schleinitzen* to come to me again, and I wait for her with great affection, and the same for the midwife."[60] These exchanges underscore the important role trusted birth attendants played in assuaging anxieties around the birthing process.

As has been discussed extensively in the work of historians such as Cathy McClive and Lianne McTavish, midwives frequently also acted as expert witnesses for both court and religious proceedings, including in paternity cases, suspicions of infanticide, and records of baptism. This public side of their professional duties is conspicuously absent from Anna's letters, although their expertise was indeed valued. In 1582, Elisabeth miscarried after what she described as nineteen weeks of missing her period and, in her words, "two pieces came from me, one large, one not so large. I showed them to people, and also a midwife, and they all agree that it was a growth, not a child."[61] The fact that Elisabeth only mentioned the midwife specifically among the people with whom she shared her "pieces" suggests that her opinion was particularly weighty. For the most part, however, midwives appear in Anna's letters as necessary and respected childbirth attendants.

57 Anne de Montot to Anna of Saxony, n.d. [likely June 1571], SächsStA-D, Loc. 8532/1, fols. 152r (French version)–153v (German translation): "das ich dieser gnaden mahr als irgent eine weibspersone aus E churf g vnderthanen benötiget/denen soch E Churf g die beuerte Wehfraw aus gnaden lest zukommen. Dieweil ßie in lande vnter ihren freunden/Jch aber als ein auslendisch/ vnd von meinen freunden (nach gottes willen) verlassen weib bin/das darzu der sprachen nicht kundig/darumb mir denn auch sonderlich einer wol vorstendiger wehfrawen will von nöten sein/dieweil ich meine noth mit wirten nicht kan vorbringen/vnd mich in dieser leibs nott micht verlassene."

58 Anne de Montot to Anna of Saxony, 23 June 1571, SächsStA-D, Loc. 8532/1, fol. 150v.

59 Elisabeth of Saxony to Anna of Saxony, 16 August 1580, SächsStA-D, Loc. 8535/2, fol. 204r.

60 Elisabeth of Saxony to Anna of Saxony, 13 October 1580, SächsStA-D, Loc. 8535/2, fol. 206r.

61 Elisabeth of Saxony to Anna of Saxony, 9 January 1582, SächsStA-D, Loc. 8535–2, fol. 228r.

2.6 Private Fears and Public Organisation

Childbirth (and its aftermath) in early modern Europe came with a significant amount of fear. The emotional impact of pregnancy and childbed loomed large for early modern women, even if we only rarely find evidence of this most private, inward-looking aspect of childbearing. Anna's epistolary correspondence shows that she recognised that fear (and experienced it herself) and that she employed two main strategies to mitigate poor outcomes – sending medical advice and sending trusted birth and lying-in attendants. A midwife who came to be regarded as "skilled" or "knowledgeable" could provide a source of comfort in the perilous birthing process, and Anna presented trusted midwives such as Mother Martha and Mother Dorothea as competent and steady hands.

Anna's positive portrayal of the midwives she sent to her family, friends, and servants hinged, however, on them being known to be skilled – and herein lies the crux of her appeals to the Zwickau Town Council in 1566 and the Nuremberg councilman Martin Pfinzing in 1570. While her letters to closer confidants tended to refer only to midwives who had already been vetted, her correspondence in a more public-facing capacity centred on the problem of finding additional "knowledgeable, competent" midwives. In early January 1573, she wrote to the administrator of Lauterstein to ask him to send trained midwives to Dresden. An old midwife from nearby Olbernhau had sent several of her apprentices previously, and Anna hoped for more. The administrator's wife, Katharina Unwirtin, responded that her city could not spare any additional midwives, but she had spoken to "the old Dreschlerin, the midwife in Albernau [Olbernhau]" and asked her advice about skilled midwives, especially in difficult births. Mother Dreschler told her that "there were indeed midwives, but in emergencies they know little what to do. She also let me know that she has a daughter who is good with those things, but she has many small children and cannot get away."[62] Mother Dreschler's negative assessment of the ability of local midwives to handle difficult births suggests that Anna was not alone in her concerns.

Turning back, then, to Anna's letters to the Zwickau Town Council and to Pfinzing, it is clear that these requests were consistent with her broader outlook on midwifery. Competence in difficult and dangerous births was a skill that Anna valued particularly and found generally lacking in Saxony's midwives. However, it is striking that her letter to Pfinzing, in which she presented herself in her most official capacity – as *Landesfürstin* – was also the letter that gave a particularly negative assessment of local midwives compared to her other writings. Although her con-

62 Katharina Unwirtin to Anna of Saxony, 6 January 1573, SächsStA-D, Loc. 8534–2, fol. 66r.

cerns about difficult births surfaced in several places, her accusation that Saxony's midwives were ignorant, incompetent, rushed labour, and caused harm to "newborn infants and women in their lying-in period" were not broader themes in her writings.[63] Arenfeldt has suggested that Anna's letter was influenced by the *Rosengarten* of Eucharius Rößlin, which she had in her library. Indeed, Anna's criticisms appear mild in comparison to Rößlin's vitriolic disparagement of midwives in his opening poem of the *Rosengarten*, which describes midwives as so negligent and incompetent that they were guilty both of murder and of keeping infants' souls from heaven.[64] While the *Rosengarten* engaged in significant hyperbole, it nonetheless reflected a generally negative attitude towards midwives in official city documents and in published writings. Whether or not Anna drew directly from the *Rosengarten*, she certainly would have been aware of those criticisms. It seems likely, then, that Anna (possibly with help from her secretary) shaped her letter to Pfinzing to match this public tenor and thereby emphasise her dire need for midwives in Saxony.

2.7 Conclusion

In all respects, midwives occupied the most liminal position in the birthing room of ladies from the nobility. They came from the lower classes and were therefore always outsiders. Even if they were local, they were from a different world. It is no surprise, then, that Anna singled them out for criticism in her public-facing writings. Peeking into the privacy of the birthing chamber through Anna's letters, however, it is striking how the criticisms of incompetence disappear. Although Anna and her correspondents did not write of midwives with quite the same warmth as they wrote of their aristocratic birth attendants, they clearly valued their skill. The few glimpses that we have from the perspective of the midwives – such as the letter from Mother Dorothea and the report from Mother Dreschler – present a collaborative view of Anna's work with them.

The lens of privacy provides a fruitful way of making sense of Anna's varying portrayals of midwives. As a mother both in the familial and the political sense, Anna had reason to vary her depiction of midwives based on the particular context – and the zone of privacy – from which she wrote. Her letter to Pfinzing, which gave the most critical view of midwives, was also the most public, as it

63 The statement about the lying-in period corresponds with evidence that Merry Wiesner-Hanks has found in southern Germany, where midwives were often expected to assume other medical tasks related to childbirth. See Wiesner-Hanks, *Working Women*, 69–73

64 Rößlin, *Rosengarten*, A4v–B2v.

asked a favour of a city council outside of Saxony. Anna (or her advisors) may have felt that it behoved her position as *Landesmutter* to echo other public portrayals of the incompetence of midwives, such as Rößlin's well-known work. She wrote in a similar vein as *Landesmutter* to the Zwickau City Council, but her focus on training new midwives rather than disparaging existing practitioners suggests that she may have felt less motivation to criticise local women harshly when corresponding with a public administration in Saxony. In both cases, Anna wrote as a "mother of the country" responsible for the wellbeing of her husband's subjects, and she emphasised to both councils that the dearth of midwives impacted the poor most acutely.

In contrast, Anna's role in her correspondence with aristocratic childbearing women (or their male interlocutors) was as a steady source of medical advice and logistical help – as a mother in a familial sense. Here her public concerns about midwifery in Saxony were less relevant, as there appears to have been enough skilled practitioners to satisfy the needs of the local nobility. This situation likely explains Anna's tendency to portray the midwife's competence as a given when describing the actual birthing room. Her letters to friends and family also demonstrated that other trusted childbirth attendants were nearly as important as the midwife. For noblewomen, the intimate space of the birthing room, with all its hopes and fears, straddled the threshold between public duty and private experience. Anna's efforts focused on helping her cherished correspondents negotiate and stabilise that complicated space.

Things looked a bit different for the broader childbearing population of Saxony. While the actual state of midwifery in sixteenth-century Saxony is difficult for historians to assess, the concerns raised by Mother Dreschler suggest that there may indeed have been too few skilled midwives to meet demand, especially in rural areas. Anna's broader, public efforts as "mother of the country" likely reflected both a genuine desire to help improve the state of midwifery and a recapitulation of the common negative assessments of rural midwives. At the same time, even in her letter to Pfinzing, Anna made it clear that she viewed *some* midwives as skilled. The way in which she portrayed that skill – or lack thereof – represented a careful negotiation of the hazy boundaries between public and private.

Bibliography

Primary sources

Sächsische Haupstaatsarchiv Dresden (SächsStA-D), Kop. 509.
SächsStA-D, Kop. 512.
SächsStA-D, Kop. 513.
SächsStA-D, Kop. 514.
SächsStA-D, Kop. 515.
SächsStA-D, Kop. 517.
SächsStA-D, Kop. 518.
SächsStA-D, Kop. 520.
SächsStA-D, Kop. 524.
SächsStA-D, Kop. 527.
SächsStA-D, Kop. 356.
SächsStA-D, Loc. 8528/1.
SächsStA-D, Loc. 8528/2.
SächsStA-D, Loc. 8532/1.
SächsStA-D, Loc. 8032-2.
SächsStA-D, Loc. 8532/4.
SächsStA-D, Loc. 8534-2.
SächsStA-D, Loc. 8535/2.
Sächsische Landes-und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden (SLUB Dresden), Mscr.Dresd.B.20.
Lonitzer, Adam. *Reformation, oder Ordnung für die Heb-Ammen, Allen guten Policeyen dienstlich: Gestelt an einen Erbarn Rath des Heyligen Reichs Statt Franckfurt, am Meyn*. Frankfurt: Christian Egenolffs Erben, 1573.
Ostendorfer, Michael. *Ordnung eines Erbarn Raths der statt Regenspurg Die Hebammen betreffende*. Regensburg: Hansen Khol, 1554.
Rößlin, Eucharius. *Der Swangern Frauwen vnd Hebammen Rosengarten*. Strasbourg: Flach, 1513.

Secondary Literature

Arenfeldt, Pernille. “The Political Role of the Female Consort in Protestant Germany, 1550–1585: Anna of Saxony as ‘Mater Patriae.’” PhD diss., European University Institute, 2006. https://cadmus.eui.eu//handle/1814/5815. Accessed 28 June 2024.
Bruun, Mette Birkedal. “Towards an Approach to Early Modern Privacy: The Retirement of the Great Condé.” In *Early Modern Privacy: Sources and Approaches*, edited by Mette Birkedal Bruun, Michaël Green, and Lars Cyril Nørgaard, 12–60. Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2022. https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctv29sfvfg.8. Accessed 28 June 2024.
Duden, Barbara. “Hoffnung, Ahnung, ‘sicheres Wissen’: Zur Historisierung des Wissengrundes vom Schwangergehen.” *Die Psychotherapeutin* 13 (2000): 25–37.
Elias, Norbert. *The Civilizing Process*. New York: Urizen Books, 1978.
Gerlach, Petra. “Von Hebammen, Ärzten und einem Accoucheur: Geburtshilfe in der Reichsstadt Esslingen.” *Esslinger Studien* 37 (1998): 113–220.

Green, Monica H. "The Sources of Eucharius Rösslin's 'Rosegarden for Pregnant Women and Midwives' (1513)." *Medical History* 53, no. 2 (April 2009): 167–92.
Green, Monica H. *Making Women's Medicine Masculine: The Rise of Male Authority in Pre-Modern Gynaecology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
Habermas, Jürgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Translated by Thomas Bürger and Lawrence Kert. Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989.
Keller, Katrin. *Kurfürstin Anna von Sachsen (1532–1585)*. Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 2010.
Kruse, Britta-Juliane. "Neufund einer handschriftlichen Vorstufe von Eucharius Rößlin's Hebammenlehrbuch *Der schwangern Frauen und Hebammen Rosengarten* und des *Frauenbüchleins* Ps.-Ortolfs." *Sudhoffs Archiv* 78 (1994): 220–36.
Labouvie, Eva. *Beistand in Kindsnöten Hebammen Und Weibliche Kultur Auf Dem Land (1550–1910)*. Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1999.
Lindemann, Mary. *Health & Healing in Eighteenth-Century Germany*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.
McClive, Cathy. "The Hidden Truths of the Belly: The Uncertainties of Pregnancy in Early Modern Europe." *Social History of Medicine* 15 (2002): 209–27.
McTavish, Lianne. *Childbirth and the Display of Authority in Early Modern France*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005.
Murphy, Hannah. *A New Order of Medicine: The Rise of Physicians in Reformation Nuremberg*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2019.
Neighbors, Dustin. "Beyond the Public/Private Divide: New Perspectives on Sexuality, Hospitality, and Diplomacy within Royal Spaces." *Royal Studies Journal* 9, no. 1 (June 2022): 1–17. https://doi.org/10.21039/rsj.356.
Neighbors, Dustin, and Natacha Klein Käfer. "Zones of Privacy in Letters Between Women of Power: Elizabeth I of England and Anna of Saxony." *Royal Studies Journal* 9, no. 1 (June 2022): 60–89. https://doi.org/10.21039/rsj.354.
Rankin, Alisha. "Telling Time Through Medicine: A Gendered Perspective." In *Gendered Temporalities in the Early Modern World*, edited by Merry Wiesner-Hanks, 95–114. Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press, 2018.
Rankin, Alisha. *Panaceia's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.
Rankin, Alisha. "Becoming an Expert Practitioner: Court Experimentalism and the Medical Skills of Anna of Saxony (1532–1585)." *Isis* 98 (2007): 23–53.
Rössler, Beate. *The Value of Privacy*. Translated by R. D. V. Glasgow. Cambridge & Malden, MA: Polity, 2005.
Schwennicke, Detlev. *Europäische Stammtafeln, Neue Folge*. Vol. I.1. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1998.
von Weber, Karl. *Anna churfürstin zu Sachsen, geboren aus königlichem stamm zu Dänemark*. Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1865. https://books.google.com/books?id=GNSVzQEACAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_atb#v=onepage&q&f=false. Accessed 28 June 2024.
Weinreb, Lloyd. "The Right to Privacy." In *The Right to Privacy*, edited by Ellen Frankel Paul, Fred Dycus Miller, and Jeffrey Paul, 25–44. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
Wiesner-Hanks, Merry E. *Working Women in Renaissance Germany*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1986.

Wiesner-Hanks, Merry E. “The Midwives of South Germany and the Public/Private Dichotomy.” In *Art of Midwifery: Early Modern Midwives in Europe*, edited by Hilary Marland, 77–94. London: Routledge, 1993.

Wiesner-Hanks, Merry E. “Early Modern Midwifery: A Case Study.” *International Journal of Women’s Studies* 6 (1983): 23–43.

Wunder, Heide. “Considering ‘Privacy’ and Gender in Early Modern German-Speaking Countries.” In *Early Modern Privacy: Sources and Approaches*, edited by Mette Birkedal Bruun, Michaël Green, and Lars Cyril Nørgaard, 63–78. Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2022. https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctv29sfvfg.9. Accessed 28 June 2024.

Søren Frank Jensen and Natacha Klein Käfer

Privacy and Healing between Public Discourse and Daily Practice: The Case of Anna of Saxony and Nikolaus Selnecker

3.1 The Medicine Brewer and the Theologian: Early Modern Intersections between Privacy, Health, and Religion

Health – or the lack thereof – has the power to reshape how humans experience the world. In early modern Europe, even beyond the physical repercussions, health issues could be a defining marker of one's spiritual state. In daily life, illnesses and health afflictions were an important part of how religious experiences were signified both for the individual and for the broader society. In the Lutheran context of sixteenth-century Saxony, one's health might be an outward indication of an inward condition. Dealing with health problems thus required help on many levels, from environmental and behavioural factors to one's innermost private beliefs. In this chapter, we will examine a particular letter exchange between Electress Anna of Saxony (1532–1585) and the theologian Nikolaus Selnecker (1530–1593) to tease out how political and religious tensions shaped how people dealt privately with illness in contrast to how they publicly portrayed their relationship with health.

The relationship between health and religion was constantly shifting in the sixteenth century. Confessional conflicts demanded an ongoing evaluation of what was considered a valid treatment for ailments. The rise of Paracelsian medicine – which was embedded in post-Reformation theological and philosophical debates – brought to the fore an emphasis on pharmacological experiments, with the distillation of remedies becoming a practice aiming not only at healthcare but also performing the duties of a pious Christian.[1] This duty of healing was particularly expected of Protestant noblewomen and the production of remedies was

1 Erik A. Heinrichs, *Plague, Print, and the Reformation: The German Reform of Healing, 1473–1573* (London & New York: Routledge, 2017); Charles Webster, "Paracelsus: Medicine as Popular Protest," in *Medicine and the Reformation*, eds. Ole Peter Grell and Andrew Cunningham (London: Routledge, 1993), 55–77.

Note: Centre for Privacy Studies, University of Copenhagen. This research has been supported by the Danish National Research Foundation (DNRF138).

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111264776-003

seen as part of their ideal of caring for the health of their territory as they were expected to do for their own household.[2] Anna of Saxony took this duty very seriously and became renowned for her remedy production.[3]

In 1577, Anna received a request for such healing assistance. In a letter otherwise concerned with the instruction of a pupil Anna had put under his care, the former Dresden court preacher Nikolaus Selnecker took the occasion to request Anna's help. Selnecker explains how he was suffering from "weakness of the pate [head] almost every day (as it is God's will)," and humbly asks for two of her most notorious distilled medicines – *aqua apoplectica* and *aqua vitae*. The theologian casts his request in a language that operates on two levels simultaneously – one physical and one spiritual – as he explains how he patiently "awaits his deliverance [*erlösung*]" from the "pain of his head, colic, and stones." Equating himself to the "poor, weak, and old," Selnecker portrays himself as reliant on both Anna's medicine and God's mercy to relieve his suffering.[4]

Selnecker's private request is all the more striking when his published writings are taken into account.[5] While Anna's medicines were difficult to attain and had recipes that only circulated within tight networks of healers and noblewomen, Selnecker had been outspoken about how piety is the medicine that ensures good health. "Our recipe," he writes in a 1564 commentary on Psalm 107, "is penance and conversion and it consists of three parts or ingredients: The first is repentance and grief, the second is a faithful heart, and the third is pious Christian life."[6] His focus on faith as healing, however, did not mean that he would

2 Alisha Rankin, *Panaceia's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

3 Rankin, *Panaceia's Daughters*, 129.

4 "Ewre CFG thue ich mich armen / krancken und alten / auch unterthenigste befehlen / und weil ich schwacheit des haubts halben / mich fast alle tag (was Gott wil) eines schweren zufalls befare/bitte ich unterthenigste / Ewre CFG wollen meiner mit Schlagwasser und aqua uit / gnedigste inn gedanck sein. Vileicht werdens ECFG uber einmal nicht durffen geben. den(n) ich trawe auf mein erlösung wartte / und ein teglichen anmachen habe an den Schmerzen meines Haubts / an Colica / und stein. Gott gebe mit gnaden Amen." Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden (SächsStA-D), Loc. 08536/05, fol. 193v.

5 The difference between private letters and public prints was not robust in the early modern period. As recent scholarship has shown, the public is also a present aspect of private letters. See Bastian Felter Vaucanson and Michaël Green, "Refractions of Privacy in Early Modern Letter Writing," in *Notions of Privacy in Early Modern Correspondence*, eds. Michaël Green and Lars Cyril Nørgaard (Brepols, forthcoming 2024).

6 "Denn unser Recept heyst Buß und bekerung/unnd hat drey *simplicia* oder *ingredientia*, Das erste heyst Rew und leyd/Das ander heyst ein gleubig hertz/Das dritte heist ein frömbklichs Christlich leben." Nikolaus Selnecker, *Das Dritt Bůch vnd letzte Theil des Psalter Dauids/Außgelegt durch Nicolaum Selneccerum, Churfürstlichen Sächsischen Hofpredicanten* (Nuremberg, 1564), fol. 104r.

exclude medicine as another viable resource. On the contrary, the case of Anna and Selnecker displays the remarkable possibility of confluence between late sixteenth-century Lutheranism and medical knowledge. The evaluation of the relationship between medicine and devotion depended on its specific configuration.[7]

Meanwhile, Anna's approach to health was hands-on. As the Electress of Saxony, one of her duties was to be able to alleviate the suffering of the sick. She became renowned across Europe for bringing her medicine brewing – in particular, her *aqua vitae* – to a significantly large scale, with distilleries across the several residences she shared with her husband, Elector August (1526–1586). She produced salves, ointments, drinks, and pills for a variety of ailments and exchanged knowledge of medicine production with a vast network that included other nobles and doctors alike. Although she did have a vast collection of medical books and Paracelsian treatises, her knowledge was oriented to very pragmatic ends, aiming at reducing symptoms and managing suffering in a direct and actionable manner.[8]

Selnecker's and Anna's different but intersecting approaches to health across written instruction and daily experience – navigating between the prescriptive and the prescription – are an instructive case to understand how privacy played a significant role in how health and religion were entangled with one another in early modern daily life. As we will see, the thresholds between private and public in both the realms of health and devotion are permeable. In their correspondence, we see Anna and Selnecker carefully carve out a shared zone of relative privacy. While they are forthcoming in their interaction, they take care to voice their exchange within an overarching normative framework of Lutheranism. In other words, the need to live up to public expectations of preachers and princesses permeates the phrasing of their letters. Anna had to follow strict public, gendered parameters in order to secure the privacy for her remedy-brewing enterprises. On the other hand, in Selnecker's public writings, we see how he operates with a theological anthropology that not only allows for but also idealises a private zone within the human being that is only known to itself and God. The relationship be-

7 Martin Luther had already described a close relationship between the two emerging sciences of theology and medicine. See Johann Anselm Steiger, *Medizinische Theologie: Christus medicus und theologia medicinalis bei Martin Luther und im Luthertum der Barockzeit* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 11–12.

8 Anna's practice of medicine brewing has been brilliantly explored in the work of several scholars. See Pernille Arenfeldt, "Wissensproduktion und Wissensverbreitung im 16. Jahrhundert: Fürstinnen als Mittlerinnen von Wissenstraditionen," *Historische Anthropologie* 20, no. 1 (January 2012), 4–28; Alisha Rankin, *Panaceia's Daughters*; and Ariane Bartkowski, *Fürstliche Laborpartner in der Alchemistischen Praxis das Netzwerk des Kurfürstenpaares August (1526–1586) und Anna (1532–1585) von Sachsen* (Görlitz: Verlag Gunter Oettel, 2017).

tween God and believer is established in the human heart, inaccessible to public purview. In both cases, public and private are thoroughly intertwined.

Anna and Selnecker's interaction is representative, first, because of the interplay presented in their respective writings between the language of medicine and the language of religion; second, because of the people involved – Anna was a noblewoman with extensive experience in alchemical, herbal, and experimental practices, while Selnecker was a prominent theologian and author of numerous influential prescriptive texts. Thus, their case brings together two modes of discourse and two types of historical material often seen as separate – medicine and religion, practice and prescription. When examined only under the lens of their specific disciplines, the medical and the religious aspects of healing can potentially lose the nuance of their entanglement in the lived experience of early modern people. If, however, we approach the case within a combination of disciplines (such as the history of healing and church history), such nuances begin to resurface, especially when we look closely at a specific private interaction.

3.2 Selnecker, Anna, and Health in a Shifting Confessional Landscape

Health is a recurring topic and Anna is a frequent figure in the writings of Nikolaus Selnecker. The basis of Selnecker's relationship with Anna was formed in the early 1560s. After Elector August assumed the principality of Saxony in 1553 following the death of his brother Moritz (1521–1553), he looked for strong connections with Lutheran scholars. In 1557, August received the recommendation of Philipp Melanchthon (1497–1560) to appoint Nikolaus Selnecker as court preacher. Selnecker took up this influential position in 1558, consequently assuming further responsibilities, first as director of the court choir and then as tutor of the hereditary prince Alexander (1554–1565), the fourth child and second son of Anna and August.[9] Selnecker remained at the Dresden court until tensions between him and the Elector compelled him to leave Dresden in 1564.[10] Selnecker main-

9 Selnecker's role at the Electoral court has been described in Wolfgang Sommer, *Gottesfurcht und Fürstenherrschaft: Studien zum Obrigkeitsverständnis Johann Arndts und lutherischer Hofprediger zur Zeit der altprotestantischen Orthodoxie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988), 82–104 and Pernille Arenfeldt, "Gendered Patronage and Confessionalization: Anna of Saxony as 'Mother of the Church'," *Renæssanceforum* 4 (2008): 1–26.

10 Selnecker left the court after reprimanding August's hunting practices, creating a temporary tension between them. See Sommer, *Gottesfurcht und Fürstenherrschaft*, 86–9.

tained a close relationship with the Electress, and after leaving Dresden, he and Anna corresponded frequently.

When Selnecker corresponded from Leipzig with Anna about his medical condition in 1577, he was back in the Elector's good graces and was by now one of Saxony's leading theologians.[11] His high status was newly acquired and largely a result of the important part he played during the spring of the same year as one of the four authors who formulated the final Lutheran confession, the Formula of Concord.[12] After leaving Dresden, Selnecker had stumbled through a series of postings. He was a professor in Jena (1565–1568) and Leipzig (1568–1570), court preacher in Wolfenbüttel (1570–1571), laid the foundations for the University of Helmstedt, and wrote a church ordinance in Oldenburg (1572–1573). His trajectory was shaped by a shifting confessional landscape and he was continually engulfed in polemics with other theologians. He was forced to leave Jena for leaning too closely towards the theological profile of Philipp Melanchthon's followers (the 'Philippists'). Meanwhile, his colleagues in Leipzig counted him among the hard-line Lutherans (the 'Gnesio-Lutherans').[13]

Selnecker returned to the electorate in 1574 and his arrival coincided with a drastic shift in the confessional course pursued by August. Selnecker assisted the Elector in his swing from the Calvinist-leaning theological profile promoted by a circle of the Elector's trusted advisors, including his confessor Johann Stössel (1524–1578), Joachim Cureus (1532–1573), court preacher Christian Schütz (1526–1594), and Caspar Peucer (1525–1602). All four were incarcerated in 1574, and August took charge of the effort to secure concord among the Lutheran parties. In 1576, Selnecker became superintendent in Leipzig and began preaching in the *Thomaskirche*, a position he held until August died in 1586.

While switching positions in the years following his departure from Dresden, Selnecker repeatedly courted Electress Anna's patronage. In their correspondence, the theologian requested her support, which she granted with funds as well as recommendations to institutions, scholars, and other nobles looking for tutoring. In turn, Selnecker dedicated many of his works to Anna and her chil-

11 As Werner Klän notes, "[I]n den Jahren von 1574–1586 galt er als der bedeutendste Theologe Kursachsens." See Klän, "Der 'vierte Mann': Auf den Spuren von Nikolaus Selneckers (1530–1592) Beitrag zu Entstehung und Verbreitung der Konkordienformel," *Lutherische Theologie und Kirche* 17 (1993), 149.

12 Hans-Peter Hasse, "Die Lutherbiographie von Nikolaus Selnecker: Selneckers Berufung auf die Autorität Luthers im Normenstreit der Konfessionalisierung in Kursachsen," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 86 (1995): 95–6. For Selnecker's biography, see Michael Wetzel, "Nikolaus Selnecker," in *Sächsische Biografie*, ed. Institut für Sächsische Geschichte und Volkskunde, https://saebi.isgv.de/biografie/3681, accessed 28 June 2024. See also Klän, "Der 'vierte Mann'."

13 Hasse, "Die Lutherbiographie von Nikolaus Selnecker," 94–96.

dren and provided her with help whenever possible. It was this close relationship between the two that led Anna to trust Selnecker with the education of the young Corfitz Grubbe, who came from a Danish noble family associated with Anna.[14] Between 1575 and 1577, Grubbe lived with Selnecker, and it was concerns over his education that first led the theologian to reach out to Anna in 1577, providing him the opportunity to request her remedies. Indeed, among his many duties, health – both the religious implications of the concept and his own – was constantly on his mind.

3.3 Health in Selnecker's Published Writings

Tracing health in Selnecker's published writings sheds light on the background to the carefully worded correspondence between the court preacher and the Electress. In his interpretations of the biblical Psalms, which were first published in three volumes from 1563 to 1564, Selnecker repeatedly engages with notions of health.[15] In the first sermon of the publication, he interprets Psalm 1 and presents health first and foremost as a spiritual category. Selnecker explains how "people say you have happiness and wellbeing when you are rich, healthy and powerful" and, conversely, how they believe it is the result of God's anger when they see "cross, poverty, sickness and contempt."[16] According to Selnecker, however, this interpretation that concludes from outward appearance to inward condition is wrong. Scripture, he explains, shows that the man who abides by God's Word and considers it his treasure is, in fact, blessed, though he may very well be "poor,

14 Arenfeldt, "Gendered Patronage and Confessionalization," 10–11.

15 Nikolaus Selnecker, *Das Erst Bůch des Psalters Dauidis/Nemlich/die ersten Fůnffzig Psalmen/ordentlichen nach einander/dem gemeinen Mann/vnd Frommen/einfåltigen Christen zu gut/vnd in dieser elenden zeit zu Trost vnd Vnterricht/außgeleget vnd geprediget/Durch M. Nicolaum Selneccerum, Noribergensem, Churfürstlichen Såchischen Hofpredigern* (Nuremberg, 1563); *Das Ander Bůch des Psalters Dauids/Von dem Ein vnd fünffzigsten biß auff den Hunderten Psalm/ordenlich nacheinander/dem gemeinen Mann/vnd frommen einfeltigen Christen zu gut/ vnd in dieser gar elenden zeit zu trost vnd vnterrichtung außgelegt/Durch Nicolaum Selneccerum, Noribergensem* (Nuremberg, 1564); *Das Dritt Bůch vnd letzte Theil des Psalter Dauids/Außgelegt durch Nicolaum Selneccerum, Churfürstlichen Såchsischen Hofpredicanten* (Nuremberg: 1564/1565). The commentary was reprinted and revised throughout the last third of the sixteenth century, and six editions are listed in the *Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachbereich erschienenen Drucke des XVI. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1983ff.), S 5637–5647, https://www.bsb-muenchen.de/sammlungen/historische-drucke/recherche/vd-16/, accessed 26 June 2024.

16 "Ist man reich/gesund/mechtig/so heisset es glůck vnd heil. Kompt denn ein Creutz/armut/krankheit/verachtung/so helt mans dafůr/als zůrne Gott mit vns." Selnecker, *Das Erst Bůch des Psalters Dauidis*, fol. 1v.

sick, despised in the World, and a miserable person who toils in the ashes."[17] In this sermon, physical and spiritual health are two different and independent things. The latter is ultimately invisible and private because it depends on divine grace; it hides, in a line of thinking that Selnecker continues from Martin Luther (1483–1546), under what appears to be its opposite (*sub contrario*).[18]

Selnecker takes a different approach to health in other parts of his interpretations of the Psalms. In his treatment of Psalm 107, for instance, Selnecker argues that the sickness people suffer is, in fact, a consequence of their sins. Since sin causes their sickness, they need Christ to not only take care of their spiritual disease, but also to "be their physician of soul and body" when they cry to God for help.[19] Describing Christ as a healer is nothing new.[20] At first glance, we might consider the health discourse in Selnecker's work simply as a more or less imaginative continuation of an established theological-rhetorical topos, but when we read it in light of his exchange with Anna, the metaphors are fleshed out, as it were, and linked to daily experiences.

Selnecker continually makes this connection to his lived life explicit. Employing himself as a literary figure, he replays the dual understanding of health as a result of sin and as a badge of honour that leads to the recognition of sin. He inserts a representation of his own situation in a sermon on Psalm 42: "I thank God," he writes, "that he visits and strikes me as a merciful father at the beginning of this 1563rd year and sends me a fever for the fifth time that shall lead me to acknowledge my many sins and show me God's great wrath."[21] As illustrated above, his failing health is presented as a consequence of his sinful life, but divine wrath is comforting in how it compels him to recognise his sin. Polemical attacks

17 "arm/kranck/veracht fůr der Welt/vnd ein elender aschenbrődel." Selnecker, *Das Erst Bůch des Psalters Dauidis*, fol. 1v.

18 Robert Kolb argues that Luther's theology of the Cross informs the Psalm commentary as a whole. See Kolb, "The Doctrine of Christ in Nikolaus Selnecker's Interpretation of Psalms 8, 22 and 110," in *Biblical Interpretation in the Era of the Reformation*, eds. Richard A. Muller and John L. Thompson (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 320–21, 332.

19 "so wil Er ihr Artzt sein/*Medicus animæ & corporis*." Selnecker, *Das Dritt Bůch vnd letzte Theil des Psalter Dauids*, fol. 104r.

20 The *Christus medicus* topos dates back to the first centuries of Christianity, and it figures regularly in the writings of Church Fathers such as Augustine (354–430) and Pope Gregory I (c. 540–604). In the sixteenth century, Luther continued this tradition, most prominently in his interpretation of Romans 4:7 from around 1515/16. See Steiger, *Medizinische Theologie*, 4–5.

21 "Ich dancke GOtt meinem HERRN/dem Vatter vnsers HErrn Jhesu Christi/das er mich auch jetzt im anfang dieses 1563. Jars/da ich diesen Psalm solte erklåren/als ein gnediger Vater/mit seiner Våterlichen Ruten/vnnd Leibsschwacheit visitirt und haimsuchet/vnd schickt mir nun zum fůnfften mal ein newes Fiber zu/das mich zur erkentnuß meiner vielfåltigen Sůnden fůhren sol/vnd mir anzeigen Gottes grossen Zorn." Selnecker, *Das Erst Bůch des Psalters Dauidis*, fol. 247v.

on Selnecker have often dwelled on his diminutive figure and his bad health,[22] but in line with his understanding that grace hides in weakness, he wears his illness as a badge of honour as he details the consolation he has found in the words of Psalm 63: "Regarding my own person," he writes, "I say and confess that these and similar words have removed many fears, horrors, and anxieties, and returned peace and consolation. I count myself among those who are still young and yet often sick and always prepared for the blissful hour of death."[23]

At times, Selnecker directly addressed pressing health concerns that posed a threat to society. His *Christlicher bericht*, a consolatory instruction on Christian life in times of "deadly air" was printed in 1565,[24] just before a severe outbreak of the plague caused hundreds of deaths in Dresden between 1566 and 1568.[25] Loyal to the genre, Selnecker interprets the plague as a consequence of God's wrath and prescribes repentance.[26] As he explains, God preaches His Word not only in the Bible and through teachers, but also through signs – plague, scarcity, war.[27] The *Christlicher bericht* presents Selnecker as "Hoffprediger zu Dresen" and the publication appears to be part of a joint effort from the Electoral court. Thus, Selnecker's treatise was accompanied by a *Kurtzer Bericht* by Johann Neefe (1499–1574),

22 This image persisted even in the nineteenth century. See, for instance, Julius August Wagenmann, "Selnecker," in *Real-Encyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, ed. Albert Hauck, vol. 14 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1884), 84.

23 "Darnach ist allhie ein schǒner Trost für junge/vnd doch schwache krancke leut/welchs ich darumb anzeige/denn ich für mein person sagen vnd bekennen muß/daß diese vnd dergleichen wort mir manchen schrecken/forcht vnd angst hinweg genommen/vnd frid vnd trost wider gegeben haben/als der ich auch in die zal derer/die alters halben noch jung/vnd doch vilmals kranck sind/gehǒre/vnd jmmerdar des seligen abschiedstǔndleins gewertig bin." Selnecker, *Das Ander Bǔch des Psalters Dauids*, fol. 92v.

24 Nikolaus Selnecker, *Christlicher bericht/Wie sich ein jeder Christ/inn Sterbsleufften trǒsten vnnd halten soll [. . .]* (Leipzig: Berwald, 1565), VD16 S 5508. The book includes an extensive interpretation of Psalm 91, a catechetical question-and-answer section, a letter encouraging a friend to prayer, as well as prayers for children, parents, the sick, and the dying.

25 Otto Clemen reports 420 casualties in 1566 alone. See Clemen, "Ein unbekanntes Pestregiment, Dresden 1566," *Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin* 20, no. 2 (1928): 176. August financed a hospital dedicated to the victims. See Matthias Meinhardt, *Dresden im Wandel: Raum und Bevölkerung der Stadt im Residenzbildungsprozess des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2009), 78, 142.

26 Heinrichs, *Plague, Print, and the Reformation*, 7.

27 "Auff solche weis gehet Gott mit vns vmb/gantz Veterlich vnd gnedig/so lang/bis er seinen zorn nimmer halten kan/vnnd wird selbs vnser Bussprediger/wenn man sein Wort nicht leiden will/vnnd wir vns von trewen Lehrern nicht wollen straffen vnnd weisen lassen/so mus Gott selbs kommen/vnnd die Buss predigen. Das thut er nu mit Zeichen am Himmel/vnd sonst/vnd mit Pestilentz/Tewrung/Krieg/vnd andern plagen [. . .]." Selnecker, *Christlicher bericht*, fol. Jv.

the Electoral court physician.[28] In agreement with Selnecker, Neefe argues that God's anger with unrecognised sin has caused the plague. Unlike Selnecker, however, Neefe points out that the capacities of medicine should not only be directed against the eternal and spiritual death but also against the temporal.[29] Consequently, the court physician prescribes cleaning the air in the city with fires and avoiding crowds and dead animals together with different recipes for medical treatment.[30] The example shows how dialogue with overlapping discourses shaped Selnecker's approach to health. At the Electoral Court, Selnecker worked alongside physicians like Neefe and medicine brewers like Anna. Religion and medicine went hand-in-hand in the prescriptive understanding of health, and pragmatically, remedies were constantly at hand to help alleviate the suffering imposed by God's wrath.

3.4 Anna as a Healer

As the Electress of Saxony, Anna lived at the intersection of the household and the state. Together with her husband August, she was educated to rule their domains as their home, operating as the "mother of her people," the *Landesmutter*. Besides being portrayed as an ideal protestant *Landesmutter* of post-Reformation Saxony, Anna was a recognised healer, sharing her medicines and healing knowledge across most of the courts in Europe, strengthening the dynastic ties of her family and the power of her court. This was a practice expected of Protestant noblewomen in German-speaking territories, since knowing how to heal was a crucial skill when managing a household. As Electress, Anna was in a financial and

28 Johann Neefe, *Ein kurtzer Bericht: Wie man sich in denen jtzo vorstehenden Sterbensleufften/ mit der Praeseruation oder verwahrungen/Dornach auch der Curation der Pestilentz/vnd etzlicher jrer accidentien/oder zufellen/verhalten sol. [. . .] Von Johann Neeffen/der Ertzney Doctorn/etc. Churfürstlicem Sechsischem Leibmedico* (Dresden: Matthes Stöckel, 1566). For Neefe's correspondence with Anna, see Alisha Rankin's chapter in this volume.

29 Neefe, *Ein kurtzer Bericht*, fol. Aijv.

30 Clemen, "Ein unbekanntes Pestregiment, Dresden 1566," 177–8; Heinrichs, *Plague, Print, and the Reformation*, 5, 198–9. Hundreds of treatises such as Selnecker's and Neefe's were printed in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in the German-speaking territories. In 1565, for instance, seven such treatises in addition to Selnecker's were printed in Magdeburg, Eisleben, and Frankfurt. The publication of plague treatises peaked in the 1560s and declined as it became more common for the civic authorities to issue plague mandates. See Heinrichs, *Plague, Print, and the Reformation*, 10, 12. The term plague denotes a broad category of epidemics that we meet under different names in the sources: for instance, as *Pestilenz*, *Pest*, *Fieber*, and *Sterbenszeiten*. See Heinrichs, *Plague, Print, and the Reformation*, 2; Martin Christ, "Preaching during Plague Epidemics in Early Modern Germany, c.1520–1618," *Studies in Church History* 58 (2022): 95.

political position to invest heavily in her distillation practices. Her distilled remedies became well known across Europe, and nobles from all confessions reached out to Anna to receive her medicines. It was not surprising, therefore, that Selnecker would trust her with information about his health.

According to Anna of Saxony, medicine should be used in addition to devotion, not in opposition and not as a substitution. When her daughter Elisabeth wrote complaining about pain during her pregnancy, she replied by insisting that her daughter endure the pregnancy pain as "Your Dearest must remember that such things are part of God's order and that it cannot take place without pain, so exercise Christian patience."[31] Although Anna understood pain and illness as part of God's will, this did not imply that she believed that one must plainly endure it without any help. Together with her letter to her daughter, Anna sent back different remedies (such as salves and pills) to alleviate her daughter's suffering.[32] The idea that the knowledge of God's creation was to be used by humanity and that of the natural world for healing and manipulating resources was widespread in both Protestant and Catholic circles.[33] The pursuit of understanding not only the Word of God, but the material manifestations of God's work was perceived as a noble endeavour. Grasping the inner workings of nature was a way to praise God's creation and as such, herbal knowledge, distillation of remedies, and manipulation of the natural world were seen as gifts from God. For Anna, distilling remedies and uncovering healing methods was also a devotional act.

This background informed Anna's response to Selnecker when he requested her medicines. As she confirmed she was sending a small glass of *aqua apoplectica* and two glasses of *aqua vitae* (one from the white recipe and one from the yellow),[34] she also pointed out that Selnecker should not make himself "so pusillanimous" but guide his thoughts to the Almighty so that he and his community could return to good health.[35]

---

31 "[. . .] EL bedenken das solches Gottes Ordnung seÿ, und es ohn schmerzen nicht zugehen kann/Vnd deshalben Christlich gedulden [. . .]." 1 April 1578, SächsStA-D, Kop. 521, fol. 205r.

32 See also Alisha Rankin's chapter in this volume.

33 Lawrence Principe, *The Secrets of Alchemy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

34 These are two different types of *aqua vitae* that Anna learned from Dorothea of Mansfeld, as demonstrated in Rankin, *Panaceia's Daughters.*

35 "Wir thun auch eurenn unterthenigstenn begeren nach Euch herbei ein glaßlein mit schlagwasser Und zwei glaßer eines mit Weissen das ander mit gelben aqua Vitae uberschicken/Und wunschen (euch gnedigst) das euch Ir solcher Wasser (nicht bedarffen moget oder da Ir die Ir brauchen muster, das euch dieselligen) zu gutter gesuntheit wohl bekommen mogen/Wir begeren aber gst. Ihr wolbi euch selbst nicht so ~~feig unnd~~ kleinmutig machen, sondern Eure Leibes stellen und solche gedancken einbilden ~~dem Allmachtigen eure leibes gelegenheit mit gedult befehlen~~/dan ~~Wir~~ wir den zu seinen godlichen zu dem Allmechtigen Verhoffen (abr.) werde euch gemeinen Christenheit (und

The version of the letter sent to Selnecker found in Anna's cartulary is heavily edited, giving the impression that the Electress struggled to find the words to give him such advice.[36] This careful formulation – filled with redactions and marginal additions – when it came to his health issues is even more striking in light of how often they communicated. Compared to other theologians sponsored by Anna, Selnecker had a closer bond with the Electress,[37] which is shown by how she addressed him in correspondence. Despite the formalities that dictated the epistolary culture in Saxony, Anna and Selnecker could be relatively candid in their exchanges, especially because they wrote to each other constantly regarding pragmatic matters regarding the care and tutoring of the Electoral children and other protégés. This candidness, however, did not mean carelessness. While addressing his approach to his own condition, she was tactful enough to remove the word "cowardly" from her draft. Her writing with such care indicates that this was an important piece of advice that she wanted to convey and it reveals how she understood Selnecker's private issues as part of a broader concern.

Anna had several reasons to be careful with her reply. Beyond her personal relationship with Selnecker, her remedy-brewing endeavours had attracted unwanted attention. In 1576, just a year before her exchange with Selnecker, August imprisoned his own Master of the Hunt for accusing Anna of brewing poisons.[38] In 1577, her daughter Elisabeth (1552–1590), at the time living at the Palatinate court as the wife of Count John Kasimir (1543–1592), also wrote to Anna that servants in her court were spreading rumours of the Electress practicing sorcery.[39]

The extent of Anna's political influence was also attracting unwanted attention. The Reformer and physician Casper Peucer, who was also Philipp Melanchthon's son-in-law, had become August's doctor in the early 1570s and had a close understanding of the Electoral couple's dynamics. Peucer was concerned about how much sway Anna had over the governance of Saxony, describing the state of affairs as having become a "gynecocracy."[40] Soon after, Peucer was imprisoned

---

das Gemain zu Leipzig) Zum bestenn nach lang bei leben und gutten gesundheit erhalten." December 1577, SächsStA-D, Kop. 521, fol. 134r–v.

36 A digital version of Anna's letter can be found on the homepage of the Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden (Kopial 521, fol. 134r–v): https://archiv.sachsen.de/archiv/bestand.jsp?guid=3ff24342-4293-4dcb-9d40-8419ea750543&_ptabs=%7B%22%23tab-digitalisat%22%3A1%7D#digitalisat, accessed 26 June 2024.

37 Among other Saxon theologians supported by Anna were, for instance, Johann Habermann and Hieronymus Weller. See Arenfeldt, "Gendered Patronage and Confessionalization," 9–10.

38 SächsStA-D, Loc. 09667/28.

39 SächsStA-D, Loc. 8535/2. A translation of this letter can be found in Pernille Arenfeldt, "The Political Role of the Consort in Protestant Germany, 1550–1585: Anna of Saxony as 'Mater Patriae'" (PhD diss., European University Institute, 2006), 281–82.

40 Arenfeldt, "Gendered Patronage and Confessionalization," 5.

under the accusation of Calvinism after an investigation by the Dresden Consistory. Although it is impossible to determine to what extent his perception of Anna influenced his imprisonment, it was only after Anna's death that Peucer was released from prison. Having a figure like Peucer, who had theological and medical authority, antagonising Anna's practices was a dangerous ordeal and certainly pushed for a public theological endorsement of Anna as Electress and a pious Lutheran noblewoman. Selnecker became one of Anna's most important cornerstones in that endeavour. As mentioned, beyond the seven years that Anna and Selnecker spent in close contact at the Dresden court, Selnecker was responsible for the education of her children, which made their bond even tighter. Of all the theologians under the Electoral couple's patronage, Selnecker rather than August was the one closest to Anna, and they corresponded steadily for twenty years until the Electress' death.[41] It is surprising, then, that in this particular exchange, Anna's response letter had to be so carefully crafted.

In her reply, Anna shows how she perceived health as something that lies at the intersection between the intimacy of one's soul, the privacy of the body, and the interests of the community. She does not hesitate to provide medicines to alleviate the symptoms, but – just as with her daughter – insists that patience and trust in God are the keys not only to individual health but also to the health of one's community and Christianity as a whole. This might have contributed to the carefulness of her approach, as Anna was echoing Selnecker's own theological understanding of health, transforming it into pragmatic advice to deal with his lived experience. In a sense, Anna was preaching to the choir.

3.5 Anna in Selnecker's Published Writings

While Selnecker sought to shape public discourse on health, Anna operated on the margins of the public field of view. Nonetheless, she has a role to play in Selnecker's writings where she emerges, at the beginning and towards the end of Selnecker's career, as an embodiment of ideal female piety. Selnecker's image of her is consistent: Anna is aware of the privileged life she leads – how she has everything she could ever dream of – but she is never caught up with a love of temporal things. She acknowledges that, in the end, only divine grace brings (ever)lasting fulfilment. "I know a pious princess," Selnecker explains in his interpretation of Psalm 63, "who once told me 'I do not know anything on this earth that I lack – be it outside splendour, inner pleasure, or the necessities of life. But I

41 Arenfeldt, "Gendered Patronage and Confessionalization," 7–8.

must say that in my entire life, nothing has brought me joy or been able to console me.'" Selnecker responds by telling an anecdote about a rich tradesman who was happy to give up eternal life for the pleasures of the earth, to which the pious princess forcefully retorts, "Safeguard me, Lord Christ, and keep such godless and dangerous thoughts away from me! [. . .] I am comforted by the promise of grace from my Lord Christ [. . .]. He is dearer to me than the whole world, money, and belongings."[42] While Anna is not identified by name, the fact that Selnecker situates himself and his work squarely at the Electoral court makes the identification with the Electress natural.[43]

In his funeral sermon for Anna from 1585, Selnecker all but confirms the identification between the pious princess and the Electress by recounting a story about how she would tell him that none of her riches fulfilled her heart which always looked towards eternity with God.[44] In his portrayal of the Electress, she was a confessionally unwavering Lutheran who was deeply angered whenever she heard about "new" doctrines. In his sermon, Selnecker places himself in her close vicinity and witnesses her heartfelt piety.[45] The sermon does not mention Anna's own resources as a healer. On the contrary, at the climax of the sermon when Selnecker narrates the final moments before she drew her last breath, he narrates how she "prayed for grace in her illness" and entrusted her soul in the hands of God.[46] Of course, such a description adheres to the conventions of the

42 "Jch kenne ein fromme Fürstin/sie sagt einsmals zu mir: Jch weiß auff diser erden nichts/das mir mangelt/es sey zur Herrligkeit/oder zum wollust/oder zur notturfft meines lebens/Aber ich muß sagen/daß mich mein lebenlang nichts der ding erfrewet hat/vnd hab mich keinmal derselben trösten kőnnen. Darauff ich antwortet/ich hette von einem Gotlosen Kauffman gehőret/der solte gesagt haben: Er wolte Gott seinen Himel gern lassen/wenn jme Gott widerumb dises leben vnd wolfart vergűnnen wolt. Aber die gute Fürstin saget: Da behűte mich mein HErr Christus für/vnd wende solche gedancken von mir/die ja gar Gottloß vnd gefehrlich sind/vnd one zweiffel so wirts auch demselbigen Kauffman widerfaren/daß er auff erden bleiben/das ist/zur ehre des ewigen lebens nimmermehr kommen wirt. Jch tröste mich der gnedigen verheissung meines HErrn Christi/vnd hőre sein Wort/vnd schliesse meinen lieben HErrn Christum in mein hertz/vnd bitte jn/er wőlle ja bey mir bleiben. Solchs ist mir lieber/denn der gantzen welt gelt vnd gut." Selnecker, *Das Ander Bűch des Psalters Dauids*, fol. 86r–v.

43 As Wolfgang Sommer has pointed out, Selnecker presents his Psalm-interpretations as preached before the Electoral court. See Sommer, *Gottesfurcht und Fürstenherrschaft*, 90.

44 Nikolaus Selnecker, *Eine Christliche kurtze Leichpredigt, Der Durchleuchtigsten HochGebornen Fürstin vnnd Frawen, Frawen Anna [. . .]* (Leipzig: Berwald, 1585), 12–3.

45 Selnecker, *Eine Christliche kurtze Leichpredigt,* 10.

46 "Wie haben warlich ein gros theil der Gotteßfurcht in diesen Landen/zu Hoff/vnd anderstwo mit dieser frommen Churfűrstin verlohren. Aber hie heist es/Gott hat sie auffelőset/Wie sie denn in ihrer Kranckheit fleissig darumb gebeten/auch őffentlich mit Namen vor sich hat bitten lassen." Selnecker, *Eine Christliche kurtze Leichpredigt*, 13.

genre,[47] but in light of Anna's fame as a medicine brewer, it goes on to bolster her image as a princess of unwavering Lutheran piety.

Selnecker's notion of health is pliable and accommodates both the idea that inward condition and outward appearance are disconnected and the idea that they are inseparable. His letter to Anna shows similar flexibility. On the one hand, he equates himself to the poor, sick, and old, puts himself at God's mercy, and waits for His salvation. On the other, he does not shy away from requesting Anna's medicine to help his condition. For him, there seems to be no contradiction in these two expectations. If, in Anna's reply, she attempted to echo his theological thinking, Selnecker also adopted the logic of Anna's craft in his own writings. Selnecker's continual replication of medicinal language stresses the healing powers of devotion, equating it to medical remedies. For a contemporary audience, this might sound like Selnecker is criticising the use of medicine to deal with illness. However, as we have seen, his view of health operated on multiple levels, and such use of medicalised language helped approximate his theological thinking to medicine rather than antagonising the two lines of thought.

3.6 The Importance of Private Exchanges in the Healing Process

Anna and Selnecker's interactions in private letters and public prints remind us about some basic features that possibly apply beyond the case itself: first, the striking tension between the absolute notions or prescriptive texts and the pliability of their applications; second, the multifarious nature of the thresholds that delineate the boundary between the two; and third, the need to read religious discourses in a wider context that pays heed to daily experiences and the inspiration from realms of life that we might not immediately consider as religiously charged. Anna and Selnecker's case shows us how potential issues resulting from this tension between prescriptive text and lived experience could be resolved within private interactions. It is through bonds of trust and mutual understanding that can be shared in private that people – both past and present – can navigate pragmatic challenges that might not align with the public view of an ideal solution.

Moreover, the example of their interaction illustrates that the thresholds between the ideal and the practical were more porous and interactional than we

47 See Cornelia Niekus Moore, *Patterned Lives. The Lutheran Funeral Biography in Early Modern Germany* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 80–1.

might think at first glance. While early modern Saxony would place divine will and the pious Christian life at the forefront of the subject of health, these principles could also be expressed through personal care, especially when done in private. Anna's sharing of medicines through her private networks was mostly seen as her performing her duty as the *Landesmutter* – an extension of her household responsibilities, which was something to be praised. However, as her fame as a medicine brewer spread, tension and suspicion rose, as the gossip in her daughter's court demonstrated. The pragmatics of maintaining health should be performed in private while the public understanding of health should be placed in God's hands.

This porous boundary between what could be done in private and how it should be presented in public also had to account for the confessional tension permeating early modern Saxony. Public explanations for health and illness had to be carefully crafted around the theological debates surrounding the ways in which the divine interacted and intersected with society and the bodies within it. As we can see from Anna and Selnecker's exchange, this careful approach also bled into private interactions. While they knew each other and corresponded for decades, they still used opportunities in their letters to demonstrate that their Christian ideals remained aligned.

They could be candid and pragmatic with each other, but they could not forget that this was also an exchange between a recognised Lutheran theologian and the Electress of Saxony, one of the most influential women in the German principalities. Their authority lay in different spheres of life in Saxony and, as such, there was a constant shift in power when it came to the subject of health. As they moved into each other's domains, we can see how their private interactions had to be carefully crafted, as exemplified by Anna's word-smithing while giving Selnecker advice to deal with his health condition.

Their interaction in 1577 shows us the trust between Anna and Selnecker when it came to issues of health and devotion. As they wrote to each other, we can see how iterative their views became – Anna absorbed Selnecker's notions of health as devotion, while he respected and depended on her medicines, even using the language of her medicinal craft to explain how health and devotion are intertwined. In the pocket of intimacy created by these letters, health and religion come to life in their private bonding, adding to the notion of domestic privacy an additional domain in the study of the notion of privacy in lived religion – a domain shaped by the affective exchange of knowledge and experience.

This particular case highlights how private interactions could play a crucial role in maintaining public unity in times of crisis. A certain level of privacy enabled the functioning of healing practices without it constantly having to pass the scrutiny of public discourse. At the same time, Selnecker's continuous publications and

sermons regarding health sought to ensure that Saxony – and Selnecker, to varying degrees of success – remained out of controversy in a landscape of shifting orthodoxies. Together, both Anna and Selnecker managed illness in private while defining ideals of health in public. Their interaction explored in this chapter demonstrates the backstage of how this balance was established within private exchanges. The permeability of the thresholds between private and public comes to light when approached at the intersection of health and devotion. Public expectations are pervasive in Anna and Selnecker's shared zone of epistolary privacy. Focusing on different approaches to health allows us to see how, across discursive modes, public and private could be constantly renegotiated to fit particular goals and to navigate specific interactions. In the sixteenth-century Dresden court, it was only by keeping the public in mind that the private could be secured.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden (SächsStA-D), Kop. 521. https://archiv.sachsen.de/archiv/bestand.jsp?guid=3ff24342-4293-4dcb-9d40-8419ea750543&_ptabs=%7B%22%23tab-digitalisat%22%3A1%7D#digitalisat. Accessed 26 June 2024.

SächsStA-D, Loc. 08536/05.

SächsStA-D, Loc. 09667/28.

SächsStA-D, Loc. 8535/2.

Neefe, Johann. *Ein kurtzer Bericht: Wie man sich in denen jtzo vorstehenden Sterbensleufften/mit der Praeseruation oder verwahrungen/Dornach auch der Curation der Pestilentz/vnd etzlicher jrer accidentien/oder zufellen/verhalten sol. [. . .] Von Johann Neeffen/der Ertzney Doctorn/etc. Churfürstlicem Sechsischem Leibmedico.* Dresden: Matthes Stöckel, 1566.

Selnecker, Nikolaus. *Christlicher bericht/Wie sich ein jeder Christ/ inn Sterbsleufften trösten vnnd halten soll. Der XCI. Psalm ausgelegt/Wer vnter dem Schirm des höchsten sitzt. Von Sterbsleufften/Ein trost geschrieben an einen guten Freundt. Von Viererley losem Gesinde in Sterbsleufften. Kurtze Kinder Fragstücke von der Pestilentz/aus dem 91. Psalm Dauids/sampt schönen tröstlichen Gebetlein. Durch Niocolaum Selnecker/Hoffprediger zu Dresen. Jtem/Ein Sermon Cecilij Cypriani/vom sterben zur zeit der Pestilentz*. Leipzig: Berwald, 1565.

Selnecker, Nikolaus. *Das Ander Bůch des Psalters Dauids/ Von dem Ein vnd fünffzigsten biß auff den Hunderten Psalm/ ordenlich nacheinander/ dem gemeinen Mann/ vnd frommen einfeltigen Christen zu gut/ vnd in dieser gar elenden zeit zu trost vnd vnterrichtung außgelegt/ Durch Nicolaum Selneccerum, Noribergensem*. Nuremberg: Heußler, 1564.

Selnecker, Nikolaus. *Das Dritt Bůch vnd letzte Theil des Psalter Dauids/ Außgelegt durch Nicolaum Selneccerum, Churfürstlichen Sächsischen Hofpredicanten*. Nuremberg: Heußler, 1564/1565.

Selnecker, Nikolaus. *Das Erst Bůch des Psalters Dauidis/ Nemlich/ die ersten Fünffzig Psalmen/ ordentlichen nach einander/ dem gemeinen Mann/ vnd Frommen/ einfältigen Christen zu gut/ vnd in*

dieser elenden zeit zu Trost vnd Vnterricht/ außgeleget vnd geprediget/ Durch M. Nicolaum Selneccerum, Noribergensem, Churfürstlichen Sächischen Hofpredigern. Nuremberg: Heußler, 1563.

Selnecker, Nikolaus. *Eine Christliche kurtze Leichpredigt, Der Durchleuchtigsten HochGebornen Fürstin vnnd Frawen, Frawen Anna, Gebornen aus Königlichem Stamme Dennmarck, Hertzogin zu Sachssen, Churfürstin, Landgreuin in Düringen, Marggreuin zu Meissen, etc. So in wahrer erkentnis vnd bekentnis Jesu Christi, den ersten Octobris zu Dreßden seliglich entschlaffen: Gehalten zu Leipzig in S. Thomas Kirchen den 7. Octob. Anno 1585*. Leipzig: Berwald, 1585.

Secondary Literature

Arenfeldt, Pernille. "Gendered Patronage and Confessionalization: Anna of Saxony as 'Mother of the Church.'" *Renæssanceforum* 4 (2008): 1–26.

Arenfeldt, Pernille. "The Political Role of the Consort in Protestant Germany, 1550–1585: Anna of Saxony as 'Mater Patriae.'" PhD diss., European University Institute, 2006.

Arenfeldt, Pernille. "Wissensproduktion und Wissensverbreitung im 16. Jahrhundert: Fürstinnen als Mittlerinnen von Wissenstraditionen." *Historische Anthropologie* 20 no. 1 (January 2012): 4–28.

Bartkowski, Ariane. *Fürstliche Laborpartner in der Alchemistischen Praxis das Netzwerk des Kurfürstenpaares August (1526–1586) und Anna (1532–1585) von Sachsen*. Görlitz: Verlag Gunter Oettel, 2017.

Christ, Martin. "Preaching during Plague Epidemics in Early Modern Germany, c.1520–1618." *Studies in Church History* 58 (2022): 91–111.

Clemen, Otto. "Ein unbekanntes Pestregiment, Dresden 1566." *Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin* 20, no. 2 (1928): 175–8.

Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachbereich erschienenen Drucke des XVI. Jahrhunderts. Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1983ff. https://www.bsb-muenchen.de/sammlungen/historische-drucke/recherche/vd-16/. Accessed 26 June 2024.

Hasse, Hans-Peter. "Die Lutherbiographie von Nikolaus Selnecker: Selneckers Berufung auf die Autorität Luthers im Normenstreit der Konfessionalisierung in Kursachsen." *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 86 (1995): 91–123.

Heinrichs, Erik A. *Plague, Print, and the Reformation: The German Reform of Healing, 1473–1573*. London & New York: Routledge, 2017.

Klän, Werner. "Der 'vierte Mann': Auf den Spuren von Nikolaus Selneckers (1530–1592) Beitrag zu Entstehung und Verbreitung der Konkordienformel." *Lutherische Theologie und Kirche* 17 (1993): 145–74.

Kolb, Robert. "The Doctrine of Christ in Nikolaus Selnecker's Interpretation of Psalms 8, 22 and 110." In *Biblical Interpretation in the Era of the Reformation*, edited by Richard A. Muller and John L. Thompson, 313–32. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996.

Meinhardt, Matthias. *Dresden im Wandel: Raum und Bevölkerung der Stadt im Residenzbildungsprozess des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2009.

Moore, Cornelia Niekus. *Patterned Lives: The Lutheran Funeral Biography in Early Modern Germany*. Wiesbaden: Harrazowitz Verlag, 2006.

Rankin, Alisha. *Panaceia's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

Sommer, Wolfgang. *Gottesfurcht und Fürstenherrschaft: Studien zum Obrigkeitsverständnis Johann Arndts und lutherischer Hofprediger zur Zeit der altprotestantischen Orthodoxie*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988.

Steiger, Johann Anselm. *Medizinische Theologie*: *Christus medicus und theologia medicinalis bei Martin Luther und im Luthertum der Barockzeit*. Leiden: Brill, 2005.

Vaucanson, Bastian Felter, and Michaël Green. "Refractions of Privacy in Early Modern Letter Writing." In *Notions of Privacy in Early Modern Correspondence*, edited by Michaël Green and Lars Cyril Nørgaard, n.p. Brepols, forthcoming 2024.

Wagenmann, Julius August. "Selnecker." In *Real-Encyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, edited by Albert Hauck, 76–88. Vol. 14. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1884.

Webster, Charles. "Paracelsus: Medicine as Popular Protest." In *Medicine and the Reformation*, edited by Ole Peter Grell and Andrew Cunningham, 55–77. London: Routledge, 1993.

Wetzel, Michael. "Nikolaus Selnecker." In *Sächsische Biografie*, edited by Institut für Sächsische Geschichte und Volkskunde. https://saebi.isgv.de/biografie/3681. Accessed 28 June 2024.

Ariane Bartkowski

Alchemy and Privacy at the Court of Saxony in Dresden during the Sixteenth Century

4.1 Alchemy between the Public and the Private

Alchemy is a complex construct that unites many areas of knowledge. The separation of knowledges as we know it today took place mainly in the eighteenth century and alchemy was ultimately reduced to the production of gold. However, it is a mistake to dismiss alchemy as mere gold making, for which it is sometimes discredited. Alchemy in Europe from the twelfth to the sixteenth century was tightly woven into the monastic environment, for it was primarily in the kitchens and laboratories of the monasteries that alchemical practice took place. While higher-ranking clerics were still the central figures hiring alchemists or acting as alchemists themselves during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the beginning of the fifteenth century started to challenge this monastic dominance in alchemy. In that period, alchemy became established, for example, in the form of distilling brandy in the houses of the burghers. This also changed the alchemists' tasks. Until then, studying the laws of nature and linking speculation and the great work of alchemy were considered the supreme principle. Now, the production of matter – that is, gold – took this place. From the sixteenth century onwards, a process of transformation gradually happened, not only in the alchemical context (as happened, for instance, during the Renaissance), and together with this transformation, a more defined notion of privacy also seemed to develop for the first time, although privacy was not yet structurally present. The sixteenth century witnessed the 'alchemical opening' due to changes brought about by the Reformation, in which alchemical knowledge left the clerical environment and established itself within the European courts. Alchemy became more 'public' and settled in the princely courts of Europe. From Florence to Prague and Vienna, alchemy became a real fad, and an experienced and capable alchemist was a sought-after resource among the high nobility. Alchemy was no longer the exclusive domain of clerics but was also increasingly used by university professors, pedagogues, merchants, physicians, goldsmiths, and mining scientists. Partly in connection with their practicing professions but partly also coming from distant professional fields, it was those groups of educated people who made alchemy so desirable at the European courts. The alchemist became a "traveller," a wanderer who

Note: Open access courtesy of the Centre for Privacy Studies (DNRF138).

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111264776-004

entered the private services of a noble lord, either voluntarily or under duress. This process of transformation in the sixteenth century was also closely linked to the following aspects – the increased use of alchemy by the so-called gold makers, the influence of Paracelsus together with the development of chymiatria, the intensification of the spiritual aspect of alchemy, the increased satirical criticism of alchemical work, the possibility of printing alchemical writings, and finally, the specialisation towards scientific chemistry. The principles of traditional alchemy, such as the growth of minerals, the transformation of metals, the production of the elixir of life, and the duty of secrecy, were not denied in the Renaissance.[1] However, the duty of secrecy especially gradually dissolved or received a different focus in the sixteenth century since, given the emergence of printing, new printed alchemical texts were produced in the period, often numbering in the hundreds, which soon flooded the book market.[2] Sascha Trültzsch-Wijnen and Daniela Pscheida have observed that:

> While the public sphere of the polis was conceived of as the public sphere of assemblies, a different understanding of the term took hold in the early modern period, at the latest with the advent of printing. The modern definition of the relationship between 'public' and 'private' in the communicative sense takes place in the context of the emergence of modern mass media and the formation of a bourgeois political public sphere.[3]

Like the eighteenth century, when new media such as magazines, newspapers, dictionaries, and suchlike spread through Europe, texts found more and more widespread publication with the popularisation of the printing press in the sixteenth century. In the process, the principle of secrecy, which had previously been so widely touted, was set aside as the private circle between author, writer, and reader disintegrated. Albert Spitznagel wrote that secrecy and secrets must be seen in connection with privacy, and publicity with intimacy and self-disclosure. However, modern research is very divided on this aspect. The private can become public when it comes out, and public is all that which has been made accessible without restriction. Only through this can the public sphere come into being.[4]

---

1 Mircea Eliade, *Geschichte der religiösen Ideen: Von Mohammed bis zum Beginn der Neuzeit*, vol. 3 (Freiburg: Herder, 1983), 244–45.

2 Lynn Thorndike, "Alchemy during the first half of the sixteenth century," *Ambix* 2, no. 1 (1938): 26.

3 "Während die Öffentlichkeit der Polis als Versammlungsöffentlichkeit gedacht war, setzt sich spätestens mit dem Buchdruck in der frühen Neuzeit ein anderes Begriffsverständnis durch. Die moderne Verhältnisbestimmung zwischen 'öffentlich' und 'privat' im kommunikativen Sinne findet im Kontext der Entstehung der modernen Massenmedien und der Herausbildung einer bürgerlichen politischen Öffentlichkeit statt." See Sascha Trültzsch-Wijnen and Daniela Pscheida, "Privatheit—Privatsphäre: Normative Konzepte im Wandel," *Medienimpulse* 51, no.1 (2013): 4.

4 Mitra Keller, *Geheimnisse und ihre lebensgeschichtliche Bedeutung: Eine empirische Studie* (Berlin: Lit 2007), 21.

There is an agreement, however, that secrets and intimacy can only be realised under the condition of privacy.[5] As Heide Wunder observes, "[I]n German-speaking countries, the semantic field of 'offen/verborgen,' 'geheim,' 'heimlich' referred to what could be seen and observed by everybody as opposed to that which was hidden, secret, clandestine."[6]

Inevitably, a fraudulent version of alchemy also spread to the princely courts in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Almost every princely court had an alchemist who was replaced, executed, or harshly punished and tortured because of his failures. It was during this period that the image of the alchemist that we have today came into being. Visible successes were rather rare, but significant achievements must not be neglected. These include ruby glass and crystal production by Johann Kunckel (also known as Johann Kunckel of Löwenstern, 1630–1703) at the court of the Elector of Brandenburg, the achievements of Johann Joachim Becher (1635–1682), who worked for Emperor Leopold I (1640–1705) in Vienna, in the field of metal and coal processing and, last but not the least, the efforts of Johann Friedrich Böttger (1682–1719), the pharmacist's assistant, and Ehrenfried Walther of Tschirnhaus (1651–1708) in the production of European porcelain.

4.2 Alchemy at the Dresden Court

This last achievement of porcelain production leads us to the Electoral court in Dresden, one of the European courts which invested heavily in alchemy in the middle of the sixteenth century, thanks mainly to the Electoral couple, Anna and August of Saxony. Their manifold interests in mining science, agrarian culture, astronomy, medicine, and ultimately also in alchemy shaped the Electorate of Saxony for over three decades. The valuable book collections of the Saxon State and University Library, Dresden (SLUB) and the historical collections of the Kunstkammer bear witness to their far-reaching interest. From as early as the 1560s, the Elector had the first collections of natural sciences and, from 1574 onwards, the first library established at Annaburg Castle.

According to Beate Rössler, three dimensions of privacy can emerge from the perspectives of the actors – decisional privacy, that is, the possibility of making self-determined decisions and to determine one's own way of life; local privacy,

5 Keller, *Geheimnisse und ihre lebensgeschichtliche Bedeutung*, 21–3.

6 Heide Wunder, "Considering 'Privacy' and Gender in Early Modern German-Speaking Countries," in *Early Modern Privacy: Sources and Approaches*, eds. Michaël Green, Lars Cyril Nørgaard, and Mette Birkedal Bruun (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2022), 64.

that is, places of retreat; and informational privacy, that is, the decision of the individual about who gets access to information.[7] For the electoral couple, all three forms of privacy apply. They were able to make self-determined decisions not only within the framework of their socio-political position, but to decide to which circle of people certain information should be communicated. Their private retreats were created by their laboratories and their libraries, to which also only a select circle of people had access. And last but least, they decided what information their chosen circle of people would receive, in the form of passing on recipes, conducting experiments, or exchanging their experiences by letter – her way of achieving a "selective control of access to the self."[8]

Figure 1: Lucas Cranach the Younger, Elector August of Saxony (c. 1565), Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (SKD), Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, signature/inventory no. 1947, SLUB Dresden/Deutsche Fotothek.

7 Beate Rössler, *Der Wert des Privaten* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2001), 23–6.
8 Trültzsch-Wijnen and Pscheida, "Privatheit—Privatsphäre," 6.

For the Elector, the focus of his alchemical interest was rather on mining sciences and on the attendant monetary gain. The knowledge gained via alchemy was indispensable for mining, and the Elector also saw in this an opportunity to improve the state of mining technology in general with the purpose of securing financial returns. Rulers thus hired alchemists and mining experts to find solutions to the same problems, even if they were found in different ways. The linking of economic alchemy and mining had far-reaching consequences, as alchemists now worked not only for their principles, but for increasing profits.[9] While medieval alchemists still saw themselves as students, prophets, or artists, modern alchemists found themselves destined to be involved in the profitable mining business. Technical innovations, however, had their price.[10] August must have quickly realised the profits he could derive from mining by means of alchemy. The fact that the alchemists claimed to be able to produce gold made the matter all the more attractive.

Elector August was assisted by his chamber secretary, Hans Jenitz (d. 1589). The chamber clerk was not only supposed to be loyal, helpful, courteous, and indebted to his lord, but also to protect him from disgrace, dishonour, and slander. According to August's own note, he was also not to make himself a friend or an enemy of anyone and was only to serve the Elector. Matters that the Elector wished to keep secret were to be kept by the chamber secretary; on the other hand, legal letters were to be handed over to the government with the Elector's knowledge. The letters were to be properly registered and no one was to know about them; in fact, the chamber secretary was to keep everything secret. Jenitz received a salary of 400 florins per year for his services (in contrast to the court councillors who received 300 florins), including board at the court as well as necessary funds for travel for himself and his assistant. In addition to trusted insight into political and diplomatic affairs as well as religious disputes, Jenitz also took care of the petitionary letters of scholars, some of which were treated with special trust.[11] He thus assumed a very important role and responsibility towards the Electoral couple.

During his reign, August had continuous correspondence with alchemists, some of whom he accepted or rejected. The Elector noticed quite quickly whether his "adept" turned out to be a capable alchemist or a charlatan. During his reign,

9 For more on mining, see Natalie Körner's chapter in this volume.

10 On the connection between alchemy and mining in connection with the princes, see Tara Nummedal, *Alchemy and Authority in the Holy Roman Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 86–90.

11 Georg Müller, "Hans Jenitz, Geheim-Sekretär des Kurfürsten August," *Dresdner Geschichtsblätter* 1, no. 4 (1983): 93, https://digital.slub-dresden.de/werkansicht/dlf/6444/1, accessed on 28 June 2024.

four alchemists, in particular, stood out in the surviving correspondence: Valten Merbitz, Daniel Bachmann, Daniel Beuther, and Sebald Schwertzer. In all letters, the aspect of secrecy and the "private experiments" appear again and again. Prescriptions were to be kept secret and kept for oneself until death, letters were to be kept confidential and not given to anyone else, and experiments were to be carried out only within a certain circle of selected people. When the Elector confided in his long-time friend and correspondence partner, Joachim II (1505–1571), the Elector of Brandenburg, regarding the alchemist Valten Merbitz, who ultimately turned out to be a fraud, August requested that Joachim "[p]lease also kindly leave this confidential message [. . .] and return the Archduke's letter to us after it has been read."[12] However, Joachim also emphasised that August should handle the matter discreetly, fraternally, and faithfully.[13] In the case of David Beuther – an alchemist who took his own life in the end because his frauds were exposed – there were several contractors who were to experiment together with Beuther on the production of gold. The Elector ordered that these partners "freely unite for ourselves and our heirs. By this letter we are committed that we will keep what David Beuther shows us secret and will not tell anyone else, no matter who they are."[14]

Whereas August's interest was more on gaining knowledge in the fields of mining and economics, Anna focused her attention more on methods of creating remedies. She was particularly interested in Paracelsus' theory of medicine. Alchemy, which represented an indispensable part of scientific knowledge in the sixteenth century, was closely related to pharmacology and chemical experiments.[15] The work of Paracelsus was linked to an undisputed process of change from traditional alchemy to chemistry. Each disease required a specific remedy, the "Arcanum," which was obtained from natural substances such as plants, animals, or minerals. Therefore, according to Paracelsus, alchemical skills were absolutely necessary for the production of medicines. Alchemy was thus not necessary for the production of

12 Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden (SächsStA-D), Kop. 300, fol. 385r–v.

13 SächsStA-D, Kop. 300, fol. 79r.

14 SächsStA-D, Loc. 04419/19, fol. 94r: "Das wir vns demnach sambtlich vnd sonderlich fur vns vnd alle vnsere erbenn freÿwillig vnd wohlbedechtig verpflichtet vnd miteinander verbundenn. [. . .] Thun solches auch hirmitt inn krafft dis brieffs das wir solche kunststucke, die vns Dauidt Beutter durch seiner Churf[ürstliche] G[naden] anschaffen vnd befurderung gelehret vnd gewiesenn, die zeit vnsers lebens bej vns allein verschwiegen vnd gehaim haltten, vnnd die niemand andern wer der auch seÿ, furder lehren vnterweisen noch in schrifften oder durch andere andeuttung berichten sollen noch wollenn."

15 Miroslava Durajová and Rostislav Smíšek, *Hieronymus der Ältere Schlick: Das Tagebuch: Eine Selbstdarstellung aus den Jahren 1580–1582* (České Budějovice: University of South Bohemia, 2008), 129.

Figure 2: Electress Anna of Saxony, SLUB/Deutsche Fotothek.

gold and silver but for the main purpose of producing remedies. As such, Anna used alchemical techniques, practices, and other methods to produce medicines and remedies. A large part of Anna's medicines, therefore, constituted distilled waters such as *aqua vitae*, which became one of her most significant medicines. Anna's white *aqua vitae* required 387 ingredients which were added to the distillation stages that took several years. The yellow *aqua vitae*, on the other hand, contained only 28 ingredients and half a year to prepare. Anna would later entrust the recipe for making the *aqua vitae* only to her daughter Elisabeth.[16] Anna refused a request from the duchess Dorothea Susanne of Pfalz (1544–1592) to send the recipe, saying that she had promised Dorothea to keep it secret.[17] Today, the recipe can be

16 Karl von Weber, *Anna churfürstin zu Sachsen, geboren aus königlichem stamm zu Dänemark* (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1865), 456–7.
17 Weber, *Anna churfürstin zu Sachsen*, 455.

found in a Heidelberg recipe collection which originated from Elisabeth.[18] These examples make it very clear that only the Electress' closest confidants had access to the "secret" knowledge.[19] Anna needed to make sure that secrecy was a top priority for her confidants. She achieved this by granting them intimate access to her person by sharing her knowledge and interests with them.

Anna's interest in the alchemical experiments at the Dresden court must always have been the focus of her pharmaceutical discoveries It is not surprising that Anna chose pharmacy rather than alchemy which aimed at transmutation (production of gold). Alchemy coupled with the idea of transmutation had been more a subject of interest for male alchemists. Although there were female alchemists, such as Anna Zieglerin,[20] women did not often identify with the role of the alchemist.[21] There is little evidence to suggest that Anna was considered an alchemist, nor did she see herself as an alchemist. Anna's and August's activities must instead be seen as united through practical alchemy on the one hand and practical medicine on the other. Alisha Rankin has observed that:

> Anna and August functioned as a symbiotic pair, using the strength of their union to improve Saxony's political and economic clout and to establish the principality as the most powerful Protestant state in the Holy Roman Empire.[22]

The interests of the Electoral couple required the establishment of several laboratories which came into existence, for example, in Dresden, Annaburg, and Torgau. In the fourteenth century, *laboratorium* was initially understood as a task or work. Not until about 1450 do we find the word being used in the monastic context to refer to workshops. In the sixteenth century, *laboratorium* initially mainly referred to the workplaces of alchemists, apothecaries, and metallurgists. The term was only later used for all rooms that served to conduct scientific and technical experiments.[23] The private aspect was reflected above all in the privately equipped laboratories where experiments could be carried out away from the public eye. In the case of Anna and August, the laboratories were usually con-

18 Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg, Codices Palatini germanici 256, fols. 24r–33v.

19 See also Alisha Rankin's chapter in this volume.

20 Anna Maria Zieglerin (ca. 1550–1575) was a female alchemist who worked for Prince Julius of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel. She came from the environment of the Dresden court, but a relationship with Anna and August has not been proved till date. Due to her experimental failure and other misdemeanours, she was executed in 1575.

21 Alisha Rankin, *Panaceia's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 152–3.

22 Rankin, *Panaceia's Daughters*, 131.

23 Karin Figala and Helmut Gebelein, eds., *Hermetik & Alchemie: Betrachtungen am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Gaggenau: Scientia Nova, 2003), 223.

nected to the respective Residential buildings so that the experiments and the manufacture of products could always take place within the sight of the Electoral couple while not attracting the curiosity of the general public. In general, it became fashionable for nobles to own one or more laboratories. Privately equipped laboratories were now becoming more and more established. At the princely courts, laboratories usually counted with a vast array of equipment and well-stocked inventories. The Calvinist Landgrave, Moritz Hessen-Kassel (1572–1632), for example, operated not only his *Laboratorium chymicum publicum* (public chemical laboratory) in which purgatives, opium preparations, English drinking gold, antimony preparations, and remedies for heart palpitations were produced (among other things), but also his privately run laboratory in which he conducted his own mostly still-unknown experiments and tested the production of new remedies, partly through self-experiments and partly on test subjects. His laboratory inventories were always available to laboratory alchemists. From 1596, Duke Frederick I of Württemberg (1593–1608) also maintained a laboratory in the old Lusthaus (demolished in 1746) in which he partly performed his own experiments. Famously, Count Wolfgang II of Hohenlohe (1546–1610) had a laboratory spread over two floors built in the former Burgzwinger in his Weikersheim residence from 1602 onwards where a circle of alchemists would operate. The last example is the laboratory found by chance in 1980 on the Oberstockstall estate in Kirchberg near Wagram. This discovery represents the most extensive equipment ever retrieved from a laboratory dating to the end of the sixteenth century. It is known that the laboratory was under the protection of Urban of Trenbach (1525–1598), Bishop of Passau. However, there were also far less well-equipped laboratories in private houses, workshops, cellars, converted kitchens and, above all, pharmacies.[24]

Reading materials were just as important to alchemical knowledge. For example, in addition to the official library, Electress Anna also had a reference and travel library. Writings that were to be kept secret were only passed on to selected, trusted circles of people, as were recipes and general exchanges of experience about the experiments. In general, the experiments were to be kept out of the public eye, especially since failure could jeopardise the Elector's reputation and success could jeopardise his claim to sole knowledge. The Electoral couple, therefore, allowed only a select group of people to participate in the experiments and the processes. Anna, in particular, paid great attention to the selection of her servants. The aspect of "private domination" [*private Herrschaft*] plays a particularly strong role here. As Heide Wunder has observed:

24 Ariane Bartkowski, *Fürstliche Laborpartner in der alchemistischen Praxis: Das Netzwerk des Kurfürstenpaares August und Anna von Sachsen* (Görlitz: Verlag Gunter Oettel, 2017), 34–5.

Figure 3: Emergency Money, Annaburg, 1921, private collection.

> In this context, 'private' refers to the sphere of 'private persons' in contrast to persons holding an office in the public sphere. Legally, 'private domination' was based on *imperium conjugale* over the consort and on *patria potestas* over the children and dependent persons in the household, who were located on the house (building), which provided shelter and protection, but simultaneously constituted 'private property' and the precondition to be accepted as a member of the urban or rural community.[25]

In general, Anna's female workers ad to pass through at least four 'stages' before they were intensively involved in the services of the distillery. First, potential female candidates were tested in the ordering and production of dresses and other accessories such as hoods, bodices, or fabrics. If this 'test' was positive, the women workers became more involved in the domestic activities at the farm – for example, by offering evaluations about the cooking. The third stage provided for the gradual introduction to pharmaceutical practices until, finally, complete involvement was achieved through the trust previously built up. Anna carried out these 'tests' with many candidates, but only a few of them experienced this proof of trust. One of them was Apollonia Neefe, wife of court physician Johann Neefe, who became the overseer of the distillery. Anna taught Apollonia not only the procedure for making *aqua vitae* but also other procedures for producing pharmaceutical

25 Wunder, "Considering 'Privacy' and Gender," 75.

products. When exactly this "Doctor Naevin" entered Anna's service is uncertain.[26] Since the end of the 1560s, however, Anna had already begun to involve Apollonia more intensively in her services. Anna trusted that she would not show the special recipes to anyone or have them copied, remarking that "You should make the recipe and not let anyone read or copy it. We have confidence in you." If they were special prescriptions, Apollonia was to send them back sealed when she made them.[27] Apollonia also cooperated with the court pharmacist Johannes unter den Linden in these 'secret' transcriptions and was tasked with ensuring that he actually protected this secrecy.[28] For this purpose, Linden was expected to visit Apollonia's house in person so that he could copy the "the recipe confidentially."[29] Once, when Linden was unable to work because of his "weakness," his servant had to assist Doctor Naevin at the castle with the work that she had been given, because "everything we have ordered her to do on her own."[30] The doctor's wife also took care of the Electress' children in her absence.[31]

Apollonia was assisted by Linden and his servant Heinrich as well as by Katharina Klein (also known as Doktor Kleinin), the widow of the personal physician Balthasar Klein (d. 1556).[32] Katharina Klein, who had already been a widow since 1560, took a central role among Anna's servants. Like Apollonia, Katharina not only acted as a midwife for Anna's children[33] but was also responsible for maintaining

26 SächsStA-D, Kop. 509, fol. 78r.

27 SächsStA-D, Kop. 512, fols. 234v–235r, 7 July 1567: "So wollest [. . .] des recepts mit vleiß machen vnnd doch das recept niemand lesen noch abschreiben lassen bej dem vertrawen so wir in dich setzen, [. . .]."

28 SächsStA-D, Kop. 519, fols. 148v–149r, Anna to Apollonia Neefe on 13 February 1576 from Annaburg. The command was not executed.

29 SächsStA-D, Kop. 519, fol. 149r, Anna to Johann unter den Linden on 13 February 1576 from Annaburg: "etzliche kunste vortrawlich."

30 SächsStA-D, Kop. 512, fols. 234v–235r: "alleine zu sawer wirdett alle ding so wir ir befohlen alleine zuuor richten."

31 SächsStA-D, Kop. 512, fol. 114r–v.

32 Balthasar Klein was first a physician in Leipzig, later in Joachimsthal. He was already active as personal physician of August's brother, Elector Moritz (1521–1553). He is mentioned especially in the records for the years 1555 and 1556. See SächsStA-D, Kop. 271.

33 About the condition of their children and especially Prince Adolf, see SächsStA-D, Kop. 514, fol. 284r–v, Anna on 30 August, 1571 from Grünhaide; SächsStA-D, Kop. 514, fol. 289r, Anna to Katharina Klein on 16 September 1571. Prince Adolf, who died after only one year, received especial care. See SächsStA-D, Kop. 514, fols. 299r–v and 299v–300r. At the beginning of 1572, Anna's daughter, Dorothea fell ill with a fever. Anna sent Katharina a prescription that she had received at the court of the imperial majesty. Katharina was also instructed to keep the other children away from Dorothea so that they would not catch it. Anna also sent four fresh pomegranates which Katharina was to give to Dorothea. See SächsStA-D, Kop. 515, fol. 33r, Anna to Katharina Klein on 18 February 1572 from Vienna.

Figure 4: Annaburg Castle, author's picture.

order at the Dresden court during Anna's absence.[34] She had taken care of cleaning Anna's chamber, which the Electress "would like to have clean and tidy,"[35] as well as for the keeping of partridges,[36] the making of hoods[37] and juices, the safeguarding of plant seeds,[38] and the sale of beer, butter, and cheese.[39] She worked not only with

34 SächsStA-D, Kop. 513, fols. 72v–73r and 80v–81r.

35 SächsStA-D, Kop. 356a, fol. 449v, Anna to Katharina Klein on 18 June 1570 from Heidelberg; SächsStA-D, Kop. 515, fol. 80r, Anna to Katharina Klein on 2 March 1573 from Görlitz: "reinlich vnnd ordenlich finden mogenn."

36 SächsStA-D, Kop. 515, fol. 76r, Anna to Katharina Klein on 1 January 1573 from Torgau.

37 SächsStA-D, Kop. 367, fol. 426r (418r), Anna to Katharina Klein on 6 November 1571 from Dippoldiswalde.

38 SächsStA-D, Kop. 367, fols. 427v (419v)–428r (420r), Anna to Katharina Klein on 6 December 1571 from Weidenhain; SächsStA-D, Kop. 517, fol. 92v, Anna to Katharina Klein on 22 August 1573 from Zwickau.

39 SächsStA-D, Kop. 367, fols. 445v (436v)–446r (437r), Anna to Katharina Klein on 23 July 1572 from Copenhagen; SächsStA-D, Kop. 367, fol. 448r (439r), Anna to Katharina Klein on 7 August 1572; SächsStA-D, Kop. 367, fols. 446v (437v)–448r (439r).

the chamberlain Hans Harrer,[40] but also with the personal physicians Johann Neefe, Paul Luther, and Caspar Peucer[41] as well as with the pharmacist Linden.[42] Just like Apollonia, Katharina was instructed in the most important manual operations so that she could manufacture the products herself in the absence of the electress. Katharina was only allowed to leave her workplace with the permission of the Electress. When Katharina asked for "things to do" on 8 January 1571, Anna allowed her to "have a day or two to go into town to take care of your business." However, Katharina was not allowed to stay away for more than two days.[43] Other important workers in the Annaburg distillery were Agnes Loser and Ursula Strang. Agnes (of) Loser (also spelled as Löser or Loser zu Pretzsch) was the wife of the hereditary marshall and member of the Privy Council, Hans of Loser (1531–1580) and was probably accepted into Anna's inner circle of servants in the mid-1980s.[44] Agnes' duties were also closely linked to the supervision of Anna's children. On 6 August 1575, Anna wrote to Agnes from Weidenhain near Torgau to inform her that her child Friedrich was suffering from a fever [*groß reissen im leiblein*] and instructed Agnes to go to Katharina Klein at Annaburg as soon as possible and support her in caring for the child.[45] A prescription was also enclosed together with the letter. However, before using the prescription, Katharina was to consult with the pharmacist Johann unter den Linden, Agnes Loser, and the wife of the new barber Valten from Holstein, who had reservations about it. Without Anna's consent, she should also not let the child have an enema.

Like Loser, Klein, and Neefe, Ursula Strang was also widowed, having been wedded previously to Andreas Strang. It is unclear when exactly Strang joined Anna's servants in the distillery house, although Anna referred to her in 1583 and again in 1584 as the *Magisterin zur Annaburgk*.[46] Nevertheless, both Katharina Klein and Apollonia Neefe were the main organisers, acting on Anna's orders in her absence. As stated by Alisha Rankin, "Neefe and Klein were both clearly sub-

40 SächsStA-D, Kop. 356a, fol. 448r–v, Anna to Katharina Klein on 7 June 1570 from Heidelberg regarding cooperation with Neefe and Peucer because of a sick woman among Anna's servants.

41 SächsStA-D, Kop. 356a, fol. 442v, Anna to Katharina Klein on 16 May 1570 from Leipzig. Anna reports to Katharina about the imminent arrival of Peucer in Dresden, who took care of the medical care of the children. In addition, see also Kop. 356a, fols. 445v–446r.

42 SächsStA-D, Kop. 517, fol. 90v, Anna to Katharina Klein on 17 August 1573 from Schwarzenberg.

43 SächsStA-D, Kop. 514, fol. 196v: "sachenn zubeschicken."

44 SächsStA-D, Kop. 524, fol. 123r–v, Anna to Agnes Loser on 29 April 1583 from Dresden.

45 SächsStA-D, Kop. 518, fol. 75r–v: "Wir seint auch angelernet worden, das andere leut iren kindern vor das reissen im leibe nach volgende artznej brauchen."

46 SächsStA-D, Kop. 524, fol. 123r–v, Anna to Agnes Loser on 29 April 1583 from Dresden; SächsStA-D, Kop. 526, fol. 232r–v, Anna to Ursula Strang on 3 November 1584 from Dresden; SächsStA-D, Kop. 525, fols. 119v–120v.

ordinates, but both were physician's wives (or widows), giving them enough status and medical experience to be assigned confidential tasks."[47]

The fact that alchemy was practiced at the princely courts primarily in a more private environment and only with selected servants was probably also due to the fact that it was not entirely without risk to pursue alchemical endeavours. While alchemy in the Middle Ages was widely accepted and tolerated by the Church,[48] this changed by the sixteenth century. The hitherto unproblematic relationship began to change only when increasingly clear hermetic theosophy developed in the second half of the sixteenth century. The search for the *Lapis Philosophorum* was more strongly understood as a quest for religious knowledge. Moreover, there was still the suspicion that the alchemists claimed to be able to produce gold by means of transmutation, and this bred the belief that they were guilty of fraud as forgers. The Elector had also suffered several failures regarding fraudulent alchemists. However, not only were the experiments that Anna and August carried out private, but also the reading practices that pertained to their interests. As claimed by Gert Melville and Peter von Moos, literature counts as one of the three dimensions of public and private.[49]

The year 1556 is given as the beginning of the library of Elector August because it was in this year that the first systematic purchases of collections were made and the Saxon Electoral library was mentioned for the first time. In addition, many book bindings were marked with the year "1556." The library was initially located in the Dresden Residence Palace but relocated to the private rooms of the Annaburg Palace after its completion. For this purpose, a transportable printing press was set up on the fourth floor of the rear castle.[50] This official library was private property to which only select people (such as, for example, August's Hebrew teacher Elias Hutter) had access in addition to the Electoral couple. The book bindings were made of reddish-brown calfskin decorated with gold, usually also with August's portrait printed in gold. Books of smaller size had the Danish and Saxon coats of arms on them. The books also had on the covers the initials A.H.Z.S.C. (August, Herzog zu

47 Rankin, *Panaceia's Daughters*, 157.

48 Medieval alchemy from the twelfth to the fifteenth century was generally not considered heretical or heterodox, with the exception of the decree ("Spondent quas non exhibent divitias pauperes alchimstae") issued in 1317 by Pope John XXII (1316–1334) which was directed mainly against the counterfeiters. Alchemists could therefore be hanged for fraud or have their goods confiscated, and clerics who practiced alchemy were to be deprived of their office. However, the decree had no lasting effect.

49 The other dimensions include the social, political, and legal-religious. See Wunder, "Considering 'Privacy' and Gender," 64.

50 Ernst Gründler, *Schloß Annaburg: Festschrift zur Einhundertfünfzigjährigen Jubelfeier des Militär-Knaben-Erziehungs-Instituts zu Annaburg* (Berlin, 1888), 122.

Sachsen, Churfürst) or A.H.Z.S.K (August, Herzog zu Sachsen, Kurfürst).[51] The first list of books from 1574[52] included 1,722 volumes. On 1 February 1575, the Electoral councillor, Dr Paul Vogel (ca. 1527–1589) was appointed to oversee the administration of the books. The second catalogue, made in 1580, already contained 2,354 volumes while the one made in 1595 mentioned 5,668 volumes.[53] August laid the foundation for this stock of books during his lifetime, an endeavour which was continued after his death. The Elector was always anxious to be informed about the latest publications and, to this end, had lists of new publications that were sent to Frankfurt am Main for the fairs or freshly printed in Leipzig sent to him from Leipzig and Wittenberg. Using these lists, August placed his orders by simply marking his wishes on the lists.[54] He had the languages he did not know translated for him. He also borrowed books from the universities of Leipzig and Wittenberg. For example, on 6 January 1568, he instructed Paul Vogel to inspect certain books. Vogel had to pick out those which could be useful to the Elector. After inspecting the books, August assured that they would all be returned intact.[55] August also received books from a variety of individuals, such as the physician in Schweidnitz (Czech: Svídnice), Jakob Horst (1537–1600),[56] Dorothea of Mansfeld,[57] the physician Christoph Pithopoeius,[58] Count Wolfgang of Hohenlohe-Weikersheim,[59] and the librarian or secretary, Hans Kilian.[60]

Likewise, the Electress received a large number of books from suppliers such as Brigitta (Brigida) of Trautson (1510/1515–1576)[61] and Duchess Elisabeth of Mecklenburg (Elisabeth of Denmark and Norway, 1524–1586), to whom Anna sent her pre-

51 Constantin Carl von Falkenstein, *Beschreibung der königlichen öffentlichen Bibliothek zu Dresden* (Dresden, 1839), 10.

52 Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats – und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden (SLUB Dresden), Bibl.Arch.I.Ba 20.

53 SLUB Dresden, Bibl.Arch.I.Ba,vols. 28 and 29.

54 Weber, *Anna churfürstin zu Sachsen*, 319.

55 Weber, *Anna churfürstin zu Sachsen*, 320.

56 SächsStA-D, Kop. 376, fol. 404r, August to Jakob Horst on 17 December 1574 from Annaburg. The physician had sent the Elector a book on diseases in German.

57 SächsStA-D, Kop. 368, fols. 29v–30r, Anna to Dorothea of Mansfeld on 12 June 1571 from Dresden. The Countess had sent books to August with the request that he should keep those that were useful to him and send the rest back to her.

58 SächsStA-D, Kop. 368, fol. 43r–v, August to Christoph Pithopeius on 19 July 1571 from Stolpen.

59 SächsStA-D, Kop. 356a, fol. 369r, August to Count Wolfgang of Hohenlohe on 27 September 1570 from Torgau.

60 SächsStA-D, Kop. 300, fols. 367r–v and 191v–192r.

61 On the correspondence between Anna and Brigitta, see Katrin Keller, "Zwischen zwei Residenzen: Der Briefwechsel der Kurfürstin Anna von Sachsen mit Freiin Brigitta von Trautson," in *Viatori per urbes castraque: Festschrift für Herwig Ebner zum 75. Geburtstag*, eds. Helmut Bräuer,

scriptions or pharmacopoeias only on the condition that they were to be handled with extreme discretion and privacy.[62] In addition to the 'official' library, Anna had other private book collections which existed in the form of a reference library or travel library[63] or in separate cabinets. Anna's reference library, which was inventoried in Annaburg Castle after her death, comprised a repository of five subjects with a total of 352 works. Among them were works, such as herbal books from Adam Lonitzer (Lonicerus, 1528–1586) and Eucharius Rößlin the Younger (Rhodion, d. 1554),[64] Walther Hermann Ryffs (variant spellings include Ryf, Reiff, Reif, Rueff, and Ruff, latinised as Gualtherus Hermenius Rivius/Ryffus, c. 1500–1548), *Das new groß Distillier-Buch*[65] and *Von wolrichenden vnd krefftigen waßern*[66] from Sigismund Kohlreuter, who himself owned some of Anna's manuscripts. Separate medicine books were kept not only in the official Electoral library but also in a "besondern Schrancken in der Chur[fürstlichen] Librarey."[67] There were also further stocks of books for private use in the laboratories themselves. August presumably kept these for the use of those working there and for himself. Various book inventories are already named in the first inventory of the Goldhaus[68] from 1598. The scribe reports that an iron drawer was found in the Great Hall behind the stove by the window and opened with the help of a locksmith. This drawer contained a total of 30 books.[69] The holdings were divided in the following centuries, the largest part now housed in the Saxon State and University Library Dresden (SLUB).

Ultimately, it must be said that August was alchemically more active or, rather, more direct than Anna – he laboured himself, independently sought out alchemists, and remained in both written and verbal correspondence with them. While Anna avoided the concept of alchemy, which was most evident in her response letter to Hieronymus Schlick,[70] August was more open to those artists who sought employ-

Gerhard Jaritz, and Käthe Sonnleitner (Institut für Geschichte der Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz, 2003), 365–82.

62 Weber, *Anna churfürstin von Sachsen*, S. 449–50.

63 Since she was often on the road, she had her travel library made by the court bookbinder in light vellum bindings. See Katrin Nitzschke, "Die 'Liberey' des Kurfürsten als Keimzelle der Sächsischen Landesbibliothek," *Dresdner Hefte: Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte* 9, no. 4 (1986): 51.

64 SLUB Dresden, Bibl.Arch.I.B,vol. 24b, fol. 2v.

65 SLUB Dresden, Bibl.Arch.I.B,vol. 24b, fol. 3r.

66 SLUB Dresden, Bibl.Arch.I.B,vol. 24b, fol. 4r.

67 SächsStA-D, Loc. 08794/12.

68 The Goldhaus in Dresden was the laboratory of the Elector August. It took its name from the laboratories it housed for alchemists to make gold.

69 SächsStA-D, Loc. 04419/03, fols. 3r–4v.

70 Anna answered him, but directly avoided the term "alchemy" and referred such questions to her husband, for whom the letter was intended. See SächsStA-D, Kop. 526, fols. 126v–127r.

ment with him. He chose the 'traditional' path of alchemy for gold making. Anna, meanwhile, took more of an indirect role, for she did not maintain any correspondence with alchemists or even seek them out herself. Although she knew the alchemists working at the court, she was always wary of questionable methods. Anna was certainly inquisitive about alchemical methods, but to call her an alchemist directly would be misleading. Alchemy became an integral part of the Saxon Electoral court gradually and remained so well into the eighteenth century, thus leaving an indelible impression on the field of science. However, in the eighteenth century, the contours of distinction between alchemy and chemistry finally became more defined. Until the seventeenth century, the terms 'chemistry' and 'alchemy' had been used interchangeably. While the boundaries between the two were still fluid, a more scientific and quantifying chemistry emerged, especially in the eighteenth century, which ultimately displaced alchemy.[71] The alchemical heyday was visibly over, and this kind of experimentation moved officially from a private practice to public knowledge.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden (SächsStA-D), Kop. 271.
SächsStA-D, Kop. 300.
SächsStA-D, Kop. 367–8.
SächsStA-D, Kop. 376.
SächsStA-D, Kop. 356a.
SächsStA-D, Kop. 509.
SächsStA-D, Kop. 512–9.
SächsStA-D, Kop. 524–6.
SächsStA-D, Loc. 04419/03.
SächsStA-D, Loc. 04419/19.
SächsStA-D Loc. 08794/12.
Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats – und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden (SLUB Dresden), Bibl. Arch.I.Ba 20.
SLUB Dresden, Bibl.Arch.I.Ba,vols. 28 and 29.
UB Heidelberg Codices Palatini germanici 256.

71 Dietlinde Goltz, "Versuch einer Grenzziehung zwischen 'Chemie' und 'Alchemie,'" *Sudhoffs Archiv* 52 (1968): 31.

Secondary Literature

Durajová, Miroslava, and Rostislav Smíšek. *Hieronymus der Ältere Schlick: Das Tagebuch: Eine Selbstdarstellung aus den Jahren 1580–1582*. České Budějovice: University of South Bohemia, 2008.

Eliade, Mircea. *Geschichte der religiösen Ideen: Von Mohammed bis zum Beginn der Neuzeit*. Vol. 3. Freiburg: Herder, 1983.

Figala, Karin, and Helmut Gebelein, eds. *Hermetik & Alchemie: Betrachtungen am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Gaggenau: Scientia Nova, 2003.

Goltz, Dietlinde. "Versuch einer Grenzziehung zwischen 'Chemie' und 'Alchemie'" *Sudhoffs Archiv* 52 (1968): 30–47.

Gründler, Ernst. *Schloß Annaburg: Festschrift zur Einhundertfünfzigjährigen Jubelfeier des Militär-Knaben-Erziehungs-Instituts zu Annaburg*. Berlin, 1888.

Keller, Katrin. "Zwischen zwei Residenzen: Der Briefwechsel der Kurfürstin Anna von Sachsen mit Freiin Brigitta von Trautson." In *Viatori per urbes castraque: Festschrift für Herwig Ebner zum 75. Geburtstag*, edited by Helmut Bräuer, Gerhard Jaritz, and Käthe Sonnleitner, 365–82, Graz Institut für Geschichte der Karl-Franzens-Universität, 2003.

Keller, Mitra. *Geheimnisse und ihre lebensgeschichtliche Bedeutung: Eine empirische Studie*. Berlin: Lit, 2007.

Můller, Georg. "Hans Jenitz, Geheim-Sekretär des Kurfürsten August." Dresdner Geschichtsblätter 1, no. 4 (1893): 89–99. https://digital.slub-dresden.de/werkansicht/dlf/6444/1. Accessed on 28 June 2024.

Nitzschke, Katrin. "Die 'Liberey' des Kurfürsten als Keimzelle der Sächsischen Landesbibliothek." *Dresdner Hefte: Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte* 9, no. 4 (1986): 50–53

Nummedal, Tara. *Alchemy and Authority in the Holy Roman Empire*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Rankin, Alisha. *Panaceia's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

Ronca, Italo. "Religious Symbolism in Medieval Islamic and Christian Alchemy." In *Western Esotericism and the Science of Religion*, edited by Antoine Faivre and Wouter J. Hanegraaff, 95–116. Leuven: Peeters, 1998.

Rössler, Beate. *Der Wert des Privaten*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2001.

Thorndike, Lynn. "Alchemy during the first half of the sixteenth century." *Ambix* 2, no. 1 (1938): 26–38

Trültzsch-Wijnen, Sascha, and Daniela Pscheida. "Privatheit – Privatsphäre: Normative Konzepte im Wandel." *Medienimpulse* 51, no. 1 (2013): 1–40

von Falkenstein, Constantin Carl. *Beschreibung der königlichen öffentlichen Bibliothek zu Dresden*. Dresden, 1839.

von Weber, Karl. *Anna churfürstin zu Sachsen*. Leipzig, 1865.

Wunder, Heide. "Considering 'Privacy' and Gender in Early Modern German-Speaking Countries." In *Early Modern Privacy: Sources and Approaches*, edited by Michaël Green, Lars Cyril Nørgaard, and Mette Birkedal Bruun, 63–78. Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2022.

Tara Nummedal

Intimate Entertainments: Andreas Orthelius' *Opera Philosophica* and Private Alchemical Practice

Between 1635 and 1637, a court distiller in the Electoral laboratories in Dresden named Andreas Orthelius carried out an alchemical experiment he called his *Opera philosophica*. The *Opera* took place within three covered glass flasks, each of which contained a "philosophical field" in which Orthelius planted seeds of gold. Aside from careful regulation of heat, the *Opera* required little intervention after the initial setup, but Orthelius closely watched these glasses for signs of progress over the course of nearly two years. Like most alchemical work in early modern Europe, Orthelius' *Opera philosophica* was shaped and shielded by complex dynamics of concealment and access.[1] His experiments took place at the centre of a series of private, nested spaces that obscured them from the public eye – flasks within a laboratory within a palace within the broader Saxon landscape. At the same time, Orthelius also strategically granted access to his flasks to at least one person. In a series of regular reports to his patron, Elector Johann Georg I von Sachsen (1585–1656), Orthelius documented colour changes, sedimentation, and the appearance and disappearance of vapours, solids, and vegetal structures in his glasses.[2] These reports emphasised the pleasure and wonder of the *Opera philosophica*, offering his observations as an intimate entertainment fit for a prince.

After two years, Orthelius ended his reports (and presumably his project), refocusing his attention instead on another project he proposed to the Elector around the same time – a potentially very profitable "secret art of smelting" [*eine gehaimbte schmelzkunst*] by which silver ore could be combined with "certain

1 On concealing and revealing as a textual strategy, see Donna Bilak, "Chasing Atalanta: Maier, Steganography, and the Secrets of Nature," in *Furnace and Fugue: A Digital Edition of Michael Maier's "Atalanta fugiens" (1618) with Scholarly Commentary*, eds. Tara Nummedal and Donna Bilak (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2020), https://doi.org/10.26300/bdp.ff.bilak, accessed 3 March 2023.

2 These reports can be found scattered throughout the *Verschiedene alchemistische Schriften 16–18th c.*, Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden (SächsStA-D) 10024, Geheimer Rat (Geheimes Archiv), Loc. 4416/6, Teil 2.

Note: Open access courtesy of the Centre for Privacy Studies (DNRF138).

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111264776-005

metallic additives" in order to yield nearly twice as much silver as usual.[3] This proposal too was carefully crafted to appeal to Electoral agendas, but Orthelius' "secret art of smelting" emphasised profits and industrial-scale operations rather than the intimacy and pleasure of the *Opera philosophica*. Moreover, while Orthelius attended to important questions of concealment and access in describing both projects, he drew on different strategies to do so. Whereas Orthelius described the art of smelting as a "secret," he opted instead for a strategy of privacy around the *Opera philosophica*, removing it from the world of profits and production and situating it, instead, in a world of pleasure and delight.

Orthelius' description of his smelting "secret" is perhaps unsurprising as it drew on a long, complex, and ubiquitous trope of secrecy that is well known in the history of alchemy. Like Orthelius, many alchemists described specific techniques or recipes as "secrets," invoking the idea of an artisanal trade secret that ought not to be communicated outside of a particular workshop, guild, or other community of experts. Other alchemists portrayed their art as offering more general (and perhaps philosophical) insights into the secrets of nature. For the prolific author Michael Maier (1568–1622), for example, writing nearly twenty years before Orthelius began his *Opera*, such secrets were more akin to revelations. Their origins were divine, hidden in nature by God "to instruct and perfect the understanding," and (al)chymical secrets were "principal and most precious of all."[4] Secrecy also shaped textual strategies such as the use of cover names [*Decknamen*] or the dispersion of pieces of a recipe or technique throughout a text [*dispersio*], which allowed alchemists to circulate their ideas and practices without revealing too much to the uninitiated.[5]

3 Andreas Orthelius to Churfürst Johann Georg I, 17 June 1636, SächsStA-D 10024, Geheimer Rat (Geheimes Archiv), Loc. 4416/6, Teil 1, fol. 568r. On this *Schmeltzkunst*, see Tara Nummedal, "Spuren der alchemischen Vergangenheit: Das Labor als Archiv im frühneuzeitlichen Sachsen," in *Spuren der Avantgarde: Theatrum alchemicum: Frühe Neuzeit und Moderne im Kulturvergleich*, eds. Helmar Schramm, Michael Lorber, and Jan Lazardzig (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2016), 157–8.

4 "Ad excolendum autem intellectum Deus infinita arcana abdidit in natura, quæ scientiis & artibus innumeris, ut ignis ex silice extunduntur, & in usum transferuntur: Inter hæc sunt Chymica secreta non postrema, sed post divinorum indagationem, omnium prima & preciosissima [. . .]." See Michael Maier, "Præfatio ad Lectorem," in Nummedal and Bilak, *Furnace and Fugue*, https://furnaceandfugue.org/atalanta-fugiens/preface.html, accessed 22 February 2023.

5 William R. Newman, "Decknamen or Pseudochemical Language? Eirenaeus Philalethes and Carl Jung," *Revue d'histoire des sciences* 49, no. 2/3 (1996): 159–88; William R. Newman, "Alchemical Symbolism and Concealment: The Chemical House of Libavius," in *The Architecture of Science*, eds. Peter Galison and Emily Thompson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 59–78.

Attending to these and other invocations of secrecy in the history of alchemy has yielded a number of important insights. Above all, examining the ways that alchemists managed their secrets – teasing their future disclosure, revealing them only partially or perhaps fully in exchange for patronage – reveals how they helped create value in an increasingly competitive market for alchemical expertise. For the most part, secrecy underscored alchemy's commercial, intellectual, medical, political, and sacred value in early modern Europe, increasing its appeal to both potential patrons and readers.[6] For alchemists, there was a paradox at the heart of this alchemical economy. Secrets gained value by being withheld, but alchemists could only collect that value by releasing them, divulging their secrets in print, in the workshop, or at court. Once those secrets found their way into the hands of patrons and readers, moreover, they could be put to use to create additional kinds of value – new medicines, more profitable mines, or even fresh insights into nature.[7]

Not all alchemists trafficked in this economy of secrets, however – or at least did not do so always. Orthelius is instructive on this point. While he described the art of smelting as a valuable secret, it is notable that he chose not to frame his alchemical *Opera philosophica* in similar terms. Orthelius did not, for example, describe the philosophical work itself as either trade secret or revelation, nor did he rely on common techniques of concealment in describing the process itself that were otherwise common in accounts of artisanal or industrial processes.[8] Moreover, whereas Orthelius positioned the smelting project in a framework of other large-scale, entrepreneurial projects designed to increase the profitability of the Saxon mining industry, the *Opera philosophica* was markedly different. It was intimate, small-scale, perhaps even entertaining for alchemist and patron

6 Modern publishers have perhaps also taken advantage of the marketability of secrets, judging by the number of books about alchemy with "secrets" in their titles. See, for instance, Spike Bucklow, *The Alchemy of Paint: Art, Science, and Secrets from the Middle Ages* (London: Marion Boyars, 2009); William Eamon, *The Professor of Secrets: Mystery, Medicine, and Alchemy in Renaissance Italy* (Washington, DC: National Geographic, 2010); Lawrence M. Principe, *The Secrets of Alchemy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012); Ralph Bauer, *The Alchemy of Conquest: Science, Religion, and the Secrets of the New World* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2019).

7 On secrets, see William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); Elaine Leong and Alisha Rankin, eds., *Secrets and Knowledge in Medicine and Science, 1500–1800* (Surrey & Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011); and Allison Kavey, *Books of Secrets: Natural Philosophy in England, 1550–1600* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007).

8 "Nothwendigkeiten zu ausführung des H. Reichspfn. hinterlassenen Philosophen Wergks," 9 May 1634, SächsStA-D 10024, Geheimer Rat (Geheimes Archiv), Loc. 4416/6, Teil 1, fol. 582r.

alike. Indeed, Orthelius' philosophical work invites us to consider something different – the possibility of a private alchemical project.

Using Orthelius' *Opera philosophica* as a springboard, this essay will explore the potential of privacy as a heuristic for advancing our understanding of early modern alchemical practice. Early modern courts might seem to be a complicated place to find privacy. The sovereigns' court *was* the state and, as such, very little of what they or their courtiers did can be understood in isolation from this public, political context. This applied as well to alchemists (such as Orthelius) who relied on the support of noble patrons (in part because alchemical work was expensive) and who carried out their work in princely laboratories or workshops where they shared space, materials, furnaces, and tools with other alchemists, smelters, distillers, and assistants who kept fires hot and helped carry out difficult, long-term, processes.[9] Moreover, alchemists' reliance on princes for financing as well as for access to libraries, laboratory equipment, and space set up a complex interplay between practitioner and sovereign in determining alchemical priorities, criteria for success, and the consequences of failure. In short, it was difficult to disentangle the work and agendas of alchemists from those of their patrons and fellow practitioners. We might well ask, therefore, whether there even was such a thing as private alchemical practice at court – that is, a kind of alchemical work that was somehow isolated from either the prince's agenda or from broader scholarly, courtly, artisanal, or industrial communities. If so, how did alchemists erect boundaries around this work to maintain its privacy, especially if they were also and perhaps simultaneously working on other projects that were directly intertwined with the agendas of their patrons or other communities? Moreover, what were the stakes and incentives of private alchemical practice? In an era in which states and natural philosophers alike increasingly claimed dominion over the natural world, was it possible to shelter nature from these agendas – that is, to create a private natural world?[10]

9 On patronage and alchemy, see Bruce T. Moran, *Patronage and Institutions: Science, Technology, and Medicine at the European Court, 1500–1750* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1991); Pamela H. Smith, *The Business of Alchemy: Science and Culture in the Holy Roman Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); Tara Nummedal, *Alchemy and Authority in the Holy Roman Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

10 This essay is informed by the work of Mette Birkedal Bruun, who has argued that the history of privacy directs our focus to "the practice and experience of withdrawal, boundary drawing, and control of access." See Bruun, "Early Modern Privacy: The Retirement of the Great Condé," in *Early Modern Privacy: Sources and Approaches*, eds. Michaël Green, Lars Cyril Nørgaard, and Mette Birkedal Bruun (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2022), 13.

5.1 Orthelius' Seeds of Gold

Let us begin by returning to the little worlds that Andreas Orthelius set up in his alchemical flasks in 1635. His two-year attempt to produce gold began in 1633 when the powerful Saxon *Geheimrat* and *Reichspfennigmeister* Nicholas Joachim von Loß died and left behind a manuscript on the philosophers' stone.[11] During his lifetime, von Loß, known as "the Rich" [*der Reiche*], was rumoured to possess an alchemical tincture. This rumour, of course, made the treatise on alchemy discovered among his papers after his death seem all the more promising.[12] The manuscript maintained that everything in nature contained the power to grow and multiply and posited that, with the proper process, this prolific power could be extracted and used to create not only the "true universal medicine" but also gold.[13]

After von Loß's death, his manuscript found its way into the hands of Andreas Orthelius, who worked at the court of Elector Johann Georg I of Saxony. As "*Destillator*,"[14] Orthelius produced various medicinal waters for the court, includ-

11 Reichspfennigmeister [Nicholas Joachim] von Loß to Churfürst zu Sachsen, 7 October 1629, SächsStA-D 10024, Geheimer Rat (Geheimes Archiv), Loc. 4416/6, Teil 2, fols. 145–147v and Orthelius' report on "Herr Reichsfennigmeister's" process, "Copey der ersten bericht von beschaffung und hoffnung des philosophischen wergks H. Reichs. Pfm.," 9 December 1633, SächsStA-D 10024, Geheimer Rat (Geheimes Archiv), Loc. 4416/6, Teil 2, fol. 187r–v. As *Reichspfennigmeister*, von Loß was responsible for collecting imperial taxes, a position that gave him a powerful political position at the court of the Saxon Elector in Dresden. I have written about the role of the Dresden laboratories as archives of the recipes of past alchemists. See Nummedal, "Spuren der alchemischen Vergangenheit," 154–73 (see, in particular, pp. 157–62 for some of Orthelius' other projects).

12 Johannes Kunckel, *Collegium Physico-Chymicum Experimentale, Oder Laboratorium Chymicum* (Hildesheim & New York: Olms, 1975), 598. This work is a facsimile of the Hamburg and Leipzig edition originally produced in 1716.

13 "Nothwendigkeiten," fol. 582r.

14 It is not clear whether this is the same Andreas Orthelius who edited and commented on Sendivogius' *Novum lumen chemicum* in 1624 and on the *Epilogus & Recapitulatio* of 1624. Newman described Orthelius' process for creating *sal nitrum* by taking red "Adamic" earth and "dunging it" with sheep's manure in layers, then leaving it in a pit for 6 months in winter to "absorb the celestial virtues." This is supposed to result in crystals—Sendivogius' *sal nitrum,* a *prima materia*—which one can collect and purify further to make the philosophers' stone. See William R. Newman, *Gehennical Fire: The Lives of George Starkey, an American Alchemist in the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 89, 212. Joachim Telle observed that, "Der Sendivogius-Kommentator Ortel (auch: Orthel, Oertel, Ortelius, Orthelius) wurde mit einem aus Rudolstadt/Thüringen gebürtigen Andreas Ortel identifziert, einem zwischen 1573/1583 am Weikersheimer Hof des Grafen Wolfgang II. von Hohenlohe als 'Medicus' und 'Laborant' bestallten Mann, der 1607 in Weikersheim Vater wurde, dann in Jena studierte (1624/25 und 1630/31) und seit 1630 bis 1637 als Chemiater am Dresdner Hof des sächsischen Kurfürsten Johann Georg I. betätigte (so Weyer 2009, 84–88). Indes scheint diese Identifikation nicht hinreichend gesichert. Ein A. Ortel wirkte jedenfalls

ing *aqua laxativa*, *spiritus citri*, *aqua apoplectica*, and *aqua contra palpitationen cordis.*[15] However, when Orthelius came across von Loß's alchemical manuscript (it is not clear where or how), he proposed to the Elector that he try out its process in the laboratories in Dresden. The Elector responded favourably to the idea and, by the following year, Orthelius had prepared a list of the materials that he would need to try von Loß's process.[16] This included access to more than just von Loß's single manuscript; he needed von Loß's entire library and collection of alchemical papers. Therefore, in 1634, backed with an Electoral order, Orthelius removed a number of "books and writings" from von Loß's personal library and transferred them to the Electoral laboratory and thus to state control.[17]

In July 1635, armed with von Loß's library, Orthelius finally began his *Opera philosophica* (as he called it) in the Electoral laboratory in Dresden. This work would occupy him for nearly two years, until the end of 1637 when he ended the project. During this time, Orthelius produced his own comprehensive record of the work by issuing reports every few weeks on his progress. Thanks to this meticulous recordkeeping, we can follow Orthelius' laboratory efforts, almost peering over his shoulder and into his glasses to see what he noticed and thought worth recording.

1641 als 'Spagyrus Electoralis' in Dresden (siehe Ortels Casualgedicht in: Brendel, *Chimia*, ed. Rolfinck, 1641, S.):(8) und ist eine Identität des theoalchemisch tingierten Sendivogius- Kommentators Ortel mit einem sächsischen Pfarrer zu erwägen, der sich 1635 und 1640 an der kriegsbedingten Geschehnissen gewidmeten Publizistik beteiligt hatte." See Joachim Telle, "Vom Tinkturwerk: Ein alchemisches Reimpaargedicht des 16. Jahrhunderts und seine Bearbeitungen von Andreas Ortel (1624) und J. R. V. (1705)," in *Geschichte der Sprache—Sprache der Geschichte: Probleme und Perspektiven der historischen Sprachwissenschaft des Deutschen. Oskar Reichmann zum 75. Geburtstag*, eds. Jochen Bär and Marcus Müller (Berlin & Boston: Akademie Verlag, 2012), footnote 17, 766–7. The key political tract is the 1640 *Blut—Angst—Threnen—Geld: Das aussgepresete [. . .] Exaction Geld wie es bey den heutigen [. . .] Kriesgswesen ist nichts anders dann der armen Leute Schweiss und Blut, etc.*

15 "Verzeichnus der [. . .] gebranten wassern, aus dem gewölbe des Church. Destillatori dem 16. Jan. 1635 Iharß mir endkommenten heraus gegeben," SächsStA-D 10024, Geheimer Rat (Geheimes Archiv), Loc. 4416/6, Teil 2, fols. 114–115.

16 "Nothwendigkeiten," fol. 582r.

17 "Verzeichnus der Medicinischen und chymischen Bücher so uff Irer Churf. Durch. zu Sachß gnedigsten anordnung, auß des Herrn Reichs Pfennig Meisters [Nicholas] Joachim von Loß, seelleit. erlaßener Bibliotheca von dem Destillatore Andreae Orthelio am 15. September dieses 1634 jahres abgeholet worden," SächsStA-D 10024, Geheimer Rat (Geheimes Archiv), Loc. 4416/6, Teil 2, fol. 104r–v; "Inventoriums, deren bücher und schrifften so aus des Herrn Reichspfennig meisters bibliothek, mir und benanted ins Churf. Sächs. Laboratorium abgefolget worden sindt, Anno 1634," SächsStA-D 10024, Geheimer Rat (Geheimes Archiv), Loc. 4416/6, Teil 2, fol. 154r–v.

Orthelius' reports are short, about a paragraph each. These are not laboratory notebooks per se but rather official reports produced for a patron on a work in progress, a project that they had together decided was worth pursuing. The reports are, to some extent, detailed enough to allow us to reconstruct his materials and process. For example, the first report explains that Orthelius began by pouring about 10 lot of distilled "spiritual water" [*wolrectificirte spiritual wasser*] onto about 1 lot of "prepared extract of Gold."[18] He then kept this mixture in a gentle heat for three days before dividing the material into three open flasks, which he then placed into a *balneum roris* or vapour bath. From here, Orthelius seems to have mostly left his flasks alone, but for two years he watched them carefully for signs of success, recording the appearance and disappearance of *sal naturae* in the necks of the glasses, the separation of material, the quantity of sediment at the bottom, and so on. The most striking element of Orthelius' reports, however, is the spectacular dance of colour in his flasks. He saw sky blue, sapphire blue, "deep blue" [*dickblau*], and light blue; brownish-red, "light red or pomegranate color" [*hell roht oder pomerantzen farb*], and blood red [*blutrot*]; pale yellow [*bleichgelb*] and a deep yellow saffron colour [*hochgelber Safran*]; "white," "clear white," mother-of-pearl, and "metallic lustre" [*metallische glanz*]; and, of course, also just plain old brown, green, blue, white, or red.

We will never know exactly what Orthelius saw in his flasks, but the way in which he described their contents, particularly his focus on colour, tells us quite a bit about the theoretical underpinnings – and thus the aims – of his *Opera philosophica*. As Orthelius explained to Elector Johann Georg I in 1633, the basic principle outlined in von Loß's manuscript was that everything in nature had the power to grow and multiply. Gold, too, possessed this power and with the right technique, Orthelius explained, it was possible to "extract the seed of gold" that contained that generative power.[19] But where did one get this seed of gold? Here

18 "Den 31. July Ao. 1635. Ist Im nahmen des Hern das wolrectificirte spiritual wasser des bewusten subjecti, so 10. loht am gewicht gehalten, uff das bereitete Gold extract, so wie ein Hochgelber Saffran ausgesehen, und 1. lot reichlich am gewicht gehabt gegossen, und also der goldsahmen inn den philosophischen agker, oder liquorische erden gesetzt worden. Ist anfenglich ettwas trüb worden, so hernach Inn einer sanfften wärm 3. tag lang gehalten, ist hell roht oder pomerantzen farb, hernach schwarzliche, endlich himmelblaw worden. Unten hat sich nach beschehenner Laüterung ein braunrote erden gesetzt." See "Bericht, wie Im bewustenn Opere Philsophico seithero weiter procedirt werden," 31 July 1635, *Verschiedene alchemistische Schriften*, fol. 195r.

19 The *Opera philosophica* that he found recorded in von Loß's manuscripts was grounded in the notion that it was possible to obtain nature's generative power in the form of seeds of gold, which could then be fertilised and multiplied to make more gold: "Als ist nun mehr dahin zu sehen, das man dergleichen gold zu wege bringe, sein sahmen, genannt des *Semen aurificum extrahire*, und diesenn itzige *Natur* gemäs einpflantz und beybringe, So wirdt nicht allein die Medi-

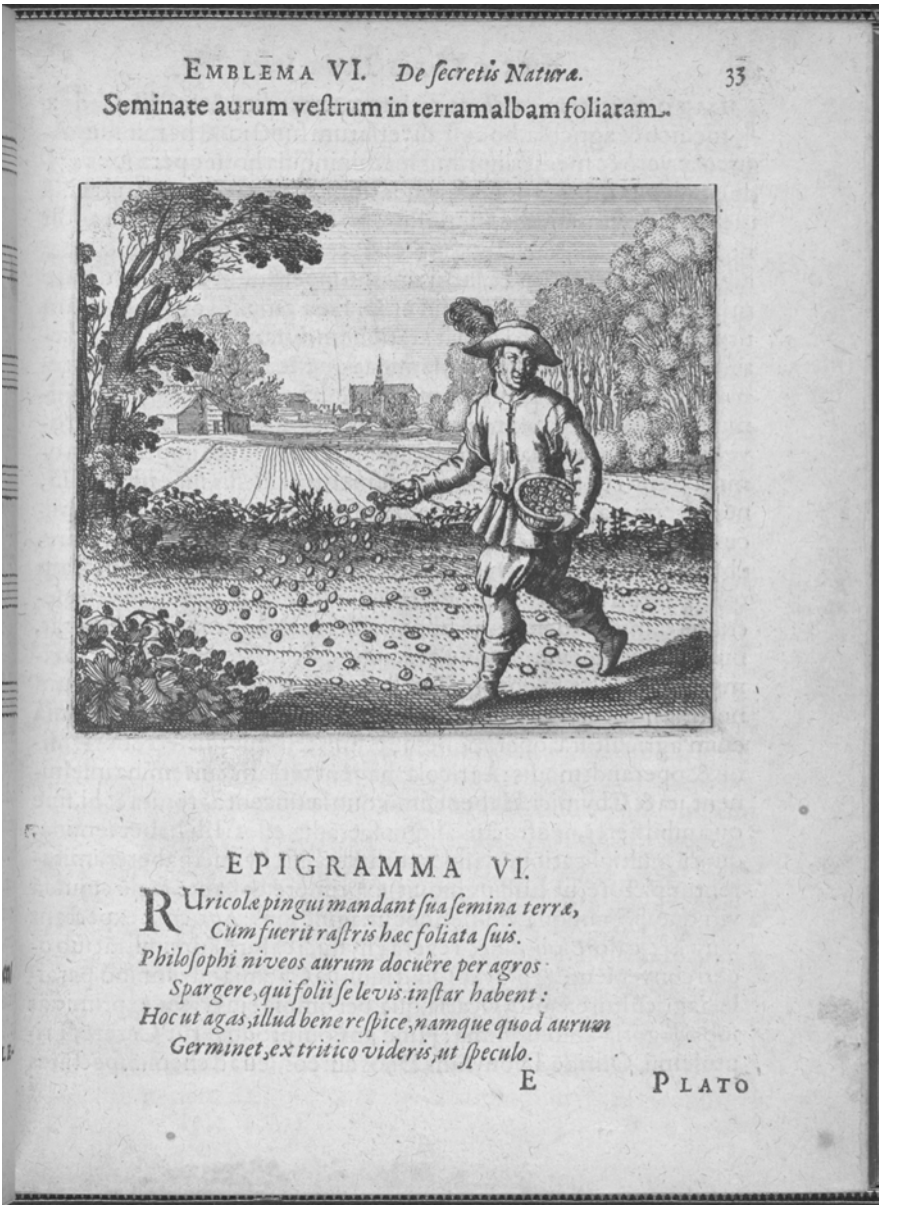


Figure 5: Maier, Michael, "Atalanta fugiens (1618). Brown Olio. Brown Digital Repository. Brown University Library. https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:760169/.

Orthelius gestured towards the importance of mining culture in Saxony, explaining that one could find no "fresher" seeds of gold for this process than in raw, unprocessed gold – namely, "in that gold that nature itself perfects." This was "gold found in the mountains and in the rivers" or – as he put it – "gold that the smelter's fire has not yet robbed of its growing and spermatic power."[20] With the right type of gold and through repeated "resolution and coagulation," Orthelius explained, it was possible eventually to harness the "full power, potency, and strength of the tincture, according to the statements of the writings of the philosophers."[21] This tincture worked on the human body as a universal medicine, but it could be used to make gold as well. Orthelius summed this up as follows: "This work is nothing other than the philosophical field in which the seeds of gold may be sown and grown into manifold fruits."[22]

This organic understanding of alchemy appears frequently in early modern sources.[23] For example, Michael Maier included it in his 1618 musical emblem book, *Atalanta fugiens* (Figure 5).[24] Framing the alchemist visually as a farmer who sows, cultivates, and harvests seeds of gold, the motto for Emblem VI directs the reader to "Sow your gold in the white foliated earth." The accompanying epigram elaborates further and describes perfectly what Orthelius hoped would unfold in his glasses:

---

cin zu der Menschenleib hirdurch gester[gen] undveredlen, sondern ist auch kein zweiffel, das es nach seiner völlige ausführung zum *aurificio* das seinige verrichten werde." See "Dem Hern Oberauffschen Nicoln von Loß ubergeben den 9 Decembris, 1633," *Verschiedene alchemistische* Schriften, fol. 187v.

20 "der goldsahmen aber Inn der gantzen *Natur* nirgends frische zu finden, dann Inn solchenn golde, welches die *Natur* selbst *finirt*. Und perficirt hat, das man wasch, 'bergk' und seiffengold zu nennen pflegt, als welchenn des schmeltzfewer von der wachsenden und sahmlichen crafft noch nichts genommen und beraubet hat." See "Dem Hern [. . .]," fol. 187r.

21 "[. . .] völlige crafft, macht und stärgke der Tinctur [. . .] nach aussage der schrifften d. P[hiloso]p[h]en." See "Dem Hern [. . .]," fol. 187r.

22 "dis wergk anderst nichts ist, dann der philosophische agker in welchen der goldsahmen geworffen auffwachsen mag Inn viefeltige frucht." See "Dem Hern [. . .]," fol. 187r.

23 On the intersection of alchemy and agriculture in an English context, see Justin Niermeier-Dohoney, "'Rusticall chymistry': Alchemy, Saltpeter Projects, and Experimental Fertilizers in Seventeenth-century English Agriculture," *History of Science* 60, no. 4 (2021): 546–74, https://doi.org/10.1177/00732753211033159 and Justin Niermeier-Dohoney, "'To Multiply Corn Two-Hundred-Fold': The Alchemical Augmentation of Wheat Seeds in Seventeenth-Century English Husbandry," *Nuncius* 37, no. 2 (2022): 284–314, https://doi.org/10.1163/18253911-bja10027.

24 Michael Maier, *Atalanta fugiens* (Oppenheim: Johann Theodor de Bry, 1617/18), in Nummedal and Bilak, *Furnace and Fugue*, https://doi.org/10.26300/bdp.ff.maier, accessed 22 February 2023.

> Rustics their seed to the fertile earth commit,
> When with their harrows they have made it fit:
> The Sophi thus their golden seed do sow
> In foliated earth as white as Snow:
> This method well observe, and you'll behold,
> As in a glass, by wheat, your budding gold.[25]

By situating his own *Opera philosophica* within this organic understanding of alchemy, Orthelius established not only how the work would proceed but also how he and the Elector would understand – and, indeed, *see* – the transformations in his own materials in the years to follow.

And so, in the summer of 1635, two years after Orthelius first found von Loß's manuscript, he began this *Opera philosophica* in the Dresden Electoral laboratories by preparing and planting his fields. As mentioned, he first combined "distilled spiritual water" [*wolrectificirte spiritual wasser*] with "prepared extract of Gold," noting, "thus the seed of gold was placed into the philosophical field, or liquid earth."[26] Orthelius's initial mixture was "murky" [*trüb*] but, after 3 days in a gentle heat, the material (which he had divided into three glasses) began to separate into layers. The liquor became "light red or pomegranate coloured, then blackish, [and] finally sky blue" while a "brown-red earth" [*braunrote erden*] settled down to the bottom.[27] He now had a little world in each of his three glasses, with the "brownish-red earth" below and "sky blue" liquid above, each signalling their location in that world by colour. And then Orthelius sat back and watched his philosophical fields for signs that they would bear fruit.

5.2 The Opera Philosophica

Over the next two years, a beautiful and vivid show unfolded before Orthelius' eyes. At the end of August 1635, something he identified as *Sal Naturae*, the "salt of nature," appeared around the neck of the glasses.[28] A few weeks later, the *Sal Naturae* began to turn yellow and sink below, eventually to be absorbed into the

25 Maier, *Atalanta fugiens*, Emblem VI, https://furnaceandfugue.org/atalanta-fugiens/emblem06.html, accessed 22 February 2023.

26 "[. . .] also der goldsamhmen inn den philosphischen agker, oder liquorische erden, gesetzt worden." See "Bericht," 31 July 1635, fol. 195r.

27 "hell roht oder pomeranz farb, hernach schwärzliche, endlich himmelblaw." See "Bericht," 31 July 1635, fol. 195r.

28 "hat sich Inn diesen 8. tagen das Sal Naturae Inn den halß der gläser Notabilisch erzeigt." See "Bericht," 31 August 1635, fol. 195r.

brown-red earth. Orthelius attributed some significance to this, noting in the same report that "from this one suspects that this mercurial salt is clothing itself with the *Tincture* and the color of *Sulphur*, which is hiding in the brown-red earth under the blue water; and it [the mercurial salt] is undertaking to make itself similar, astral or heavenly."[29] Soon this *Sal Naturae* took on a "pretty metallic lustre" and Orthelius also noted that "the glasses, held up to the sun, displayed rainbow colours.[30] In January 1636, in the middle of winter, Orthelius saw "a lovely white lustre like mother-of-pearl" in the belly of the glasses and the "sky blue water" began to fade almost to grey.[31] It is not hard to imagine a gloomy day in Dresden that winter, the grey skies and frosty ground outside perfectly in sync with the scene in Orthelius' laboratory glasses.

As the sky-blue water continued to fade and slowly began to assimilate into the earth below, Orthelius decided to increase the strength of the fire "because then this earth will change from one colour to another, until it has finally become blood red."[32] Meanwhile, Orthelius' fields began to show other signs of life. By the end of February and early March, perhaps as Saxony began to warm up, signs of spring began to stir in the flasks as well. Alongside the "lovely white lustre" like "mother-of-pearl" that appeared all over the glasses, "green spots" also began to dot the top of one of them.[33] For the next few months, both the lustre and the green spots came and went in all three glasses, a volatile mix of winter and spring typical of March and April weather in Northern Germany.[34] By May, the iridescent "mother-of-pearl" substance started to turn yellow and brown; summer seemed to be settling in.[35] By early June 1636, Orthelius was certain that the

29 "daraus vermuhtet wirdt, das solch *Mercurialisch* Salz sich mitt der *Tinctur* und farbe des *Sulphuris*, so Inn der braunroten erden unter dem blawen wasser stegkt, bekleidet; Und solches ihme gleichförmig, astralisch oder himlisch zu machen unterfangt." See "Weiter bericht vom Opere Philosophico," 4–19 October 1635, *Verschiedene alchemistische Schriften*, fol. 199r.

30 "hübschen metallischen glanz"; "die gläser, gegen der Sonn gehalten, an etzlichen orten Regenbogenische farben repraesentirn." See "Weiter bericht vom Opere Philosophico," 19 October–1 November 1635, fol. 198r.

31 "hadt sich *in opera philosophico* der hübsche weiße glanz wie Perlenmutter in den bauchen der gläser noch Immer darerzeiget." See "Weiter bericht vom Opere Philosophico," 9–22 January 1636, fol. 214r.

32 "da sich dann solche erden von einer farb zur andern verendern wird, bis sie entlichen blutroth worden." See "Weiter bericht vom Opere Philosophico," 22 January–5 February 1636, fol. 242r.

33 "der schöne weiß glantz, so geringst an den gläsern herumb sich inwendig [angeletzet?] hat, wie Perlenmutter"; "die grünen eingesprengten fleck." See "Weiter bericht vom Opere Philosophico," 22 February–12 March 1636, fol. 244.

34 "Weiter bericht vom Opere Philosophico," 12 March–19 May 1636, fols. 245r–248v.

35 "Inn dem bauch der Gläser noch continuiren, sich theils gegen Der gülbe, theils gegen der braune sich Zuneigendt." See "Weiter bericht vom Opere Philosophico," 19–27 May 1636, fol. 249r.

"white lustre" covering the inside of his glasses was none other than "*terra foliata*" or the "white foliated earth" of the philosophers, in which his seeds of gold were to multiply.[36] Michael Maier's Emblem VI ("Sow your gold in the white foliated earth") exemplifies the kind of "philosophical" (that is, alchemical) framework Orthelius likely had in mind. "To this end say the Philosophers that their gold must be sowed upon white foliated earth, as if they meant that the Sowing of corn Should be observed and imitated [. . .]," Maier explained. He continued, "White earth, because sandy, yields little fruit to the countrymen [i.e., farmers], by whom that which is black and fat is more desired, but the white principally conduces to the Philosophers, if it be foliated, that is, well prepared, because they know how to enrich it with their dung."[37]

About a year after Orthelius began his *Opera philosophica*, therefore, his philosophical fields were prepared, planted, and ready to yield their crops. The little worlds in his glasses had three layers – a thick and ever-increasing brown earth at the bottom, the sky-blue water floating above it, and, at the very top, the lustrous white *terra foliata* with occasional flecks of green.[38] In September, as harvest time drew near, "white lustrous earth" appeared underneath the brownish-red earth and "also began to produce fantastic colours."[39] Meanwhile, the earth under the sky-blue water continued to "assimilate" the water, as Orthelius put it, and the white lustre "broke apart like fish scales" and began to look like foliated earth.[40]

Finally, in November 1636, the landscape in one of the glasses finally seemed to bear fruit. "[P]retty plants have sprouted on the sides of the glass," he noted, "as when small trees are planted along an embankment."[41] Given these signs of

36 "der Weise glantz in dem bauch der gläser |: welcher Doch nicht anders ist, dann die *terra foliata,* Deren die *philosophi* zum theil gedencken." See "Weiter bericht vom Opere Philosophico," 28 May–11 June 1636, fol. 251r.

37 "Hinc dicunt Philosophi, quod aurum eorum in terram albam foliatam seminandum sit, quasi velint, seminationem tritici spectandam esse pro exemplo et imitandam . . . . Terra alba, utpote arenosa, rusticis parum fructus suppeditat, quibus nigra et pinguis magis ad nutum; at Philosophis inprimis illa confert, si foliata sit, hoc est, bene praeparata: quia hi eam stercorare fimo suo noverunt [. . .]." See Maier, *Atalanta fugiens*, Emblem VI https://furnaceandfugue.org/atalanta-fugiens/emblem06.html, accessed 23 February 2023.

38 "Weiter bericht vom Opere Philosophico," 16–30 July, 1636, fol. 256r.

39 "weis glanzend erden"; "auch anfänget, sich wunderlich anfarben zuerzeugen." "Weiter bericht vom Opere Philosophico," 13–30 September 1636, fol. 218r.

40 "das sal Naturae Im bauch der gläser vom netallischen glantz, dessen Jüngst gedacht worden ettwas wider abgenommen, und sich zerspreitet, wie fischschupen, oder als ein gebletterte erden erzeiget." See "Weiter bericht vom Opere Philosophico," 1–14 November 1636, fol. 284r.

41 "und in den einem sindt hübsche gewächß an den seiten des glasses herfür gesprossen, als wann an dem Ufer des Waßers geringst umb bawme gepflantzet weren." See "Weiter bericht vom Opere Philosophico," 13 October–13 November 1636, fol. 215. It should be noted that this par-

progress, it is easy to imagine that Orthelius would have been optimistic about the prospects, although he also wondered about what it all meant. By February 1637, he seemed increasingly uncertain. "The figures, pictures, and growths continue to show themselves on the walls of the glasses, above the remaining water line. Such wondrous colors and [. . .] things about which even a man full of wisdom about Nature and a learned Hermeticus should be astonished. However, I cannot, in my simplicity, make any thorough judgments about whether these wondrous apparitions, Nature's playful visions, will comprise the work and fulfill our hopes."[42] Despite this hesitation, Orthelius watched colours come and go, deepen and fade, and the growths on the sides of the glasses persist throughout the summer and autumn until he finally concluded the process at the end of 1637.

5.3 Strategies for Privacy

Orthelius' reports suggest that he did, in fact, create and sustain a limited form of privacy around the *Opera philosophica* that he carried out in the Electoral laboratory, in the sense that he crafted circumscribed and controlled spaces that isolated his philosophical fields from the court's broader entrepreneurial agendas. To accomplish this, he relied first and foremost on spatial, rhetorical, and social strategies to mark his flasks as distinct spaces. His reports, for example, emphasised the "wondrous colours" and "astonishing" figures and growths within his flasks, participating in a courtly discourse of wonder and curiosity to underscore their exceptional nature.[43] Moreover, Orthelius used technical terms such as "foliated earth" to indicate that his work was distinctly "philosophical" or alchemical. This kind of alchemical citation made it clear that his three flasks were entirely created and controlled by Orthelius – he determined whether to cover them, whether to raise or lower the heat, add something, or perhaps even destroy them.

---

ticular report was not signed "Andreas Orthelius Destillator manu propria" and, like many of the reports between October and December 1636, appears to have been written by someone named Christoff Lehmann.

42 "So erweisen sich doch die figuren, bildnussen, undt gewächse an den innerlichen wänden der gläser, oberhalb dem noch ubrigenn wasserlinie, so Wunderlich anfarben und [. . .] dingen, das auch ein Naturweiser Mann und hocherfarhner Hermeticus sich drüber verwundern solte. Ob aber diese wunderliche apparentien, darmitt die Natur so visirlich spielet, werden eben das wergk ausmach und das verhoffte erfüllen, kan ich meiner einfalt noch nichst gründliches Urtheilen." See "Weiter bericht vom Opere Philosophico," 26 February 1637, fol. 261r.

43 Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150–1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998).

Rhetorically, then, he constructed them as private worlds under his control, loosely experimental spaces that could host carefully managed tests of the theory of the organic generation of metals set out in von Loß's manuscript.

This conceptual boundary between the *Opera philosophica* and the more industrialised (mining and agricultural) landscape of Saxony was reinforced by a spatial boundary. Circumscribed by the glass walls of Orthelius' flasks, the three little worlds were enclosed spaces, separated from the environments around them. The miniature scale of these worlds further removed them from the realm of mines and farms, thereby shrinking their utility. As miniature versions of the natural world, they became something else – emblems of the power of art to imitate nature and make it even more spectacular. In this sense, they were reoriented towards the Electoral *Kunstkammer*, resembling some of the Electors' most prized objects. These included, for example, a cherry pit carved with 185 tiny faces that von Loß's father, Christoph von Loß, gave to Elector Johann Georg's father around 1589[44] or, more locally, a tiny gilt spider automaton, manufactured by the court clockmaker Tobias Reichel, whose mechanical legs allowed it to walk like a "real" spider.[45] Like the spider and the cherry pit, whose faces are so small that viewers today peer at them through a magnifying glass, the minature philosophical fields in Orthelius' flasks also sparked wonder. However, their scale also imposed a certain way of interacting with them. They could only be viewed properly up close, almost guaranteeing that one's interactions with them would be personal and intimate.

On their own, these spatial and rhetorical techniques could only partially accomplish the task of creating and maintaining boundaries between the *Opera philosophica* and other projects and thus ensure privacy for Orthelius' work. After all, the walls of his flasks were made of glass, and while this transparency was essential to allow Orthelius to observe and report on what was happening inside his flasks – and thus to establish them as alchemical spaces – it also exposed their contents to the prying eyes of others who might pass through the laboratory. If we return to Orthelius' reports, however, we can see that he also managed access to his private little worlds at least in part by positioning them as

44 "Kirschkern mit 185 geschnitzten Köpfen," shortly before 1589, Inventarnr. VII 32 ee, now on display in the Neues Grünes Gewölbe, Dresden and in the Digital Collections of the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, https://skd-online-collection.skd.museum/Details/Index/117609, accessed 27 February 2023.

45 The "Automat in Form einer Spinne," Inventarnr. VI 7 qq, was added to the Electoral Kunstkammer in 1604 by Electress Hedwig of Saxony, now accessible in the Digital Collections of the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden https://skd-online-collection.skd.museum/Details/Index/118405, accessed 28 February 2023.

expert spaces that only someone with a trained eye would be able to see. Orthelius' descriptions were lively, full of compellingly vivid images of growth and transformation, but that does not mean that everyone who looked at them saw what Orthelius saw. These reports were certainly carefully crafted and managed accounts. He may well have exaggerated, for example, the wondrous quality of what he saw forming on the walls and out of the layers of the closed little worlds to make them more appealing. Even Orthelius' more prosaic descriptions, however, were also an act of creation, a translation of what might have looked like a mass of chaotic or undifferentiated matter (especially to a non-expert viewer) into the pretty little fields that proved his alchemical theory. In seeing what others might not, Orthelius positioned himself as an expert observer and perhaps taught the Elector how to see with a 'chymical' eye as well. (Interestingly, Orthelius stopped short of *interpreting* what he saw, demurring that in his "simplicity" he was unable to judge the significance of the material transformations at play in the flasks.) By ensuring that the flasks required visual expertise – or an expert guide – to access, Orthelius thus bolstered the rhetorical and spatial boundaries of his work with an additional barrier. The flasks might have been made of glass and their contents visible to all, but their privacy could nevertheless remain intact, for not everyone who looked would know what to see.

Exceptionally wondrous, alchemical, small in scale, and inaccessible to all but the most expert eyes, Orthelius' philosophical fields were mostly isolated from the culture of entrepreneurial alchemy and secrecy associated with mining and other Electoral projects to create a more productive and profitable landscape. They were also largely disconnected from a broader scholarly community of natural philosophers.[46] Withdrawn from these other agendas, the *Opera philosophica* was private in the sense that it was personal, both in scale and in ambition, an intimate project shared between Orthelius and his patron. However, this begs the question: what was the goal of this project? This form of privacy, I suggest, allowed Orthelius to position this particular project in a context markedly different from the Saxon smelting houses – it became a courtly entertainment, item of playful curiosity, and perhaps even a source of pleasure.[47] Very few people were able to access Orthelius' worlds, but for those who were able to watch his fields grow over the course of two years, the impact must have been spectacular. The philosophical fields were dynamic and colourful but, most of all, they were uncanny

46 On this culture of entrepreneurial alchemy, see Nummedal, "Entrepreneurial Alchemy," in *Alchemy and Authority*, 73–95.

47 On science as entertainment at early modern courts, see Mario Biagioli, *Galileo, Courtier: The Practice of Science in the Culture of Absolutism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), especially Chapter 2 ("Discoveries and Etiquette," 103–58).

and delightfully surprising – miniature, clearly alchemical replicas of aspects of the natural world, simultaneously natural and manufactured and, above all, dynamic, in motion, and alive. Like a menagerie or private garden, they offered the Elector a personal portal in which to watch nature up close.

5.4 Privacy as Courtly Entertainment

In June 1636, about midway through his two-year alchemical show, Orthelius pitched his other, very different project to Elector Johann Georg I – the "secret art of smelting" with which we began. His letter to the Elector describing the art emphasised profits above all else. He argued that the technique could double the silver yield in the Electoral mines. He noted that, if put into operation on a large scale, it could yield "a mighty profit"[48] and indicated his wish that "a most gracious compensation for me and mine will not be forgotten in the future when Our Gracious Lord makes something profitable, as is absolutely to be hoped."[49] This kind of language demonstrates that at other moments, Orthelius did not hesitate to participate in the economy of secrets, selling a valuable technique in exchange for "compensation" and hoping that the Elector would recognise this exchange as a good investment. The contrast between this discourse of secrecy around Orthelius' smelting proposal – rooted in the world of artisans, engineers, and miners – and its absence from the two-year long record of his *Opera philosophica* underscores the limits of secrecy in connection with early modern alchemy. Drawing on Orthelius as a case study, I have proposed that privacy was a strategy that alchemists could use to isolate some kinds of projects from courtly entrepreneurial (and possibly other) agendas by reducing their scale, limiting their utility, and highlighting instead their pleasure, in the process appealing to courtly discourses of wonder and delight. Given his reluctance to philosophise, Orthelius does not seem to have had much of an agenda beyond this, but this use of privacy to reposition alchemy away from entrepreneurial secrets overlapped with the ambitions of some alchemists (such as Michael Maier) to raise alchemy's status from its artisanal roots, making it less artisanal and more philosophical or

48 "welcher zugangk und vermehrung dann Im grosen wergk jhärlich ein mechtigenn profiht ertragen thut." See Orthelius to Churfürst Johann Georg I, fol. 568r–v.

49 "[. . .] das wenn ja hirmit künftig wie gäntzlich zu hoffen, unsern gnedigstenn herrn ein gutter nutz und mergklicher profiht geschafft würde, durch des hern gevatters commendirliches an und fürbringen, meiner oder der meinigen, zu einem gnedigsten Recompenß, nicht sole vergessen werden." See Orthelius to Churfürst Johann Georg I, fol. 568r–v.

courtly.[50] Orthelius created and sustained a limited form of privacy around his *Opera philosophica* through spatial, rhetorical, and social strategies. He carved out a distinct alchemical space in his three flasks, marking and managing their boundaries with text, glass, and required expertise. Orthelius himself controlled (or at least attempted to control) the beginning and end of these worlds as well as their agents and modes of access. Notably, Orthelius did not describe his *Opera philosophica* as a secret. Orthelius' flasks may not have produced profitable fields of gold but they delivered in other ways instead. In the end, private alchemical projects such as Orthelius' belonged not in the smelting houses but in the *Kunstkammer*, where they exposed the limits of entrepreneurial relationships to nature and preserved ludic discourses of pleasure and delight in nature for just a little bit longer.[51]

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Verschiedene alchemistische Schriften, 16–18th c. Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden (SächsStA-D) 10024, Geheimer Rat (Geheimes Archiv), Loc. 4416/6.

"Kirschkern mit 185 geschnitzten Köpfen." Shortly before 1589. Inventarnr. VII 32 ee. Digital Collections of the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden. https://skd-online-collection.skd.museum/Details/Index/117609. Accessed 27 February 2023.

Kunckel, Johannes. *Collegium Physico-Chymicum Experimentale, Oder Laboratorium Chymicum*. Hildesheim & New York: Olms, 1975. Facsimile of the Hamburg and Leipzig edition, 1716.

Maier, Michael. *Atalanta fugiens*. Oppenheim: Johann Theodor de Bry, 1617/18. In *Furnace and Fugue*: *A Digital Edition of Michael Maier's "Atalanta fugiens" (1618) with Scholarly Commentary*, edited by Tara Nummedal and Donna Bilak. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2020. https://doi.org/10.26300/bdp.ff.maier.

Reichel, Tobias. "Automat in Form einer Spinne." Early 17th c. Inventarnr. VI 7 qq. Digital Collections of the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden. https://skd-online-collection.skd.museum/Details/Index/117609. Accessed 27 February 2023.

50 See Tara Nummedal and Donna Bilak, "Interplay: New Scholarship on *Atalanta fugiens*," in Nummedal and Bilak, *Furnace and Fugue*, https://doi.org/10.26300/bdp.ff.nummedal-bilak, accessed 2 March 2023.

51 Paula Findlen, "Between Carnival and Lent: The Scientific Revolution at the Margins of Culture," *Configurations* 6, no. 2 (1998): 243–67, https://doi.org/10.1353/con.1998.0016.

Secondary Literature

Bauer, Ralph. *The Alchemy of Conquest: Science, Religion, and the Secrets of the New World*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2019.

Biagioli, Mario. *Galileo, Courtier: The Practice of Science in the Culture of Absolutism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.

Bilak, Donna. "Chasing Atalanta: Maier, Steganography, and the Secrets of Nature." In *Furnace and Fugue*: *A Digital Edition of Michael Maier's "Atalanta fugiens" (1618) with Scholarly Commentary*, edited by Tara Nummedal and Donna Bilak. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2020. https://doi.org/10.26300/bdp.ff.bilak.

Bruun, Mette Birkedal. "Early Modern Privacy: The Retirement of the Great Condé." In *Early Modern Privacy: Sources and Approaches*, edited by Michaël Green, Lars Cyril Nørgaard, and Mette Birkedal Bruun, 12–60. Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2022.

Bucklow, Spike. *The Alchemy of Paint: Art, Science, and Secrets from the Middle Ages*. London: Marion Boyars, 2009.

Daston, Lorraine, and Katharine Park. *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150–1750*. New York: Zone Books, 1998.

Eamon, William. *The Professor of Secrets: Mystery, Medicine, and Alchemy in Renaissance Italy*. Washington, DC: National Geographic, 2010.

Eamon, William. *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994.

Findlen, Paula. "Between Carnival and Lent: The Scientific Revolution at the Margins of Culture." *Configurations* 6, no. 2 (1998): 243–67.

Kavey, Allison. *Books of Secrets: Natural Philosophy in England, 1550–1600*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007.

Leong, Elaine, and Alisha Rankin, eds. *Secrets and Knowledge in Medicine and Science, 1500–1800*. Surrey & Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011.

Moran, Bruce. *Patronage and Institutions: Science, Technology, and Medicine at the European Court, 1500–1750*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1991.

Newman, William R. "Decknamen or Pseudochemical Language? Eirenaeus Philalethes and Carl Jung." *Revue d'histoire des sciences* 49, no. 2/3 (1996): 159–88.

Newman, William R. "Alchemical Symbolism and Concealment: The Chemical House of Libavius." In *The Architecture of Science*, edited by Peter Galison and Emily Thompson, 59–78. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999.

Newman, William R. *Gehennical Fire: The Lives of George Starkey, an American Alchemist in the Scientific Revolution*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Niermeier-Dohoney, Justin. "'Rusticall chymistry': Alchemy, Saltpeter Projects, and Experimental Fertilizers in Seventeenth-century English Agriculture." *History of Science* 60, no. 4 (2021): 546–74. https://doi.org/10.1177/00732753211033159.

Niermeier-Dohoney, Justin. "'To Multiply Corn Two-Hundred-Fold': The Alchemical Augmentation of Wheat Seeds in Seventeenth-Century English Husbandry." *Nuncius* 37, no. 2 (2022): 284–314. https://doi.org/10.1163/18253911-bja10027.

Nummedal, Tara. *Alchemy and Authority in the Holy Roman Empire*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Nummedal, Tara. "Spuren der alchemischen Vergangenheit. Das Labor als Archiv im frühneuzeitlichen Sachsen." In *Spuren der Avantgarde: Theatrum alchemicum: Frühe Neuzeit und*

Moderne im Kulturvergleich, edited by Helmar Schramm, Michael Lorber, and Jan Lazardzig, 154–73. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2016.

Principe, Lawrence M. *The Secrets of Alchemy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012.

Smith, Pamela H. *The Business of Alchemy: Science and Culture in the Holy Roman Empire*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994.

Telle, Joachim. "Vom Tinkturwerk: Ein alchemisches Reimpaargedicht des 16. Jahrhunderts und seine Bearbeitungen von Andreas Ortel (1624) und J. R. V. (1705)." In *Geschichte der Sprache – Sprache der Geschichte: Probleme und Perspektiven der historischen Sprachwissenschaft des Deutschen. Oskar Reichmann zum 75. Geburtstag*, edited by Jochen Bär and Marcus Müller, 761–800. Berlin & Boston: Akademie Verlag, 2012.

Natalie Körner

Privacy, Extraction, and Extreme Environments: The Miner, the Hermit, and the First Architect

The development of early modern Saxony into a territory of profound political and cultural influence was, in large part, financed by the mining industry. After a slump in the fourteenth century, mining revived in the mid-fifteenth century with increased demand and improved technologies. The ore-rich mountains in particular – partially Saxon, partially Bohemian – became a major site of extraction. The Saxon town of Annaberg, for example, came into being, with early mining pits starting in 1492. By 1514, it had over 900 working pits to extract silver, copper, tin, bismuth, and cobalt. Its population grew explosively and, by 1540, its then-12,000 inhabitants constituted Saxony's second largest town.[1] The advanced, sixteenth-century technologies of the mining industry were described and documented by the Saxon physician and mining expert, Georgius Agricola (1494–1555) in his influential treatise *De Re Metallica* (1556) on metallurgy and mining.

To enrich my explorative analysis of the experience of privacy in Dresden's early modern mining practices, this chapter draws on the trope of a solitary male figure in the wilderness who extracts raw matter in various forms. To better understand the miner and his work environment as described and depicted by Agricola and other visual representations of the mining process of the time, I will draw conceptual analogies between the labour-related practices of the miner and those of three other male figures whose exposure to an extreme environment came with a unique experience of privacy. The process of extraction created embodied knowledge and changed both the extracting force and the environment. The first section centres on Agricola's descriptions of the miners' work environment. This is followed by an examination of privacy in relation to the miner and his late-medieval and early modern, mythical antithesis popular in mining lore – the solitary Wild Man.

1 Tina Asmussen and Pamela O. Long, "Introduction: The Cultural and Material Worlds of Mining in Early Modern Europe," *Renaissance Studies* 34, no. 1 (2019): 15; Thomas Morel, "The Mines and the Court," in *Underground Mathematics: Craft Culture and Knowledge Production in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 83–117, https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009267274.004.

Note: Centre for Privacy Studies, University of Copenhagen. This research has been supported by the Danish National Research Foundation (DNRF138).

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111264776-006

Both inhabit remote landscapes which are turned into wastelands as a result of the mining activities that require the felling of entire forests, turning the mountains inside out and redirecting streams.[2] This man-made wasteland and the extreme underground realm of the mine relates in environmental experience to the figurative desert – the desolate, remote terrain of the desert father (and, to a lesser extent, the desert mother). I will expand my analysis of this historical material with a more associative investigation of desert fathers who were an important trope in the early modern period, long after the actual practice of seeking out the desert to be closer to God had all but ceased. As a conceptual role model, the desert father could be emulated to carve out moments of withdrawal from one's family or community for intense prayer, meditation, work, and study. I will explore this figure in my third section to further describe the nuances of the experience of privacy linked with an extreme environment, such as the mine and the desert. Finally, in the fourth part of this chapter, I will show how the ways in which the miner and the hermit make their respective inhospitable regions survivable evoke the figure of the 'first architect' and his efforts to create shelter, as described in historical treatises of architecture up until and beyond the early modern period. The Wild Man, the desert father, and the first architect will guide my exploration of the miner's experience of privacy below the ground, in an extreme environment of danger, darkness, and isolation. This solitary aspect of the miner's experience has received much less scholarly attention than his integration into a strong collective.[3] This chapter thus draws on a variety of historical material to offer an insight into the sense of privacy anchored in an extreme environment and how related spatial and conceptual constructs and environmental realities provided a unique experience of privacy in the early modern period.

In an architectural-historical context, the simple huts marking shafts in the mining landscape above ground and the lapidary sheds often depicted in hermit paintings evoke the common and pervasive trope of the 'first hut' built by the 'first

2 For more on the Wild Man, see Richard Bernheimer, *Wild Men in the Middle Ages: A Study in Art, Sentiment, Demonology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952); Gerhard Heilfurth, *Bergbau und Bergmann in der deutschsprachigen Sagenüberlieferung Mitteleuropas* (Marburg: Elwert, 1967); Roger Bartra, *Wild Men in the Looking Glass: The Mythic Origins of European Otherness*, trans. Carl T. Berrisford (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994); Rudolf Simek, *Monster im Mittelalter: Die phantastische Welt der Wundervölker und Fabelwesen* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2015); Tina Asmussen, "Wild Men in Braunschweig—Economies of Hope and Fear in Early Modern Mining," *Renaissance Studies* 34, no. 1 (2019): 31–56.

3 The emphasis of the collective can be understood as a result of historical reception. See Sebastian Felten, "Mining Culture, Labour, and the State in Early Modern Saxony," *Renaissance Studies* 34, no. 1 (2019): 124.

architect' in architectural writing since antiquity.[4] Descriptions of this primordial hut in early modern architectural theory seem to echo the mining infrastructure detailed in Agricola's treatise – an effort at environmental manipulation to create a stable interior microclimate that contrasts with the harsher and more unstable exterior conditions of wind, cold, heat, rain, direct sunlight, and so on.[5] Despite their tectonic similarities and their shared telos of microclimatic management, mining huts, hermit shelters, and the imagined *ur*-hut of architectural origin stories have never previously been compared. There is a shortage of literature on the architectural implications of early modern mining which tend instead to be allocated to the realm of engineering – an anachronistic classification.[6] Drawing on both the text of Agricola's mining treatise and its detailed woodcuts (292 in total) as well as the Saxon mining scene depicted in the Annaberger Bergaltar (Figure 6), painted by Hans Hesse on the back of the altar of St Anne's Church in Annaberg-Buchholz, Saxony in 1521, this chapter will provide an insight into the architecture of early modern mining. I will pair these sources with seminal architectural treatises by Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472) and Filarete (c.1400–c.1469) to explore extraction as closely tied to the establishment of rudimentary shelter.[7]

4 For a historical and theoretical overview of this common concept in architectural history, see Joseph Rykwert, *On Adam's House in Paradise: The Idea of the Primitive Hut in Architectural History*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981). The famous eighteenth-century version of the concept can be found in Marc-Antoine Laugier, *An Essay on Architecture: In Which Its True Principles Are Explained, and Invariable Rules Proposed, for Directing the Judgement and Forming the Taste of the Gentleman and the Architect, with Regard to the Different Kinds of Buildings, the Embellishment of Cities* (London: T. Osborne and Shipton, 1755), https://archive.org/details/essayonarchitect00laugrich/mode/2up?ref=ol, accessed 28 June 2024.

5 A common theme in architectural history and theory, the 'first hut' is often translated as 'primitive hut' in English (juxtaposed against the more neutral German term '*Urhütte*,' for example), which comes with problematic connotations of subjugating the other and colonialism. See, for example, Stephen Cairns, "Notes for an Alternative History of the Primitive Hut," in *Primitive: Original Matters in Architecture*, eds. Jo Odgers, Flora Samuel, and Adam Sharr (London: Routledge, 2006), 86–95. I therefore use the terms 'first hut,' '*ur*-hut,' and 'primordial hut.'

6 Until the eighteenth century, there was little differentiation between architects and engineers. See, for example, Irina Gouzévitch and Peter Jones, "Becoming an Engineer in Eighteenth-Century Europe: The Construction of a Professional Identity," *Engineering Studies* 3, no. 3 (2011): 149–52.

7 Georgius Agricola, *De Re Metallica: Translated from the First Latin Edition of 1556*, trans. Herbert Clark Hoover and Lou Henry Hoover (New York: Dover Publications, 1950), Project Gutenberg e-book, https://www.gutenberg.org/files/38015/38015-h/38015-h.htm, 4, accessed 28 June 2024. Agricola was familiar with and cited Vitruvius, whose *De architectura* (ca. 15 BCE) is the oldest surviving text on architecture. For example, Agricola specifically references Vitruvius' description of a machine that was used to draw water from mines. See Agricola, *De Re Metallica*, 175.

Figure 6: Hans Hesse, Annaberger Bergaltar (1521), St Anne's Church in Annaberg-Buchholz, Saxony, Wikimedia Commons.

As Mette Birkedal Bruun writes, "privacy is contingent," that is, it relates to a specific context and must simultaneously be understood as an evolving concept.[8] My analysis of the miner, the Wild Man, the hermit, and the first architect in their respective *vastitates* (Latin term for 'desert,' but also denoting 'destruction' and 'wasteland'[9]) will shed light on the experience of privacy in relation to extractive practices that treat a hostile environment as a reserve of resources. Much research on early modern privacy revolves spatially around chambers,

8 Mette Birkedal Bruun, "Privacy in Early Modern Christianity and Beyond: Traces and Approaches," *Annali dell'Istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento/Jahrbuch des italienisch-deutschen historischen instituts in Trient* 44, no. 2 (2018): 46.

9 https://www.dizionario-latino.com/dizionario-latino-italiano.php?lemma=VASTITAS100, accessed 28 June 2024.

studies, closets, private chapels, and retreats.[10] The typologies explored in this chapter offer an expansion of these spaces by including the miner's shaft or tunnel, the concept of the imagined 'first shelter' built by the 'first architect,' and the hermit's desert abode (on which many of the spaces associated with early modern privacy are modelled). The chapter situates privacy in spaces of labour, particularly those that either require privacy simply because of the spatial conditions of the work or because the subject of labour is secret or demands full concentration and a minimum of distractions or intrusions caused by the presence of other people. Lena Cowen Orlin observes, "Personal privacy takes many forms: interiority, atomization, spatial control, intimacy, urban anonymity, secrecy, withholding, solitude."[11] Beyond interiority, spatial control, secrecy, and solitude, I will examine instances of an almost compulsory privacy in relation to mining and the consequences and implications of labour in an extreme environment. This environment provided just enough space and resources for one body, and being in private was a prerequisite for completing challenging extractive work, for the attentiveness required to respond to deadly environmental dangers, and for mental discipline, as exemplified in the dealings with demons. In the sections that follow, I frame privacy as a prerequisite for the extractive practices linked to the transformative processes of knowledge creation, with special focus on the spatial conditions.

6.1 The Miner

In sixteenth-century knowledge production, metals were situated at the faultline between the secrecy of alchemy and the openness of "the great age of mining literature."[12] A major contributor to this literature was Agricola. His university edu-

10 Bruun, "Privacy in Early Modern Christianity," 43–6. See also Lena Cowen Orlin, "Closets," in *Locating Privacy in Tudor London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 296–326. Much of the work coming out of PRIVACY aims to expand the view on spaces of privacy. See, for instance, Natacha Klein Käfer, ed., *Privacy at Sea: Practices, Spaces, and Communication in Maritime History* (Cham: Springer International, 2023), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-35847-0.

11 Orlin, *Locating Privacy*, 2.

12 Pamela O. Long, "The Openness of Knowledge: An Ideal and its Context in 16th-Century Writings on Mining and Metallurgy," *Technology and Culture* 32, no. 2 (April 1991): 328. See also Pamela H. Smith, "The Codification of Vernacular Theories of Metallic Generation in Sixteenth-Century European Mining and Metalworking," in *The Structures of Practical Knowledge*, ed. Matteo Valleriani (Cham: Springer International, 2017), 371–92, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-45671-3_14.

cation – founded on the humanist familiarity with important classical texts[13] – informed his proximity to practitioners and vice versa. His historical and theoretical knowledge formed the backdrop for his practical observations of mines. Agricola's mining knowledge granted him such liberties as tolerance of his Catholic religion in predominantly Lutheran Saxony and put him at a significant competitive advantage as an investor. In fact, by 1542, nine years after he had moved to Saxony and begun to invest in mines, Agricola was one of Chemnitz's twelve richest inhabitants and in 1546, the Saxon prince Maurice (1521–1553) appointed him burgomaster.[14] In a futile attempt to restrict access to Agricola's extensive mining knowledge, Maurice's brother and successor, Augustus (1526–1586) tried to convince Agricola to translate the *De Re Metallica* into German exclusively for the ruler's use.[15] However, Agricola died later that year before the translation could be made.

Agricola's writing is witness to the conditions of privacy pertaining not just to the process of ore extraction (as I will demonstrate) but also to aspects of metallurgical knowledge creation above ground. For example, in relation to assaying, Agricola specified, "It is necessary that the assayer who is testing ore or metals [. . .] should close the doors of the room in which the assay furnace stands, lest anyone coming at an inopportune moment might disturb his thoughts when they are intent on the work."[16] In a statement probably recalling his own experiences,

13 Well-versed in many disciplines himself, Agricola stressed that the miner (in this case, meaning the owner or co-owner of a mine) should be thoroughly familiar with "many arts and sciences," specifically philosophy, medicine, astronomy, surveying, arithmetical science, drawing, law, and architecture. See Agricola, *De e metallica*, 4.

14 Long, "The Openness of Knowledge," 336.

15 The following letter draft is transcribed, shortened, and cited in Andrea Kramarczyk, "'Ihr wollet dasselbe abschreiben lassen'—Kurfürst August von Sachsen und Georgius Agricolas montanistisches Werk," Agricola-Forschungszentrum Chemnitz, 2: "D Agricola/eodem die [8. 1. 1555]/ Hochgelarter l.g. Nachdem ir/hiebeuor im latein ein Buch im/Druck ausgehen lassen. Des titel/~~ist~~ sein sal De rebus metallicis,/welchs vns fast gerumbt wirt,/vnd wir aber den Verstand desselben/ gerne wissen vnd haben mochten,/Als ist Vnser gnedigs begeren,/Ir wolltet dasselb Buch zu forderlich/ewer gelegenheit in die Deuczsche/sprach vordolmeczschen, Vnd ~~Dasselb~~/nicht mehr dan eins wider abschreiben lassen viel weniger/in Druck geben sondern vorwart/bei euch behalten Vnd Vns das abgeschrieben exemplar/dauon zuschicken ~~Das wollen wir/vns auch in gnaden erkennen.~~/Do ir auch darczu eins schreibers/bedurffen wurdet, wollen/wir Ime darumb pflegen lassen/Daran thut ir Vnser gnedige vnd gefellige/meinung Datum."

16 Agricola, *De Re Metallica*, 223–4. For more on the difficulty of carving out undisturbed and private (in the sense of solitary) research time in the early modern period, see also Ivana Bičak, "Chops and Chamber Pots: Satire of the Experimental Report in Seventeenth-Century England," in *Early Modern Privacy: Sources and Approaches*, eds. Michaël Green, Lars Cyril Nørgaard, and Mette Birkedal Bruun (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2022), 266–80.

Agricola observed that the focus that was conducive to research was disturbed by the presence of others. In this case, knowledge production required solitude of a kind that was also encouraged for prayer. In 1548, just three years after Agricola's death, his fellow Catholic, Ignatius of Loyola advised on the privacy required for the mental exercise of prayer: the practitioner "will, ordinarily, more benefit himself, the more he separates himself from all friends and acquaintances and from all earthly care, as by changing from the house where he was dwelling, and taking another house or room to live in, in as much privacy as he can."[17] In the process of creating his coveted treatise on mining, Agricola oscillated between his study and the mine – two places of potential solitude that could provide him with a precursor to the Loyolan privacy to reflect and write.

Informed by his background as a physician, Agricola's *De Re Metallica* offers an insight into the extreme environment of the mine and details the efforts made to provide survivable working conditions for the mine workers. Agricola vividly conjured the dangers of the subterranean part of the mine in his overview of the causes that could lead to the abandonment of pits.[18] Besides infringing upon military enterprises and a lack of sufficient metal, he listed the following problems: too much water to be managed cost-effectively in tunnels and shafts, "noxious air" and poison that could not be adequately removed from excavated spaces, "fierce and murderous demons" that could not be exorcised, and loose and collapsing structural elements.[19] Additionally, the miners worked in near-complete darkness. Their candlelit lamps would be dimmed by the poor air quality, which also caused headaches.[20] Part of the extraction process involved the setting of targeted fires (Figure 7) to make the harder veins more manageable, further diminishing the air quality and causing potential structural collapses, such as the risk that "the mountain by its great weight sinks into itself, and then the shaft buildings are swallowed up."[21]

Mining takes place in extreme environments where humans must act collectively to ensure their survival. However, mining is also individualistic and solitary. As the miner descends into the mine, he withdraws more and more from the collectiveness of mining. The miner's lone descent into the subterranean realm of extraction resembles the withdrawal from company that is characteristic of privacy. The descent into the extreme environment of the mine was a journey into the unknow-

17 Christine Göttler, "Realms of Solitude in Late Medieval and Early Modern European Cultures: An Introduction," in *Solitudo: Spaces, Places, and Times of Solitude in Late Medieval and Early Modern Cultures*, eds. Karl A. E. Enenkel and Christine Göttler (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2018), 12.
18 Agricola, *De Re Metallica*, 217–8.
19 Agricola, *De Re Metallica*, 217–8.
20 Agricola, *De Re Metallica*, 121.
21 Agricola, *De Re Metallica*, 128.

Figure 7: Woodcut depicting targeted fire, Agricola, De Re Metallica, 120, Wikimedia Commons.

able, away from the relatively predictable cooperative operations above ground. The further the miner was from the collective above ground, the more he depended on embodied knowledge and his senses (which were often impaired by the shortage of light and oxygen) to navigate the space, maintain vigilance regarding mortal dangers, and embrace the logic of the mountain in order to identify and extract the ore-rich material. The miner's isolation in the subterranean tunnels and shafts was the precondition for tracing the vein of ore before its subsequent extraction from the mountain and its carriage to the collective at the surface. While not directly present in the historical material, this subterranean deconstruction of the mountain and the subsequent reorganisation of its isolated matter according to its

Figure 8: Woodcut depicting descent into the mine, Agricola, De Re Metallica, 213, Wikimedia Commons.

mineral composition can be understood as a metaphor for the heuristic process of scholarly thinking undertaken by Agricola above ground, alone in his study.[22]

Agricola portrayed the different ways of descending into the mine via a shaft (Figure 8). The caption identifies four different methods: "A–Descending into the shaft by ladders. B–By sitting on a stick. C–By sitting on the dirt. D–Descending by steps cut in the rock."[23] A, B, and C are solitary descents down narrow shafts not much wider than the miner's body whereas D is more spacious, big enough even for a horse, and allows several miners to descend at once.[24] This more spacious access could lead to a lower-lying tunnel, which in turn would feed into a narrower set of shafts to access deeper parts of the mine. The Annaberger Bergaltar (Figure 6) also shows various entry points into the mine. The altar consists of four image panels which give detailed insights into the tasks of miners and the context of their labour – in this case, around a silver mine and its related trades. As the miners enter the subterranean part of the mine, they are mostly depicted as solitary figures. Three miners are painted in the act of disappearing alone into the mine's tunnels, and another miner is going down a shaft ladder, while two solitary workers have just emerged. In the distance, on the right panel, a lone miner is at work on a new tunnel opening. Behind the smelting house on the left panel, a carrier is emerging from a tunnel with an open truck of the kind known as a "dog."[25] These openings that led directly into the mountain were sized to accommodate just one person for the simple practical reason that it took a lot of work to excavate these tunnels, and up to 200 metres below the surface, space was kept to the bare minimum required to fit one miner's body, his tools, and lamps.[26] The solitary miners emerging from and disappearing into the mountain contrast with the men at work above ground. Both in Agricola's woodcuts and in the central panel of the Annaberger Bergaltar, these workers can often be seen working in pairs or groups – for example, to operate the windlasses.

The relationship between the scale of the underground architecture and the size of the miner is especially apparent in depictions of the miner below ground,

22 The term 'heuristic' comes from a Greek verb that denotes 'to find.' See Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 23.

23 Agricola, *De Re Metallica*, 213.

24 See also *Mappa Geographica Circuli Metalliferi Electoratus Saxoniae cum omnibus quae in eo comprehenduntur Praefecturis et Dynastiis quales sunt* (Augsburg: Mattaeus Seutter, 174). The copperplate engraving is on two separate sheets with a watercolour wash.

25 Agricola, *De Re Metallica*, 156.

26 Agricola, *De Re Metallica*, 122. See also Thomas Morel, "Of Scholars and Miners," in *Underground Mathematics: Craft Culture and Knowledge Production in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 20–49, https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009267274.002.

Figure 9: Silver mining in Kutná Hora, 1490s, Illumination, Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 10: Woodcut depicting the miner below ground, Agricola, De Re Metallica, 104, Wikimedia Commons.

such as in narrow tunnels or cave-like excavations (Figures 8, 9, and 10). In Agricola's depictions, whenever the focus is on a single worker inside a shaft or tunnel, the rectangular frame and neat hatching of parallel lines in the underground spaces is interrupted by a rugged outline. This rugged outline simulates the uneven surface geometry of the mountain and offers a glimpse of the miner – a digger with his "iron tools"[27] or a carrier with a wheelbarrow – alone at work below ground. Naturally, other carriers would come along to wheel away the hewn rock, and fellow labourers might also pass by. The sense of isolation is also conveyed in the Kutna Hora gradual of a mining scene where the underground world consists of dense rock and caves occupied by single miners, collectively working yet barely connected by narrow tunnels.

The miners descended into the mountain alone. In this obscure, liminal domain between the engineered infrastructure and the organic force of raw 'nature,' the miner's space and imagination could be intruded upon by demons. The existence of demons inside mines was an accepted fact in early modern science, corroborated not least by Agricola's inclusion of them in his *De Animantibus Subterraneis*, an overview of subterranean animals that originally formed part of the *De Re Metallica* but is not included in the English translation of 1912. In the words of the Hoovers, the English translators of the *De Re Metallica* (who later went on to become the President and First Lady of the United States):

> Neither the sea nor the forest so lends itself to the substantiation of the supernatural as does the mine. The dead darkness, in which the miners' lamps serve only to distort every shape, the uncanny noises of restless rocks whose support has been undermined, the approach of danger and death without warning, the sudden vanishing or discovery of good fortune, all yield a thousand corroborations [in the minds of the miners].[28]

In addition to the ubiquitous superstitions of the time, the effect of stagnant air and extended periods of solitude undoubtedly made the miners ever more attuned to potential demons. In my analysis of the historical context, the solitary male figures – enclosed in dark shafts, withdrawing deeper into the mountain, possibly pursued by ill-meaning creatures – evoke the miner's opposite counterpart – the shy Wild Man, who lived in voluntary seclusion amid the forests of mountain regions.

27 See Agricola, *De Re Metallica*, 149.

28 Agricola, *De Re Metallica*, 217, footnote 26.

6.2 The Wild Man

When a new mining area was developed in a remote region, the mining folk would soon encounter or confront the 'Wild Man,' either in person or at least the myths surrounding him.[29] A popular figure in mining lore, the Wild Man became a ubiquitous character in the Harz region – which was partly Saxon and where pits and mining towns were named after him and his figure started appearing on silver coins – in the sixteenth century.[30] One example from 1538 depicts the Wild Man carrying a tree trunk in one hand and an ore sample in the other, reflecting his symbolic representation of natural resources.[31]

The Wild Man knew no architecture and no agriculture, spoke no language, and believed in no God. This naked, hairy creature "shunned human contact, settling, if possible, in the most remote and inaccessible parts of the forest, and making his bed in crevices, caves, or the deep shadow of overhanging branches."[32] He was so "bound up with the forest"[33] that on the rare occasions when miners did catch him, he would soon die in captivity. There were Saxon tales that suggested miners would have to catch and even kill the Wild Man before they could find the ore he protected while alive.[34] This narrative translates into the idea that the miners must kill the Wild Man – that is, raw, pre-cultural 'nature' – in order to initiate the extraction of 'nature's' riches. The creation of mining knowledge was thus entwined with a conscious negation of the untamed and 'natural' in favour of extraction. In the words of historian Tina Asmussen, "The Wild Man indicates an environment that is uncanny, raw, unpredictable, foreign, and uncultured."[35] The established mine and its adjacent trades, by contrast, was a site of advanced artistry, craft, and applied scientific knowledge, and this knowledge was 'mined' – that is, acquired and refined – no less than the ore.

Despite their obvious commonalities (both were drawn to mountains, experienced the solitude of unpopulated areas, and were profoundly connected to ore), the figure of the Wild Man was constructed in binary opposition to the miner: the Wild Man retreated whereas the miner advanced; the Wild Man lived in solitude

29 The Wild Man was a well-known mythical figure from the Middle Ages that had lost some general popularity by the sixteenth century, although it remained important in mountainous regions. See Bernheimer, *Wild Men in the Middle Ages* and Asmussen, "Wild Men in Braunschweig."
30 Asmussen, "Wild Men in Braunschweig," 32.
31 Asmussen, "Wild Men in Braunschweig," 37–8.
32 Bernheimer, *Wild Men in the Middle Ages*, 9.
33 Bernheimer, *Wild Men in the Middle Ages*, 24.
34 Asmussen, "Wild Men in Braunschweig," 31.
35 Asmussen, "Wild Men in Braunschweig," 40.

whereas the miner formed part of a collective; the Wild Man inhabited the forest whereas the miner cut it down; the Wild Man protected and concealed the ore whereas the miner exposed it. With regard to architecture, the Wild Man lived in natural caves and crevices and lifted wood only symbolically in representations on coins while the miner felled trees to build huts and fortify tunnels and dug shafts and drifts, creating artificial caves and crevices. Their core difference can be summed up as follows: the miner extracted whereas the Wild Man did not. The act of extraction was fundamental. It went far beyond reacting to one's environment and survival; it was an explorative effort of knowledge and wealth creation. Extraction was part of an alchemical worldview in which one could take part in the transformative processes of nature.

However, the apparent lack of artistry ascribed to the Wild Man was also a kind of strength and superiority. While the mining site's ingenious infrastructure was sized to fit the miner's body, to keep that body safe and functioning in the extremes of the subterranean world, the solitary Wild Man had an entirely different relationship with the environment, and this explained his lack of a built environment. As Richard Bernheimer observes, "The wild man sits wrapped up, shivering and morose, when the sun is shining, while smilingly exposing his body to the elements when the weather is bad."[36] The lore of the Wild Man seems to imbue him with a kind of freedom, an immunity to the harsh climatic conditions of the mine and the surrounding 'desert.'

Early modern Christian society was aware of the destructive implications of extraction. The Christian denunciation of the immoral aspects of affluence, such as greed, were juxtaposed with the obligation to honour humanity's *dominium terrae* as well as nature's riches *by extracting them*.[37] Scholars such as Agricola believed in this obligation to humanity's progress despite the mining industry's accumulation of wealth and its exploitation and wounding of 'Mother Nature.'[38]

36 Bernheimer, *Wild Men in the Middle Ages*, 24.

37 See Asmussen, "Wild Men in Braunschweig," 43 and Asmussen and Long, "Introduction," 10. Todd A. Borlik shows that environmental issues—such as nature's rights, deforestation, and air quality—shaped much of early modern literature. See Todd A. Borlik, *Ecocriticism and Early Modern English Literature: Green Pastures* (New York & London: Routledge, 2012). Phillip John Usher examines early modern extraction (mining) and raises the issues of budding capitalism and ecology, linking the early modern period with today's notion of the Anthropocene. See Phillip John Usher, "Incipit: From Sub-to Exterranean," in *Exterranean* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2019), 14, https://doi.org/10.1515/9780823284245-002. He also points to other authors who have established similar links.

38 This latter position was held by authors of important sixteenth-century mining treatises—for example, Agricola and Biringuccio. See Long, "The Openness of Knowledge," 322 and Asmussen and Long, "Introduction," 8. See also Paulus Niavis' text on a mythological court setting, where a

The sense of entitlement kept the remorse in check. The Wild Man was part of this 'nature' that humans harmed in the process of extraction.

Above ground, miners formed a strong collective that could take on the Wild Man and tame the mountains in their quest for ore and wealth.[39] Underground and alone in the uncontrollable and unknowable dark, however, man became 'wild.'[40] He was no longer protected by the mining collective and its communal ordering efforts, both in terms of the engineering that made the mine physically safe, but also by means of the lore that structured the world into nature and culture. Isolated and below ground, the miner could be intruded upon by demons in the same way that humans intruded upon the Wild Man. Demons were to men as men were to the Wild Man. Just as humans would invade the Wild Man's seclusion and territory in greater numbers if the area was rich in ore, there would be greater numbers of demons to frighten the miners if the pit was richly productive.[41] When underground, the miner became completely 'bound up with the mountain,' just as the Wild Man was bound up with the forest. His lungs filled with lithic dust, the smuts from fires and rock dust clung to his skin, and his body contorted to adjust to the craggy crevices of the probing drifts that followed the

maltreated and bloody Mother Nature sues the miner. For more, see Asmussen, "Wild Men in Braunschweig," 43.

39 "In his recent survey of mining art, Rainer Slotta locates the origin of mining culture in: 'The unique [working] environment—together with the 'battle against Nature'—[that] led to a specific consciousness and a unique identity, which is mirrored in the artistic expressions of the mining sector: The miner creates a special environment and creates monuments for himself, in which he lives and recognizes himself. By creating these 'values' [. . .] he distinguishes himself from other professional groups.'" See Rainer Slotta, "Der (Silber-)Bergbau als Kunst-Katalysator," in *Der Alteuropäische Bergbau: Von den Anfängen bis zur Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts*, eds. Christoph Bartels and Rainer Slotta (Münster: Aschendorff, 2012), 591–618. Translated by Felten in "Mining Culture, Labour, and the State," 123.

40 Early modern analogies between light and knowledge and between darkness and lack of knowledge were ubiquitous and can be found in numerous sources as well as, for example, in Agricola, *De Re Metallica*, 18.

41 "Hardanus Hake (d. 1611), a sixteenth-century pastor of Wildemann, reports in his chronicle of Harz mining from around 1580 how a *Deamon Metallicus* that the miners called *Berg Männlein*, and which took the form of a friar, haunted the rich pit *Wilder Mann*. This evil spirit protected the silver ores, frightened the miners, and caused great damage. Paracelsus (around 1493–1541) discussed the interconnection of rich ore-bearing veins and spirits at length. The presence of demons in the mines was also a belief that Agricola noted. In his text *Bermannus sive de re metallica* [Bermannus or a Dialogue on Metallurgy] (1530) the learned miner Bermann explains the ambivalent nature of mining demons [. . .]." See Asmussen, "Wild Men in Braunschweig," 39.

veins of ore; occasionally, he even had to hew away at the recalcitrant mountain while lying down.[42]

The belief in demons and in the Wild Man relates to the association of danger with being alone, and this resonated with the prevailing attitude towards privacy in the early modern period, specifically in the first half of the sixteenth century when the private – disengaged from the collective 'presence society' – still suggested a likelihood of wrongdoing, sin, and (moral) danger.[43] Historian Rudolf Schlögl has explored the 'presence society' as a foundational aspect of the early modern period when physical presence initially structured societal and communicative hierarchies and practices.[44] Only slowly did absent parties become able to exert an influence, thereby enabling modern societal structures. The miners who descended into the solitude of the subterranean part of the mine also faced the dangers associated with privacy – moral and mental dilemmas, physical dangers, and lasting isolation. However, exposure to such perils could also result in financial success and thus the opportunity to restructure one's social standing.

6.3 Desert Fathers

Miners were not alone in seeking out the harshest and most solitary environments. Saints who are remembered for retreating to wastelands to mine – in this case, a more conceptual kind of mining – propagated the trope of desert fathers who withdrew into the solitude of remote landscapes to read, write, meditate, pray, and ultimately generate more knowledge.[45] These hermits had sought out deserts and other

42 Later developments in miners' dress show an attempt to disentangle from the mountain: "In the 1730s, miners disassociated themselves from their dirty work by donning pristine, white clothes on their strolls through town. This marked their leisure time in a widely visible way [. . .]." See Felten, "Mining Culture, Labour, and the State," 133. Usher refers to demons present in early modern mines to postulate "an Earth that is vital, vibrant, and ready to enter the miner as much as the miner enters it." See Usher, "Demonic Mines," in *Exterranean*, 112, https://doi.org/10.1515/9780823284245-007.

43 The German term is '*Anwesenheitsgesellschaft*' and is explored in detail in Rudolf Schlögl, *Anwesende und Abwesende: Grundriss für eine Gesellschaftsgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit* (Constance: Konstanz University Press, 2014). The importance of physical presence in the spatial and cultural setting of the early modern household has been explored in Joachim Eibach, "Das offene Haus: Kommunikative Praxis im sozialen Nahraum der europäischen Frühen Neuzeit," *Zeitschrift Für Historische Forschung* 38, no. 4 (2011): 621–64.

44 Schlögl, *Anwesende und Abwesende*.

45 See Derwas J. Chitty, *The Desert a City: An Introduction to the Study of Egyptian and Palestinian Monasticism under the Christian Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966). See also William Harm-

kinds of *vastitates* – uncultivated, uninhabited, desolate, or barren land – where they would subject themselves to a hostile climate, close proximity to demons, and remoteness from the distractions of urban life and fellow humans in order to extract enlightenment, an extraction that became possible thanks to the greater closeness to God.[46]

This well-established trope of the hermit, so pervasive at the time, stands behind Agricola when he advises that the assayer should close his door while working when he himself sits in his study to write the *De Re Metallica*, when he depicts a lone miner descending into a cavelike opening in the mountain, and when he writes about the dangers of demons in the absolute remoteness of a deep mining shaft. The figure of the hermit inspired many people – not only individuals, but also professional groups such as artists, professors, and natural scientists – during the early modern period when it became possible to carve out space and time in solitude, away from the collective of the presence society.[47] They modelled the time they spent thinking, writing, and working in solitude on the trope of the hermit, and they fashioned their work spaces – the scholar's study, the artisan's workshop, the alchemist's laboratory – after the hermit's desert abode.[48] The need for solitude often accompanied work that used and produced "specialised and 'secret' knowledge," such as Agricola's highly sought-after treatise.[49]

By embodying enlightenment, the hermit became a kind of idol who could be visited, written about, and depicted in paintings and drawings. In western Europe from the 1300s onwards, hermits were often portrayed in the more familiar remote mountain or forest landscapes rather than in the eastern desert.[50] Here they

less S. J., "Roman Egypt," in *Desert Christians: An Introduction to the Literature of Early Monasticism*, ed. William Harmless S. J. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), https://doi.org/10.1093/0195162234.003.0001.

In this chapter, I refer to desert hermits as a male phenomenon because of the historical context and reception that I am engaging with. However, during the eremitic period (which lasted until the Middle Ages), there were also desert mothers and many medieval female recluses. See, for example, Margot H. King, "Desert Mothers: A Survey of the Feminine Anchoretic Tradition in Western Europe," *Hermitary*, accessed 10 March 2024, https://www.hermitary.com/articles/mothers.html. For early modern representations of female desert saints, see "Hermitary—Gallery—Art—Sadeler: Solitudo Sive Vitae Foeminarum Anachoritarum (Female Hermits in Landscapes)," *Hermitary*, https://www.hermitary.com/gallery/art/sadeler-foeminarum/, accessed 10 March 2024.

46 Göttler, "Realms of Solitude," 6.

47 For the professional groups embracing the hermit as model, see Göttler, "Realms of Solitude," 11. For more on being present and 'together,' see Schlögl, *Anwesende und Abwesende* and Eibach, "Das offene Haus".

48 Göttler, "Realms of Solitude," 3, 5, 11.

49 Göttler, "Realms of Solitude," 11.

50 Göttler, "Realms of Solitude," 8. Göttler is citing Jaques Le Goff, *L'Imaginaire médiéval: Essais* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), 59–75.

would be visited by demons who tested their piety. The best way to deal with these demons was to accept their presence but not engage with them. Miners similarly sought out the dark, subterranean mine with its wasteland of tree stumps above to extract a lithic kind of knowledge. My analogical reading reveals that like the desert fathers, they read the book of nature and exposed themselves to a harsh and solitary existence where they came face-to-face with demons. Like the hermits, miners visited by demons fared best when they simply allowed the demons to carry on with their pretend mining activities (unless the demons in question were of the evil kind, in which case the only thing to do was to abandon the pit). Agricola described the demons' activities as such:

> They wander down the wells and around mines and although they do nothing, they seem to train themselves in all manner of labor. Now they dig holes, now they pour what is dug out into vessels, and now they maneuver the hauling machine. Although sometimes the demons harass [*lacessunt*] the miners with extracted matter [*glareis*], only rarely however do they hurt [*laedunt*] them. The demon never harms the miners unless provoked by loud laughter or insults.[51]

Encountering demons was part of the experience of extreme environments where reason and the senses were pushed to the limit. Whether pretending to engage in mining activities or tempting humans to sin, demons were as uncontrollable as the extreme environments sought out for extraction and had to be tolerated.

Once the landscape is turned into a mine, it would soon be transformed into a literal wasteland – treeless, barren, pierced and punctured, emptied, and burned from the inside out. Tina Asmussen observes that both the German terms *Bergwerk* [mine] and *Landschaft* [landscape] contain suffixes (*-werk* and *-schaft*) that mean 'making' or 'creating,' thus evoking a "manufactured environment, arduously built out of layers of rock and soil."[52] This terrain, manipulated and occupied by miners, resonates with the kinds of wastelands hermits sought to find closer proximity to God in terms of the difficulty of inhabitation.

51 This is an edited translation of Agricola's *De animantibus subterraneis*, cited from Usher, "Demonic Mines," 102.

52 Tina Asmussen, "Ingenuity, Sweat, and Bloodsour Work in Sixteenth-Century Mining Literature," in *Ingenuity in the Making: Matter and Technique in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Richard J. Oosterhoff, José Ramón Marcaida, and Alexander Marr (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2021), 65. She also uses the term 'resource landscape.' See Tina Asmussen, "The Cosmologies of Early Modern Mining Landscapes," in Göttler and Mochizuki, *Landscape and Earth*, 239–66, https://doi.org/10.1017/9789048552153.007.

The desert fathers and mothers of the third and fourth centuries inhabited caves and huts in Syria, Palestine, and Egypt.[53] The latter provided shade and shelter from the elements through woven or wooden roofs.[54] The trope of the hermit and his simple abode found its way into countless drawings and paintings – for example, as a hut integrated into a mountain recess in Joachim Patinir's 1517 painting of St Jerome. A collection of over 200 engravings featuring male and female hermits published by the brothers Johann (1550–1600) and Rafael Sadeler (1560–1628) between 1587 and 1600 shows many different types of hermit dwellings. The depictions in the manner of Maerten de Vos (1532–1603) and Adriaen Collaert (1560–1618) show the hermit by natural stone caves rudimentarily enhanced with rough wooden awnings, recesses below large tree roots, simple wooden sheds, and in hollow tree trunks.[55] In some depictions, there are instances of gardening and more advanced infrastructure, such as water channelled towards the hermit's abode in open wooden pipes.

These simple constructions resembled the rustic, pragmatic structures depicted and described in Agricola's *De Re Metallica* and on the panels of the Annaberger Bergaltar. In Agricola's woodcuts, the many tree stumps bear witness to the mining industry's voracious consumption of wood to build infrastructure – lightweight, tectonic huts above ground and stereotomic structures carved into the mountain and fortified with wood below the ground.[56] At the beginning of Book V, Agricola explains the first steps to be taken after a mineral vein that descends into the ground has been discovered and deemed worth mining:

> Now when a miner discovers a *vena profunda* he begins sinking a shaft and above it sets up a windlass, and builds a shed over the shaft to prevent the rain from falling in, lest the men who turn the windlass be numbed by the cold or troubled by the rain.[57]

The shaft and the windlass produce one another: the windlass is necessary to extract the shaft, and without any material to extract, there would be no infrastruc-

53 See David Leatherbarrow and Richard Wesley, "Pre-Modern Cloisters and Precincts," in *Three Cultural Ecologies*, 1st ed. (Oxford & New York: Routledge, 2018), 106–7, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315595863-5. See also Columba Stewart Osb, "Anthony The Great," in *The Early Christian World*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2017), 1010–20, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315165837-51.

54 Leatherbarrow and Wesley, "Pre-Modern Cloisters and Precincts," 107.

55 A delineation of the evolution of the hermit's hut can be found in Leopoldine Prosperetti, *Landscape and Philosophy in the Art of Jan Brueghel the Elder (1568–1625)* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 169–70.

56 The concepts of the tectonic and the stereotomic were influentially described by the architect and author Gottfried Semper (1803–1879) in *Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten oder Praktische Ästhetik* (Frankfurt & Munich, 1860–1863).

57 Agricola, *De Re Metallica*, 102.

ture. The windlass and its operators are usually protected by a hut or at least a roof. Before going into details about the underground world and its structural challenges, Agricola prioritises the description of the shed that is to be built over the shaft. These structures are also particularly present on the central panel of the Annaberger Bergaltar (Figure 7) where fifteen simple huts are placed atop neat mounds of excavated material.

In their specific functionality and locality, the huts – be they the hermit's or the miner's infrastructure – manifested the interplay between the raw wooden material (formerly) available on-site, the human body, and the natural elements.[58] Agricola described the architecture of the mine's environmental manipulation in detail. In Agricola's descriptions, quintessential architectural knowledge regarding materiality, body, climate, and microclimate met the extreme, man-made subterranean environment of the mine. At the mine, cutting-edge infrastructural and metallurgical knowledge faced off against the unknowable and uncontrollable subterranean world of poisonous fumes, cruel temperatures, uncontainable fires, foul air, total darkness, demons, loose rocks, and collapsing ceilings. At work, the miners were constantly paying "the greatest attention"[59] to stagnant air, gushing water, loose rocks, and rotten timbering. As well as increasing the miners' chances of survival, this empirical practice of attentiveness during the extraction process also resulted in the production of knowledge about environmental control. The air and its quality were especially crucial environmental agents. Agricola observed that ventilation requirements changed not just according to the condition of the shafts and tunnels but also with the changing seasons, temperatures, and atmospheric conditions.[60] This knowledge was translated into architectural contraptions such as "powerful blowing machines"[61] installed at the mouths of shafts to enhance natural ventilation, which amplified the airflow by tapping into the observed movement of the air through the mine. Hesse also depicted a tall "ventilating machine" for "receiving and diverting into the shaft the blowing of the wind."[62]

Besides such ventilating machines that channelled the wind into the mines, various hauling machines were devised to draw up the water that gathered in the sumps. As the simplest hauling machine, the windlass was central to mining operations – it was used to lift extracted material and groundwater out of the mine

58 See also Ursula Klein and E. C. Spary, eds., *Materials and Expertise in Early Modern Europe: Between Market and Laboratory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

59 Agricola, *De Re Metallica*, 121.

60 Agricola, *De Re Metallica*, 121–2.

61 Agricola, *De Re Metallica*, 121.

62 Agricola, *De Re Metallica*, 200.

and often also to help the miners descend the shafts.[63] While most hauling machines were built for one or two bodies, some were operated by vertical or horizontal wheels turned by treading or diverted creeks.[64] These machines could take on very large dimensions. Agricola describes the largest (Figure 11), a machine for drawing water. This machine had an operating water wheel measuring 36 feet (roughly 11 metres) in diameter.[65] It also had a reservoir into which a stream was diverted, an axle and drum, brakes, and a "hanging cage" or operating hut for the machine's driver who supervised four fellow workers.[66] In the process of making the environmental conditions of the mine more endurable, mining thus engendered infrastructural innovations. The relationship between the worker's body and the environmental conditions in and above the mine was key to the design and construction of the extraction machinery, to the outfitting of subterranean tunnels and shafts, and to the design of the huts and shelters above ground. In the process of resource extraction and production of mining knowledge, the mining industry thus created and managed extreme environments that in their strain on the human body evoke those sought by the desert fathers.

6.4 The First Hut

The management of environmental agents and infrastructural interventions fell into the domain of architecture. At the time, engineering and architecture were still part of the same discipline, as set out by Leon Battista Alberti, author of the key architectural treatise *Ten Books on Architecture* (1485). He argued that the architect's skills and knowledge went far beyond providing shelter from the sun, the cold, and bad weather, and he emphasised the architect's role in infrastructural management. In line with Agricola's technical descriptions, Alberti states that the architect devises "the methods of drawing up vast quantities of water from hidden depths" and of "cutting through rock, by tunnelling through mountains [. . . and] restraining the waters."[67] At the mine, architecture was a vital dis-

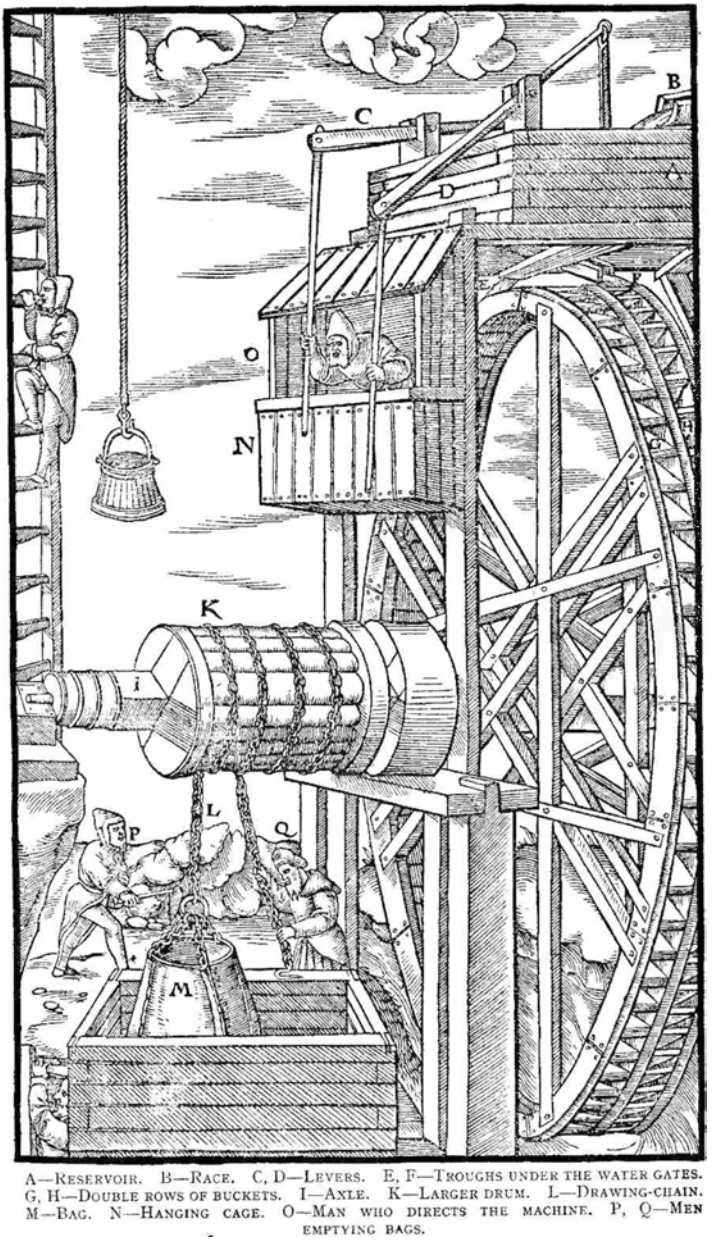
63 In some explanatory depictions, such as Agricola's Figure 8 and the windlass in the foreground of the Annaberger Bergaltar, the machinery is not covered by a shaft-house or roof in order to display the men and the machine at work.

64 Agricola, *De Re Metallica*, 197.

65 1 foot equals 28.5 cm. See https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/De_re_metallica_(1912)/Book_IV#cite_note-2, accessed 28 June 2024.

66 Agricola, *De Re Metallica*, 197–200.

67 Leon Battista Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, trans. Joseph Rykwert, Neil Leach, and Robert Tavernor (Cambridge, MA & London: MIT Press, 1988), 3.



A—Reservoir. B—Race. C, D—Levers. E, F—Troughs under the water gates. G, H—Double rows of buckets. I—Axle. K—Larger drum. L—Drawing-chain. M—Bag. N—Hanging cage. O—Man who directs the machine. P, Q—Men emptying bags.

Figure 11: Woodcut depicting machine used for drawing water, Agricola, De Re Metallica, 199, Wikimedia Commons.

cipline that facilitated the excavation of rocks, the piercing of mountains, and access to the 'hidden depths' of the earth.

In his treatise, Agricola points out that buildings such as mining infrastructure and especially windlass huts "protect the [. . .] body from rain, wind, cold, and heat" and are constructed using metallic tools such as "axes, saws, and augers."[68] However, even beyond such direct links to the metallic, architecture in general revolves around the extraction of raw materials – clay for bricks, stone for slabs, tree trunks for wood, sand for glass. Vitruvius details the origins of architecture in Book II of his *Ten Books on Architecture*, the oldest surviving written work on architecture. He stresses the importance of the availability of material. Inhabitants of forested regions build their shelters out of wood whereas others who lack timber might primarily rely on a method of excavation:

> They [. . .] select a natural hillock, run a trench through the middle of it, dig passages, and extend the interior space as widely as the site admits. Over it they build a pyramidal roof of logs fastened together, and this they cover with reeds and brushwood, heaping up very high mounds of earth above their dwellings.[69]

Thus, the process of gathering and extracting construction materials is embedded in the very beginnings of building as a means of creating stable interior conditions. Indeed, according to Vitruvius, the original impetus for building stemmed from a microclimatic event. His narrative evokes the tales of the Wild Man in mining lore: "The men of old were born like the wild beasts, in woods, caves, and groves, and lived on savage fare."[70] During a storm, some trees caught fire, causing people to flee "terrified by the furious flame."[71] When they returned, however, they realised that the fire was pleasantly warm, so they kept it going, and their gathering around this heat source prompted the birth of communication and culture. Soon enough, "they began in that first assembly to construct shelters. Some made them of green boughs, others dug caves on mountain sides, and some, in imitation of the nests of swallows and the way they built, made places of refuge out of mud and twigs."[72] Climatic manipulation and material extraction were as closely bound together in the origin stories of architecture as they were in the mining industry.

68 Agricola, *De Re Metallica*, 14.

69 Vitruvius: The Ten Books on Architecture. Vitruvius. Morris Hicky Morgan. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. London: Humphrey Milford. Oxford University Press. 1914, Chapter 1, https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Vitr.%202.1&lang=original, accessed 28 June 2024.

70 Vitruvius, Chapter 1.

71 Vitruvius, Chapter 1.

72 Vitruvius, Chapter 1.

The figure of the lone male in a desolate region is ubiquitous and well-known in later architectural origin narratives, as in the *Trattato di Architettura* (1464) by the Italian Antonio di Pietro Averlino, known as Filarete. Filarete is particularly relevant in relation to mining infrastructure which (as I have shown) was built entirely around the miner's body and the conditions encountered in the extreme environment in and around the mine. He references Vitruvius's origin narrative, but he embellishes it with Christian details, postulating that "the first man to build houses and habitations" must have been Adam. After his expulsion from Paradise, Adam was suddenly confronted with the harsh reality of "bad weather and rain."[73] At first, Adam attempted to use his own body for environmental protection: "Since he had nothing else at hand to cover [himself], he put his hands over his head to protect himself from the rain."[74] The accompanying illustration (Figure 12) shows a solitary Adam in naked dejection. Heavy raindrops densely surround him, there are clouds above him, and he stands alone at the very edge of a small, jagged, island-like slab. His defining environmental motivation for building a shelter is to protect his body from the weather.

The relationship between the human body and building is foundational for Filarete, just as it is in mining infrastructure – not just in terms of proportioning and scale, but also in relation to maintenance. Filarete emphasises the analogy between body and building – just like humans who are not well maintained (that is, fed and cared for), neglected buildings also die: "I will [then] show you [that] the building is truly a living man. You will see what it must eat in order to live, exactly as it is with man."[75] Here again, the 'essence' of shelter can be directly linked to mining architecture. If shafts and tunnels are not maintained, they are prone to collapse, crushing the bodies enclosed within. As Filarete writes regarding the maintenance of a building:

> You need to maintain it continually and to guard it from corruption and too much fatigue, because, as man becomes thin and ill from too much fatigue, so [does] the building. Through corruption, the body of the building rots like that of man. Through excess it is ruined and dies like man, just as is said above.[76]

In the mine, this relationship between the rotting structure and the dying miner's body is an urgent reality. By integrating the infrastructure of mining into the discourse of the 'origins of architecture,' we can expand the canon of architectural beginnings beyond housing to encompass extraction. Like an *Urhütte*, the archi-

73 Filarete, MS Magliabechiano, Biblioteca Nazionale Florence, Magl. II, 1, 140, fol. 4v.
74 Filarete, MS Magliabechiano, Biblioteca Nazionale Florence, Magl. II, 1, 140, fol. 4v.
75 Filarete, MS Magliabechiano, Biblioteca Nazionale Florence, Magl. II, 1, 140, fol. 6r.
76 Filarete, MS Magliabechiano, Biblioteca Nazionale Florence, Magl. II, 1, 140, fol. 6r.

Figure 12: Antonio Averlino 'Filarete', Adam, Trattato di architettura (c.1464).

tecture of a mine is formed by the local availability of material (that is, the vein), the climate, and the miner's body.

A running theme throughout the *De Re Metallica* is that Agricola prioritises the well-being of the workers. The extraction methods and infrastructure are closely bound to the needs of the miner's body, which also inform the more complex ventilating machines and windlass designs. This consideration for the miner's body is practical as well as ethical. If the diggers are hindered by a lack of fresh air or by rising water levels underground, or if the windlass operators are overburdened by the weight of their load or by rain and harsh temperatures,

then the extraction process will be jeopardised. Thus, Agricola stresses that "we should always devote more care to maintaining our health, that we may freely perform our bodily functions, than to making profits."[77]

Filarete made architecture about Adam's body. He explained that the first building was constructed "from the necessity for survival"[78] and that its form was "derived from the form and measure of man and from his members."[79] In an adaptation of Filarete, Adam's body might be replaced with the miner's body. The mining architecture then solves the problems of how that body can navigate the extreme, man-made environment of the mine and how the underground space can be extended by further extraction. Thus, like the mining industry, architectural theory and history are constructed in dialogue with a solitary male figure. The first architect was reluctantly marooned in the wilderness, and he built the first hut to protect himself from the elements. The resulting *ur*-hut thus denotes the simplest form of architecture. Unlike the Wild Man, the first architect is at odds with nature, indicative of a practice based on the extraction of building materials and tools. As an intellectual, speculative construct, the *ur*-hut is an important theme in architectural theory that reflects ways of creating and manipulating an enclosed environment. Inherent in architecture's origin stories is a differentiation between the less comfortable outside climate and the more comfortable interior climate designed for the sustenance of the human body.

6.5 Conclusion: The Dangers and Promises of Privacy

I have explored instances of a solitary male engaged in the heuristic endeavour of extracting divine revelation, ore deposits, or suitable building materials under hostile environmental conditions in a wasteland. While the hermit sought the desert, the miner produced it, and the architect managed it. The examples I have given appear, at first glance, to be defined by diametrically opposed binaries – solitude versus company, nature versus culture, ignorance versus knowledge. The motivated, solitary male in the untamed, raw, extreme environment of the figurative or literal desert seeks to transform it or himself in juxtaposition to the found conditions. Here, privacy is a prerequisite for extractive practices based on

77 Agricola, *De Re Metallica*, 214.
78 Filarete, MS Magliabechiano, Biblioteca Nazionale Florence, Magl. II, 1, 140, fol. 5r.
79 Filarete, MS Magliabechiano, Biblioteca Nazionale Florence, Magl. II, 1, 140, fol. 5r.

dismantling, dissecting, and reorganisation of raw matter into culture and knowledge. The intellectual construct of an *ur*-hut historically mediates the threshold between the environment as it is – the wild – and a stable and comfortable interior microclimate – the tamed or cultured. To overcome this overly simple binary juxtaposition, I have transplanted the *ur*-hut out of the imaginary, primordial landscape and into the industrial context of the mine, which engenders a man-made, unstable, and hostile environment of 'progress.'

The hut forms a threshold between the human body and the desert – it is an infrastructure of environmental manipulation. It makes the stay in the desert or in the mine possible. The simple shelter or hut mediates between the wilderness and its hostile environmental conditions, such as the scorching sun of the desert and its cold nights. The hermit advances deeper into habitable regions, and the miner digs deeper below ground via the tool of architecture – an architecture as rudimentary as possible while still facilitating survival. The simple hut frames the body in the expanse of the conceptual desert and alleviates the potentially overwhelming privacy by allowing space for just one body – like the narrow shafts of the mine that are designed for access by a single person. The miner and hermit or scholar struck a balance between solitude and collective and between nature and culture to optimise their resource extraction and wealth or knowledge creation. The one-man hut facilitated privacy to take on more positive connotations, as the hut (or shaft) were identified with important knowledge creation. It found practical application in early modern room typologies such as the study and the closet.

The figure of the miner is an interesting key to unlocking the nuances of privacy in the early modern period, especially as he is generally understood as part of a collective industry that involves many people, shared customs, and collaborative tasks (Figure 9). However, as this figure also shows, below the ground, the miners are slotted into lithic niches where they experience moments or periods alone, at labour within the mountain, tracing ore veins, unearthing material to make space for their own bodies and their advances deeper into the rock.

To conclude, the investigation of early modern mining in Saxony reveals several markers of privacy. While the miners are connected by their profession and shared labour and there is the potential of physical proximity even below ground, privacy is exclusive and enables people to create distance between themselves and others. The dense mass of rock, which swallows up light, sound, and vibrations between the hewers depicted in mining imagery, is representative of the undefinable differences between people that require and provide privacy – even between related members of a collective, such as the mining community. Privacy happens in the space that creates and accepts difference between people.

Privacy is intertwined with deprivation and requires motivation – the miners are motivated to endure their physical privations, to face their demons, and to incorporate themselves deeper into the mountain in exchange for more embodied knowledge of the mountain together with the potential riches and the change in social status (public life) these can entail. In an aspect of privacy linked to spatial agency, the hewers are literally carving out space for their own bodies from the mountain mass. They carve out the space into which they withdraw. Considering these findings on privacy, it may become obvious why a contemporary reading of privacy as given by cookie politics and GDPR may not lead to a satisfactory experience of privacy. Privacy requires labour in the sense of commitment, and its value is bound up with the development of the self.[80]

Bibliography

Agricola, Georgius. *De Re Metallica: Translated from the First Latin Edition of 1556*. Translated by Herbert Clark Hoover and Lou Henry Hoover. New York: Dover Publications, 1950. Project Gutenberg e-book.

Alberti, Leon Battista. *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*. Translated by Joseph Rykwert, Neil Leach, and Robert Tavernor. Cambridge, MA & London: MIT Press, 1988.

Asmussen, Tina. "Ingenuity, Sweat, and Bloodsour Work in Sixteenth-Century Mining Literature." In *Ingenuity in the Making: Matter and Technique in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Richard J. Oosterhoff, José Ramón Marcaida, and Alexander Marr, 65–78. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2021.

Asmussen, Tina. "The Cosmologies of Early Modern Mining Landscapes." In *Landscape and Earth in Early Modernity: Picturing Unruly Nature*, edited by Christine Göttler and Mia Mochizuki, 239–66. Visual and Material Culture, 1300–1700. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022. https://doi.org/10.1017/9789048552153.007.

Asmussen, Tina. "Wild Men in Braunschweig – Economies of Hope and Fear in Early Modern Mining." *Renaissance Studies* 34, no. 1 (2019): 31–56.

Asmussen, Tina, and Pamela O. Long. "Introduction: The Cultural and Material Worlds of Mining in Early Modern Europe." *Renaissance Studies* 34, no. 1 (2019): 8–30.

Bartra, Roger. *Wild Men in the Looking Glass: The Mythic Origins of European Otherness*. Translated by Carl T. Berrisford. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994.

Bernheimer, Richard. *Wild Men in the Middle Ages: A Study in Art, Sentiment, Demonology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952.

Bičak, Ivana. "Chops and Chamber Pots: Satire of the Experimental Report in Seventeenth-Century England." In *Early Modern Privacy: Sources and Approaches*, edited by Michaël Green, Lars Cyril Nørgaard, and Mette Birkedal Bruun, 266–80. Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2022.

80 For the theme of self-mastery and privacy, see Mette Birkedal Bruun, "Towards an Approach to Early Modern Privacy: The Retirement of the Great Condé," in Green, Nørgaard, and Bruun, *Early Modern Privacy*, 49.

Bruun, Mette Birkedal. “Privacy in Early Modern Christianity and Beyond: Traces and Approaches.” *Annali dell’istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento/Jahrbuch des italienisch-deutschen historischen Instituts in Trient* 44, no. 2 (2018): 33–54.

Bruun, Mette Birkedal. “Towards an Approach to Early Modern Privacy: The Retirement of the Great Condé.” In Green, Nørgaard, and Bruun, *Early Modern Privacy*, 12–60.

Borlik, Todd A. *Ecocriticism and Early Modern English Literature: Green Pastures*. New York & London: Routledge, 2012.

Cairns, Stephen. “Notes for an Alternative History of the Primitive Hut.” In *Primitive: Original Matters in Architecture*, edited by Jo Odgers, Flora Samuel, and Adam Sharr, 86–95. London: Routledge, 2006.

Chitty, Derwas J. *The Desert a City: An Introduction to the Study of Egyptian and Palestinian Monasticism under the Christian Empire*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1966.

Eibach, Joachim. “Das offene Haus: Kommunikative Praxis im sozialen Nahraum der europäischen Frühen Neuzeit.” *Zeitschrift Für Historische Forschung* 38, no. 4 (2011): 621–64.

Felten, Sebastian. “Mining Culture, Labour, and the State in Early Modern Saxony.” *Renaissance Studies* 34, no. 1 (2019): 119–48.

Filarete. *Filarete, Ms. Magliabechiano, Florence, Bib. Naz. Magl. II, 1, 140, Fol. 114v, p. 432 (A. M. Finoli & L. Grassi, Eds., Filarete : Trattato Di Architettura, Milan, Il Polifilo, 1972).* Edited by A.M. Finoli, n.d.

Göttler, Christine. “Realms of Solitude in Late Medieval and Early Modern European Cultures: An Introduction.” In *Solitudo: Spaces, Places, and Times of Solitude in Late Medieval and Early Modern Cultures*, 1–28. Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2018.

Göttler, Christine, and Mia Mochizuki, eds. *Landscape and Earth in Early Modernity: Picturing Unruly Nature*. Visual and Material Culture, 1300–1700. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022. https://doi.org/10.1017/9789048552153.

Gouzévitch, Irina, and Peter Jones. “Becoming an Engineer in Eighteenth-Century Europe: The Construction of a Professional Identity.” *Engineering Studies* 3, no. 3 (2011): 149–52.

Harmless, William, S. J. “Roman Egypt.” In *Desert Christians: An Introduction to the Literature of Early Monasticism*, edited by William Harmless S. J. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. https://doi.org/10.1093/0195162234.003.0001.

Heilfurth, Gerhard. *Bergbau und Bergmann in der deutschsprachigen Sagenüberlieferung Mitteleuropas*. Marburg: Elwert, 1967.

“Hermitary – Gallery – Art – Sadeler: Solitudo Sive Vitae Foeminarum Anachoritarum (Female Hermits in Landscapes).” *Hermitary*. Accessed 10 March 2024. https://www.hermitary.com/gallery/art/sadeler-foeminarum/.

King, Margot H. “Desert Mothers: A Survey of the Feminine Anchoretic Tradition in Western Europe.” *Hermitary*. Accessed 10 March 2024. https://www.hermitary.com/articles/mothers.html.

Klein Käfer, Natacha, ed. *Privacy at Sea: Practices, Spaces, and Communication in Maritime History*. Cham: Springer International, 2023. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-35847-0.

Klein, Ursula, and E. C. Spary, eds. *Materials and Expertise in Early Modern Europe: Between Market and Laboratory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Kruft, Hanno-Walter. *Geschichte der Architekturtheorie: Von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*. Munich: Beck, 1986.

Laugier, Marc-Antoine. *An Essay on Architecture: In Which Its True Principles Are Explained, and Invariable Rules Proposed, for Directing the Judgement and Forming the Taste of the Gentleman and the Architect, with Regard to the Different Kinds of Buildings, the Embellishment of Cities*. London: T. Osborne and Shipton, 1755. https://archive.org/details/essayonarchitect00laugrich/mode/2up?ref=ol. Accessed 28 June 2024.

Laugier, Marc-Antoine. *Essai sur l'architecture*. Paris: Duchesne, 1753.
Leatherbarrow, David, and Richard Wesley. "Pre-Modern Cloisters and Precincts." In *Three Cultural Ecologies*, 101–14. 1st ed. Oxford & New York: Routledge, 2018. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315595863-5.
Long, Pamela O. "The Openness of Knowledge: An Ideal and Its Context in 16th-Century Writings on Mining and Metallurgy." *Technology and Culture* 32, no. 2 (April 1991): 318–55.
Morel, Thomas. "Of Scholars and Miners." In *Underground Mathematics: Craft Culture and Knowledge Production in Early Modern Europe*, 20–49. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009267274.002.
Morel, Thomas. "The Mines and the Court." In *Underground Mathematics*, 83–117. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009267274.004.
Orlin, Lena Cowen. *Locating Privacy in Tudor London*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
Osb, Columba Stewart. "Anthony The Great." In *The Early Christian World*, edited by Philip F. Esler, 1010–20. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2017. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315165837-51.
Prosperetti, Leopoldine. *Landscape and Philosophy in the Art of Jan Brueghel the Elder (1568–1625)*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2009.
Rykwert, Joseph. *On Adam's House in Paradise: The Idea of the Primitive Hut in Architectural History*. 2nd ed. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981.
Schlögl, Rudolf. *Anwesende und Abwesende: Grundriss für eine Gesellschaftsgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit*. Constance: Konstanz University Press, 2014.
Simek, Rudolf. *Monster im Mittelalter: Die phantastische Welt der Wundervölker und Fabelwesen*. Cologne: Böhlau, 2015.
Smith, Pamela H. "The Codification of Vernacular Theories of Metallic Generation in Sixteenth-Century European Mining and Metalworking." In *The Structures of Practical Knowledge*, edited by Matteo Valleriani, 371–92. Cham: Springer International, 2017. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-45671-3_14.
Smith, Pamela H., and Benjamin Schmidt. *Making Knowledge in Early Modern Europe: Practices, Objects, and Texts, 1400–1800*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.
Usher, Phillip John. "Demonic Mines." In *Exterranean*, 99–112. New York: Fordham University Press, 2020. https://doi.org/10.1515/9780823284245-007.
Usher, Phillip John. "Incipit: From Sub-to Exterranean." In *Exterranean*, 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1515/9780823284245-002.

Jan Siegemund

On Problems of Distinguishing Private from Political Libels: Three Cases from Electoral Saxony

In sixteenth-century conflict culture, as this chapter aims to outline, the boundary between the private and the public was often challenged or shifted as a part of conflict management – a phenomenon not unknown today.[1] In the following discussion, the problem of privacy at the beginning of the early modern period will be examined through the lens of the public and the political as concepts opposed to the private. More precisely, this chapter deals with conflicts of both an ostensibly private or public nature carried out in the public sphere.[2] To this end, I will analyse how conflicts were conducted via libels in Electoral Saxony in the second half of the sixteenth century.[3]

The term 'libel' and related designations encompassed a large variety of types of manuscripts from different contexts in the early modern period, as a file in the Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden, in which 'libels and invective booklets' [*schmeschrifften und famos libel*] were collected between 1583 and 1588, may illustrate.[4] The file contains a printed treatise against the humanist Nicodemus Frischlin (1547–1590), handwritten pasquilles against, among others, the Calvinist court chaplain Johann Salmuth (1552–1622), a 'defamatory booklet' about the destruction of the altar of St. Benno in Meissen, and various libels, slips of paper, as well as booklets against municipal and territorial authorities, above all against the Electors August (1553–1586) and Christian I (1586–1591). These texts

1 The tabloid press in particular regularly presents cases in which public interest in initially private matters is justified by arguing its relevance to societal problems, thus shifting the boundary between the private and the public. An illustrative example is the public interest in the trial between Amber Heard and Johnny Depp and its significance for the #MeToo movement. See Anthony Scott, "The Actual Malice of the Johnny Depp Trial," *The New York Times*, 2 June 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/02/arts/depp-heard-trial-malice.html, accessed 28 June 2024.

2 For the use of term for the premodern era, refer to footnote 22.

3 The cases examined here come from my dissertation entitled *Öffentlichkeit als Waffe: Schmähschriften als Mittel des Konfliktaustrag in Kursachsen in der zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts*, Konflikte und Kultur–Historische Perspektiven, vol. 41 (Constance & Munich: UVK Verlag, 2024).

4 Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden (SächsStA-D), 10024 Geheimer Rat (Geheimes Archiv), Nr. Loc. 09710/27.

Note: Open access courtesy of the Centre for Privacy Studies (DNRF138).

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111264776-007

can hardly be meaningfully categorised using traditional literary genre terms.[5] Rather, libels – also connected by an 'invective mode'[6] – have to be understood as a "category of action."[7] Their commonality lies in their function of involving a public in an already existing conflict in order to disparage an opposing party. Libellers usually tried to reach as large an audience as possible and used mechanisms of public communication to do so. Therefore, cases of libel are particularly suitable for examining the public sphere in which they achieved their effect. Moreover, the cases examined here are particularly well documented in trial records which contain not only the libels themselves, but also information on their perception.[8] The cases were reconstructed on the basis of sources from the territorial as well as the municipal jurisdictions.[9]

Studies on libels in early modern Europe usually classify them as part of the "political world"[10] and as an expression of a public voice.[11] From this perspective, libels appear as particularly important in the formulation of criticisms of author-

5 On the pasquilles of early modern Germany, see Gerd Schwerhoff, "Das Pasquill im frühneuzeitlichen Deutschland: Ein Kommunikationsmedium zwischen Schmähung und Kritik," *Kulturwissenschaftliche Zeitschrift* 6 (2021): 79–94. The same applies to invective writings in general. See Marina Münkler, "Einige Grundüberlegungen zum Konzept und zur Reichweite invektiver Gattungen," *Kulturwissenschaftliche Zeitschrift* 6 (2021): 1–9.

6 Katja Kanzler, "Invective Form in Popular Media Culture: Genre—Mode—Affordance," *Kulturwissenschaftliche Zeitschrift* 6 (2021): 29–33.

7 Christian Kuhn, "Ballads, Libels, and Songs," in *The Handbook of Medieval Studies: Terms—Methods—Trends*, vol. 2, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin & Boston: De Gruyter, 2010), 1618.

8 Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England 1500–1700*, Oxford Studies in Social History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 302.

9 With at least 36 cases of dissemination of defamatory writings from the 16th century, the Sächsische Hauptstaatsarchiv holds what is probably the most extensive collection in Germany for this period. The collection '10024 Geheimer Rat' is particularly rich in sources of this sort.

10 Alastair Bellany, "Libels in Action: Ritual, Subversion and the English Literary Underground," in *The Politics of the Excluded, c. 1500–1850*, ed. Tim Harris (Oxford: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 100.

11 Pauline Croft, "The Reputation of Robert Cecil: Libels, Political Opinion and Popular Awareness in the Early Seventeenth Century," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 1 (1991): 43–69; Pauline Croft, "Libels, Popular Literacy and Public Opinion in Early Modern England," *Historical Research* 68 (1995): 266–85; Kuhn, "Ballads"; Christian Kuhn, "Urban Laughter as a 'Counter-Public' Sphere in Augsburg: The Case of the City Mayor, Jakob Herbrot (1490/95–1564)," in *Humour and Social Protest*, eds. Marjolein 't Hart and Dennis Bos (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 77–93; Andreas Gestrich, "Schandzettel gegen die Obrigkeit: Pasquillen als Mittel der Obrigkeitskritik in der Frühen Neuzeit," in *Südwestdeutschland—die Wiege der deutschen Demokratie*, ed. Otto Borst (Tübingen: Silberburg-Verlag, 1997), 43–57.

ity as well as in protest movements and uprisings.[12] Researchers usually distinguish, explicitly or implicitly, between political libels and private libels which originated in personal conflicts.[13] Even though scholars have occasionally alluded to the fact that many libels were non-political and part of everyday social life,[14] research on these personal libels is extremely scarce.[15] In this chapter, I will examine three cases from the cities of Artern, Dresden, and Zwickau in the second half of the sixteenth century. On the surface, the events in Artern and Zwickau are typical cases of political conflict whereas the Dresden case developed out of a personal dispute concerning a sales contract. However, a closer look reveals that all three cases provide good reasons to question the strict distinction between private and public conflicts in the early modern period.

The contrasting adjectives 'public' and 'private' as well as the public sphere, especially the German term '*Öffentlichkeit*,' are extensively discussed concepts in historical scholarship. Therefore, some definitions are necessary, such as those provided by the work of Peter von Moos. Von Moos identifies three dimensions of the words 'public' and 'private': accessibility, agency, and interest.[16] In this paper, I will focus on two of these dimensions – accessibility and interest.

From the perspective of accessibility, von Moos defines as 'public' everything that refers to information which is not intimate – that is, that which cannot be limited to individual communication partners but is theoretically accessible to all.[17]

12 Andreas Würgler, *Unruhen und Öffentlichkeit: Städtische und ländliche Protestbewegungen im 18. Jahrhundert*, Frühneuzeit-Forschungen, vol. 1 (Tübingen: bibliotheca academica Verlag, 1995), 133–56.

13 For recent scholarship on the subject, see Clare Egan, "Libel in the Provinces: Disinformation and 'Disreputation' in Early Modern England," *Past & Present* 257 (2022): 75–110. Egan strictly focuses on private libels which she distinguishes from political ones. Although she addresses the relationship between private and public, she does not discuss the criteria for categorising libels in detail. For her, libels are political if they attack the monarch or the government and potentially lead to civil unrest. For examples from Germany, see Ulinka Rublack, "Anschläge auf die Ehre: Schmähschriften und -Zeichen in der städtischen Kultur des Ancien Régime," in *Verletzte Ehre: Ehrkonflikte in Gesellschaften des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit*, eds. Klaus Schreiner and Gerd Schwerhoff (Cologne: Böhlau 1995), 387 and Gestrich, "Schandzettel," 56.

14 Steven May and Alan Bryson, *Verse Libel in Renaissance England and Scotland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 25.

15 Exceptions include the work of Egan, "Libel in the Provinces" and, insofar as the German-speaking world is concerned, Rublack, "Anschläge auf die Ehre."

16 Peter von Moos, "Die Begriffe 'öffentlich' und 'privat' in der Geschichte und bei den Historikern," *Saeculum* 49 (1998): 177.

17 See André Krischer, "Rituale und politische Öffentlichkeit in der Alten Stadt," in *Stadt und Öffentlichkeit in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Gerd Schwerhoff, Städteforschung, vol. 83 (Cologne: Böhlau, 2011), 129.

Sixteenth-century German language already knew the corresponding term '*offenlich*.' This understanding of 'public' corresponds to a concept of *Öffentlichkeit*, often understood in the sub-discipline of communication history as a network of acts of communication. This network can be described in terms of its participants, media, spaces, times, and topics.[18] Conversely, privacy can be understood as an "enclosed universe of communication"[19] in which one can decide who should and who should not participate. In this respect, privacy thus corresponds largely to secrecy.

In terms of the dimension of interest, actions are public if they are carried out in the interest of the community – or if their omission runs counter to it. Private actions, on the other hand, serve only self-interest. Interest also plays an important role in the description of 'public' formulated by John Dewey, which Peter von Moos addresses as well.[20] According to Dewey, 'public' refers to all those interactions, whose consequences affect not only those directly involved but also third parties, i.e. smaller or larger groups within the general public. This potential effect on the community then legitimizes the control of such public interactions. In this sense, von Moos proposes that "the boundary between the private and the public is the range of consequences of actions requiring control."[21] Accordingly, privacy implies that events remain limited in their effect on the people who directly participate in them (for example a dispute which is settled solely between direct opponents). The concept of *Öffentlichkeit* which fits the *interest*-based definition of 'public' and 'private' best is the *politische Öffentlichkeit* (political public sphere) if it is understood as a device of arbitration and legitimation.[22] The legal system takes this understanding of the relationship between 'private' and 'public' into account by criminal-

18 On this approach, see, for example, Daniel Bellingradt and Massimo Rospocher, "A History of Early Modern Communication," in *A History of Early Modern Communication: German and Italian Historiographical Perspectives*, eds. Daniel Bellingradt and Massimo Rospocher, Yearbook of the Italian-German Historical Institute in Trento, vol. 45 (Bologna: Società editrice il Mulino, 2019), 7–22.

19 David Vincent, *Privacy: A Short History* (Cambridge: Polity, 2016), 3.

20 von Moos, "Die Begriffe 'öffentlich' und 'privat,'" 174–5.

21 "Die Grenze zwischen dem Privaten und dem Öffentlichen ist somit die Reichweite der kontrollbedürftigen Handlungsfolgen." See von Moos, "Die Begriffe 'öffentlich' und 'privat,'" 175.

22 The political public sphere was introduced into academic discourse in a particularly influential way by Jürgen Habermas, who dated its emergence in Europe to the beginning of the 19th century and located it in coffee houses and reading circles of the enlightened bourgeoisie where political topics were critically discussed with reference to the common good. See Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: Polity, 1989). Almost all aspects of Habermas' narrative have since been criticised by historians. It is now widely accepted that forms of the political public sphere can be traced back at least to the late Middle Ages. For a prescient summary of the historical critiques levelled against Habermas, see Andreas Gestrich, "The Public Sphere and the Habermas Debate," *German History* 24 (2006): 413–30.

ising certain acts and allowing them to be prosecuted *ex officio*, while others can only be prosecuted on indictment. In her study of early modern Swedish law, Mia Korpiola recently pointed out that the early modern period offered little room for privacy – or private deviance – in this sense, since legal ideas formulated a preference for prosecuting all offences for the good of the community.[23]

With regard to the characteristics of the libel conflicts analysed below, it should be noted that the conception of the public based on interest is extremely close to certain definitions of the political. Philip Hoffmann-Rehnitz, for example, describes as political all those conflicts which revolved around problems concerning collectively binding decision-making.[24] Conversely, conflicts which only affect individuals but not the general public could be described as personal or private. Thus, I will use 'political' as a relevant opposing term for 'private.' An analysis of the political quality of defamatory interactions thereby serves the contouring of what was considered private.

7.1 Accessibility: Libels in *locis publicis* and the 'Open House'

Andreas Langener, an apothecary and merchant from Nuremberg, placed particular emphasis on the public impact of his libels when he posted several of them in Dresden's Old Town on Sunday morning, 19 June 1569, and the following day.[25] The writings were directed against Tham Pflugk, a member of one of the most important noble families in Electoral Saxony, and referred to a dispute between the two men over a delivery of goods in 1567. Langener stated that Pflugk had not paid for the delivered goods as agreed because the price was too high in his opinion. Moreover, Pflugk had chased the merchant away with insults and physical attacks. Langener therefore demanded that Pflugk pay him the original price of the goods plus compensation for the violence perpetuated against him. In Pflugk's

23 Mia Korpiola, "Early Modern Swedish Law and Privacy: A Legal Right in Embryo," in *Early Modern Privacy: Sources and Approaches*, eds. Michaël Green, Lars Cyril Nørgaard, and Mette Birkedal Bruun (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2022), 135–55, esp. 138–42.

24 Philipp Hoffmann, "Rechtmäßiges Klagen oder Rebellion? Konflikte um die Ordnung politischer Kommunikation im frühneuzeitlichen Leipzig," in *Interaktion und Herrschaft: Die Politik der frühneuzeitlichen Stadt*, ed. Rudolf Schlögl (Constance: UVK Verlag, 2004), 318.

25 The reconstruction of the case is based on the records of the trial against Langener. See SächsStA-D, 10024 Geheimer Rat (Geheimes Archiv), Loc. 09710/23, Loc. 09710/24, Loc. 09710/25. See also Jan Siegemund, "'unrechtliche peinliche schmehung oder dem gemeinen nutz nuetzlich?' Eine Fallstudie zur Normenkonkurrenz im Schmähschriftprozess des 16. Jahrhunderts," *Das Mittelalter* 25 (2020): 135–49.

account, Langener had delivered the goods too late and consequently could not claim payment. In 1568, the dispute was brought before the *Landesregierung* as the appropriate court authority. This institution was, however, ultimately unable to broker an agreement and urged both sides to take legal action and submit formal letters of justification. Pflugk refused to do so and Langener was initially unable to persuade him to settle their conflict in a court of law. Probably as an expression of his sense of justice but above all to exert pressure, Langener finally attached the aforementioned libels in which he described the events from his point of view and publicly demanded that his opponent meet him in court to resolve their disagreement and come to a just settlement.

Langener chose three central locations in Dresden for posting his libels – on a door of the Kreuzkirche as the most important church of the city, on a gate of the bridge crossing the river Elbe as a central traffic junction, and on a gate of the Royal Palace [*Residenzschloss*] as the site of the Saxon Electoral court. These heavily frequented locations can be considered public places par excellence with important functions in the urban communication network and guaranteed that the libels would be read by as many people as possible.[26] From a communications history perspective, these places were public due to the fact that they were more or less fully accessible, that is, their frequentation was not subject to any control (in Dresden, the Residenzschloss was not demarcated from the city, so the surrounding area was a central place of civic life).[27] The gate of the Residenzschloss where Langener posted his writ-

26 On public places, see Susanne Rau, "Orte—Akteure—Netzwerke: Zur Konstitution öffentlicher Räume in einer frühneuzeitlichen Fernhandelsstadt," in Schwerhoff, *Stadt und Öffentlichkeit*, 39–64; Gerd Schwerhoff, "Öffentliche Räume und politische Kultur in der frühneuzeitlichen Stadt: Eine Skizze am Beispiel der Reichsstadt Köln," in Schlögl, *Interaktion und* Herrschaft, 113–36; Gerd Schwerhoff, "Spaces, Places, and the Historians: A Comment from a German Perspective," *History and Theory* 52 (2013): 420–32. *Loci publici* also played an important role in legal texts concerning slander and libel. The famous legal scholar Jost de Damhouder (1507–1581), for example, held that the invective effects of slander resulted primarily from the time and place of the act. See Joos de Damhouder, *Praxis rerum criminalium: Gründlicher Bericht und anweisung, Welcher massen in Rechtfärtigung Peinlicher sachen, nach gemeynen beschribenen Rechten vor und in Gerichten ordentlich zuhandeln* (Frankfurt, 1571), fol. 245b. The influential Saxon scholar Benedict Carpzov (1595–1666) even included public places in his definition of libel: "Qui definitur: compositio in scriptis facta ejus, quod autor probare non vult ad infamiam alicujus, in publico loco, occult nomine adfixa." See Benedict Carpzov, *Practicae Novae Imperialis Saxonicae Rerum Criminalium Pars II* (Wittenberg, 1646), Quaestio 98, §2.

27 Karlheinz Blaschke, "Dynastie—Regierung—Schloss," in *Geschichte der Stadt Dresden. Band 1: Von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des Dreißigjährigen Krieges*, eds. Karlheinz Blaschke and Uwe John (Stuttgart: Theiss, 2005), 425. On the architectural situation of the castle and Schlossstrasse, see Norbert Oelsner, "Das Dresdner Residenzschloss in der frühen Neuzeit," in Blaschke and John, *Geschichte der Stadt Dresden*, 432–46.

ings was located on the much-frequented Schlossstrasse which formed an important traffic axis in the city and led from the central market square to the Elbe bridge. Communication emanating from these locations was thus accessible to everyone. This fact was also emphasised by Pflugk, who stressed that these were "*loc[i] public[i]*, where many people go and talk every day."[28] The emphasis on oral communication also points to the fact that the libels experienced extensive public circulation in rumour and talk. Langener enhanced this effect through clever timing. For example, he posted the libel at the church "publicly at the time of the early sermon, so that it would be carried all the further by the many people who had been in and out of the church in such large numbers at the time."[29]

By using the Residenzschloss, Langener also specifically addressed the Electoral Saxon court.[30] Langener chose the time of the service in the court chapel to post his libel because he wanted to make sure that the court had to pass by his texts after the service.[31] In this way, he had involved Pflugk's most relevant peer group in the conflict. There was a particularly large group of Pflugk's relatives and in-laws at the court. For example, Rudolf von Carlowitz, who ultimately pulled down the libel from the wall of the Schlosskirche, was Pflugk's brother-in-law.[32] This group of relatives and peers was particularly sensitive to attacks on Pflugk's honour and reputation.[33] With regard to the court's involvement, Langener even went a step further by sending letters to Elector August and his wife Anna (1532–1585) in which he also strongly

28 "[. . .] locis publicis, do teglich viel Leuthe zugehen vnnd sonst zu Conversiren pflegen," plaintiff's third indictment, 22 March 1570, SächsStA-D, 10024 Geheimer Rat (Geheimes Archiv), Loc. 09710/23.

29 "Vnder der Fruhe Predigtt auch offentlich damit dieselbige vonn wegenn Menninge der leuthe, so damalß auch in grosser anzall, Jnn der Kirche gewesenn vnnd herauß gegangenn, desto weitter spargirtt wurde [. . .]," plaintiff's evidence, 1 June 1574, SächsStA-D, 10024 Geheimer Rat (Geheimes Archiv), Loc. 09710/25, fol. 11*.

30 "Churf[urstliches] hofflager," plaintiff's first indictment, 27 September 1569, SächsStA-D, 10024 Geheimer Rat (Geheimes Archiv), Loc. 09710/23.

31 Plaintiff's evidence, 1 June 1574, SächsStA-D, 10024 Geheimer Rat (Geheimes Archiv), Loc. 09710/25, fols. 10b–11a*.

32 Plaintiff's evidence, 1 June 1574, SächsStA-D, 10024 Geheimer Rat (Geheimes Archiv), Loc. 09710/24, fol. 9b.

33 "[Langeners Angriffe betrafen] nicht alleinn in gemein das vhralte adeliche ritterlich geschlecht der Pflugen, in allen vorneme adelich wirden ihe vnd alle wege loblich gestanden, geehrett vnd angesehen worden, sondern auch gedachte[n] Damian Pflugk [der] sich von Jugent auff biss anhero an allen vnnd iden ohrtenn mitt sein thun vnd lassenn, aller ehrlich adelich tugenden vnd lob wirdigen wandels, wie einem Ehrlibenden adelich Rittermessigen man anstehett vnd gezimet zum hochsten gebraucht vnnd gehalten[. . .]," plaintiff's second indictment, 11 October 1569, SächsStA-D, 10024 Geheimer Rat (Geheimes Archiv), Loc. 09710/23.

denounced what he saw as Tham Pflugk's wrongful behaviour. Having suffered this disparagement in front of his peers as well as his liege lord, Pflugk was thus even more incited to answer Langener's actions.

Several testimonies at the trial indicate that relatives and friends of Tham Pflugk were informed of Langener's efforts, mainly through rumours. The summoned nobles Bünau, Schönberg, Schleinitz, and Miltitz – all weighty Saxon families with strong connections to the court – had not seen the libels themselves but, as Hans von Schleinitz testified, some had only heard "talk of Langener posting libels about Tham Pflugk."[34] The prosecution also emphasised that the posting of the libels was "an audible rumour" in parts of Electoral Saxony.[35] The witness statements also suggest that the dispute had even become a topic of gossip at court. One witness said, for example, that the matter was "very perceptible" among the "high and princely persons" and among the nobility as a whole.[36]

Langener's choice of locations for displaying his libels shows that these effects were planned. The result of his actions, however, can only be considered a limited success. The dispute was reopened in court, as Langener had wanted. Unfortunately, as is so often the case, the sources tell us nothing about the outcome of the trial. We do know, however, that Langener was imprisoned and spent almost two years in jail.

A second example may show that it was not necessary to post libels in public places in order to initiate public debate. Showing how easily and fast information about libels in the domestic sphere spread in a small city may illustrate how few really private spaces existed in the early modern period when it came to communication, news, and rumours.

In the winter of 1590, an elaborate pasquill of several pages entitled *Colloquium, between a Mansfeld citizen and a country messenger held on the streets* was placed in the streets of the small Thuringian city of Artern.[37] The document commented on a politically complex situation, but it was directed against the Elector Christian I and his 'partisans' – individual citizens of Artern and the town council.[38] Because of the libel's explosive nature (among other things, it threat-

34 "[. . .] davon hörenn redenn, das Langner schmeheschrifften uber Tham pflugenn angeschlagenn habe," testimony of Hans von Schleinitz, 8 November 1574, SächsStA-D, 10024 Geheimer Rat (Geheimes Archiv), Loc. 09710/25, fol. 237a*.

35 "ein schelber gerucht unnd gemein sage," plaintiff's evidence, 1 June 1574, SächsStA-D, 10024 Geheimer Rat (Geheimes Archiv), Loc. 09710/25, fol. 14a.

36 "[. . .] hohenn vnnd furstlichen Personenn [. . .] sehr Ruchbar worden," plaintiff's evidence, 1 June 1574, SächsStA-D, 10024 Geheimer Rat (Geheimes Archiv), Loc. 09710/25, fol. 13b.

37 "Ein Colloquium, so sich zuischen einem mansfeldischen und Landboten vf der strassen begeben," SächsStA-D, 10036 Finanzarchiv, Loc. 12034/7, fols. 6–17*.

38 The background to the libellous campaign was the incorporation of the formerly independent county of Mansfeld into the Electorate of Saxony in the years 1570–80. The reason for this were

ened the Elector not only with an uprising in the county of Mansfeld, but also with an attempt on his life), the author could assume that it would attract some attention. The circumstances of the initial discovery of the *Colloquium* and its subsequent journey can be reconstructed through the statements of Wenzel Görtler, a servant of the Meyenburg family, against whom the libel was also directed.[39] The *Colloquium* was left in the street, about three steps from the front door of the Meyenburg residence. There it was found by Meyenburg's daughter, a visiting friend, and a maid. All three women took it in their hands one after another and finally handed it to Görtler, who was to bring it to the master of the house, Michael Meyenburg. According to his own account, Görtler read only the title page while delivering the document. It is very likely that most of the people involved had a rough idea of what the text they held in their hands was about.

In addition to Michael Meyenburg himself, three craftsmen from the neighbouring village were present in the parlour at this time. In their presence, Meyenburg read the text; it is probable that he even read parts of it aloud, or at least commented on its content. He then took the *Colloquium* to his brother Casper's writing room. Over the next few days, the brothers took other citizens of Artern into their confidence and asked them for advice. Afterwards, Michael Meyenburg took the libel to the *Oberaufseher* (chief administrator) of the county. While he was on his way, another paper was found near his house – this time by a citizen named Hans Fischer, an illiterate man. Fischer brought the note into the house, to a small room downstairs where another citizen, Thomas Bierbauch, who was visiting Michael Meyenburg's wife, was staying. Bierbauch in turn passed the note on to Görtler. Within a very short time and despite the secrecy, at least five other

---

the enormous debts which the Counts of Mansfeld had accumulated. However, the new situation was not accepted by some of the counts of Mansfeld for a long time, which resulted in repeated conflicts with the Saxon Electoral administrators. The immediate trigger for the writing of the libel was the orientation of the Saxon territory towards Calvinism under Elector Christian I from 1588/89 onwards. In this context, Lutheran clergymen were replaced by Calvinist-minded ones, including the superintendent of Eisleben in 1589. In the process, the Saxon Electoral *Oberaufseher* (the highest administrator of the county of Mansfeld) asserted himself against the will of the counts of Mansfeld, who felt cheated of their *ius patronatus*, which caused the long-standing conflict to escalate, at least in Artern. For details, see Thomas Klein, *Der Kampf um die zweite Reformation in Kursachsen 1586–1591*, Mitteldeutsche Forschungen, vol. 25 (Cologne: Böhlau, 1962); Marion Ebruy, "Die Verwaltung der Grafschaft Mansfeld durch Oberaufseher des Kurfürstentums Sachsen von der Sequestration der Grafschaft Mansfeld 1570 bis zum Aussterben des Grafengeschlechts 1780: Die Rolle und Aufgabe der Oberaufseher als Regierungsbevollmächtigte der Kurfürsten von Sachsen in der Grafschaft Mansfeld" (PhD diss., University of Leipzig, 1991).

39 The statement coincides in detail with other statements and can be considered credible. See Wenzel Görtler's report, s. d., SächsStA-D, 10036 Finanzarchiv, Loc. 12034/4, fols. 50–54*.

citizens of Artern and four residents of neighbouring communities (and, by extension, their families) were at least aware of the discovery of this libel and, in some cases, also of its contents. These events illustrate the limited privacy of early modern domestic areas, which Joachim Eibach postulates in the concept of the 'Open House.' According to Eibach, the home and, in a broader sense, the family only became a place of private retreat around 1800. Before that, the house was a highly accessible, interactive space frequented by many different people and characterised by a culture of visibility – and, one might add, audibility.[40]

Starting from the way in which the libel was handled in the house of the Meyenburgs, information about the find spread through the town, especially in the form of rumour and talk. This process illustrates how much the inhabitants of a small early modern town such as Artern knew about each other and how few opportunities they had to communicate privately. For example, a townsperson testified that Meyenburg's wife had told his wife about the discovery of the *Colloquium*. Since there was general talk of such libels anyway, he instructed his wife to learn more about the contents of the *Colloquium*, but Mrs Meyenburg kept quiet about it.[41] The reason for her silence was the explosive nature of the document which the Meyenburgs desperately wanted to keep secret, but ultimately could not.

Meanwhile, the talk in Artern was further fuelled by indiscretion. Meyenburg's servant, Wenzel Görtler attracted the most negative attention. Not only had he reported the events in a letter to a friend (who in turn told other citizens), but the citizen Claus Sempergk also reported that the Artern city pastor had stormed out of the *Bürgermeister*'s house one night in a state of anger, shouting: "Oh Wentzel, Wentzel, because you can keep silent, there is no need!"[42] Although Sempergk lacked context, the episode is both a further indication that Görtler had problems maintaining secrecy and that such incidents in Artern always took place under the eyes or within earshot of third parties. The events also point to the important function played by oral communication in the form of rumour and

40 Joachim Eibach, "Das offene Haus: Kommunikative Praxis im sozialen Nahraum der europäischen Frühen Neuzeit," *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 38 (2011): 621–64. See also Joachim Eibach, "From Open House to Privacy? Domestic Life from the Perspective of Diaries," in *The Routledge History of the Domestic Sphere in Europe: 16th to 19th Century*, eds. Joachim Eibach and Margareth Lanzinger (London & New York: Routledge, 2020), 347–63.

41 Testimony of Martin Schmidt, 24 August 1591, SächsStA-D, 10036 Finanzarchiv, Loc. 12034/11, fols. 67–69*.

42 "O Wentzel, Wentzel, weil du schweigen kanst, so hat es keine noth!," Testimony of Claus Sempergk, 13 August 1591, SächsStA-D, 10036 Finanzarchiv, Loc. 12034/11, fol. 35b*.

talk in the early modern public sphere.[43] In the constantly news-hungry society of the early modern period, news – especially of a scandalous kind – quickly found its way into communal talk as the most important form of everyday knowledge transmission.[44] Since talk – and, even more so, rumour – was not limited to a specific group and ensured rapid dissemination, information could very quickly take on a public character in this way.[45]

7.2 Public Interest in Private Conflicts

As a rule, rumours deal with information to which a relevant public interest is attributed, at least by the individual communication partners. Rumours thus have a strong connection to ideas of the common good, especially in the early modern period. The function of rumours in early modern criminal charges makes this particularly evident. First, the potentially harmful acts were evaluated in communal talk. If a certain threshold of rejection was reached, the community labelled the behaviour as criminal. At this point, the talk initiated more public rumours that could reach the responsible authorities and function as anonymous reports.[46]

For the social handling of deviance, publicity was of great importance. Contemporaries in the Middle Ages and at the beginning of the early modern period regarded it as their duty to make deviations from the norm known to everyone in order to give the community the opportunity to intervene and maintain

43 On these forms of communication that are constitutive for the early modern public sphere, their mechanisms, and effects, see Heather Kerr and Claire Walker, eds., *'Fama' and her Sisters: Gossip and Rumour in Early Modern Europe*, Early European Research, vol. 7 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015).

44 See Michaele Hohkamp, "Klatsch," in *Enzyklopädie der Neuzeit online*, edited by Friedrich Jaeger. https://doi.org/10.1163/2352-0248_edn_COM_293111. See also Maximilian Rose, "'Herr Niemand' und der Kurfürst von Sachsen: Schmähschriften und Öffentlichkeit im 16. Jahrhundert—ein Fallbeispiel," *Neues Archiv für Sächsische Geschichte* 92 (2021): 48–9.

45 In a comparable sense, concerning the problems of late medieval and early modern spouses to keep marital conflicts private, David Vincent sees curiosity and the resulting gossip as a threat to privacy. See Vincent, *Privacy*, 22–3.

46 Ulinka Rublack, *Magd, Metz' oder Mörderin: Frauen vor frühneuzeitlichen Gerichten* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1998), 33; André Holenstein, "Normen und Praktiken der Anzeige in der Markgrafschaft Baden-Durlach in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts," in *Der Staatsbürger als Spitzel: Denunziation während des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts aus europäischer Perspektive*, eds. Michaela Hohkamp and Claudia Ulbrich, Deutsch-Französische Kulturbibliothek, vol. 19 (Leipzig: Universitätsverlag, 2001), 111–46.

order. This led to a need to reveal what was secret or hidden. Following the same reasoning, people were sceptical about what was kept private.[47]

The authors and disseminators of libels brought conflicts which had previously been less public – or, in their view, not public enough – into the public sphere. Cases of libel therefore demonstrate the connection between the public and the law, as the writers ultimately addressed an audience, explicitly or implicitly, in order to sanction a supposed violation of norms. This motive had prompted Andreas Langener to post his libels in Dresden's Old Town. As already mentioned, this act was preceded by a dispute which the two men failed to settle in court. Langener simply lacked the means to persuade his adversary Pflugk, who apparently had no desire to deal with the matter further, to follow the legal proceedings to their conclusion. The libels therefore represented an attempt to access justice via the path of publicity.

It is clear from Langener's libels as well as from his argumentation over the course of the trial that he rejected a selfish motive for his actions. From his point of view, Pflugk's behaviour was not only harmful to him but to everyone. It was a general injustice to which the community – the *christianitas*[48] – had to react by questioning Pflugk's honourability which, in turn, would force the nobleman to relent.[49] Ultimately, Langener even went one step further and styled himself as the preserver of legal order by criticising the authorities' lack of enforcement in restoring law and order against Pflugk.[50] He framed the conflict between himself and Pflugk as both public and political through the explicit reference to the common good. Public places like the Kreuzkirche, the Residenzschloss, and the Elbe bridge where Langener posted his writings supported his cause by charging his

47 Bernd Thum, "Öffentlich-Machen, Öffentlichkeit, Recht: Zu den Grundlagen und Verfahren der politischen Publizistik im Spätmittelalter (mit Überlegungen zur sog. 'Rechtssprache')," *Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik* 10 (1980): 12–64. Thum, however, rejects the term 'private' for the Middle Ages since, in his opinion, it presupposes a separation of state and society that did not exist at that time.

48 On *christianitas* as a form of medieval public sphere, see Heike Johanna Mierau, "Fama als Mittel zur Herstellung von Öffentlichkeit und Gemeinwohl in der Zeit des Konziliarismus," in *Politische Öffentlichkeit im Spätmittelalter*, ed. Martin Kintzinger, Vorträge und Forschungen, vol. 75 (Ostfildern: Thorbecke, 2011), 237–86.

49 "[D]amit die sache zum ahnfangk vnd Ende komme, [und] die erbarkeith sampt der gerechtigkeit gefödderт [werde]," libel of Andreas Langener, SächsStA-D, 10024 Geheimer Rat (Geheimes Archiv), Loc. 9710/23.

50 "Vnd glauben nicht das mir solche vnbilligkeit vnter Turcken oder Mammelucken begegnen möchte, [. . .] Jn Summe es gehet zu, das ein stein geschweig eines Menschen hertz, vnbilligkeit halben Blutten möchte," petition to Johann Kasimir von Pfalz-Simmern, SächsStA-D, 10024 Geheimer Rat (Geheimes Archiv), Loc. 09710/23.

writings with meaning and staging them as publicly relevant.[51] In doing so, the author made use of established practices of publications of official texts at church and castle gates and thus of the authority of the ecclesiastical and secular officials. Through their placement at the church, the writings symbolically formulated a claim to truth and justice, since churches were the place of ecclesiastical jurisdiction and public shame sanctions.[52] The Royal Palace, accordingly, can be seen as a symbol of Electoral power.

Tham Pflugk, on the other hand, naturally emphasised the damage done to his honour, which seemed especially great to him due to the public dimension of the attack, which appeared particularly pronounced in contrast to the limited publicity of the written court proceedings. In Pflugk's opinion, the dispute with Langener was private in the sense that a public involvement of the community was not necessary. However, Pflugk also argued (albeit more implicitly) by making reference to the common good, highlighting the fact that Langener was practising vigilante justice by means of libel, that is, that he "wanted to be his own judge."[53] This contradicted the legal order and thus endangered peace and public order: "Because a libel 'robbed a man of his good name,' in a society that depended on reputation, the victim would be forced to defend himself by whatever means he could, even if this meant breaching the peace."[54]

At the beginning of the early modern period, the common good (*bonum commune)* was regarded not only as the decisive guideline for legislative action, but also

51 On the importance of spaces for the impact and interpretation of libels, see Karin Sennefeld, "Citizenship and the Political Landscape of Libelling in Stockholm, c. 1720–70," *Social History* 33 (2008): 146–63. Two functions ('frequentation' and 'charging with meaning') of the places chosen for the display of libels are also mentioned in Bellany, "Libels in Action," 114–5.

52 Gerd Schwerhoff, "Sakralitätsmanagement: Zur Analyse religiöser Räume im späten Mittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit," in *Topographie des Sakralen: Religion und Raumordnung in der Vormoderne*, eds. Gerd Schwerhoff and Susanne Rau (Munich & Hamburg: Dölling und Galitz, 2008), 49. See also Karl Brunner, "Inszenierung und Öffentlichkeit in und um Kirchen im Mittelalter," in *Ein Thema—zwei Perspektiven: Juden und Christen in Mittelalter und Frühneuzeit*, eds. Eveline Brugger and Birgit Wiedl (Innsbruck: Studien-Verlag, 2007), 187–94.

53 "sein eigen Richter [haben] sein wollen," plaintiff's first indictment, 27 September 1569, SächsStA-D, 10024 Geheimer Rat (Geheimes Archiv), Loc. 09710/23.

54 May and Bryson, *Verse Libel*, 5. This argumentation is typical of a whole series of legal disputes about 'Scheltbriefe' at the beginning of the early modern period. As Matthias Lentz has shown, the two positions were based on fundamentally different ideas of law—namely, a cooperative one which accepts self help and one of magisterially administered criminal justice which slowly gained acceptance in the sixteenth century. See Matthias Lentz, *Konflikt, Ehre, Ordnung: Untersuchungen zu den Schmähbriefen und Schandbilder des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit (ca. 1350 bis 1600)*, Veröffentlichungen der historischen Kommission für Niedersachsen und Bremen, vol. 217 (Hanover: Hahn, 2004).

as a "regulative for the individual good conduct of each particular citizen."[55] This strategy of legitimation, which was also present in legal provisions on the dissemination of defamatory writings,[56] shows how difficult it is to identify a sphere of the private when it comes to conflicts and norm violations in the early modern period.

7.3 Political Libels and the Staging of Public Interest

From today's perspective, the initial dispute between Langener and Pflugk was a private conflict. Its public dimension was a result of both parties trying to claim that their interests were aligned with the common good, which was typical of the early modern period. I will now reverse the perspective and consider a dispute which initially appears to be a public or political affair. As described at the beginning, research usually distinguishes between libels of a political and those of a private nature, although it is rarely made explicit what the respective categorisations mean. In addition to Hoffmann-Rehnitz's aforementioned definition, which refers to problems that require collectively binding decision-making, Johannes Arndt also considers conflicts political "in which various state, economic, or cultural institutions fight with each other over power opportunities or individual citizens, possibly organised in groups, take action against these institutions."[57] Ultimately, the basis

55 "Regulativ für das individuelle Wohlverhalten des einzelnen Bürgers." See Winfried Schulze, "Vom Gemeinnutz zum Eigennutz: Über den Normenwandel in der ständischen Gesellschaft der Frühen Neuzeit," *Historische Zeitschrift* 243 (1986): 598. On the common good, see also Peter Blickle, "Der Gemeine Nutzen: Ein kommunaler Wert und seine politische Karriere," in *Gemeinwohl und Gemeinsinn: Historische Semantiken politischer Leitbegriffe*, eds. Herfried Münkler and Harald Bluhm, Forschungsberichte der interdisziplinären Arbeitsgruppe "Gemeinwohl und Gemeinsinn" der Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, vol. 1 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001), 85–108 and Andrea Iseli, *Gute Policey: Öffentliche Ordnung in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Stuttgart: Ulmer, 2009), 125–30.

56 For example, in his influential *Processus und Practica* (published in 1541), the Saxon Electoral legal practitioner Kilian König (1470–1526) permitted the writing of libels if it was beneficial to the common good to make public the accusations contained and if these accusations were true. See Siegemund, "Schmähschriftenprozess," 143–8.

57 "[. . .] bei denen verschiedene staatliche, wirtschaftliche oder kulturelle Institutionen um Machtchancen miteinander streiten oder einzelne Bürger, eventuell in Gruppen organisiert, gegen diese Institutionen vorgehen." See Johannes Arndt, *Herrschaftskontrolle durch Öffentlichkeit: Die publizistische Darstellung politischer Konflikte im Heiligen Römischen Reich 1648–1750*, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Europäische Geschichte Mainz, vol. 224 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 11.

of this actor-centred definition is community participation or impact. At the centre of the following considerations is a libel simply called *Pasquillus* which appears to be clearly political but, on closer examination, demonstrates how problematic a classification of conflicts on the basis of the above-mentioned definitions can be.

The *Pasquillus* is an invective poem of seven pages, which was posted on the Town Hall of Zwickau on 4 February 1599, again on a Sunday morning before the early service.[58] In addition to its text, the *Pasquillus* was adorned with three small drawings that show the executioner's instruments in the form of wheel and gallows and Zwickau's coat of arms, which possibly (even the interpretations of contemporaries diverge on this point) swapped the traditional swans with ravens. The symbols refer to the content of the manuscript – the *Pasquillus* was directed against the Councillor, Michael Kratzbeer (d. 1622),[59] the *Bürgermeister* Christoph Faber (d. 1612),[60] and the City Council as a whole. A Zwickau citizen named Johann Offneyer was imprisoned as the author of the *Pasquillus*. Even though he defended himself against the accusation in a trial which lasted several years, it can be assumed that he was indeed the author and had posted the libel on the Town Hall.

In his text, Offneyer accuses Michael Kratzbeer of adultery, avarice, and venality or corruption. Finally, he intensifies these allegations by accusing Kratzbeer of conspiratorial machinations and by comparing him to the Roman politician Lucius Sergius Catilina (ca. 108–62 BCE). He thus stylises himself as Cicero, who thwarted Catilina's conspiracy and drove him and his allies out of the city of Rome and ultimately to their deaths.[61] This story had found its way into the canon of widely received ancient literature through the reception of Cicero's *Orationes in Catilinam* and Sallust's *De coniuratione Catilinae* and was often cited in the context of disputes over political partisanship to criticise authorities.[62] The

58 Staatsarchiv Chemnitz (StC), 30023 Amt Zwickau, Nr. 902, fols. 25a–28a*. The surviving *Pasquillus* is a copy, based on the original.

59 Kratzbeer held office of Councillor from 1598 and *Bürgermeister* from 1609 to 1622. See Tobias Schmidt, *Chronica Cygnea. Oder Beschreibung Der sehr alten/Löblichen/und CHurfürstlichen Stadt ZWICKAU/[. . .]* (Zwickau, 1656), 458, 467.

60 Faber was initially rector of the municipal school from 1591, a member of the Zwickau City Council from 1594, and *Bürgermeister* from 1597. See Schmidt, *Chronica Cygnea*, 422, 458, 468.

61 For an overview, see E. J. Philips, "Catiline's Conspiracy," *Historia: Zeitschrift für alte Geschichte* 25 (1976): 441–8.

62 Yanick Maes, "Catilina," in *Historische Gestalten der Antike: Rezeption in Literatur, Kunst und Musik*, eds. Peter von Möllendorf, Annette Simonis, and Linda Simonis, Der Neue Pauly, Supplemente, vol. 8 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2013), 247–58. See also Niels Grüne, "'Und sie wissen nicht, was es ist': Ansätze und Blickpunkte historischer Korruptionsforschung," in *Korruption: Historische Annäherungen an eine Grundfigur politischer Kommunikation*, eds. Niels Grüne and Simona Slanicka (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010), 11–34.

Pasquillus denigrates the *Bürgermeister* Christoph Faber as weak, hypocritical, and oblivious to his duties, as a laughing stock whose actions are primarily oriented towards self-interest, thus invoking a category diametrically opposed to the common good. The third individual attacked in the libel is the town clerk David Müller who is described as an upstart and a favourite. Together, the three men form a conspiratorial community, according to the *Pasquillus*.

Ultimately, however, the criticism conveyed via the *Pasquillus* is not directed at the three individuals but at the Council itself. The councillors as a whole are described as oblivious to their duties, as lazy, and addicted to pleasure and drinking. The Council fails in its political task because it is unable to quell discord and guarantee urban peace. This was a serious accusation, since the commitment to the common good distinguished good authorities from tyrannical ones.[63] On the basis of these accusations, the author of the *Pasquillus* calls for a revolt and the dismissal of the existing Council, placing himself at the head of a citizens' movement.[64] The pamphlet fulfilled three functions: first, it was an attack on the honour of the individuals and of the Council as a municipal institution; second, it called upon the urban public to resist in the form of physical violence; third, it legitimised this resistance. A right to resist could be derived, at least theoretically, from accusing the authorities of not doing justice to the agendas of good rule and of governing instead in an unchristian and tyrannical manner.[65]

In view of the supposed distinction between public or political and private conflicts and corresponding categories of libels, one problem immediately comes to mind – invectives against an institution or an office inevitably affected the individual honour of the office-holders. Calling the City Council lazy affected the individual councillors directly and personally. Conversely, a denial of honour in a personal – for instance, family – environment directly affected the 'professional honour,' the eligibility of a person, as Clare Egan illustrates for cases of libel.[66]

63 Blickle, "Der Gemeine Nutzen," 96; Iseli, *Gute Policey*, 130.

64 "Wan man anstendige bürgerblut/Jm Rath gebrauchet diese Zeitt/So würde es besser alhier Zu gehen/mit allen sachen wol zusehen/Schafft ab Caluine vnd Juristen/vnd sazt dagegen fromme Christen/an ihr Stadt ins Regiment/sonst wierdt es nehmen ein böß endt," *Pasquillus*, StC, 30023 Amt Zwickau (Justiz- und Rentamt), Nr. 902, fol. 27b.

65 Luise Schorn-Schütte, "Obrigkeitskritik und Widerstandsrecht: Die 'politica christiana' als Legitimitätsgrundlage," in *Aspekte der politischen Kommunikation im Europa des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Luise Schorn-Schütte (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2004), 195–232. The accusations of corruption contained in the text reinforce this as they had the potential of mobilising the citizenry. See Niels Grüne, "Anfechtung und Legitimation: Beobachtungen zum Vergleich politischer Korruptionsdebatten in der Frühen Neuzeit," in Grüne and Slanicka, *Korruption*, 412.

66 Egan, "Libel in the Provinces." For the situation in Germany, see Rublack, "Angriffe auf die Ehre," 400.

Additionally, the rules of honour made it virtually impossible to critically discuss certain topics without transgressing into the personal at some point. In early modern Europe, every political conflict ultimately revolved around questions of reputation and honour.[67]

The surviving documents of the Offneyer case make it possible to reconstruct the conflict – or, rather, multiple conflicts – which ultimately led to the creation of the *Pasquillus*.[68] They show that the identification of the pamphlet as political falls short and excludes essential aspects of the conflict's context. The starting point of almost all the disputes was Offneyer's activity as a lawyer, which he took up in Zwickau in 1595 at the latest. In a complaint filed by the Council against Offneyer, twelve lawsuits conducted or supported by him were listed as relevant to the events of 1599.[69] These involved disputes of both personal and political nature with individual citizens but also with city officials and the town's Council. I will reconstruct three conflicts in some detail to give an example of how Offneyer strategically mixed personal and political conflicts.[70]

Johann Offneyer and Martin Fiedler against the Kratzbeer heirs: In 1592, the Zwickau City Council mortgaged the house of the citizen Martin Fiedler to the Council member Daniel Kratzbeer because of debts. Fiedler tacitly accepted this for several years until Johann Offneyer advised him to take legal action against the Kratzbeer family. After the City Council had tried to broker a compromise in vain, Fiedler and his lawyer Offneyer extended the suit to include the Council. In two judgments in 1599 and 1601, the Leipzig High Court [*Oberhofgericht*] ruled against the two men and also saddled Fiedler with the legal costs. Offneyer had pushed forward and may even have instigated the case of his impoverished client. After all, he was the one who had ensured that the litigation would be expanded and the Council's original verdict challenged. This exact pattern can be found in several unsuccessful trials that Offneyer was involved in – Offneyer simply regarded the City Council's decisions as unlawful. The Council was thus transformed from an authority which could arbitrate into a conflicting party. At this point, observers of the conflict already identified private and public spheres. In

67 On different concepts of honour in the pre-modern period, see Gerd Schwerhoff, "Early Modern Violence and the Honour Code: From Social Integration to Social Distinction?" *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés* 17 (2013): 31–4.

68 The extensive material on this case includes, among other things, trial records of the commissions appointed in the Pasquill and Injuria cases, interim verdicts of several previous trials, witness statements, interrogations of the accused, as well as transcripts of Council minutes and private correspondence. See StC, 30023 Amt Zwickau, Nr. 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 1177, 1178, 1270, and 1271.

69 Plaintiff's Indictment, 5 March 1600, StC, 30023 Amt Zwickau, Nr. 901, fols. 96b–105b.

70 The reconstruction is based on the following files: StC, 30023 Amt Zwickau, Nr. 901, 902, and 1177.

fact, one partisan of the Council complained about Offneyer recognising the Council's verdict as *privatum affectum* and not as lawful directive.[71]

Johann Offneyer against the Kratzbeer family: From the legal dispute about Fiedler's house and further cases, a real enmity developed between Offneyer and the Kratzbeer family. At the centre of the family was Michael Kratzbeer, who would later be defamed in the *Pasquillus.* During this conflict, Offneyer often resorted to slander, which seemed to go far beyond what was usual in early modern legal proceedings. In a statement of complaint by the Council, one of Offneyer's insults against Michael Kratzbeer was reproduced as follows: "If the honourable councillor does not abolish Michael Kratzbeer, who is not worthy of the council, then God himself will intervene. If Kratzbeer's character and deeds had been reported to the Elector of Saxony, he would not have confirmed him in office."[72]

The pattern of escalation already known from the Fiedler case becomes obvious again. Offneyer combined personal and political lines of conflict and involved both the City Council and the *Landesregierung* in the dispute between him and Kratzbeer by doubting the qualifications of Councillor Kratzbeer as well as the judgement of the City Council as a whole. This conflation of spheres was further reinforced by Kratzbeer's work as a member of the Council. This is exemplified by an episode which occurred sometime after the libel was posted: when Offneyer finally fell out with Fiedler, his former client brought a slander suit against Offneyer, Kratzbeer acted as judge. Offneyer not only resented the fact that Kratzbeer had accepted the slander suit in his capacity as judge, but also suspected that he had prompted Fiedler to file the suit in the first place. In this conflict, the shift from the factual level – which played out mainly in court – to the emotionally charged level of honour becomes particularly clear. In one instance, Offneyer accused Michael Kratzbeer's brother of lying in wait for him outside the city in order to shoot him in the back, from which only a misfire had prevented him.[73] The episode illustrates how the conflict affected the Kratzbeer family as a whole. On a different occasion, Offneyer physically attacked Michael Kratzbeer in the streets – on 10 January 1598, he apparently ambushed the Councillor in an alley, drew his weapon, and chased

71 Günter von Bünau's petition, 23 July 1597, StC, 30023 Amt Zwickau, Nr. 901, fols. 336–337.

72 "[. . .] do ein erbar Rath Michel Kratzbehrn als einen so des Rathsstandes nicht wirdig nicht abschaffen würde, so würde Gott selbst darein greiffen, dan do der landesfürst mit grund were berichtet worden, das kratzbehrs zustand vnd gelegenheit, so würde er ihm zu solch ambt nicht confirmiret haben," plaintiff's evidence, 10 October 1604, StC, 30023 Amt Zwickau, Nr. 902, fols. 109b–110a.

73 Offneyer's articles of inquisition, 9 February 1607, StC, 30023 Amt Zwickau, Nr. 1177, fol. 35a*.

him into a nearby pharmacy. Offneyer then waited for Kratzbeer in front of the building and challenged him to come out.[74]

Offneyer against Magdalena Berreuter and the Zwickau Council: The case of Magdalena Berreuter shows how closely Offneyer linked personal conflicts within the neighbourhood and fundamental disputes with the Council, which in turn were fought out on a personal level with *Bürgermeister* Faber. Berreuter too was initially represented by Offneyer in his function as a lawyer in a lawsuit against the Zwickau Council. When her husband died in 1598 and left her in financial need, she found employment in Offneyer's house and even nursed him when he fell ill with the plague. However, a quarrel arose and Offneyer eventually sued Berreuter for theft, insult, and – ironically – increasing the danger of plague. The town bailiff went to see Berreuter but did not immediately arrest her after she protested her innocence and gave her own version of events. Offneyer complained about what he saw as disgraceful inaction of the City Council in this matter and took action himself by chasing Berreuter and her children out of her house. He then demanded that the City Council arrest the expelled woman as he wanted to bring an accusation against her and promised the bail necessary for imprisonment. In its reply, however, the Council rejected the requested trial, stating that neither did they consider Offneyer to be sufficiently wealthy to grant bail, nor did they trust him to provide the necessary sureties. The capture of Magdalena Berreuter would be carried out *ex officio*, but only when the current wave of plague was over. For Offneyer, this meant an intense humiliation.

Around the time of the publication of the *Pasquillus*, Johann Offneyer sent a detailed letter to the Council. The letter shows how Offneyer combined personal and public concerns and how his factual accusations developed into a generalised criticism of the authorities, which was directed against the Council and presented Offneyer as an advocate of truth. Offneyer complained that the Council refused to act against the thief Magdalena Berreuter. In this conception, the Council – especially *Bürgermeister* Faber – was protecting harmful people, thus failing in its duty as a good magistrate and acting to the detriment of the community. The motive of revealing truths for the protection and benefit of the common good links Offneyer to Andreas Langener, who also justified his libels with the need to publicly denounce his opponent's transgressions in the interest of the common good.[75] Ulti-

74 Articles of inquisition, 10 November 1603, HStC, 30023 Amt Zwickau, Nr. 902, fol. 16b*. Offneyer confessed to the incident but claimed he had not drawn his weapon (87b*).

75 Offneyer to the commission, 5 May 1599, StC, 30023 Amt Zwickau, Nr. 901, fol. 314b: "Jch muß aber, beneben der ganntzen Stadt vnd ehrlichen Burgerschafft, Welches Jch aber Got Clage, mit schmerzen erfahren, daß man vber öffentlichen vberwiesenen, vnndt Crafft fürstlichen beuehlichs vberfurten diebinnen, Meineydigen, Ehrlosen vnndt verlegenen Leuten, Welches Jch nicht

mately, the path of the conflict once again led from the private two-party process directly to the public questioning of the city's regiment.

The interweaving of the conflicts Offneyer was involved in was ultimately also a result of the constellation in which persons acted in multiple roles and thus carried perceived violations of honour into different situations. The origin of many disputes was Offneyer's acting as a lawyer for his clients, from which his personal grievances arose, which he then attributed to the Council as a judicial authority. Furthermore, he encountered one councillor in particular, Michael Kratzbeer, in two different ways – on the one hand as an opponent of one of his clients in court, and on the other in a private, emotionally charged dispute.

The accusations Offneyer raised against the Council in the aforementioned letter of complaint clearly resemble those of the *Pasquillus* which had been posted on the Town Hall only a few weeks earlier. Offneyer was thus very likely the author of both. Thus, the whole conflict was not solely political but – to an ever greater extent – deeply personal. The individual personal disputes were removed from the sphere of private life through the reference to the common good, through the involvement of the City Council as a judicial authority, and due to the fact that some parties of the conflict were city officials.

Johann Offneyer's *Pasquillus* caused some concern in the Council. Whereas previous accusations and public insults by Offneyer – for example, in church, in the Town Hall, or in one of the town's cookshops – had angered the Council although eventually provoked hardly any reactions, an investigation was immediately initiated after the libel was discovered, and Offneyer was imprisoned. In addition to its symbolic power and its greater qualities of dissemination compared to purely oral forms of communication, the great threatening potential of the libel was, above all, its connection to protest and sedition. This connection is also reflected in legislation from the beginning of the early modern period.[76] The authorities of the sixteenth century often feared a conspiracy with relevant public participation behind libels

animo iniurandj, Sonndern, wie Gott vnnd Jhr herrn auch selber wisset, vmb Gottes ehre, warheit vnndt Gerechtigkeit willen, vnnd propter interesse totius Reipublicae, [. . .] vnd daß man darkegen mich vnndt anndere ehrliche leute gerne zu schannden machen wollte, wann man nur könnte [. . .]."

76 On the development of legislation against defamatory writings and censorship in the Holy Roman Empire and in Electoral Saxony, see Paul Buehler, "'So that the Common Man may see what kind of tree bears such harmful fruit': Defamation, Dissent, and Censorship in the Holy Roman Empire, ca. 1555–1648," (PhD diss., University of Arizona, 2015); Allyson Creasman, *Censorship and Civic Order in Reformation Germany, 1517–1648: Printed Poison & Evil Talk*, St Andrews Studies in Reformation History (Burlington: Ashgate, 2012). For an overview from a legal-historical perspective, see Günter Schmidt, *Libelli famosi—zur Bedeutung der Schmähschriften, Scheltbriefe, Schandgemälde und Pasquille in der deutschen Rechtsgeschichte* (Cologne: Kleikamp, 1985).

and other acts criticising the authorities.[77] Similarly, German historical research sometimes regards invective writings in the context of urban conflicts as a preliminary stage of violent sedition and the 'tip of the iceberg' of larger protest movements.[78] Following the problem of the separation of political and personal libels, this thesis must also be questioned – was there really a collective behind the majority of the surviving libels, ready to riot, or could an individual libeller also use the potential of anonymous writings to feign a voice of the people?[79]

Johann Offneyer's *Pasquillus* addressed these concerns of the authorities with razor sharp precision by invoking the typical elements of urban unrest at the time of crisis around 1600.[80] The libel paints a picture of the Council as arrogant and corrupt while the citizenry is addressed as a we-collective diametrically opposed to the Council. This polarisation of Council and citizenry was a fundamental pattern of urban conflict in the late Middle Ages.[81] The criticism of an increasingly oligarchic City Council often articulated by opposing factions is also echoed in the libel, which bewails the corruption and nepotism of some councillors.[82] The omnipresent issues of poor city finances and mismanagement, which usually caused outbreaks of unrest, are also taken up.[83] Finally, the confessional lines of conflict so characteristic of

77 Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture*, 308; Croft, "Libels," 285. Bellany even refers to libels as "literary resistance." See Bellany, "Libels in Action," 105. On the concerns of early modern authorities about unrest and loss of control, see Christopher Friedrichs, *The Early Modern City 1450–1750*, A History of Urban Society in Europe (London: Longman, 1995), 303–25. For a reaction of the *Landesregierung* of Electoral Saxony to libels, see Rose, "Schmähschriften und Öffentlichkeit."

78 Gestrich, "Schandzettel," 55–7, quote 55.

79 For scholarship on anonymous dialogue pamphlets, see Thomas Kaufmann, "Anonyme Flugschriften in der frühen Reformation," in *Die frühe Reformation in Deutschland als Umbruch: Wissenschaftliches Symposium des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte 1996*, eds. Stephen Buckwalter and Bernd Moeller, Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte, vol. 199 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1998), 191–267.

80 On the crisis of German cities around 1600, see Peter Blickle, "The European Crisis of the 1590s: The Situation in German Towns," in *The European Crisis of the 1590s: Essays in Comparative History*, ed. Peter Clark (London: Allen & Unwin, 1985), 135–56. For crises pertaining more generally to places elsewhere in Europe, see Geoffrey Parker, *Global Crisis: War, Climate Change and Catastrophe in the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

81 Peter Blickle, *Unruhen in der ständischen Gesellschaft: 1300–1800,* Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte, vol. 1 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2012), 45.

82 On the oligarchisation of city councils, see Ulrich Rosseaux, *Städte in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2006), 62–3. On the conflict-prone relationship between council and citizenry, see Wolfgang Mager, "Genossenschaft, Republikanismus und konsensgestütztes Ratsregiment: Zur Konzeptionalisierung der politischen Ordnung in der mittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen deutschen Stadt," in Schorn-Schütte, *Aspekte der politischen Kommunikation*, 13–122.

83 These kinds of concrete problems were often the cause of urban conflicts. See Blickle, *Unruhen*, 45.

riots in the sixteenth century are also included by making a reference to Calvinism and the widespread saying that lawyers are bad Christians [*Juristen, böse Christen*].[84]

But to what extent is there evidence that these widespread factors of urban unrest and revolt also played a role in Zwickau at the time of the posting of the *Pasquillus*? In fact, in the city's historiography, the second half of the sixteenth century is described as a time of economic decline – silver mining in Schneeberg, which was important for Zwickau's economy, subsided and social antagonisms in Zwickau increased. In addition, towards the end of the century there were several outbreaks of epidemic diseases and periods of drought which led to famines and sharply rising prices.[85] This situation resulted in concrete conflicts not only between the Council and parts of the citizenry over grain policy, but also between the Council and the guilds, which ultimately led to the imprisonment of several masters of the brewers' and butchers' guilds.[86] A tax on beer and wine introduced in the years before 1599 had apparently caused particular displeasure, which the Council regarded as a potential cause of rebellion.[87] Finally, denominational disputes had also arisen in 1590/91 when the Council and the citizenry fell out in a dispute over the Reformed faith and orthodox Lutheranism.[88]

The Council was worried about the rebellious potential of its citizens and feared that they would become recalcitrant and no longer show the necessary respect. Offneyer had hitherto been a *res mali exempli* to the citizenry and had taken much away from the *autoritati nostrae reipublicae*, as the council complained. The common good was also cited again: in a petition to the Elector, it was requested that Offneyer be severely punished "for the sake of the entire city's benefit and welfare."[89] Although the Council may have feared a rebellion, it did

84 In the *Pasquillus,* it says: "Schafft ab Caluine vnd Juristen/vnd sazt dagegen fromme Christen." On the proverb, see Michael Stolleis, "Juristenbeschimpfung, oder: Juristen, böse Christen," in *Politik—Bildung—Religion: Hans Maier zum 65. Geburtstag,* eds. Theo Stammen, Heinrich Oberreuter, and Paul Mikat (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1996), 163–70.

85 The most comprehensive study on early modern Zwickau is still Susan Karant-Nunn's *Zwickau in Transition, 1500–1547: The Reformation as an Agent of Change* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1987). For a summary account, see Helmut Bräuer, "Zwickau vom Ausgang des Spätmittelalters bis zum Beginn des 17. Jahrhunderts," in *Chronik Zwickau, Band 1: Von den Anfängen bis zum 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Kulturamt der Stadt Zwickau (Zwickau: Sandstein Kommunikation, 2017), 84–117. More information about the plague can be found in Michael Löffler and Norbert Peschke, *Chronik der Stadt Zwickau* (Zwickau: Förster & Börries, 1993), 49 and Emil Herzog, *Chronik der Kreisstadt Zwickau. Zweiter Teil: Jahresgeschichte* (Zwickau: Zueckler, 1845), 358.

86 Herzog, *Chronik*, 361–3, 367.

87 StC, 30023 Amt Zwickau, Nr. 901, fol. 54a.

88 Bräuer, "Zwickau," 101–2.

89 "[. . .] der ganntzen gemeinen stadt nutzes vndt wolfart willen," plaintiff's indictment, 5 March 1600, StC, 30023 Amt Zwickau, Nr. 901, fols. 108b–109a.

not style Offneyer as the mouthpiece of a larger group of citizens, but rather as a troublemaker acting out of selfish motives, especially greed. In view of the course of the conflict outlined above, it accused him of sowing discord between the parties in order to obtain work for himself as a lawyer. He was, in this perspective, not interested in the well-being of his clients. On the contrary, his clients were always in danger of ending up on the begging pole if things did not go according to Offneyer's plans.

The question arises whether the Council was correct in its assessment. Did Johann Offneyer act out of self-centred motives and stage as public what was actually a private problem? Or was he a representative of at least parts of the citizenry and thus represented public interests? As I have shown, there are indications that the relationship between the Council and parts of the citizenry in Zwickau was tense around 1600, which increased the threatening potential of the libel. However, there is no indication in the extensive documents that Offneyer had received any support or encouragement from the ranks of the citizens. This ambiguity of the ostensibly political libel, the fact that the question of whether it was a medium of individual or collective protest could not and cannot be answered with certainty neither by the contemporaries nor by modern-day historians, is characteristic of such writings. One cannot simply assume that libels were always an expression of public opinion, that they formed the tip of the iceberg of political protest movements, and that they were part of an escalation dynamic that led to physical violence.[90]

This insight also casts a critical light on the connection between libels and communally executed shaming rituals.[91] At first glance, the normative reference, the function of social sanctioning through disparagement, the common satirical and comic elements, and the addressing of a public connect both phenomena. Pauline Croft, for example, compares libels to the custom of charivaris, in which masked members of the community gathered in front of the house of the person being sanctioned and played "rough music."[92] Croft attributes a special position

90 Christian Jouhaud points in a similar direction when he notes that a core of the libels was to manipulatively convince the recipients of a closed public opinion. See Christian Jouhaud, "Les libelles en France au XVIIe siècle: action et publication," *Cahiers d'histoire: Revue d'histoire critique* 90/91 (2003): 33–45.

91 For example, see Martin Ingram, "Ridings, Rough Music and Mocking Rhymes in Early Modern England," in *Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. Barry Reay (London: Routledge, 1988), 166–97.

92 Croft, "Libels," 283. On the charivari, see Natalie Zemon Davis, "The Reasons of Misrule: Youth Groups and Charivaris in Sixteenth-Century France," *Past & Present* 50 (1971): 41–75; Edward Thompson, "'Rough Music': Le Charivari anglais," *Annales: Economies, sociétés, civilisations* 27 (1972): 285–312. For the German-speaking world, see Norbert Schindler, *Widerspenstige Leute: Studien zur Volkskultur in der frühen Neuzeit* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1992); Ernst Hinrichs, "'Charivari' und

to the libels as they were much easier to organise than charivari. In view of cases such as Offneyer's, however, the difference is more fundamental – it seems to be a characteristic of libels to be able to feign the participation of larger groups of the local community and thus an existing public interest. In contrast, charivaris and comparable rituals required bigger groups of participants and did not allow for complete anonymity. Although participants in shaming rituals could hide behind masks and strong ritualisation, they had to be physically present and were thus tangible and never really anonymous.

The anonymity offered by libels not only provided protection from the reactions of the persons who had been defamed and the authorities, but also constituted, according to Thomas Kaufmann, "a literarily targeted means of articulating the claim to general truth representation in the *Öffentlichkeit*, or rather of creating this '*Öffentlichkeit*' [. . .] in the first place."[93] Unlike charivaris which were by nature a means of collective sanctioning, libels thus allowed individuals to stage a *vox populi* while concealing individual, personal motives behind a façade of the common good.[94] Only if they were received appropriately by the public – namely, if the libels were actually used for collective ridicule – did they fulfil a function comparable to that of charivari.

7.4 Conclusion

The three cases of libelling discussed in this essay illustrate that searching for privacy in early modern societies can be productive. However, as a result of the ambiguity of the term itself and its use in everyday language, it is important to clearly state which dimensions of privacy are being discussed. In this paper, the focus was on accessibility and interest. With regard to accessibility, it became clear that the pre-modern era, especially the enclosed communication situation of the early modern city, left little room for privacy precisely because of the great importance of spatially and socially transgressive forms of communication such as rumour and gossip. Even homes as seemingly private spaces can be considered at least partly public, as Eibach's concept of the 'Open House' shows. Particularly

Rügebrauchtum in Deutschland: Forschungsstand und Forschungsaufgaben," in *Brauchforschung*, ed. Martin Scharfe, Wege der Forschung, vol. 627 (Darmstadt: WBG, 1991), 430–63.

93 "[. . .] ein literarisch gezielt eingesetztes Mittel, um den Anspruch auf allgemeine Wahrheitsrepräsentanz im Raum der Öffentlichkeit zu artikulieren, beziehungsweise diese ‚Öffentlichkeit' [. . .] allererst zu schaffen." See Kaufmann, "Anonyme Flugschriften," 243.

94 Peter Burke, *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy: Essays on Perception and Communication* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 107–8.

explosive, possibly taboo topics were disseminated quickly and almost inevitably became public. The libel cases also show that contemporaries knew which strategies to use to publicly spread their messages.

When it comes to the dimension of interest, privacy means that events remain limited in their effects to persons who directly participate in them. The assessment of certain interactions as private is therefore always variable and subjective. However, it can be stated that there were hardly any generally accepted areas of privacy in the early modern period as all conflicts were potentially of interest to the community.

Writings such as the *Pasquillus* claimed to address public interests. However, the very same *Pasquillus* was also based on many inter-individual and – in the given sense – private disputes. This blending of private and political disputes – or, rather, the latter's distinctly private dimension, which is particularly pronounced in Johann Offneyer's doings – can be regarded as characteristic of the conflict culture of the early modern period. The interlocking of the private and the public nature of conflicts can be traced back to the importance of honour, the lack of separation between different social roles, and the importance of the common good as a figure of argumentation and legitimation.[95]

The staging of public interest – that is, denying any dimension of privacy of a given grievance – promised advantages for the libellers in the form of attention and legitimation. Contemporaries distinguished between different spheres and were partly aware of their significance for conflict dynamics. The persons attacked in the libels feared the loss of privacy in the sense of both accessibility and interest, since the spread of the disparagement in the network of the public sphere and the framing of those affected as malign to society could result in considerable damage to their reputation. Despite this, it is possible to assign a rough place on the spectrum between private and political to most cases of libel in early modern Europe. It is therefore useful to speak of political or private libel and thus define a specific sphere of influence of the medium in question. However, differentiation is necessary to emphasise the complexity of the underlying conflicts and avoid hasty conclusions.

95 Egan reaches similar conclusions concerning the intertwined roles of libelled persons as private citizens and officeholders. See Egan, "Libel in the Provinces."

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Carpzov, Benedict. *Practicae Novae Imperialis Saxonicae Rerum Criminalium Pars II*. Wittenberg, 1646.
Damhouder, Joos de. *Praxis rerum criminalium Gründlicher Bericht und anweisung, Welcher massen in Rechtfärtigung Peinlicher sachen, nach gemeynen beschribenen Rechten vor und in Gerichten ordentlich zuhandeln*. Frankfurt, 1571.
Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden (SächsStA-D), 10024 Geheimer Rat (Geheimes Archiv), Loc. 09710/23.
SächsStA-D, 10024 Geheimer Rat (Geheimes Archiv), Loc. 09710/24.
SächsStA-D, 10024 Geheimer Rat (Geheimes Archiv), Loc. 09710/25.
SächsStA-D, 10024 Geheimer Rat (Geheimes Archiv), Loc. 09710/27.
SächsStA-D, 10036 Finanzarchiv, Loc. 12034/4.
SächsStA-D, 10036 Finanzarchiv, Loc. 12034/7.
SächsStA-D, 10036 Finanzarchiv, Loc. 12034/11.
Schmidt, Tobias. *Chronica Cygnea. Oder Beschreibung Der sehr alten/Löblichen/und CHurfürstlichen Stadt ZWICKAU/[. . .]*. Zwickau, 1656.
Staatsarchiv Chemnitz (StC), 30023 Amt Zwickau, Nr. 901.
StC, 30023 Amt Zwickau, Nr. 902.
StC, 30023 Amt Zwickau, Nr. 903.
StC, 30023 Amt Zwickau, Nr. 904.
StC, 30023 Amt Zwickau, Nr. 905.
StC, 30023 Amt Zwickau, Nr. 1177.
StC, 30023 Amt Zwickau, Nr. 1178.
StC, 30023 Amt Zwickau, Nr. 1270.
StC, 30023 Amt Zwickau, Nr. 1271.

Secondary Literature

Arndt, Johannes. *Herrschaftskontrolle durch Öffentlichkeit: Die publizistische Darstellung politischer Konflikte im Heiligen Römischen Reich 1648–1750*. Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Europäische Geschichte Mainz. Vol. 224. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013.
Bellany, Alastair. “Libels in Action: Ritual, Subversion and the English Literary Underground.” In *The Politics of the Excluded, c. 1500–1850*, edited by Tim Harris, 99–124. Oxford: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001.
Bellingradt, Daniel, and Massimo Rospocher. “A History of Early Modern Communication.” In *A History of Early Modern Communication: German and Italian Historiographical Perspectives*, edited by Daniel Bellingradt and Massimo Rospocher, 7–22. Yearbook of the Italian-German Historical Institute in Trento. Vol. 45. Bologna: Società editrice il Mulino, 2019.
Blaschke, Karlheinz. “Dynastie – Regierung – Schloss.” In *Geschichte der Stadt Dresden. Band 1: Von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des Dreißigjährigen Krieges*, edited by Karlheinz Blaschke and Uwe John, 420–31. Stuttgart: Theiss, 2005.

Blickle, Peter. “Der Gemeine Nutzen: Ein kommunaler Wert und seine politische Karriere.” In *Gemeinwohl und Gemeinsinn: historische Semantiken politischer Leitbegriffe*, edited by Herfried Münkler and Harald Bluhm, 85–108. Forschungsberichte der interdisziplinären Arbeitsgruppe “Gemeinwohl und Gemeinsinn” der Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Vol. 1. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001.

Blickle, Peter. “The European Crisis of the 1590s: The Situation in German Towns.” In *The European Crisis of the 1590s: Essays in Comparative History*, edited by Peter Clark, 135–56. London: Allen & Unwin, 1985.

Blickle, Peter. *Unruhen in der ständischen Gesellschaft: 1300–1800*. Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte. Vol. 1. Munich: Oldenbourg, 2012.

Bräuer, Helmut. “Zwickau vom Ausgang des Spätmittelalters bis zum Beginn des 17. Jahrhunderts.” In *Chronik Zwickau, Band 1*: *Von den Anfängen bis zum 18. Jahrhundert*, edited by Kulturamt der Stadt Zwickau, 84–117. Zwickau: Sandstein Kommunikation, 2017.

Brunner, Karl. “Inszenierung und Öffentlichkeit in und um Kirchen im Mittelalter.” In *Ein Thema – zwei Perspektiven: Juden und Christen in Mittelalter und Frühneuzeit*, edited by Eveline Brugger and Birgit Wiedl, 187–94. Innsbruck: Studien-Verlag, 2007.

Buehler, Paul. “‘So that the Common Man may see what kind of tree bears such harmful fruit’: Defamation, Dissent, and Censorship in the Holy Roman Empire, ca. 1555–1648.” PhD diss., University of Arizona, 2015.

Burke, Peter. *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy: Essays on Perception and Communication*. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Creasman, Allyson. *Censorship and Civic Order in Reformation Germany, 1517–1648: Printed Poison & Evil Talk*. St Andrews Studies in Reformation History. Burlington: Ashgate, 2012.

Croft, Pauline. “Libels, Popular Literacy and Public Opinion in Early Modern England.” *Historical Research* 68 (1995): 266–85.

Croft, Pauline. “The Reputation of Robert Cecil: Libels, Political Opinion and Popular Awareness in the Early Seventeenth Century.” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 1 (1991): 43–69.

Davis, Natalie Zemon. “The Reasons of Misrule: Youth Groups and Charivaris in Sixteenth-Century France.” *Past & Present* 50 (1971): 41–75.

Ebruy, Marion. “Die Verwaltung der Grafschaft Mansfeld durch Oberaufseher des Kurfürstentums Sachsen von der Sequestration der Grafschaft Mansfeld 1570 bis zum Aussterben des Grafengeschlechts 1780: Die Rolle und Aufgabe der Oberaufseher als Regierungsbevollmächtigte der Kurfürsten von Sachsen in der Grafschaft Mansfeld.” PhD diss., University of Leipzig, 1991.

Egan, Clare. “Libel in the Provinces: Disinformation and ‘Disreputation’ in Early Modern England.” *Past & Present* 257 (2022): 75–110.

Eibach, Joachim. “Das offene Haus: Kommunikative Praxis im sozialen Nahraum der europäischen Frühen Neuzeit.” *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 38 (2011): 621–64.

Eibach, Joachim. “From Open House to Privacy? Domestic Life from the Perspective of Diaries.” In *The Routledge History of the Domestic Sphere in Europe: 16th to 19th Century*, edited by Joachim Eibach and Margareth Lanzinger, 347–63. London & New York: Routledge, 2020.

Fox, Adam. *Oral and Literate Culture in England 1500–1700*. Oxford Studies in Social History. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Friedrichs, Christopher. *The Early Modern City 1450–1750*. A History of Urban Society in Europe. London: Longman, 1995.

Gestrich, Andreas. “Schandzettel gegen die Obrigkeit: Pasquillen als Mittel der Obrigkeitskritik in der Frühen Neuzeit.” In *Südwestdeutschland – die Wiege der deutschen Demokratie*, edited by Otto Borst, 43–57. Tübingen: Silberburg-Verlag, 1997.

Gestrich, Andreas. “The Public Sphere and the Habermas Debate.” *German History* 24 (2006): 413–30.

Grüne, Niels. “‘Und sie wissen nicht, was es ist’: Ansätze und Blickpunkte historischer Korruptionsforschung.” In *Korruption: Historische Annäherungen an eine Grundfigur politischer Kommunikation*, edited by Niels Grüne and Simona Slanicka, 11–34. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010.

Grüne, Niels. “Anfechtung und Legitimation: Beobachtungen zum Vergleich politischer Korruptionsdebatten in der Frühen Neuzeit.” In Grüne and Slanicka, *Korruption*, 409–25.

Habermas, Jürgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Cambridge: Polity, 1989.

Herzog, Emil. *Chronik der Kreisstadt Zwickau. Zweiter Teil: Jahresgeschichte*. Zwickau: Zueckler, 1845.

Hinrichs, Ernst. “‘Charivari’ und Rügebrauchtum in Deutschland: Forschungsstand und Forschungsaufgaben.” In *Brauchforschung*, edited by Martin Scharfe, 430–63. Wege der Forschung. Vol. 627. Darmstadt: WBG, 1991.

Hoffmann, Philipp. “Rechtmäßiges Klagen oder Rebellion? Konflikte um die Ordnung politischer Kommunikation im frühneuzeitlichen Leipzig.” In *Interaktion und Herrschaft: Die Politik der frühneuzeitlichen Stadt*, edited by Rudolf Schlögl, 309–56. Historische Kulturwissenschaft. Vol. 5. Constance: Konstanz University Press, 2004.

Hohkamp, Michaela. “Klatsch.” In *Enzyklopädie der Neuzeit online*, edited by Friedrich Jaeger. https://doi.org/10.1163/2352-0248_edn_COM_293111.

Holenstein, André. “Normen und Praktiken der Anzeige in der Markgrafschaft Baden-Durlach in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts.” In *Der Staatsbürger als Spitzel: Denunziation während des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts aus europäischer Perspektive*, edited by Michaela Hohkamp and Claudia Ulbrich, 111–146. Deutsch-Französische Kulturbibliothek. Vol. 19. Leipzig: Universitätsverlag, 2001.

Ingram, Martin. “Ridings, Rough Music and Mocking Rhymes in Early Modern England.” In *Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century England*, edited by Barry Reay, 166–97. London: Routledge, 1988.

Iseli, Andrea. *Gute Policey: Öffentliche Ordnung in der Frühen Neuzeit*. Stuttgart: Ulmer, 2009.

Jouhaud, Christian. “Les libelles en France au XVIIe siècle: action et publication.” *Cahiers d’histoire: Revue d’histoire critique* 90/91 (2003): 33–45.

Kanzler, Katja. “Invective Form in Popular Media Culture: Genre – Mode – Affordance.” *Kulturwissenschaftliche Zeitschrift* 6 (2021): 26–36.

Karant-Nunn, Susan. *Zwickau in Transition, 1500–1547: The Reformation as an Agent of Change*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1987.

Kaufmann, Thomas. “Anonyme Flugschriften in der frühen Reformation.” In *Die frühe Reformation in Deutschland als Umbruch: Wissenschaftliches Symposium des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte 1996*, edited by Stephen Buckwalter and Bernd Moeller, 191–267. Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte. Vol. 199. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1998.

Kerr, Heather, and Claire Walker, eds. *‘Fama’ and her Sisters: Gossip and Rumour in Early Modern Europe*. Early European Research. Vol. 7. Turnhout: Brepols, 2015.

Klein, Thomas. *Der Kampf um die zweite Reformation in Kursachsen 1586–1591*. Mitteldeutsche Forschungen. Vol. 25. Cologne: Böhlau, 1962.

Korpiola, Mia. “Early Modern Swedish Law and Privacy: A Legal Right in Embryo.” In *Early Modern Privacy: Sources and Approaches*, edited by Michaël Green, Lars Cyril Nørgaard, and Mette Birkedal Bruun, 135–155. Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2022.

Krischer, André. “Rituale und politische Öffentlichkeit in der Alten Stadt.” In *Stadt und Öffentlichkeit in der Frühen Neuzeit*, edited by Gerd Schwerhoff, 125–158. Städteforschung. Vol. 83. Cologne: Böhlau, 2011.

Kuhn, Christian. “Ballads, Libels, and Songs.” In *The Handbook of Medieval Studies: Terms – Methods – Trends*, edited by Albrecht Classen, 1618–33. Vol. 2. Berlin & Boston: De Gruyter, 2010.

Kuhn, Christian. “Urban Laughter as a ‘Counter-Public’ Sphere in Augsburg: The Case of the City Mayor, Jakob Herbrot (1490/95–1564).” In *Humour and Social Protest*, edited by Marjolein ‘t Hart and Dennis Bos, 77–93. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Lentz, Matthias. *Konflikt, Ehre, Ordnung: Untersuchungen zu den Schmähbriefen und Schandbilder des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit (ca. 1350 bis 1600)*. Veröffentlichungen der historischen Kommission für Niedersachsen und Bremen. Vol. 217. Hanover: Hahn, 2004.

Löffler, Michael, and Norbert Peschke. *Chronik der Stadt Zwickau*. Zwickau: Förster & Börries, 1993.

Maes, Yanick. “Catilina.” In *Historische Gestalten der Antike: Rezeption in Literatur, Kunst und Musik*, edited by Peter von Möllendorf, Annette Simonis, and Linda Simonis, 247–258. Der Neue Pauly. Supplemente 8. Stuttgart: Metzler, 2013.

Mager, Wolfgang. “Genossenschaft, Republikanismus und konsensgestütztes Ratsregiment: Zur Konzeptionalisierung der politischen Ordnung in der mittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen deutschen Stadt.” In *Aspekte der politischen Kommunikation im Europa des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*, edited by Luise Schorn-Schütte, 13–122. Munich: Oldenbourg, 2004.

May, Steven, and Alan Bryson. *Verse Libel in Renaissance England and Scotland*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Mierau, Heike Johanna. “Fama als Mittel zur Herstellung von Öffentlichkeit und Gemeinwohl in der Zeit des Konziliarismus.” In *Politische Öffentlichkeit im Spätmittelalter*, edited by Martin Kintzinger, 237–86. Vorträge und Forschungen. Vol. 75. Ostfildern: Thorbecke, 2011.

Moos, Peter von. “Die Begriffe ‘öffentlich’ und ‘privat’ in der Geschichte und bei den Historikern.” *Saeculum* 49 (1998): 161–93.

Münkler, Marina. “Einige Grundüberlegungen zum Konzept und zur Reichweite invektiver Gattungen.” *Kulturwissenschaftliche Zeitschrift* 6 (2021): 1–9.

Oelsner, Norbert. “Das Dresdner Residenzschloss in der frühen Neuzeit.” In Blaschke and John, *Geschichte der Stadt Dresden*, 432–46.

Parker, Geoffrey. *Global Crisis: War, Climate Change and Catastrophe in the Seventeenth Century*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013.

Philips, E. J. “Catiline’s Conspiracy.” *Historia: Zeitschrift für alte Geschichte* 25 (1976): 441–8.

Rau, Susanne. “Orte – Akteure – Netzwerke: Zur Konstitution öffentlicher Räume in einer frühneuzeitlichen Fernhandelsstadt.” In Schwerhoff, *Stadt und Öffentlichkeit*, 39–64.

Rose, Maximilian. “‘Herr Niemand’ und der Kurfürst von Sachsen: Schmähschriften und Öffentlichkeit im 16. Jahrhundert – ein Fallbeispiel.” *Neues Archiv für Sächsische Geschichte* 92 (2021): 63–96.

Rosseaux, Ulrich. *Städte in der Frühen Neuzeit*. Darmstadt: WBG, 2006.

Rublack, Ulinka. “Anschläge auf die Ehre: Schmähschriften und -Zeichen in der städtischen Kultur des Ancien Régime.” In *Verletzte Ehre: Ehrkonflikte in Gesellschaften des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit*, edited by Klaus Schreiner and Gerd Schwerhoff, 381–411. Cologne: Böhlau, 1995.

Rublack, Ulinka. *Magd, Metz’ oder Mörderin: Frauen vor frühneuzeitlichen Gerichten*. Frankfurt: Fischer, 1998. Published in English as *The Crimes of Women in Early Modern Germany*. Oxford Studies in Social History. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999.

Schindler, Norbert. *Widerspenstige Leute: Studien zur Volkskultur in der frühen Neuzeit*. Frankfurt: Fischer, 1992.

Schmidt, Günter. *Libelli famosi – zur Bedeutung der Schmähschriften, Scheltbriefe, Schandgemälde und Pasquille in der deutschen Rechtsgeschichte*. Cologne: Kleikamp, 1985.

Schorn-Schütte, Luise. "Obrigkeitskritik und Widerstandsrecht. Die 'politica christiana' als Legitimitätsgrundlage." In Schorn-Schütte, *Aspekte der politischen Kommunikation*, 195–232.

Schulze, Winfried. "Vom Gemeinnutz zum Eigennutz: Über den Normenwandel in der ständischen Gesellschaft der Frühen Neuzeit." *Historische Zeitschrift* 243 (1986): 591–626.

Schwerhoff, Gerd. "Das Pasquill im frühneuzeitlichen Deutschland: Ein Kommunikationsmedium zwischen Schmähung und Kritik." *Kulturwissenschaftliche Zeitschrift* 6 (2021): 79–94.

Schwerhoff, Gerd. "Early Modern Violence and the Honour Code: From Social Integration to Social Distinction?" *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés* 17 (2013): 27–46.

Schwerhoff, Gerd. "Öffentliche Räume und politische Kultur in der frühneuzeitlichen Stadt: Eine Skizze am Beispiel der Reichsstadt Köln." In Schlögl, *Interaktion und Herrschaft*, 113–136.

Schwerhoff, Gerd. "Sakralitätsmanagement: Zur Analyse religiöser Räume im späten Mittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit." In *Topographie des Sakralen: Religion und Raumordnung in der Vormoderne*, edited by Gerd Schwerhoff and Susanne Rau, 38–72. Munich & Hamburg: Dölling und Galitz, 2008.

Schwerhoff, Gerd. "Spaces, Places, and the Historians: A Comment from a German Perspective." *History and Theory* 52 (2013): 420–32.

Scott, Anthony. "The Actual Malice of the Johnny Depp Trial." *The New York Times*. 2 June 2022. https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/02/arts/depp-heard-trial-malice.html. Accessed 28 June 2024.

Sennefeld, Karin. "Citizenship and the Political Landscape of Libelling in Stockholm, c. 1720–70." *Social History* 33 (2008): 146–63.

Siegemund, Jan. "'unrechtliche peinliche schmehung oder dem gemeinen nutz nuetzlich?' Eine Fallstudie zur Normenkonkurrenz im Schmähschriftprozess des 16. Jahrhunderts." *Das Mittelalter* 25 (2020): 135–49.

Siegemund, Jan. *Öffentlichkeit als Waffe: Schmähschriften als Mittel des Konfliktaustrag in Kursachsen in der zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts*. Konflikte und Kultur–Historische Perspektiven. Vol. 41. Constance & Munich: UVK Verlag, 2024.

Stolleis, Michael. "Juristenbeschimpfung, oder: Juristen, böse Christen." In *Politik – Bildung – Religion: Hans Maier zum 65. Geburtstag*, edited by Theo Stammen, Heinrich Oberreuter, and Paul Mikat, 163–70. Paderborn: Schöningh, 1996.

Thompson, Edward. "'Rough Music': Le Charivari anglais." *Annales : Economies, sociétés, civilisations* 27 (1972): 285–312.

Thum, Bernd. "Öffentlich-Machen, Öffentlichkeit, Recht: Zu den Grundlagen und Verfahren der politischen Publizistik im Spätmittelalter (mit Überlegungen zur sog. 'Rechtssprache')." *Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik* 10 (1980): 12–64.

Vincent, David. *Privacy: A Short History*. Cambridge: Polity, 2016.

Würgler, Andreas. *Unruhen und Öffentlichkeit: Städtische und ländliche Protestbewegungen im 18. Jahrhundert*. Frühneuzeit-Forschungen. Vol. 1. Tübingen: bibliotheca academica Verlag, 1995.

Paolo Astorri

Private Marriages: A Case from the *Consultationes Constitutionum Saxonicarum* (1599–1601)

Throughout the medieval and early modern period, the practice of clandestine marriages was widespread. Although the notion of clandestine marriage was ambiguous and not uniform, in general, a clandestine marriage was a marriage contracted in the absence of witnesses and other formalities required by canon law.[1] The church discouraged such marriages, but at the same time, it considered them as legally binding. Indeed, for canon law, a valid marriage only required an expression of free will by the couple.[2] As marriage had notable economic, social, and political consequences, families exercised considerable pressure on the couples. In order to avoid such

1 See Beatrice Gottlieb, "The Meaning of Clandestine Marriage," in *Family and Sexuality in French History*, eds. Robert Wheaton and Tamara K. Hareven (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), 49–73. See also A. J. Finch, "Parental Authority and the Problem of Clandestine Marriage in the Later Middle Ages," *Law and History Review* 8 no. 2 (1990): 189–204; José Sánchez-Arcilla-Bernal, "La formación del vinculo y los matrimonios clandestinos en la Baja Edad Media," *Cuadernos de Historia del Derecho* 17 (2010): 7–47. It is important to stress that the term "clandestine marriage" could mean different things. For example, in several Italian statutes the term "clandestine marriage" was used to identify a marriage without parental consent. See Dean Trevor, "A Regional Cluster? Italian Secular Laws on Abduction, Forced and Clandestine Marriage (Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries)," in *Regional variations in matrimonial law and custom in Europe, 1150–1600*, ed. Mia Korpiola (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 147–159, esp. 153–154. In German episcopal synods, the word "clandestine" was used to mean absence of the banns, in church courts, it meant the absence of witnesses, and in secular courts, it also meant the absence of parental approval. See Michael Schröter, *"Wo Zwei zusammenkommen in rechter Ehe . . ." Sozio- und psychogenetische Studien über Eheschliessungsvorgänge vom 12. bis 15. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1985), 322. For the opinion of the canonists, see Luigi Nuzzo, "Il matrimonio clandestine nella dottrina canonistica del basso medioevo," in *Studia et Documenta Historiae et Iuris* 64: 1998, 351–396.

2 The bibliography on medieval marriage, especially on the doctrine of consent as it was reshaped by Pope Alexander III (1159–1181), is abundant. For some notable examples, see James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 331–7; Charles Donahue, Jr., *Law, Marriage, and Society in the later Middle Ages: Arguments About Marriage in Five Courts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 16–7; Philip L. Reynolds, *How Marriage Became One of the Sacraments: The Sacramental Theology*

Note: Centre for Privacy Studies, University of Copenhagen. This research has been supported by the Danish National Research Foundation (DNRF138).

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111264776-008

family bonds, many couples turned to clandestine marriages. Clandestine marriages were nonetheless dangerous – if one of the spouses repented and wanted to marry someone else, she or he could succeed, because the first clandestine marriage was difficult to prove. In many cases, a man seduced a woman by promising to marry her, the couple had sexual intercourse, but the man subsequently disappeared or refused to fulfill his obligations, while the woman lost her virginity or even became pregnant.[3]

The sixteenth-century Lutheran Reformation increased repression against clandestine marriages. The Reformers allied with political and secular authorities and held that parental consent was a necessary requirement imposed by divine law. Canon law recognised the validity of clandestine marriages and therefore it had to be abrogated.[4] The validity of a marriage now depended on the consent of the mother and the father as a divine law requirement. Marriage was no longer considered as a sacrament under church jurisdiction, but a public institution of the earthly kingdom. Therefore, in the lands where the Reformation was successful, marriage received a new regulation embedded in marriage and church ordinances issued by local authorities.[5]

Despite theological and legal condemnation, clandestine marriages continued to be a widespread practice. Many reasons drove young couples to marry against the will of their parents: they wanted to escape family ties and affirm their choice in the intimate, personal sphere of marriage. This desire might be considered as

of Marriage from its Medieval Origins to the Council of Trent (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 155–288.

3 Men who wanted to have sex with a woman outside marriage often deliberately used this tactic. See, for instance, Silvana Seidel Menchi, "Percorsi variegati, percorsi obbligati: Elogio del matrimonio pre-tridentino," in *Matrimoni in dubbio: Unioni controverse e nozze clandestine in Italia dal XIV al XVIII secolo*, eds. Silvana Seidel Menchi and Diego Quaglioni (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002), 43–5.

4 This was not a complete novelty as in some German ecclesiastical synods, marriages between minors against the will of their parents were punished with excommunication and disinheritance. See Joel F. Harrington, *Reordering Marriage and Society in Reformation Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 179. Several Italian statutes also established that the children who married against the will of their parents had to be disinherited. See Giovanni Chiodi and Wim Decock, "Disinheritance of Children for Lack of Parental Consent to the Marriage in the Ius Commune and Early Modern Scholastic Traditions," in *Succession Law, Practice and Society in Europe Across the Centuries*, ed. Maria Gigliola di Renzo Villata (Cham: Springer, 2018), 271–335. For this problem in Spain, see Federico R. Aznar Gil, "El consentimiento paterno o familiar para el matrimonio en la legislación eclesiástica ibérica bajomedieval (ss. XII–XVI)," in *Rivista internazionale di diritto comune*, 6 (1995), 127–251.

5 Henning P. Jürgens, "Eheordnungen—Ordnungen für die Ehe als 'weltlich Ding'," in *Gute Ordnung: Ordnungsmodelle und Ordnungsvorstellungen in der Reformationszeit*, eds. Irene Dingel and Armin Kohnle (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2014), 221–37.

an expression of privacy, meant here as absence of intrusion from parents and ecclesiastical or secular authorities.[6] In the perspective of the authorities, such marriages were indeed clandestine and in violation of the law, but for the young couples, those marriages represented a way to express their freedom and sexual desire without the limitations imposed by the social, political, and economic context. To investigate this aspect, this chapter focuses on the particular case of marriages contracted in absence of parental consent, using an oath, a prayer, or another form of devotion to sanctify the union. Here we can look at what happens at the threshold of conscience (a place where oaths cannot be annulled) and public life (church ceremonies, ranks in society, public penance).

This case was very popular in the *Concistoria*, the ecclesiastical tribunals of the Reformation. Moreover, it was discussed in the first volume of the *Consultationes Constitutionum Saxonicarum*, a collection of questions discussed by the jurists of the law faculties of Wittenberg and Leipzig. The objective of this chapter is to show how jurists sought to ensure public control of private matters of conscience. Was the new regulation of clandestine marriages strict or did it admit exceptions? Was there any space left for the couple to marry clandestinely against the will of their parents? To answer these questions, this article is divided into three sections. After this introductory segment, the second section outlines the main changes to marriage law devised by the Reformers, focusing especially on the opinion of particular jurists and theologians with regard to the necessity of parental consent. The third section analyses the case of a marriage contracted in absence of parental consent, using an oath, a prayer, or another form of devotion, as discussed in the first volume of the *Consultationes*. Finally, the conclusion addresses what these discussions reveal about the room for privacy in marriage in early modern Saxony.

8.1 The Necessity of Parental Consent

Before delving into the case of a marriage contracted by an oath as a replacement of parental consent, we require a bit of context, especially on the necessity of pa-

6 Privacy is a multifaceted concept. Far from delving into definitions, here I call "privacy" the freedom to decide autonomously on fundamental, existential matters. For an overview of the meaning of "privacy", see Beate Roessler, *The Value of Privacy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), 4–10. More recent works include Bert-Jaap Koops et al., "A Typology of Privacy," in *University of Pennsylvania Journal of International Law* 38(2) – 2017, 483–575; Bart van der Sloot and Aviva de Groot, eds., *The Handbook of Privacy Studies: An Interdisciplinary Introduction* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018). For an historical perspective, see Michaël Green, Lars Cyril Nørgaard and Mette Birkedal Bruun, *Early Modern Privacy: Sources and Approaches* (Leiden: Brill, 2022).

rental consent. With the Lutheran Reformation, marriage underwent fundamental changes regarding its nature, formation, impediments, as well as the introduction of divorce.[7] It was no longer a sacrament and therefore governed by the church, canon law, and ecclesiastical courts, but an institution of the earthly kingdom, a social and public estate subordinated to the power of the State and governed by civil law. Marriage was a public institution; it had to be initiated in compliance with rigid formal requirements, in the absence of which a marriage would be void. The spouses could only marry after obtaining the consent of their parents and exchanging their promises to marry (*sponsalia*) in the presence of at least two witnesses. They were to repeat their wows publicly in the church where they would also receive the priest's instruction and blessing. Finally, before sexual intercourse, which would complete the union, the couple ought to get their marriage registered in church registers.

A marriage should be contracted in the presence of the parents, because without their authorisation, there would be no way to prove that the marriage was God's will. Obedience to one's parents was obedience to God. For Luther, "[i]t is not a matter of free choice or decision but a natural and necessary thing, that whatever is a man must have a woman and whatever is a woman must have a man."[8] Yet men and women were not entirely free to select their partners. It was God that brought a man and a woman together – He operated through the will of

7 Hartwig Dieterich, *Das protestantische Eherecht in Deutschland* (Munich: Claudius Verlag, 1970), 24–74; John Witte, Jr., "The Reformation of Marriage Law in Martin Luther's Germany: Its Significance Then and Now," *Journal of Law and Religion* 4 (1987): 293–351; Joel F. Harrington, *Reordering Marriage*; John Witte, Jr., *Law and Protestantism: The Legal Teachings of the Lutheran Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 199–256; John Witte, Jr., *From Sacrament to Contract: Marriage, Religion and Law in the Western Tradition* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 113–58. See also Michael Schröter, *'Wo Zwei zusammenkommen in rechter Ehe . . .': Sozio-und psychogenetische Studien über Eheschliessungsvorgänge vom 12. bis 15. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1985); Ingeborg Schwarz, *Die Bedeutung der Sippe für die Öffentlichkeit der Eheschliessung im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen: Fabian, 1959), 60–6; Roland Kirstein, *Die Entwicklung der Sponsalienlehre und der Lehre vom Eheschluss in der deutschen protestantischen Eherechtslehre bis zu J. H. Böhmer* (Bonn: L. Röhrscheid, 1966), 154–5. On clandestine marriages in the Reformation, see Paolo Astorri, "The Redefinition of Clandestine Marriage by Sixteenth-Century Lutheran Theologians and Jurists," *Law and History Review* 41 (2023): 65–92.

8 Martin Luther, *On the Estate of Marriage* in Luther's Works, vol. 45 (LW45), (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1962), 38. See also Marjorie Elisabeth Plummer, "On the Estate of Marriage," in *The Annotated Luther: Christian Life in the World*, eds. Hans J. Hillerbrand, Kirsi I. Stjerna, and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017), 33–77. As Lyndal Roper observes, for Luther, sexuality is a force impossible to be governed and only to be directed according to God's order. See Lyndal Roper, "Luther: Sex, Marriage and Motherhood," *History Today* 33, no. 12 (1983): 33–8.

the parents of the spouses.[9] Luther insisted that parental approval was justified by the Fourth Commandment of the Decalogue.[10] Moreover, Jeremiah 29:6 ("Give husbands to your daughters and wives to your sons") and other similar passages ordered children to obtain parental approval. Finally, Adam and Eve had not chosen for themselves, but rather God had brought Eve to Adam.[11] In Luther's view, the foundation of marriage was therefore not the will of the parties (as it was for the Roman Catholics), but the will of God. The will of God was reflected in the will of the parents. Spouses could not marry without their parents' consent, for to do so would be an arbitrary decision and a violation of God's will.

Luther's opinion on the requirement of parental consent for the validity of marriages was the object of many debates, such as: were all marriages contracted without parental consent void or could they be retrospectively approved by the parents, thus making them valid? What should be done if sexual intercourse had also occurred? Let us look at some examples. The Danish Lutheran theologian, Niels Hemmingsen (1513–1600) and the French Calvinist theologian, Théodore de

9 Bibliography on Luther and marriage is abundant. See, for example, Hans Hattenhauer, "Luthers Bedeutung für Ehe und Familie," in *Luther und die Folgen*, eds. Hartmut Löwe and Claus-Jürgen Roepke (Munich: Kaiser, 1983), 86–109; Georg Kretschmar, "Luthers Konzeption von der Ehe," in *Martin Luther: Reformator und Vater in Glauben*, ed. Peter Manns (Stuttgart: Zabern, 1985), 178–207; Jane Strohl, "Luther on Marriage, Sexuality, and the Family," in *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology*, eds. Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel, and L'ubomír Batka (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 370–82; Thomas Kaufmann, "Reformation der Lebenswelt: Luthers Ehetheologie," in *Der Anfang der Reformation: Studien zur Kontextualität der Theologie, Publizistik und Inszenierung Luthers und der reformatorischen Bewegung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 550–64; Christian Volkmar Witt, *Martin Luthers Reformation der Ehe: Sein theologisches Eheverständnis vor dessen augustinisch-mittelalterlichem Hintergrund* (Tübigen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017). For a summary, see Trevor O'Reggio, "Martin Luther on Marriage and Family," *History Research* 2, no. 3 (2012): 195–218, https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/church-history-pubs/20/, accessed 28 June 2024.

10 On the crucial importance of this commandment in the Reformation, see Robert James Bast, *Honor your Fathers: Catechisms and the Emergence of a Patriarchal Ideology in Germany 1400–1600* (Leiden: Brill, 1997). For more in general on the role of the Decalogue for the Reformers, see Harold J. Berman, *Law and Revolution II: The Impact of the Protestant Reformations on the Western Legal Tradition* (Harvard: Harvard University Press 2003), 71–100; Antti Raunio, "Divine Law and Natural Law in Luther and Melanchthon," in *Lutheran Reformation and the Law*, ed. Virpi Mäkinen (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 21–62; Mathias Schmoeckel, *Das Recht des Reformation: Die epistemologische Revolution der Wissenschaft und die Spaltung der Rechtsordnung in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 24–38; Martin Heckel, *Martin Luthers Reformation und das Recht* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 406–88.

11 Martin Luther, *That parents should neither compel nor hinder the marriage of their children, and that children should not become engaged without their parents' consent*, in LW 45, 390. On the necessity of parental control, see Dieterich, *Das protestantische Eherecht*, 56–60.

Bèze (1519–1605) were very strict in their views. Hemmingsen studied in Wittenberg where he attended Melanchthon's lessons. He later became Professor of Greek in Copenhagen in 1543, of dialectics in 1545, and of theology in 1553. As a leading theologian in the Church of Denmark, he produced an enormous output of exegetical commentaries, devotional books, and books on natural law and systematic and pastoral theology. He was deeply involved in the implementation of the Reformation in Denmark. In his *Libellus de coniugio, repudio et divortio* (1572), Hemmingsen claimed that in the absence of lawful consent – namely, if the marriage was made against the will of the parents or the guardians – the marriage could be rescinded by the judge. Such a marriage was indeed unjust whether sexual intercourse had happened or not, except if the parents or those who act in their stead could be persuaded to admit such a marriage.[12] The Catholic doctrine that accepted marriages contracted through the will of the couple was only based on human law and could therefore be mitigated or abrogated. God's commandment was to honour the father and the mother, and as such must be placed before canon law which, for Hemmingsen, was the Antichrist's constitution.

Hemmingsen's rigid position precluded any effect to the marriage contracted in the absence of parental consent. The Fourth Commandment of the Decalogue could not be broken, and the acceptance of such kinds of marriages would mean the endorsement of canon law – which is human law – against divine law. A similar stance was held by Théodore de Bèze. De Bèze studied law in Orléans and then went to Paris where he worked on Latin poetry. In 1549, he was appointed Professor of Greek at the academy in Lausanne and in 1559 became Professor of theology in Geneva along with Jean Calvin. When Calvin died in 1564, he took on his role as leader of the Calvinist church. De Bèze's publications (which were mostly related to poetry and theology) enjoyed large success. In his *De repudiis et divortiis tractatus* (1555), De Bèze argued that if the parents or those who act in their stead were not asked or did not give their consent, even retrospectively, and had a just cause to oppose the marriage, the marriage was void because it lacked what is most important – God's authority.[13] De Bèze insisted in a rigid application

12 Niels Hemmingsen, *Libellus de coniugio, repudio et divortio, in gratiam fratrum, qui iudices causarum matrimonialium in regnis Dania & Norvegia constituti sunt* (Leipzig, 1578), 159: "Si consensus non fuit iustus, hoc est, si promissio de nuptiis facta est contra illorum voluntatem, in quorum potestate sunt illi, qui paciscuntur de nuptiis, potest per iudicem rescindi tanquam iniustus, sive secuta sit carnalis copula, sive non, nisi aliter parentes, aut illi qui in parentum loco sunt, persuaderi possunt."

13 Théodore de Bèza, *De repudiis et divortiis tractatus, in quo pleraeque de causis matrimonialibus controversiae ex verbo Dei deciduntur* (Nijmegen, 1666), 155–156: "Si parentes neque ultro [. . .] neque rogati, subsequente consensus rem alioqui non rite factam confirmarint, et justam

of the Biblical dictate with the consequence that a marriage without parental consent was not valid.

On the contrary, Melchior Kling, a Professor of law at the University of Wittenberg and an expert on marital cases, rejected such a restrictive view. Kling was educated in Wittenberg by the Lutheran professors Hieronymus Schurff (1481–1554) and Johann Apel (1486–1536). He obtained the title of *doctor utriusque iuris* (Doctor in Civil and Canon Law), and in 1536 he became a Professor of canon law at the same university. He was an assessor at the Schöffenstuhl (bench of jurymen) and the Hofgericht (the supreme court).[14] In his 1553 treatise on marriage cases, Kling repeated the traditional canon law definition – a clandestine marriage was when the contract was concluded by the spouses alone, without witnesses.[15] Thus, no parental consent was necessary, and the only rationale for witnesses was the necessity to prove the marriage. He followed his master Schurff, who did not second Luther's thesis on the necessity of parental consent.[16]

Following the medieval canonist Hostiensis,[17] Kling held that clandestine marriages were forbidden because of the danger to the soul [*periculum animarum*]. If one of the spouses in a clandestine marriage changed his/her mind, the court would consider the spouses to be eligible to marry again as the marriage could not be proved. However, the first (clandestine) marriage existed in conscience and was binding, even if it could not be proved. The party who contracted a new marriage would be obliged to pay his/her conjugal debt and have sex with the new spouse under pain of excommunication; however, on the other hand, s/he would be bound

---

suae recusationis causam habuerint, nullum contractum matrimonium videri, cui videlicet desit quod praecipuum est, nempe Dei auctoritas [. . .]."

14 Heiner Lück, "Zur Grundlegung des evangelischen Eherechts in Wittenberg," in *Katharina von Bora, Die Lutherin: Aufsätze anlässlich ihres 500. Geburtstages*, ed. Martin Treu (Wittenberg: Stiftung Luthergedenkstätten in Sachsen-Anhalt, 1999), 167. On the Wittenberg jurists, see also Heiner Lück, "Beiträge ausgewählter Wittenberger Juristen zur europäischen Rechtsentwicklung und zur Herausbildung eines evangelischen Eherechts während des 16. Jahrhunderts," in *Reformation und Recht: Ein Beitrag zur Kontroverse um die Kulturwirkungen der Reformation*, ed. Christoph Strohm (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 73–109. On the the Schöffenstuhl, the Hofgericht, and the Consistorium, see Heiner Lück, "Wittenberg als Zentrum kursächsischer Rechtspflege: Hofgericht-Juristenfakultät-Schöffenstuhl-Konsistorium," in *700 Jahre Wittenberg: Stadt, Universität, Reformation*, ed. Stefan Oehmig (Weimar: Böhlau, 1995), 213–48; Heiner Lück, *Die kursächsische Gerichtsverfassung 1423–1550* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1997).

15 On Kling's approach to canon law, see Witte, *From Sacrament*, 72–3.

16 Hieronymus Schurff, *Consiliorum seu responsorum iuris centuria prima* (Frankfurt, 1594), 150–1.

17 Enrico da Susa, *Summa aurea* (Cologne, 1612), 1140; Adhémar Esmein, *Le mariage en droit canonique* (Paris: Sirey, 1929), II, 149.

to the first spouse. Indeed, the clandestine marriage existed in conscience.[18] For Kling, parental consent was not a strict requirement because it was not sufficiently supported by law. Civil law, Kling observed, established that although the consent of the father was necessary, that of the mother was not. Canon law did not require this consent for the validity of the bond. The theologians affirmed that if the marriage had also been consummated with sexual intercourse, then it was valid. However, civil law did not accept this solution because it invalidated all marriages contracted without parental approval, regardless of consummation.[19]

Kling's opinion was eventually rejected by most marital ordinances issued by Lutheran princes. These ordinances regulated the new constitution of marriage. In Saxony, an ordinance issued by Electoral Prince, August of Saxony (1580) required parental consent for parties to contract a valid marriage. This ordinance also issued heavy sanctions to repress clandestine marriages. If the children married against their parents' will, the ordinance permitted the fathers to disinherit their children. Moreover, if the children were discovered to have had sexual intercourse after a clandestine betrothal, they had to be punished with imprisonment or another discretionary punishment.[20] On the other hand, notwithstanding these sanctions, the Consistorium, a court formed by theologians and jurists, was brimming with cases of clandestine marriages. Here a pragmatic solution was often adopted: if a son or daughter had married a dishonest person, the marriage had to be rescinded; if s/he had married a person who was honest and at the same social level, then the betrothal could be tolerated.[21] This should not come as a surprise since marriages had important economic consequences.[22]

8.2 A Marriage without Parental Consent Confirmed by an Oath

Despite this context of increased repression of clandestine marriages, young couples sought to get married without parental consent. A peculiar strategy was to confirm their marital vows with an oath, a prayer, or another form of devotion. The underly-

18 Melchior Kling, *Tractatus matrimonialium causarum* (Frankfurt, 1577), fols. 68b–69. See also Dieterich, *Das protestantische Eherecht*, 122–4.

19 Kling, *Tractatus*, fols. 78a and 78b.

20 Emil Sehling, *Die evangelischen Kirchenordungen des XVI. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig: Reisland, 1902), vol. 1, 386.

21 Conrad Mauser, *Tractatus juridicus de nuptiis* (Jena, 1582), 52.

22 Harrington, *Reordering Marriage*, 187–97.

ing assumption was to replace parental consent with a promise to God. This case was apparently very frequent in the Consistoria. The Consistoria did not, however, agree on the solution, prompting the jurists who authored the first volume of the *Consultationes* to address the issue.[23] The so-called *Consultationes Constitutionum Saxonicarum* were a three-volume collection of different legal opinions, mostly related to the preparation of the *Kursächsische Konstitutionen*, a new standard legislation for Saxony.[24] The first volume, titled *Illustres, aureae, solemnes, diuque exoptatae quaestionum variarum apud iuris utriusque interpretes controversarum decisiones et discussiones* appeared in print in 1599.[25] This document was based on a manuscript that the young bookseller Johann Theobald Schönwetter (1575–1657) had acquired from Anton Columbinus, a lawyer working at the Reichskammergericht (the imperial cameral court) in Speyer. Schönwetter's volume collects the work of the jurists of the law faculties of Leipzig and Wittenberg for the preparation of the *Kursächsische Konstitutionen*. It is divided into two parts, the first of which covers 130 *quaestiones*. These questions span five chapters, and this five-chapter structure is announced on the title page: 1) *de contractibus vel quasi, et causis matrimonialibus*, 2) *de successionibus et ultimis voluntatibus*, 3) *de iudicio et processu*, 4) *de delictis vel quasi delictis*, and 5) *miscellaneas quaestiones*.[26] In the first part, we find a long elaboration pertaining to issues of marriage. This is presented as a *Gutachten* (advisory opinion) issued by the Consistory in Wittenberg. The Elector had commissioned this official statement almost ten years after the jurists' meetings for the preparation of the *Konstitutionen*.[27] In 1600, a second volume was published,[28] and in 1614 a third volume appeared.[29] Later, Peter Frider (d. 1616), also known as Mindanus after his hometown of Minden, collected all three

23 Hermann Theodor Schletter, *Die Constitutionen Kurfürst Augusts von Sachsen vom Jahre 1572* (Leipzig, 1857).

24 Gerhard Buchda and Heiner Lück, "Kursächsische Konstitutionen," in *Handwörterbuch zur deutschen Rechtsgeschichte*, eds. A. Erler, E. Kaufmann, and D. Werkmüller, vol. 3 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1998), 354–61 for an extensive bibliography. For an annotated edition of the *Konstitutionen*, see Wolfgang Kunkel, Hans Thieme, and Franz Beyerle, eds., *Quellen zur Nueren Privatrechtsgeschichte Deutschlands*, vol. I.2 (Weimar: Böhlau, 1938), 243–318, 354.

25 *Illustres, aureae, solemnes, diuque exoptatae quaestionum variarum apud iuris utriusque interpretes controversarum decisiones et discussiones* (Frankfurt: Schönwetter, 1599).

26 *Illustres, aureae, solemnes*, I, 1–203.

27 *Illustres, aureae, solemnes*, I, 24–6. See also Schletter, *Die Constitutionen*, 154.

28 *Variarium iuris controversi quaestionum et in usu practico, praesertim Camerae quotidie occurentium, Resolutiones et Decisiones* (Mainz : Albinus, 1600).

29 *Tomus tertius continens illustres, aureae, solemnes, diuque exoptat at quaestionum variarum apud utriusque iuris interpretes controversarum decisiones et discussiones, ex iure caesareo, pontificio et saxonico ad praxin cameras accomodatas [. . .]* (Frankfurt: Richter, 1614).

volumes. Frider was a Professor of law at the Protestant University of Gießen, and his momentous compilation comprised three books entitled *Constititutiones Consultationum Saxonicarum*.[30]

The case is discussed in the second part of the first volume (only in the first edition, as it is not included in the second edition), in *quaestio* XIII entitled "Wann sich die kinder ohne der eltern Vorwissen Ehelich verloben, und ihre Verlöbnis mit endtlicher Pflicht oder Execration und Verpflichtung thun befestigen."[31] The case was decided by the Consistory of Wittenberg, most probably under the authority of Joachim von Beust (1522–1597), the leading authority on marriage law.[32] It is subdivided into three sub-cases: first, a secret marriage with an oath and a public marriage coexisting at the same time; second, the secret marriage is the sole one and does not coincide with a marriage publicly performed, and the children decide to apologise to their parents and accept their decision; third, when there is a secret sworn marital promise alone, which does not coincide with the public one, and the children decide to apologise to their parents and come back under their guardianship.

Regarding the first sub-case, after a brief explanation of the debate on parental consent, the jurists refer to *quaestio* LVI in the same volume, where they also point out that parental consent is necessary by divine law and human law and refer to the diocese of Halle, where all clandestine marriages without parental consent were declared void.[33] Then, the jurists propose a long list of quotations of various authorities both in the fields of theology and law. First, they cite Luther who in his sermon *On Marital Matters* wrote: "It should have no effect either if in the secret betrothal there were gifts from the bridegroom, or if other pledges, oaths or agreements were made."[34] In this passage, Luther discussed the case of coexisting public and secret betrothal. He said that a secret betrothal (without parental consent) would not be granted any value; only the public betrothal would be considered valid. In addition, the jurists refer to the Italian jurist Giason del

30 *Consultationum saxonicarum ad illustres et gravissimas, easque varias iuris utriusque communis, nec non saxonici quaestiones habitarum, et a celeb. Wittembergensis & Lipsensis Scabinatuum Adsessoribus, iussu Elect. Saxon. Augusti decisarum, libri quinque* (Frankfurt: Hoffmann, 1616). I follow Frider and refer to the work as the *Consultationes* because this is the title that was used in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries.

31 *Illustres, aureae, solemnes*, 8b–9b.

32 See "Wann sich die kinder ohne der eltern Vorwissen Ehelich verloben, und ihre Verlöbnis mit endtlicher Pflicht oder Execration und Verpflichtung thun befestigen [. . .]," *Illustres, aureae, solemnes*, 8b.

33 *Illustres, aureae, solemnes*, 49b–50a.

34 Martin Luther, *Von Ehesachen (On marital matters)*, in Luther's Works vol. 43 ed. G. Wiencke (LW 43), (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1968) 281–2.

Maino (1435–1519) in his commentary on the Roman law text *Non dubium* (C 1 14 15),[35] which established that contracts against the law are invalid. To support this statement, the jurists also cite the rule of Papinian (D 2 14 38) according to which the agrements of private citizens could not contravene what was established by public law.[36] They also cite the postulations of Niels Hemmingsen and Matthaeus Wesenbeck (1531–1586), a Professor of law at Wittenberg and a towering authority in the field of private law.[37]

After these authorities, the jurists move to the examination of *ius commune* and passages from the Bible. The jurists refer to Roman law (D 1 1 1; D 12 2; C2 58 6?) and canon law (*Si diligenti* X 2 2 12). Public law is what belongs to holy affairs, priests, and magistrates. Thus, according to the jurists, oaths stipulated by private citizens are not valid against public law. The decretal *Si diligenti* established that an agreement of private citizens could not derogate public law [*pacto privatorum iuri publico minime derogari*].[38] On the contrary, private agreements concerning private rights [*iura privata*] would be valid against public law according to another passage of canon law (the decretal *cum contingat* X 2 24 28). However, the jurists reject this conclusion by referring to another canon law text (*Ad nostram* X 2 24 21) according to which reckless oaths [*iuramenta temeraria*] are not to be observed. Moreover, they claim that oaths made on the First Table of the Decalogue (the first three commandments) should not be valid when they are against the Second Table (the remaining seven commandments). Indeed, God must be obeyed first, men second (Acts 5:19, the so-called *Clausola Petri*). Only God concludes marriages, and such an act cannot be separated by men (Matthew 16:6).

The jurists sought to resolve the tension between the oath and the dangers of two marriages – one public and one clandestine. For the jurists, oaths and prayers can be annulled easily in practice, but not in conscience. This raises a danger when a child is secretly engaged without the consent of their parents and makes this bond firm by a true oath.[39] If the child repents and wants to marry another

35 Giasone del Maino, *In primam partem codicis commentaria*, (Venice, 1589), De legibus, non dubium, 28v ff.

36 *Illustres, aureae, solemnes*, 9a: "Item, regula, quod ius publicum pactis privatorum non tollatur, sampt ander mehr Ursachen/ pro confirmation huius opinionis adduciert werden."

37 *Illustres, aureae, solemnes*, 9a. The jurists only mention Wesenbeck's name. We can guess they referred to Matthaeus Wesenbeck, *Paratitla in pandectarum iuris civilis libros quinquaginta,* (Basel: Oporinus, 1563), Dig. lib. II, tit. XIV de pactis, 40–41.

38 *Si diligenti* (X 2 2 12).

39 *Illustres, aureae, solemnes,* 9a: "Firmior ergo ratio, quod iuramenta temeraria non sint servanda [. . .]. Et possent alia schemata iuridica sive politica induci. Sed omnibus constat, quod iuramenta primae tabulae Decalogi precepto cedere debeant, quae in secundum incurrunt; Item, quod Deo magis, quam hominibus sit obediendum Art. Cap. 5, 29. Deum autem coniugia perfi-

person and asks for parental approval, the first marriage (that is, the one without parental approval) would remain as a secret marriage, a theoretically inadmissible condition because it would block the second (public) marriage. This conclusion is supported by public law and the ordinance. The young spouses should, therefore, receive public penance and the first, secret marriage should not be considered as valid.

The situation is different in the second sub-case, when the secret marriage is the sole one and does not coincide with a marriage publicly consumed. If the children decide to obey their parents, acknowledge their sin, apologise, and ask their parents to recommend their conscience to permit such a marriage, the jurists deem that the marriage could be held as valid in such a case. The new marriage ordinance also accepted this solution even when there was no oath.[40] Thus, the fact that an oath was added to such a marital agreement can only confirm this decision. In substance, whether or not the marriage was binding depended on a fluid set of factors.

The third case is when there is a secret sworn marital promise alone which does not coincide with the public one, and the children decide to apologise to their parents and come back under their guardianship. Here, the jurists recommend that parents decide the course of action according to the rank and social class of the couple. If the spouses are equal in rank and descent, the parents shall be reasonably admonished to guard their children's consciences and to act with seriousness so that such marriages may not be easily dissolved. If, however, this would not help, then the marriage engagement would be declared unlawful because of the parents' advice, and the children would receive public penance (as in the first case). The oath should then be declared as unfair and dissolved.[41] The jurists support this conclusion by referring to Niels Hemmingsen. For Hemmingsen, in the case of a promise with an added oath, when someone united himself with a woman of different social status, he could rescind such a contract. Indeed, as Hemmingsen reasoned, a reckless oath never pleases God. Moreover, in this case, the legal postulation that says that an oath against good morals is not binding should be applied (Hemmingsen is most probably referring to Roman law).[42]

---

cere, et talia non esse ab hominibus separanda, testatur Matth. 19 vers. 6. Devotiones et exacrationes possunt, et vero et re facile annihilari, non etiam conscientia, sicut exempla sunt in promptu."

40 *Illustres, aureae, solemnes*, 9a.

41 *Illustres, aureae, solemnes*, 9b.

42 Niels Hemmingsen, *Libellus de coniugio*, 126: "Quapropter, etiamsi quis se iuramento astrinxerit foeminae impari, potest a contractu rectius edoctus decedere. Numquam enim placueris

In short, the jurists decided that in case of coexisting public and secret marriages, the secret marriage cannot be declared as valid and the public marriage should prevail. In case there is no public marriage but the children repent and ask their parents for permission to marry and such permission is granted, then the marriage is regarded as valid. When the secret and the public marriages do not coincide but the children decide to repent and ask their parents for permission, their parents may decide to tolerate the marriage if both parties are of the same social condition. However, if the parents refuse, then the secret marriage should be declared invalid, the oath dissolved, and the unlawfully wedded couple punished.

8.3 Conclusion

The questions raised at the beginning of this chapter asked whether the new regulation of clandestine marriages was strictly formulated or admitted of exceptions and whether there was any space for the couple to marry clandestinely. In this context, the word "clandestinely" means in the absence of witnesses and parental consent. This term signalled both a violation of the rules on marriage and a restricted access to the decisional process of marriage. The couple intended to marry in private – namely, without their parents and witnesses – because it wanted freedom of choice. Irrespective of whether the reason was love, sex, or other factors, the important point was that the couple wanted to escape external interferences and family bonds – that is, both parties were in search of what we would today call 'privacy.'

Clandestine marriages were not seen in a positive light since it was difficult to prove such marriages. The Latin adjective '*clandestinum*' (clandestine, secret) expresses such negative connotations which were already evident in the medieval period.[43] With the Reformation, aversion against clandestine marriages increased. The Reformers pledged to repress such marriages and strengthen parental authority. Lutheran theology insisted on the role of parents as divinely instituted authority to lead the household and educate the children. Marriage and church ordinances implemented those teachings and imposed penalties over the people who contracted clandestine marriages.

Was there any space left for a couple to marry clandestinely (or privately) against the will of their parents? Was there any possibility left for a "private mar-

Deo, si praestes quod temerarie iurasti contra Dei voluntatem. Teneatur ergo regula iuris: non est obligatorium contra bonos mores praestitum iuramentum."

43 Astorri, "The Redefinition of Clandestine Marriage," 89–90.

riage"?[44] In Saxony, within a context of amplified repression, clandestine marriages persisted and the Reformers had to face this issue. As a matter of principle, when the couple married clandestinely with an oath and a later public marriage also existed, the clandestine marriage could not be recognised, the oath would not be considered as valid, and the couple would be punished. However, if there was no public marriage and the couple repented, apologised to their parents, and the parents accepted their marriage, the marriage could be considered as valid.

When the clandestine marriage did not coincide with the public marriage but the couple repented and asked forgiveness from their parents, the social condition of the spouses came to the fore. Indeed, this more pragmatic criterion was used to solve such cases – if someone married a person not of the same social condition, he/she could rescind his/her contract. Instead, if the couple belonged to the same social class, the parents were encouraged to support the marriage. However, if they still denied their consent, the marriage could not be declared as valid, the oath would be dissolved, and the couple would be punished. This strategy reveals that, although residual, a space for the private existed. The personal choice of the couple could have value under certain conditions, even if an oath was not sufficient to guarantee the validity of the marriage.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Bèza, Théodore de. *De repudiis et divortiis tractatus, in quo pleraeque de causis matrimonialibus controversiae ex verbo Dei deciduntur*. Nijmegen, 1666.

Consultationum saxonicarum ad illustres et gravissimas, easque varias iuris utriusque communis, nec non saxonici quaestiones habitarum, et a celeb. Wittembergensis & Lipsensis Scabinatuum Adsessoribus, iussu Elect. Saxon. Augusti decisarum, libri quinque. Frankfurt, Hoffmann, 1616.

Hemmingsen, Niels. *Libellus de coniugio, repudio et divortio, in gratiam fratrum, qui iudices causarum matrimonialium in regnis Dania & Norvegia constituti sunt*. Leipzig, 1578.

Illustres, aureae, solemnes, diuque exoptatae quaestionum variarum apud iuris utriusque interpretes controversarum decisiones et discussiones. Frankfurt: Schönwetter, 1599.

Kling, Melchior. *Tractatus matrimonialium causarum*. Frankfurt, 1577.

44 The expression "private marriage" is suggested by the Lutheran theologian Johann Wigand (1523–1587). In his *De coniugio doctrina* (1578), he uses the adverb "*privatim*" to describe clandestine marriages. For him clandestine marriages are those contracted "privately", in absence of those who exercise authority over the spouses. See Johann Wigand, *De coniugio doctrina* (Jena: Richtzenhan, 1578), H 5.

Luther, Martin. *On the Estate of Marriage* in Luther's Works, vol. 45, ed. W. I. Brandt, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1962).
Luther, Martin. *That parents should neither compel nor hinder the marriage of their children, and that children should not become engaged without their parents' consent* in Luther's Works, vol. 45, ed. W. I. Brandt (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1962).
Luther, Martin. *On marital matters* in Luther's Works vol. 43 ed. G. Wiencke, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1968).
Mauser, Conrad. *Tractatus juridicus de nuptiis*. Jena, 1582.
Schurff, Hieronymus. *Consiliorum seu responsorum iuris*. Frankfurt, 1594.
Susa, Enrico da. *Summa aurea*. Cologne, 1612.

Secondary Literature

Astorri, Paolo. "The Redefinition of Clandestine Marriage by Sixteenth-Century Lutheran Theologians and Jurists." *Law and History Review* 41 (2023): 65–92.
Bast, Robert James. *Honor your Fathers: Catechisms and the Emergence of a Patriarchal Ideology in Germany 1400–1600*. Leiden: Brill, 1997.
Berman, Harold J. *Law and Revolution II: The Impact of the Protestant Reformations on the Western Legal Tradition*. Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2003.
Brundage, James A. *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1987.
Buchda, Gerhard, and Heiner Lück. "Kursächsische Konstitutionen." In *Handwörterbuch zur deutschen Rechtsgeschichte*, edited by A. Erler, E. Kaufmann, and D. Werkmüller, 354–361. Vol. 3. Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1998.
Dieterich, Hartwig. *Das protestantische Eherecht in Deutschland*. Munich: Claudius Verlag, 1970.
Donahue, Charles Jr. *Law, Marriage, and Society in the later Middle Ages: Arguments About Marriage in Five Courts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
Finch, A. J. "Parental Authority and the Problem of Clandestine Marriage in the Later Middle Ages." *Law and History Review* 8, no. 2 (1990): 189–204.
Gottlieb, Beatrice. "The Meaning of Clandestine Marriage." In *Family and Sexuality in French History*, edited by Robert Wheaton and Tamara K. Hareven, 49–73. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980.
Harrington, Joel F. *Reordering Marriage and Society in Reformation Germany*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
Hattenhauer, Hans. "Luthers Bedeutung für Ehe und Familie." In *Luther und die Folgen*, edited by Hartmut Löwe and Claus-Jürgen Roepke, 86–109. Munich: Kaiser, 1983.
Heckel, Martin. *Martin Luthers Reformation und das Recht*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016.
Kaufmann, Thomas. "Reformation der Lebenswelt: Luthers Ehetheologie." In *Der Anfang der Reformation: Studien zur Kontextualität der Theologie, Publizistik und Inszenierung Luthers und der reformatorischen Bewegung*, 550–64. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012.
Kirstein, Roland. *Die Entwicklung der Sponsalienlehre und der Lehre vom Eheschluss in der deutschen protestantischen Eherechtslehre bis zu J.H. Böhmer*. Bonn: L. Röhrscheid, 1966.
Kretschmar, Georg. "Luthers Konzeption von der Ehe." In *Martin Luther: Reformator und Vater in Glauben*, edited by Peter Manns, 178–207. Stuttgart: Zabern, 1985.

Kunkel, Wolfgang, Hans Thieme, and Franz Beyerle, eds. *Quellen zur Nueren Privatrechtsgeschichte Deutschlands*. Vol. I.2. Weimar: Böhlau, 1938.

Lück, Heiner. "Wittenberg als Zentrum kursächsischer Rechtspflege: Hofgericht-Juristenfakultät-Schöffenstuhl-Konsistorium." In *700 Jahre Wittenberg*: *Stadt, Universität, Reformation*, edited by Stefan Oehmig, 213–48. Weimar: Böhlau, 1995.

Lück, Heiner. "Zur Grundlegung des evangelischen Eherechts in Wittenberg." In *Katharina von Bora, Die Lutherin: Aufsätze anlässlich ihres 500. Geburtstages*, edited by Martin Treu, 161–177. Wittenberg: Stiftung Luthergedenkstätten in Sachsen-Anhalt, 1999.

Lück, Heiner. "Beiträge ausgewählter Wittenberger Juristen zur europäischen Rechtsentwicklung und zur Herausbildung eines evangelischen Eherechts während des 16. Jahrhunderts." In *Reformation und Recht: Ein Beitrag zur Kontroverse um die Kulturwirkungen der Reformation*, edited by Christoph Strohm, 73–109. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017.

O'Reggio, Trevor. "Martin Luther on Marriage and Family." *History Research* 2, no. 3 (2012): 195–218. https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/church-history-pubs/20/. Accessed 28 June 2024.

Plummer, Marjorie Elisabeth. "On the Estate of Marriage." In *The Annotated Luther: Christian Life in the World*, edited by Hans J. Hillerbrand, Kirsi I. Stjerna, and Timothy J. Wengert, 33–77. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017.

Raunio, Antti. "Divine Law and Natural Law in Luther and Melanchthon." In *Lutheran Reformation and the Law*, edited by Virpi Mäkinen, 21–62. Leiden: Brill, 2006.

Reynolds, Philip L. *How Marriage Became One of the Sacraments: The Sacramental Theology of Marriage from its Medieval Origins to the Council of Trent*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

Roessler, Beate. *The Value of Privacy*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005.

Roper, Lyndal. "Luther: Sex, Marriage and Motherhood." *History Today* 33, no. 12 (1983): 33–8.

Sánchez-Arcilla-Bernal, José. "La formación del vinculo y los matrimonios clandestinos en la Baja Edad Media." *Cuadernos de Historia del Derecho* 17 (2010): 7–47.

Schletter, Hermann Theodor. *Die Constitutionen Kurfürst Augusts von Sachsen vom Jahre 1572*. Leipzig, 1857.

Schmoeckel, Mathias. *Das Recht des Reformation*: *Die epistemologische Revolution der Wissenschaft und die Spaltung der Rechtsordnung in der Frühen Neuzeit*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014.

Schröter, Michael. *'Wo Zwei zusammenkommen in rechter Ehe . . .': Sozio-und psychogenetische Studien über Eheschliessungsvorgänge vom 12. bis 15. Jahrhundert*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1985.

Schwarz, Ingeborg. *Die Bedeutung der Sippe für die Öffentlichkeit der Eheschliessung im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert*. Tübingen: Fabian, 1959.

Sehling, Emil. *Die evangelischen Kirchenordungen des XVI. Jahrhunderts*. Leipzig: Reisland, 1902.

Seidel Menchi, Silvana. "Percorsi variegati, percorsi obbligati: Elogio del matrimonio pre-tridentino." In *Matrimoni in dubbio: Unioni controverse e nozze clandestine in Italia dal XIV al XVIII secolo*, edited by Silvana Seidel Menchi and Diego Quaglioni, 17–60. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002.

Strohl, Jane. "Luther on Marriage, Sexuality, and the Family." In *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology*, edited by Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel, and L'ubomír Batka, 370–82. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Witt, Christian. *Martin Luthers Reformation der Ehe: Sein theologisches Eheverständnis vor dessen augustinisch-mittelalterlichem Hintergrund*. Tübigen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017.

Witte, John Jr. "The Reformation of Marriage Law in Martin Luther's Germany: Its Significance Then and Now." *Journal of Law and Religion* 4 (1987): 293–351.

Witte, John Jr. *Law and Protestantism: The Legal Teachings of the Lutheran Reformation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Witte, John Jr. *From Sacrament to Contract: Marriage, Religion and Law in the Western Tradition*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011.

Mette Birkedal Bruun and Natalie Körner

Tracking Privacy in Early Modern Saxony: An Epilogue

This volume shows vital areas of early modern Saxon life – religion, politics, health, law, knowledge, production, court life, and social standing. As demonstrated in the chapters, each of these areas featured different kinds of experiences, crises, disruptions, safeguarding, and boundary-drawing related to privacy. A focus on such cases can serve as a magnifying lens to inspect the connections and distinctions of individuals and communities, human relations to spaces of different scales – from flasks, via rooms and houses, to castles, and monopolies of knowledge and expertise. In this epilogue, we will first sum up some of the aspects of privacy explored in the chapters and then move on to sketch how historical insights gained in this way are relevant for today's discussions of privacy.

9.1 Privacy in Early Modern Saxony

How can we grasp the notions of privacy that appear in early modern Saxony? In this volume, terms deriving from the Latin '*privatus*' appear only in the juridical vocabulary discussed by Astorri. In his sources, the term '*pactum privatorum*' denotes the private agreement contrasting public contracts[1] or in the differentiating between *personae privatae* and *privati* – that is, the subjects and the ruler or the magistrate.[2] The case of Saxony reminds us that the technical juridical language is a principal transmitter of the Latin terminology regarding societal structures revolving around public offices as well as the public jurisdiction vis-à-vis conflicts between private citizens.[3]

1 See Paolo Astorri's chapter in this volume.

2 See the introduction to this volume. See also Paolo Astorri and Lars Cyril Nørgaard, "Publicus–privatus: The Divine Foundations of Authority in Dietrich Reinking," *Journal of Early Modern Christianity* 9, no. 1 (2022): 93–119.

3 For the Latin implications, see Aloys Winterling, "'Öffentlich' und 'privat' im kaiserzeitlichen Rom," in *Gegenwärtige Antike—antike Gegenwarten: Kolloquium zum 60. Geburtstag von Rolf Ri-*

Note: The research underlying this chapter was conducted in the Danish National Research Foundation Centre for Privacy Studies (DNRF138) which is hosted by the University of Copenhagen and directed by Mette Birkedal Bruun.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111264776-009

Since there are hardly any terminological indicators in the sources studied in this context, the authors pursue understandings and practices related to privacy by other means. Rankin applies the heuristic zones of privacy, developed at the Centre for Privacy Studies (Figure 13).[4] The zones help her to analyse the different discourses in Anna of Saxony's approach to pregnancy and birth as well as related conducive remedies. Anna's attitude and self-representation depend on whether she appears as Electress with formal authority in society, as mother embedded in the "household" and family, or as a maker of medicinal remedies engaging with a cognisant network of peers who form a joint virtual laboratory independent of physically immediate communities. Rankin also addresses the body as a zone of concealing and revealing pregnancy.

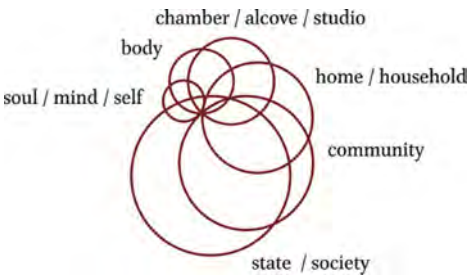


Figure 13: The heuristic zones of privacy developed by Mette Birkedal Bruun.

Other authors zero in on specific zones or areas where privacy is at stake or at risk. For example, Søren Frank Jensen and Natacha Klein Käfer focus on the subtle negotiations of public status and private conditions implied in the correspondence of Electress Anna and court preacher Selnecker as an interface between the private chamber and the community. Aligned with the same zones, Tara Nummedal illustratively shows how Andreas Orthelius' "experiments took place at the centre of a series of private, nested spaces that obscured them from the public eye – flasks within a laboratory within a palace within the broader Saxon landscape."[5]

However, other approaches are deployed as well. For example, Jan Siegemund's analysis is conducted through the "lens of the public and the political as concepts opposed to the private," and he takes as his point of departure Peter von

linger, eds. Tassilo Schmidt, Winfried Schmitz, and Aloys Winterling (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2005), 223–44.

4 Mette Birkedal Bruun, "Towards an Approach to Early Modern Privacy: The Retirement of the Great Condé," in *Early Modern Privacy*: *Sources and Approaches*, eds. Michaël Green, Lars Cyril Nørgaard, and Mette Birkedal Bruun (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2022), 12–60 (Fig. 2.1).

5 See Nummedal's chapter in this volume.

Moos' identification of three dimensions of the words 'public' and 'private': accessibility, agency, and interest, focusing on accessibility and interest.[6] Other chapters abide by approaches pertaining to specific research fields. In Paolo Astorri's contribution, legal and, in Natalie Körner's case, spatial analysis leads to diverse sets of reflections on early modern privacy.

Overall, the volume deals with a series of material and immaterial spaces from which privacy is carved out. The methods of carving out privacy range from the subtle and partial epistolary distancing from the public authority held by Electress Anna and Selnecker within the larger territory of the realm (Frank Jensen and Klein Käfer) to the deliberations in the conscience and the human heart as the ultimate interior form of privacy, known only to God (Astorri, Frank Jensen and Klein Käfer). The household offers but limited protection from prying eyes and talkative neighbours (Siegemund), the laboratory is sealed off from outsiders greedy for knowledge or prone to suspicion of illegitimate actions or creations that are not what they appear to be (Bartkowski and Nummedal), and the experimental flasks (which in Nummedal's presentation become a mini-laboratory) are shielded from those who did not understand what went on inside in a form of encrypted knowledge.[7] The reader also encounters a literal "carving out" of privacy in the chapter on the subterranean withdrawal of the miners from their community above ground (Körner).

The boundaries created around privacy are manifold. Some of them are material. Walls, locks, and carefully crafted modes of access offer some protection (Nummedal). However, as Siegemund reminds us, such boundaries are not robust. Nummedal mentions the "spatial, rhetorical, and social strategies" that created a degree of privacy around alchemical experiments. Letters and recipes are fragile vehicles of information shared only among the few, illustratively offset by the role

6 Peter von Moos, "Die Begriffe 'öffentlich' und 'privat' in der Geschichte und bei den Historikern," *Saeculum* 49 (1998): 177.

7 Nummedal refers to Michael Maier's understanding of the revelatory nature of the alchemical processes, and with their enigmatic content, the experimental flasks in Orthelius' experiment bear some semantic resemblance to both the complex revealing/concealing quality of parables—as, for example, in the Gospel of Mark 4.11–12: "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside, everything comes in parables; in order that they may indeed look, but not perceive, and may indeed listen, but not understand." See Mette Birkedal Bruun, *Parables: Bernard of Clairvaux's Mapping of Spiritual Topography* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 149. It also brings to mind the practice of encryption that would allow outsiders to read, but not to understand a given text. See Hugo André Flores Fernandes Araújo, "Secrecy, War, and Communication: Challenges and Strategies of the General-Government of the State of Brazil in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century," in Natacha Klein Käfer, ed., *Privacy at Sea: Practices, Spaces, and Communication in Maritime History* (Cham: Springer International, 2024), 173–97.

played by treatises (for instance, Körner and Nummedal), sermons (Frank Jensen and Klein Käfer), and libels (Siegemund) as highly public utterances. As several chapters show, calibrating trust also offers a form of protection. Such control may be exercised by carefully monitoring who receives what, *in casu*, medical information (Rankin) or Anna's instigation of a four-stage initiatory process that tested the servants who were, eventually, allowed into her workshop and distilleries (Bartkowski). Scale matters in relation to privacy. Nummedal shows how the small size of the alchemical flasks requires that the viewer is close by, which is a practical form of exclusion. While most of these boundaries are horizontal, working along spatial and or social axes that distinguish individuals and groups from communities and the wider society, Körner provides an example of boundary-drawing along a vertical axis – from the collective above ground to the isolation and privacy in the subterranean mine.

Such (spatial) markers of privacy are, however, not always material. Siegemund explains that while the material boundary of the home has little effect when it comes to carving out privacy over and against public defamation or the wildfire of rumours, the boundaries drawn by the shared stewardship of the common good can be truly significant for upholding privacy. Astorri addresses another such more evasive boundary – namely, "the threshold of conscience (a place where oaths cannot be annulled) and public life (church ceremonies, ranks in society, penance)."[8]

Far from claiming any robust opposition between privacy and that which is public or communal, the chapters of this volume throw light on a series of malleable thresholds. In the words of Frank Jensen and Klein Käfer, their research into the exchange between Anna and Selnecker that oscillates between absolutes and flexible interpretations thereof demonstrates "how potential issues resulting from this tension between prescriptive text and lived experience could be resolved within private interactions."[9] This example shows that privacy is not in opposition to societal norms and standards, but rather permeated by them. Thus, Anna and Selnecker's rather private correspondence about personal health is pervaded by public expectations (Frank Jensen and Klein Käfer), the miners' segregation abounded in encounters with creatures and perceptions of contemporary lore (Körner), and individual, private actions determined the robustness of the common good (Siegemund).

Privacy is defined by what it is and is not. The chapters of this volume highlight both the resemblances and the contrasts of privacy. Thus, we learn that in sev-

8 See Astorri's chapter in this volume.

9 See Frank Jensen and Klein Käfer's chapter in this volume.

eral of the examples involving the products made in laboratories and distilleries, privacy comes close to secrecy (Bartkowski, Nummedal, Rankin); in other cases, the focus rests instead on the similarity of privacy with solitude and individualism (Körner) or with intimacy and familiarity (Frank Jensen and Klein Käfer). Apart from the singular miners of Körner's study, all chapters approach privacy as a relational phenomenon that connects, for example, Anna and the members of the recipe network (Rankin), Anna and her trusted servants and collaborators (Bartkowski), Orthelius and Elector Johann Georg I (Nummedal), Pflugk with his peers and relatives (Siegemund), and the couples who marry clandestinely (Astorri).

Privacy is understood in contrast to public appearance and status (Frank Jensen and Klein Käfer), authoritative norms (Frank Jensen and Klein Käfer, Rankin), general dissemination (Bartkowski, Nummedal, and Rankin), visibility and community (Körner), parental wishes and juridical powers (Astorri), as well as the public and political in relation to the common good (Siegemund). While most chapters show privacy as potency in the sense that it enables agents to act, Siegemund underlines that in the early modern period, privacy was often seen in opposition to – or even as a threat to – the common good.

The chapters largely focus on people of power or close to power. This all-too-familiar bias in historical research points to the availability of sources. However, it also tells us a good deal about the agency to carve out privacy for oneself in the early modern world. It takes resources to create distance between oneself and others, whether by exercising control of one's physical space or by mastering one's personal circumstances as well as the individuals and networks the information thereof may be available to. This is particularly prominent in Siegemund's study of the difficulties of protecting honour against ubiquitous slander. Anna of Saxony is another case in point. As shown by Frank Jensen and Klein Käfer, the serious measures with which Peucer's charges against her were countered imply the danger of rumours and allegations running wild. Underlining the issue of privacy as a privilege, Frank Jensen and Klein Käfer's chapter also reveals that the ducal couple had the means to stop Peucer's dangerous accusations and to reinstall the orthodox reputation of Anna's laboratory, as well as a certain degree of protective privacy around its production. Körner's chapter offers a different perspective. The miners were not (yet) well-off, and their access to privacy was a prerequisite to their labour rather than the effect of an effort to shield a perceived value.

9.2 Privacy Insights

The case of early modern Saxony exemplifies some general traits regarding notions and practices related to privacy that may offer insights across centuries.[10] Privacy is a pause from communal engagement.[11] Körner's chapter shows this in a material sense, highlighting the spatial and temporal pocket that the solitary miners inhabit before returning to communal life and its people, customs and traditions, and collaborative tasks – in short, to their society. This pause is not a complete isolation. Taken as paradigmatic figures, the miners still belong to their community, its norms, values, structures, and beliefs when they are underground. In the same way, the manufacturers of medicine and metals are by no means cut off from society. In fact, it is exactly their societal bonds and their implied risks of defamation, criminal allegation, misuse of knowledge, and suchlike which make privacy desirable. This caesural quality is underlined by the fact that in these examples, publicity is never far away – recipes must be turned into medicaments in order to be helpful, alchemists must venture out of the laboratories in order to present their findings, and letters are sent and potentially passed on in order to activate networks.

Scholars working on privacy today underline its contextual character. While the community looms large albeit somewhat anonymously in lawyers Warren and Brandeis' famous 1890 claim that privacy means being 'let alone,' above all, by the prying eyes of the press,[12] privacy has increasingly become the interest of social scientists of many kinds. For example, social psychologist Irwin Altman understands privacy as "a boundary control process whereby people sometimes make themselves open and accessible to others and sometimes close themselves off from others."[13] Psychologist Barry Schwartz describes how privacy boundaries organise societies vertically and horizontally, and he underlines the power nego-

10 It is the scholarly ambition of the Centre for Privacy Studies to explore ways in which historical research can be a resource when dealing with contemporary issues. Privacy is a particularly relevant topic for this exploration because not only does the term carry a weighty contemporary baggage, but it also has strong historical roots, be they the terminological antecedents in Latin, cognates in Western vernacular languages, or the practices, theories, regulations, perceptions, and tacit understandings that contributed to the shaping of notions of privacy and the private.

11 We owe this insight to our PRIVACY colleague, Johannes Ljungberg.

12 Samuel D. Warren and Louis D. Brandeis, "The Right to Privacy," *Harvard Law Review* 4, no. 5 (1890): 193–220.

13 Irwin Altman, "Privacy Regulation: Culturally Universal or Cultural Specific?" *Journal of Social Issues* 33, no. 3 (1977): 67.

tiation and manifestation inherent in the maintenance and disruption of privacy.[14] The orientation towards community is central in information scientist Helen Nissenbaum's understanding of the right to privacy as the "right to *appropriate* flow of personal information" in a flexible process that is determined by "contextual integrity."[15] Nissenbaum argues that this contextually defined privacy is buttressed by societal norms. Finally, science and technology scholars such as Paul Dourish are particularly interested in the cultural and social embeddedness of technologies and their inherent privacy concerns.[16] Each of these definitions inspires echoes, nuances, counter-definitions, and instances of dissent.[17]

The chapters of this volume contribute several important insights to this ongoing discussion on the social embeddedness of privacy. They highlight values such as a thirst for and a trust in different forms of knowledge – or, in today's lingo, 'information' – and the keen sense that such knowledge should not be broadly available but must be guarded according to proprietary norms and practices regarding inclusion and exclusion based on social, religious, intellectual, and material conditions. The historical cases reveal the blatant biases and invite us to search for similar blind spots today. The chapters also point to the religious and medical belief systems *en vogue* in early modern Saxony, from Lutheran to Galenic outlooks, inviting us to have a closer look at current beliefs influencing notions and practices of privacy.

Privacy also requires spatial agency and access. The chapters abound in spaces that afford some degree of privacy or – contrary, perhaps, to our expectations – do not offer any privacy, as is the case in Siegemund's study of the porous walls and their failure to protect the inhabitants of a house from the uninhibited flow of information. Pride of place is held by the workshops, distilleries, and laboratories of

14 Barry Schwartz, "The Social Psychology of Privacy," *American Journal of Sociology* 73, no. 6 (1968): 741–52.

15 Helen Nissenbaum, *Privacy in Context: Technology, Policy, and the Integrity of Social Life* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), 127 (Nissenbaum's italics). James B. Rule questions Nissenbaum's suggestion that the norms underlying this "contextual integrity" can be identified. See James B. Rule, "Contextual Integrity and its Discontents: A Critique of Helen Nissenbaum's Normative Arguments," *Policy & Internet* 11, no. 3 (September 2019): 255–79.

16 See Paul Dourish and Ken Anderson, "Collective Information Practice: Exploring Privacy and Security as Social and Cultural Phenomena," *Human-Computer Interaction* 21, no. 3 (2006): 319–42. For a discussion of Dourish and Anderson and the contributions of other science and technology practitioners, see Katja Pape de Neergaard, Brit Ross Winthereik, and Mette Birkedal Bruun, "Privacy as Process: Subtle negotiations of privacy in the digital home during lockdown," *New Media and Society* (forthcoming).

17 For an argument against Inness' linking of privacy and intimacy, see Beate Roessler, *The Value of Privacy* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005), 5.

Anna and August as well as other producers of medicines, alchemical knowledge, and products. Spatial privacy can be achieved by shutting people out or, as Bartkowski shows, by carefully surveying and testing those who are allowed in.

Scholars who have worked on spatial privacy, both of the past and in the present, have largely focused on the house and its rooms. They remind us that historically, houses did not have the walled-off quality that was later associated with Western households[18] and, as Orlin shows, privacy in the home was more readily available in the open space of the gallery which offered no hiding for potential eavesdroppers.[19] Architectural historians are interested in how the introduction of the corridor came to distribute access to domestic space in a way that fostered privacy.[20] At the same time, chambers and closets remain an area of interest for scholars in pursuit of even fragile and momentary forms of privacy.[21] Especially in the medieval and early modern periods, indoor privacy may have been hard to come by, which directed pursuits of privacy in the direction of gardens, parks, and wild nature.

The chapters of this volume bring to light several other forms of spatial privacy, with the workspace in the laboratory and in the miners' shafts and tunnels as two prominent examples. They also point to different kinds of private activities other than sex, sleep, murder, suicide, or criminal plotting that are characteristic of the bedroom,[22] the study or devotional immersion conducted in the *studiolo* or the chamber[23] or, finally, the display of select pieces of art conducted in intimate

18 See Joachim Eibach, Inken Schmidt-Voges, and Roman Bonderer, eds, *Das Haus in der Geschichte Europas: Ein Handbuch* (Oldenbourg: De Gruyter, 2016); Joachim Eibach and Margareth Lanzinger, eds., *The Routledge History of the Domestic Sphere in Europe 16th to 19th Century* (Abingdon & New York: Routledge, 2020). See also the problematisation of the conflation of private and domestic in Erica Longfellow, "Public, Private, and the Household in Early Seventeenth-Century England," *Journal of British Studies* 45, no. 2 (2006): 313–34.

19 Lena Cowen Orlin, "Galleries," in *Locating Privacy in Tudor London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 226–61.

20 See Robin Evans' classic essay "Figures, Doors and Passages," in *Translations from Drawing to Building and Other Essays* (London: Architectural Association, 1996), 55–91.

21 See Andrew M. Riggsby, "'Public' and 'private' in Roman culture: the case of the cubiculum," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 10 (1997): 36–56; Kristina Sessa, "Christianity and the Cubiculum: Spiritual Politics and Domestic Space in Late Antique Rome," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 15, no. 2 (2007): 171–204. For references to scholarship on the early modern period, see Bruun, "Towards an Approach to Early Modern Privacy," 44.

22 See Riggsby, "'Public' and 'private' in Roman culture."

23 For references to scholarship on religious activities in early modern closets, see Bruun, "Towards an Approach to Early Modern Privacy," 44.

spaces in the home.[24] The manual, productive and, in some cases, intellectual work of mining, medical production, and alchemical experiments require a different kind of privacy reflected in the spaces in which these activities take place. The chapters thus indicate a productive dimension of privacy which is particularly prominent in Körner's example of mining. Given the convergence of mining, alchemical production, medical practices, as well as the general attention to one's soul characteristic of the early modern period, the case of Saxony brings particular awareness to privacy as a locus of transformation. The chapters show how natural resources, chemical materials, herbs, selves, and physical bodies are worked upon in privacy. Since the equation of privacy and domesticity – bound up with leisure and family life – is one prominent dimension of today's understanding of privacy, this productive dimension of privacy has largely disappeared from view. As the domestic is being questioned and expanded during our time of trends accelerated by the pandemic that reformulate the home into a site of varied social and functional constellations, privacy linked to a monofunctional idea of the domestic has become hollow.

In early modern Saxony, carving out privacy is a conscious act driven by motivation and with a particular purpose in mind. Often, there is a reason to pursue the experience of privacy – privacy for certain relationships, privacy for thoughts, emotions, knowledge, and experiences that one is not willing to share with anyone or beyond a selected group. In these chapters, motivations circle around material gain (Bartkowski, Körner, and Nummedal), medical insight and, ultimately, healing (Rankin), the opportunity to conduct exchanges that are somewhat removed from the public arena (Rankin, Frank Jensen and Klein Käfer), and cultivating relationships that are considered suspicious or unwanted by family members (Astorri).

The Right to Privacy stipulated by the Human Rights Convention and similar constitutions suggest that contemporary motivations for seeking privacy are related to basic human conditions and continue historical discussions on the connections of privacy with freedom, subjectivity, and dignity.[25] However, current discussions on the limits of privacy in relation to, for example, tracking contagion, catching potentially subversive activities, fighting crime, or simply technological advancements are

24 Riggsby, "'Public' and 'private' in Roman culture," 38; Alexandra Kocsis, "Multimedia Conversations: Love and Lovesickness in Sixteenth-century Italian Single-sheet Prints," in *Tracing Private Conversations in Early Modern Europe: Talking in Everyday Life*, eds. Johannes Ljungberg and Natacha Klein Käfer (Cham: Springer International, 2024), 283–312.

25 See Rafael Capurro, "Privacy: An intercultural perspective," *Ethics and Information Technology* 7, no. 4 (2005): 37–47; Danielle K. Citron, *The Fight for Privacy: Protecting Dignity, Identity, and Love in the Digital Age* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2022).

a reminder that the potentially stark contrast of privacy and the common good addressed in Siegemund's chapter is not only an early modern phenomenon.

Historical research reminds us of the many practical reasons for seeking out privacy. Cases such as the ones presented here thus redirect discussions of privacy away from conceptual debates about principles and values towards the practical needs of specific human beings in particular circumstances. The historical cases, however, also remind us that not all sections of society – be they in the past or in the present – have equal access to claiming privacy.

Finally, practices related to privacy come with some form of deprivation. Privacy retains its link to the negation inherent in the Latin term '*privatus*' (freed, liberated, deprived, robbed). In the Latin context, it is the deprivation of an office that marks the private status, space, or person. In the chapters of this volume, we see other forms of deprivation at play. This is a principal theme in Körner's analysis of the onerous conditions below ground and the miners' deprivation not only of company, but also of comfort as well as physical and mental security. Although few of the other workspaces examined in the volume are as harsh, this example does invite us to look for deprivations and helps us see, for example, how Anna's commitment to secrecy around her recipes trumps her bond to her daughter (Rankin) and how jurists considered clandestine marriages dogged by the lack of parental and societal approval (Astorri).

Historical examples remind us to pay attention to the wide array of factors that influence how different people carve out privacy. The Saxon cases of this book show how different human beings created, sought, lacked, and valued privacy, displaying the means, motivations, and abilities of the presented actors to create privacy and the ways in which their individual conditions determined their agency in relation to carving out such privacy.

Bibliography

Altman, Irwin. "Privacy Regulation: Culturally Universal or Cultural Specific?" *Journal of Social Issues* 33, no. 3 (1977): 66–84.

Araújo, Hugo André Flores Fernandes. "Secrecy, War, and Communication: Challenges and Strategies of the General-Government of the State of Brazil in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century." In *Privacy at Sea*: *Practices, Spaces, and Communication in Maritime History*, edited by Natacha Klein Käfer, 173–97. Cham: Springer International, 2024.

Astorri, Paolo, and Lars Cyril Nørgaard. "Publicus–privatus: The Divine Foundations of Authority in Dietrich Reinking." *Journal of Early Modern Christianity* 9, no. 1 (2022): 93–119.

Bruun, Mette Birkedal. "Towards an Approach to Early Modern Privacy: The Retirement of the Great Condé." In *Early Modern Privacy*: *Sources and Approaches*, edited by Michaël Green, Lars Cyril Nørgaard, and Mette Birkedal Bruun, 12–60. Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2022.

Bruun, Mette Birkedal. *Parables: Bernard of Clairvaux's Mapping of Spiritual Topography*. Leiden: Brill, 2007.

Capurro, Rafael. "Privacy: An intercultural perspective." *Ethics and Information Technology* 7, no. 4 (2005): 37–47.

Citron, Danielle K. *The Fight for Privacy: Protecting Dignity, Identity, and Love in the Digital Age*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2022.

Dourish, Paul, and Ken Anderson. "Collective Information Practice: Exploring Privacy and Security as Social and Cultural Phenomena," *Human-Computer Interaction* 21, no. 3 (2006): 319–42.

Eibach, Joachim, Inken Schmidt-Voges, and Roman Bonderer, eds. *Das Haus in der Geschichte Europas: Ein Handbuch*. Oldenbourg: De Gruyter, 2016.

Eibach, Joachim, and Margareth Lanzinger, eds. *The Routledge History of the Domestic Sphere in Europe 16th to 19th Century*. Abingdon & New York: Routledge, 2020.

Evans, Robin. *Translations from Drawing to Building and Other Essays*. London: Architectural Association, 1996.

Kocsis, Alexandra. "Multimedia Conversations: Love and Lovesickness in Sixteenth-century Italian Single-sheet Prints." In *Tracing Private Conversations in Early Modern Europe: Talking in Everyday Life*, edited by Johannes Ljungberg and Natacha Klein Käfer, 283–312. Cham: Springer International, 2024.

Longfellow, Erica. "Public, Private, and the Household in Early Seventeenth-Century England." *Journal of British Studies* 45, no. 2 (2006): 313–34.

Neergaard, Katja Pape de, Brit Ross Winthereik, and Mette Birkedal Bruun, "Privacy as Process: Subtle negotiations of privacy in the digital home during lockdown." *New Media and Society*, forthcoming.

Nissenbaum, Helen. *Privacy in Context: Technology, policy, and the integrity of social life*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010.

Orlin, Lena Cowen. *Locating Privacy in Tudor London*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Riggsby, Andrew M. "'Public' and 'private' in Roman culture: the case of the cubiculum." *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 10 (1997): 36–56.

Roessler, Beate. *The Value of Privacy*. Cambridge: Polity, 2005.

Rule, James B. "Contextual Integrity and its Discontents: A Critique of Helen Nissenbaum's Normative Arguments." *Policy & Internet* 11, no. 3 (September 2019): 255–79.

Sessa, Kristina. "Christianity and the Cubiculum: Spiritual Politics and Domestic Space in Late Antique Rome," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 15, no. 2 (2007): 171–204.

Schwartz, Barry. "The Social Psychology of Privacy." *American Journal of Sociology* 73, no. 6 (1968): 741–52.

von Moos, Peter. "Die Begriffe 'öffentlich' und 'privat' in der Geschichte und bei den Historikern." *Saeculum* 49 (1998): 161–193.

Warren, Samuel D., and Louis D. Brandeis. "The Right to Privacy." *Harvard Law Review* 4, no. 5 (1890): 193–220.

Winterling, Aloys. "'Öffentlich' und 'privat' im kaiserzeitlichen Rom." In *Gegenwärtige Antike – antike Gegenwarten: Kolloquium zum 60. Geburtstag von Rolf Rilinger*, edited by Tassilo Schmidt, Winfried Schmitz, and Aloys Winterling, 223–44. Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2005.

List of Contributors

Paolo Astorri (paa@teol.ku.dk) is Assistant Professor of Legal History at the Centre for Privacy Studies, University of Copenhagen (DNRF138), and Associate Scholar at the LAWINSEL Project at the University of Cork. He is the author of *Lutheran Theology and Contract Law in Early Modern Germany (ca. 1520–1720)*, published in Brill's new series 'Law and Religion in the Early Modern Period' in 2019. He has published numerous articles on the legal aspects of the Protestant Reformation.

Ariane Bartkowski (ariane.bartkowski@gmail.com), born in Meissen in 1986, studied Medieval History and Philosophy at Chemnitz University of Technology. She then completed her doctorate, also at Chemnitz University of Technology, in 2017 with the topic 'Princely laboratory partners in alchemical practice – the network of the electoral couple August and Anna of Saxony.' From 2017 to 2021, she worked as an employee at Meissen Cathedral. Her responsibilities included managing the archive, working in administration and guiding guests. During this time, she also worked as a freelancer for the Schlossberg Museum in Chemnitz on various projects. Since 2021, she lives in Dresden (Saxony, Germany) and is head of the records management for the Diocese of Dresden-Meißen.

Mette Birkedal Bruun (mbb@teol.ku.dk) is Professor of Church History at the University of Copenhagen and Director of The Danish National Research Foundation Centre for Privacy Studies (DNRF138, 2017–2027). Bruun is a member of the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters and the editor-in-chief of Privacy Studies Journal. Her research interests include early modern devotion and the monastic movement. She has authored the monographs *The Unfamiliar Familiar: Armand-Jean de Rancé (1626–1700) between Withdrawal and Engagement* (Copenhagen: 2017) and *Parables: Bernard of Clairvaux's Mapping of Spiritual Topography* (Leiden: 2007) and edited, among other volumes, *Early Modern Privacy: Sources and Approaches* (with Michaël Green and Lars Cyril Nørgaard, Leiden: 2021), *The Cambridge Companion to the Cistercian Order* (Cambridge: 2013), *Commonplace Culture in Western Europe in the Early Modern Period I* (with David Cowling, Leuven: 2011), and *Negotiating Heritage: Memories of the Middle Ages* (with Stephanie Glaser, Turnhout: 2008).

Søren Frank Jensen (sfj@teol.ku.dk) is a postdoctoral researcher at Centre for Privacy Studies, University of Copenhagen (DNRF138). He earned his PhD from University of Copenhagen in 2023, with a thesis exploring how religious ideals shaped notions of privacy in sixteenth-century Lutheran devotional literature. He was recently awarded the Carlsberg Foundation's Internationalisation Fellowship and will undertake a project at the University of Hamburg titled 'Mines, Oceans, Comets: Natural Hazards between Individual Agency and Communal Responsibility in Religious Texts (1550–1650).' His research interests include the reception history of the Bible, print culture, privacy studies, and environmental history.

Natacha Klein Käfer (nkk@teol.ku.dk) is Assistant Professor at the Centre for Privacy Studies, University of Copenhagen (DNRF138). She is the research leader of the HEALTH theme at the Centre for Privacy Studies, the research coordinator of the project Privacy Black & White, and the head of the research group Latin American Privacy Studies. Her research focuses on healing knowledge and its connections to privacy in the early modern period and on transcontinental networks of knowledge. She has published on practices of knowledge production, privacy in maritime history, and healer-patient confidentiality from a historical perspective.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111264776-010

Natalie Patricia Körner (npk@teol.ku.dk) is Associate Professor at the Institute of Architecture and Design of the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts – Architecture, Design and Conservation and at the Centre for Privacy Studies (DNRF138) at the University of Copenhagen. In her recent architecture history research, she has focused on the experience of privacy from a spatial perspective. Her research interests revolve around concepts of nature and the environment and how these inform architecture and spatial imaginaries. Körner was educated as an architect at Cambridge University and at the ETH, Zurich and has worked for several practices including Zaha Hadid and Studio Olafur Eliasson.

Tara Nummedal (tara_nummedal@brown.edu) is the John Nickoll Provost's Professor of History at Brown University (USA), where she teaches courses in early modern European history and the history of science. She is the author of *Alchemy and Authority in the Holy Roman Empire* (University of Chicago Press, 2007) and *Anna Zieglerin and the Lion's Blood: Alchemy and End Times in Reformation Germany* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019). With Donna Bilak she co-edited *Furnace and Fugue: A Digital Edition of Michael Maier's Atalanta fugiens with Scholarly Commentary* (University of Virginia Press, 2020), a digital publication on a musical alchemical emblem book, Atalanta fugiens (1618).

Alisha Rankin (alisha.rankin@tufts.edu) is Professor of History and Chair of the History Department at Tufts University. She is the author of *Panaceia's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany* (University of Chicago Press, 2013) and *The Poison Trials: Wonder Drugs, Experiment, and the Battle for Authority in Renaissance Science* (University of Chicago Press, 2021), and she is a co-editor of the journal Bulletin of the History of Medicine. She has published numerous articles on medicine and science in early modern Europe, focusing particularly on the history of pharmacy, the history of experiments, and women's history.

Jan Siegemund (jan.siegemund@uni-bielefeld.de) is a postdoctoral research fellow in the department of pre-modern history at Bielefeld University. During his doctoral studies, he was a member of the Collaborative Research Center 1285, Invectivity. Constellations and Dynamics of Disparagement, at Technische Universität Dresden. He received his doctorate with a thesis *entitled Öffentlichkeit als Waffe. Schmähschriften als Mittel des Konfliktaustrags in Kursachsen in der zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts*, published in 2024. His research interests include the history of communications and the public sphere, criminal history, and economic history. His current research project focuses on rumours as a form of uncertain communication in late medieval and early modern long-distance trade.

Index

People

Agricola, Georgius (1494–1555) 97, 99, 101–6, 108–9, 111–12, 114–20, 122–3
Alberti, Leon Battista (1404–1472) 99, 118
Anna of Saxony (princess of Denmark, 1532–1585) 1–3, 10, 15–36, 41–56, 61, 65, 135, 176, 179
Apel, Johann (1486–1536) 165
August of Saxony, Elector (1526–1586) 3, 9–11, 21, 43–5, 61–2, 102, 166

Bachmann, Daniel 64
Balthasar, Wurm 27
Becher, Johann Joachim (1635–1682) 61
Beuther, David 64
Bèze, Théodore de (1519–1605) 163–4
Böttger, Johann Friedrich (1682–1719) 61

Catilina, Lucius Sergius (ca. 108–62 BCE) 143
Christian I of Saxony (1560–1591) 129, 136–7
Cureus, Joachim (1532–1573) 45

Dorothea Katharina of Brandenburg-Ansbach, Burggräfin of Meissen (1538–1604) 32
Dorothea of Mansfeld (1493–1578) 23, 28, 30–1, 73
Dorothea of Saxe-Lauenburg, Queen Consort of Denmark (1511–1571) 28
Dorothea of Schönburg (1523–1572) 26
Dorothea Susanne of Pfalz (1544–1592) 65

Ehrenfried Walther of Tschirnhaus (1651–1708) 61
Elisabeth of Mecklenburg, (Elisabeth of Denmark and Norway, 1524–1586) 73
Elisabeth of Saxony, Countess Palatinate (1552–1590) 25–6, 29–31, 33, 50–1, 65–6, 73
Elizabeth I of England, Queen (1533–1603) 21

Faber, Christoph (d. 1612, Bürgermeister of Zwickau) 143–4, 149
Filarete (c.1400–c.1469) 99, 121–3
Frederick I of Württemberg (1593–1608) 67
Frider, Peter (d. 1616) 167
Frischlin, Nicodemus (1547–1590, Humanist) 129

Grubbe, Corfitz 46

Hemmingsen, Niels (1513–1600) 163–4, 169, 170
Horst, Jakob (1537–1600) 73
Hutter, Elias (1553–1605 between 1609) 72

Jenitz, Hans (d. 1589) 63
Jenitz, Hans (d. 1593) 32
Joachim II of Brandenburg (1505–1571) 64
John Frederick I, Elector of Saxony (1503–1554) 5
Johann Georg I. von Sachsen, Elector (1585–1656) 77–8, 81, 83, 92, 179
Johann Kasimir, Count Palatinate (1543–1592) 25, 29, 51
Johann(es) Kunckel of Löwenstern (1630–1703) 61
Johannes Unter den Linden 69, 71

Katharina of Kolowrat-Nowohradsky (d. 1583) 28
Kilian, Hans 73
Klein, Balthasar (d. 1556) 69
Klein, Katharina 69–71
Kling, Melchior (1504–1571) 165
Kohlreuter, Sigismund (1534–1599) 74
Kratzbeer, Michael (d. 1622, Zwickau Council member) 143, 146–8
Krosigk, Hans Georg (c. 1526–1581) 28

Leopold I of Vienna (1640–1705) 61
Lonitzer, Adam (Lonicerus) (1528–1586) 74
Loser, Agnes 71
Loser, Hans of (1531–1580) 71
Loß, Nicholas Joachim von (1576–1633) 81–2
Luther, Martin (1483–1546) 5, 43, 47, 162–3, 168

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111264776-011

Magdalena of Mansfeld 30–1
Maier, Michael (1568–1622) 78, 84–6, 88, 92
Maino, Giasone del (1435–1519) 168
Margareta of Hohnstein-Vierraden (1555–1606) 26
Margareta of Schleinitz 30, 33
Melanchthon, Philipp (1497–1560) 44–5, 51
Merbitz, Valten 64
Moritz of Hessen-Kassel (1572–1632) 67
Moritz of Saxony (1521–1553) 1, 5, 69, 102
Montot, Anne de 32–3
Mother Anna (midwife) 21, 23
Mother Dorothea (midwife) 23–4, 30, 34–5
Mother Dreschler (midwife) 34–6
Mother Este (midwife) 26
Mother Marta (midwife) 31–2
Mother Walpp (midwife) 32

Neefe, Apollonia (d. 1578) 68–9, 71
Neefe, Johann (1499–1574) 27–8, 32, 48–9

Orthelius, Andreas (fl. 1630s) 77–93, 176–7, 179

Paracelsus (Theophrastus Bombastus of Hohenheim, 1493/1494–1541) 60, 64
Peucer, Caspar (1525–1602) 45, 51–2
Pfinzing, Martin (1521–72) 15–17, 19–21, 34–6
Pithopoeius, Christoph 73

Rascalon, Wilhelm (1525/26–after 1591) 25
Rösslin, Eucharius (1470–1526) 16–17, 35
Rösslin, Eucharius the Younger (Rhodion) (d. 1554) 74
Rüxleben, Cornelius von (1525–1590) 32

Salmuth, Johann (1552–1622, Court Preacher) 129
Schlick, Hieronymus (d. 1619) 74
Schönwetter, Johann Theobald (1575–1657) 167
Schurff, Hieronymus (1481–1554) 165
Schütz, Christian (1526–1594) 45
Sebald (Sebalt) Schwertzer (Schwerzer, Schwärzer oder Schwärtzer) (1552–1598) 64
Selnecker, Nikolaus (1530–1593) 41–56, 176–8
Stössel, Johann (1524–1578) 45
Strang, Ursula 71

Trautson, Brigitta (Brigida) (1510/1515–1576) 73
Trenbach, Urban of (1525–1598) 67

Unwirtin, Katharina 34

Vitruvius (c. 80–70 BC–after c. 15 BC) 99, 120–1
Vogel, Paul (ca. 1527–1589) 73

Walther Hermann Ryffs (Ryf, Reiff, Reif, Rueff, and Ruff, latinised as Gualtherus Hermenius Rivius/Ryffus), (c. 1500–1548) 74
Warnsdorff, Elisabeth Lymarin 20
Wernerin, Katharina 23
Wesenbeck, Matthaeus (1531–1586) 169
Wilhelm of Hohnstein-Vierraden (1518–1570) 26
Wilhelm the Younger of Oppersdorf (d. 1598) 28
Wolfersdorf Anna of 25
Wolfgang II of Hohenlohe (1546–1610) 67

Zieglerin, Anna Maria (ca. 1550–1575) 66

Scholars mentioned in the text

Arenfeldt, Pernille 16–17

Brandeis, Louis D. 180
Bruun, Mette Birkedal 18, 20

Dourish, Paul 181
Duden, Barbara 24

Käfer, Natacha Klein 21

Lindemann, Mary 18–19

McClive, Cathy 18, 33
McTavish, Liane 18, 33
Moos, Peter von 176–7

Neighbors, Dustin 19, 21
Nissenbaum, Helen 181

Orlin, Lena Cowen 182

Rössler, Beate 20

Schwartz, Barry 180–1

Warren, Samuel D. 180
Wunder, Heide 18

Places

Annaberg-Buchholz 99–100
Annaburg 21–3, 61, 66, 68–9, 70–4
Artern 131, 136–8

Brandenburg 61, 64

Chemnitz 102
Copenhagen 70

Dippoldiswalde 70
Dresden (Kreuzkirche Dresden, Residenzschloss Dresden) 1–2, 11, 15, 21–3, 27, 29–30, 34, 42, 44–5, 48–9, 51–2, 56, 59–75, 77, 81–2, 86–7, 90, 129, 131, 133–4, 140

Florence 59
Frankfurt am Main 73

Görlitz 67, 70
Grünhaide 69

Heidelberg 32, 66, 70–1
Holy Roman Empire 2

Jena 45
Joachimsthal (Czech: Jáchymov) 69

Kirchberg (Wagram) 67

Leipzig 3, 5, 45, 65, 69, 71, 73, 160, 166

Mansfeld county 137

Nuremberg 15–16, 20, 34

Oberstockstall 67
Olbernhau 34
Oldenburg 45

Prague 59

Saxony 1–11, 15–36, 59–75, 81, 85, 87, 90, 97–100, 102, 124, 161, 166, 172
Schwarzenberg 71
Schweidnitz (Czech: Svídnice) 73
Stolpen 73
Stolpern 22

Torgau 22–3, 66, 70–1, 73

Vienna 59, 61, 69

Weidenhain 70–1
Weikersheim 67
Wittenberg 5, 73, 161, 163–4, 167–9
Wolfenbüttel 45

Zwickau 15, 17, 19–21, 34, 36, 70, 131, 143–7, 150–1

Terms

access/accessibility 177, 179–82, 184
adept 63
agency 177, 179, 181, 184
agriculture 85
alchemist(s) 5, 59, 61, 63–4, 66–7, 72, 74–5, 78–81, 85, 92, 180
alchemy 44, 59–75, 77–93
Annaberger Bergaltar, 1521 99–100, 106, 116–18
appearance 179
aqua apoplectica 42, 50
aqua vitae 22–3, 42–3, 50, 65, 68
Atalanta fugiens (book by Michael Maier) 77, 84–6, 88
authority 175–7
automaton 90

balneum roris (vapor bath) 83
birthing chamber 17, 35
boundary 177–8, 180

chamber 176, 182
charity 23
cherry pit 90
childbirth 15–36
closet 182
Collective 98, 103–4, 109, 111–14, 124
color 83, 87, 89
common good 132, 139–42, 144, 147–8, 152–3, 178–9, 184
community 175–81
conflict management 129
conscience 161, 165, 169–70, 177–8
Consistory 167–8
control 178–80
correspondence 43, 45–6, 51, 176, 178
courts, princely courts 80, 91
crime 180, 182–3

danger 98, 101, 103–4, 109, 113–14, 123
De Re Metallica (1556) 97, 99, 102–6, 108–9, 112, 114, 116–20, 122–3
Decalogue (Ten Commandments) 163, 164, 169
Decknamen 78
defamation 178, 180
demon 101, 103, 109, 112–15, 117, 125
desert 98, 100–1, 111, 114, 123–4
desert father 98, 113–18
devotion 43, 50, 54–6
distillation 22, 41, 50
distillery 68, 71

Electoral court 9
Electoral laboratory 82, 89
environmental agents 117–18
experience 59, 62, 67–8, 72
experiment 176–7, 183
extraction 97–125
extreme environment 97–125

first architect 97–125
flask(s) 77, 81, 83, 87, 89–91, 93, 175–8
Formula of Concord 5, 45
funeral sermon 53

generative power of nature 81, 83, 90
gold 59–60, 63–7, 72, 74–5

health 10, 41–52, 54–6, 123
hermit 97–125
honour 135, 140–1, 144–6, 148, 153, 164, 179
honourable women 27–8
hut 98–9, 111, 116–24

infrastructure 99, 109, 111, 116–17, 120–2, 124
isolation 98, 104, 109, 112–13, 178, 180

knowledge 1–11, 97, 101–4, 110–15, 117–18, 123–5
Kunstkammer 90, 93

laboratory 59, 62, 66–7, 74
law 1, 6–7, 11
letters 41–3, 48, 50–2, 54–5
libel 129–53
library 61–2, 67, 72, 74
Lutheran Reformation 4, 6
lying-in period 25–7, 35

machines 99, 115, 117–19, 122
marriage 7, 11
marriage, clandestine 159–71
medicine 22–3, 26–8, 41–4, 49–50, 52, 54–5, 61, 64–6, 74
midwife/midwifery 9–10, 15–36
miner 97–125
miniatures 90, 92
mining 9, 11, 59, 61, 63–4, 79, 85, 90–2, 97–9, 101–3, 107, 109–18, 120–1, 123–4
mother of pearl 83, 87
mountains 97–8, 103–4, 106, 109–10, 112–14, 116, 118, 120, 124–5

nature 109–12, 115, 123–4

oath 161, 166–71
Öffentlichkeit 131–2, 134, 141, 152
Open House 133–9, 153
Opera philosophica 77–93

parental consent 160–70
patronage 45, 52
pharmacy 66
philosophers' stone 81
philosophical field 77, 85–6, 88–91
physician 47, 49, 51
pregnancy 17–19, 24–5, 28–9, 31, 34, 50
presence 101, 103–4, 112–15, 117
privacy 1–11, 41–56, 97–125, 160–1, 171
private, agreement 169
private, citizen 169
psalms 42, 46–8, 52
public interest 129, 139–53

recipe(s) 21, 23, 26, 42, 49–50
Religion 4–5, 7, 10
remedies 21, 25–7
remedy-brewer 43, 51

sal naturae (salt of nature) 83, 86–8
Schmalkaldic War 5
seclusion 109, 112
secrets/secrecy 10, 77–9, 91–3
seed of gold 83, 86
self (development of) 125
shaming rituals 151–2
shed 98, 100, 116–17
silver 77–8, 92
smelting 77–9, 91–3
solitude 101, 103, 109
sorcery 51
spaces 7–9, 11
spiritual water 83, 86
sulphur 87
superstition 109

theologian 41–6, 51–2, 55
tincture 81, 85, 87
transmutation 66, 72

underground/subterranean 98, 103–4, 106, 109, 111–13, 115, 117–18, 122–3
urban revolt 144, 150

wasteland 98, 100, 113, 115, 123
white foliated earth 85, 88
white lustre 83, 87–8
Wild Man 11, 97–8, 100, 109–13, 120, 123
wonder 77, 89–90, 92