

A. Data on Application and Obligations

1.2 The Imperial Diet of Regensburg of 1576 – a Pilot Project on the Digital Edition of Sources on the Early Modern Era

1.3 The Imperial Diet of 1576

1.4 Early Modern History; History of European Political Culture; Digital Humanities

1.5 Total Time: 3 Years

1.6 Application Time: 3 Years

1.7 Beginning of Funding: 1 April 2017

1.8 Summary

B. Description of the Project

1. Current State of Research and Preliminary Studies

1.1 Current State of Research

1.1.1 The Imperial Diet – Editorial Practice and State of Research

In 1988, in the first volume published by the Historical Commission's "Imperial Diets 1556-1662 Division," Maximilian Lanzinner established the editorial principles which form the methodical base of the series to this day.¹ Lanzinner, who based his principles on ideas formulated by Heinz Angermeier in 1986,² formulated the following hypothesis, which was to be considered an editorial rule and has been substantiated by the division's subsequent work: the imperial diets of the second half of the sixteenth century differed fundamentally from those which met during the Reformation period (which have been edited in the "younger series" of imperial diet records). Lanzinner focuses on two aspects of this transformative process: (1) the growing importance of administrative literacy, which can be seen to some degree in all the diets' participants and which proved of great consequence to the edition of these imperial files (in the age of printing); (2) the emperor's changed role within the imperial system after Emperor Charles V's abdication in 1556. The "moments of diplomacy and political confrontation" between emperor and imperial estates

¹ Lanzinner (1988), 65–113. All subsequent page references to Lanzinner within the text refer to this work.

² Position paper of the Historical Commission 1986 (in the collection there).

became less important after 1556, and the imperial diets (and other imperial assemblies) developed into conferences which dealt with “the affirmation, improvement, and handling of that which the ‘Reichsherkommen’ and the imperial constitution dictated and [with] the issue of the empire’s character as a federation” (p. 68f.).

Taken together, both of these factors — the overabundance of source material and this deeper understanding of the imperial diet as an institution whose purpose it was to flesh out the principles laid out in 1555 — determined and continues to determine the editorial practice. Editors were in fact forced to adhere to this practice as long as the edited sources had to be pressed between two book covers for publication. Thus, the contents of the source edition were necessarily limited in many ways: (1) Only those sources were edited which shed light on the “diet as a whole” (p. 75) — from the initial convening of the delegates through the reading of the emperor’s proposition³ to the recess (*Reichsabschied*); (2) The edition solely includes sources — some in the form of summaries (*Aktenreferat*), some abridged, some regested, and others in full — that fall within this time frame (25 June–12 October in the case of the Imperial Diet of Regensburg in 1576); (3) And it comprises only those sources, which document the exchange of the emperor and the imperial estates with the proposed contents on the one hand (*Verhandlungsakten*), the agenda presented by the Mainz Chancellery which flowed into the deliberations on the other (*Beilagen, Gutachten* etc.); (4) Likewise it is the involvement of the archchancellor — a position handed down to the archbishop of Mainz since the Middle Ages — which determines which aspects of the communicative practice of supplication central to the diet’s proceedings are scrutinized in the respective volumes; (5) As side issues (*Nebenhandlungen*) topics within the diet’s proceedings are classified and edited for which there was no formal, concrete proposal but which were the subject of deliberations by the estates, regardless of how these were conducted. The Catholic and Protestant estates’ deliberations on religious peace (keywords: Religious Freedom [*Freistellung*], *Declaratio Ferdinanda*, Religious Negotiations), having last been officially addressed by the emperor in 1559,⁴ are part of this subchapter.

This organization of the source material according to content and formal structures is complemented by the edition of minutes dealing with internal deliberations (such as by the curiae, the committees, the confessional parties) and the procedures themselves. Where such records are not available, they are “constructed” from text fragments and other sources, mostly relying on reports and directives (*Berichte und Weisungen*).

³ The chapter headings of the printed edition are underlined; cf. in detail App. II (Editorial Concept).

⁴ Compare Fröschl (1994), 48.

The volumes' introductions and annotations (*Sachkommentar*) refer to those source collections which are inextricably linked with the diet's proceedings and which are therefore systematically cataloged in the archives visited. These cannot be included in the main text body, however, due to the limited number of pages available and the preliminary decision to explore the diet in its materialist, formalist dimensions, more specifically: 1) sources dealing with the history prior to the imperial diet (including the formal instructions); 2) correspondence as well as reports and directives;⁵ 3) sources which attest to some participants' membership in other corporative groups within the empire (imperial circles, associations, etc.) 4) sources on negotiations with third-party members attending the diet on a regular basis, such as, for example, nuncios and emissaries of West European civil war parties; 5) records shedding light on particular details about the diet's proceedings (amongst others, ceremonial processes); 6) groups of sources outlining the emperor's role in greater detail (particularly minutes of the Privy and Imperial Aulic Councils; "private negotiations" between individual estates and the emperor).

Without a doubt, any edition on the diet's history must necessarily include the issues dealt with by the assembly of the estates in a formal way.⁶ However, there is also no doubt, as recent studies (not only of the imperial diets) have shown,⁷ that it is insufficient to deal with the event at this purely instrumental level because the diet was characterized by intense processes of political communication. For the first time, this proposed edition presents a unique opportunity to illustrate the complexity and intricacy of these communications and interactions as they took place during the imperial diet. It is the digital editing which makes it possible to explore and present the communicative dynamics of this event rather than presenting them as an individual volume editor's interpretations and findings in the annotations as it had necessarily to be the case in the age of printing. These new methods of digital editing are thus integral and central to the project (cf. section 2). The proposed pilot project aims to take a step towards a deeper understanding of the imperial diet, drawing on and deepening this more recent historiography.

Historians have recently stressed the extent to which interpretations of the imperial diet which solely focus on formal decision-making processes are influenced by the model

⁵ To differentiate: Fröschl (1994), 70-74.

⁶ Even taking into account the culture of informality, characteristic of the imperial diet's history in general, the exclusive, if not uncontested, role of the prince-elector of Mainz – who ranked just slightly below the king – represents the imperial diet's one element that became the event's institutionalized fix point already in the 16th century (Neuhaus [1998]; Gotthard [1998], 211-214). The prince-elector is therefore referred as "formal." To the categories of "formal" and "informal" as such compare Stollberg-Rilinger (2013b).

⁷ Of Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger's numerous works, we highlight here: Stollberg-Rilinger (?2013).

of modern parliamentarism. Disproportionate attention is thus paid to formal processes outlined in official documents at the expense of addressing other channels of communication.⁸ Without going into more detail here, it seems necessary to point out the following: if institutional theory is correct that within the nature of institutions in general and of organized bodies, like that represented by the imperial diet, in particular,⁹ institutional meaning and institutional objectives (“Sinn und Zweck institutioneller Ordnungsarrangements”) are inexplicably intertwined, it naturally follows that no political institution, past or present, can be properly assessed by merely focusing on the institution’s objectives and the written depiction of the decision-making process (and documenting these issues in an edition). It is just as important to consider the way specific (conflicting) and morally binding value propositions become manifest in routine actions as well as in the ways they are discussed, scrutinized, realigned, and recorded. This new understanding of the diet which has been developed over the past quarter century necessitates a modification of the current editorial practice: historians should focus not merely on the formalized procedures and the diet’s outcomes but examine the nature of these events as evidenced in the participants’ actions, dialogues, and written communications. In other words: it is essential to document the imperial diet’s proceedings. The editor should strive to make maximum use of this insight for the proposed research project particularly because the sixteenth-century imperial diet was an institution with only a few explicit rules— the event’s deeper meaning was rooted in the application of implicit knowledge. By modelling the data in an interactive fashion (*interaktionszentriert*), the digital edition will focus on the complexity of communications and dynamics of the event and therefore, compared to the current editorial concept, offer substantive advantages to future generations of scholars rather than incremental lineal progress. (Cf. 2.1).

Based on this understanding of imperial assemblies, the research team will revise the editorial concept, even if it is not able to fully do it justice: as desirable as it would be to present all of the sources dealing with the diet in their full length alongside in-depth analysis, the time constraints of necessary for the project preclude this. Since this project intends to cultivate experience in the field of digital editing—which will be of great value in future editorial projects—while meeting the project’s publication deadline, significant consideration will be given to possibilities for the extension of the current editorial concept.

⁸ Summarizing and differentiating: Neu (2012), 64-83; see also Haug-Moritz (2009), 37-60.

⁹ Thus the differentiation between instrumental and symbolic actions Stollberg-Rilinger (2004), 497f.; see also Blänkner (2005), 90-93; Vec (2001), 559-587.

Despite these limitations of time and budget, the systematic compilation of all the source material concerning the imperial diet of 1576 and its inclusion within an internationally accessible digital archive (*webbasierte Archivdokumentation*) is a significant contribution to historical scholarship in its own right.

The extension will be two-fold: (1) As a first step, the most important participant standing at the center of the institutional self-conceptualization,¹⁰ around whom the entire diet's proceedings revolved, is taken much more into account than in current scholarship: the emperor as person and office keeper (more precisely, in 1576: the emperor Maximilian II., and the Roman King Rudolf, elected in 1575).¹¹ The organization of the archival records on the imperial diets is itself evidence that the emperor stood at the center of the proceedings: Administrative literacy and archival storage of the imperial diet's records start in the chancelleries of the emperor and his most important partner, the prince-elect of Mainz in his function as imperial archchancellor. It is thus with good reason that their records are generally, if not in all cases,¹² treated as "original records" (*Originalüberlieferung*, p. 73).

In order to paint a fuller picture of the imperial head of state, it becomes necessary to refocus the editorial lens both in terms of time frame and content: in other words, (a) to include more than just a short introductory summary of events preceding the diet, beginning with the invitation sent to the participants (in case of the Diet of Regensburg, on 10 November 1575) up to the diet's festive opening (25 June 1576), but to give a full documentation of the extensive preparations for the diet undertaken by the imperial court; (b) to add records to the edition dealing with the emperor's actions during the diet, in particular records of the Privy Council and the Imperial Aulic Council. This section of the edition is also to include sources dealing with the emperor's central, ceremonial role within the diet's proceedings and within the imperial court.

Such an extension of the current editorial concept, coupled with the new digital editorial concept, will highlight the symbolic as well as instrumental dimensions of the diet's proceedings, as well as of gaining new insight into the diet's position between the poles of the traditional "Hoftag" (granting of imperial privileges; investitures) and the more "modern" imperial diet, which was in the process of gaining institutional autonomy.¹³ It will further demonstrate that the phrase "emperor and empire" implied more than just "emperor

¹⁰ Rehberg (1998), 388.

¹¹ Laubach (2015), 338f.

¹² Thus the record of the electoral convention (*Kurfürstentag*) of 1575 is missing (Neerfeld [2015], 49f.).

¹³ Lanzinner's observations conclude that the 1570s represent a key period in this regard, Lanzinner (1998). Concerning the category of "institutional autonomy" see Sikora (2001), 15-19.

and estates,” as is primarily documented in the many petitions (supplications) recorded in the minutes of the Imperial Aulic Council. Recent research suggests that one of the diets’ central functions was to allow the empire’s subjects to experience the empire as a venue which manifested itself primarily in the imperial exercise of judicial power or the granting of clemency (*kaiserliche Rechts- und Gnadengewalt*).¹⁴

(2) Conceptualized by its legitimizing core, the imperial diet therefore appears also in other regards as an institution whose purpose exceeded its function as a venue of political decision making: the diet also served as a ‘communication and information system’¹⁵ whose antennae stretched way beyond the empire’s borders. The diet, including especially the diet of 1576 (side issues: the election of the king of Poland; the Netherlands; Moscow delegation), also represents a communicative hot spot of European politics, serving as evidence of the intertwined nature of communication within Latin Christendom in the latter half of the sixteenth century, which, in turn, was the necessary prerequisite for the success of such a highly communicative event.¹⁶ This European dimension of the diet will be highlighted at the level of selected correspondences, as well as integrally incorporated at the level of the extant printed editions.¹⁷

To return briefly to the topic of political correspondence: Reviewers of the “imperial diet records” have repeatedly called for an comprehensive edition of the political correspondence (at least of the diet’s most important participants). As valuable as such a work would be, however, a project of this scope runs the risk of the edition not being finished on schedule. Three measures are built into the proposal which go beyond the limits of the current editorial practice (listing and ordering the archival documents in the annotations): 1) the complete body of individual correspondence is to be listed and documented, headed by keywords; 2) printed source editions are not only to be listed, but also included as digital links (as long as this infringes upon no copyright laws); 3) due to reasons discussed below, special heed is paid to the Saxon prince-electors’ correspondence, which is to be edited in its entirety as well as the correspondence of the emperor and his most important associate during the Imperial Diet’s proceedings, the prince-electors of Mainz (in detail: Appendix II: Editorial concept – old, new).

¹⁴ Ortlieb (2015).

¹⁵ Friedrich (2007).

¹⁶ Cursory hints may for example be found in Ritter (1889), 500, 505, 512f.

¹⁷ Compare 3. Literature; 1. Sources (selection).

1.1.2 The Imperial Diet of 1576

There are no modern comprehensive studies of the Imperial Diet of Regensburg also because the relevant files are not available in edited form. Even today, the most differentiated presentation of the diet's proceedings and its prior history (beginning immediately after the convention of the prince-electors [*Kurfürstentag*] in 1575 (3 November)), dates back to 1895.¹⁸

More recent articles deal with particular aspects, with special emphasis put on the issue of the Polish king's election¹⁹ at the prince-electors' convention in 1575, as well as the "Muscovite delegation,"²⁰ which is dealt with in connection to the proposed agenda item "recuperations/ Livonia." Important insights into the classification of the imperial diet of 1576 within the general context of genuine imperial political issues are provided in particular by studies which deal with the perspective of individual imperial estates (Electorate of the Palatinate, Bavaria, Counts of Wetterau)²¹ as well as by Lanzinner's pioneer study (1993²²) which added a fresh perspective on imperial politics. In addition, some papers have also treated the experiences of individual participants.²³

Further, studies dealing primarily with two thematic fields—the issue of taxation to fight against Turkish troops and the application of the articles of the Peace of Augsburg—follow established scholarly tradition by examining these issues systematically while following a horizontal timeline.²⁴ It is in part due to the availability of the edited volumes of sources on the imperial diets (published since 1988) that this time-honored research tradition is now becoming an important factor in producing fresh insights.

In addition, it is important to mention two additional volumes produced more recently by the longtime head of the Historical Commission's imperial diets division, Maximilian Lanzinner. While not limited exclusively to the diet of 1576, they do deal with important problems of the imperial diets taking place during the second half of the sixteenth century which will be reconsidered within the framework of the proposed edition.²⁵

Finally, based on the plans for the proposed edition, just a few of the most important theses of recent scholarship are outlined below:

¹⁸ Moritz (1895), 185-433; compare still Ritter (1889), 1, 479, 500-514.

¹⁹ Neerfeld (2015), 33f., 343-352; Augustynowicz (2001); idem (2010).

²⁰ Aulinger (1980), 159-164; Völkl/ Wessely (1992).; Bojcov (2012); Neuhaus (2012) u. (2013).

²¹ Edel (1997), 370-441; Heil (1998), 524-566; Schmid (1989), 293-297.

²² Lanzinner (1993), 407, 446-448, 450, 474-480, 483-485, 489-509.

²³ Nicklas (1995), 148-164; idem. (1997), 181-206.

²⁴ Gotthard (2004), 352-355, 359, 375f., 384f.; Rauscher (2004); idem (2003), 45-83, esp. 74-76; Lanzinner (2010). All these works provide the reader with access to the older literature.

²⁵ Lanzinner/Strohmeier (2006); Lanzinner (1998).

1. Moritz' seminal study showed already in the nineteenth century that the Diet of Regensburg in 1576 marked a "turning point in the history of the imperial Turkish taxes." This has been recently scrutinized in detail by Rauscher.²⁶ Within the past twenty-five years acceptance of the view has grown that the Regensburg imperial diet of 1576 represents another such "turning point" in the imperial federation's disintegration—which gained momentum after the late 1580s.²⁷ In his summary of the religious negotiations and the concerns over the "*Reichstürkenhilfe*" (roughly: tax levied to defeat the Turkish invaders) which stood at the center of the proceedings of the Diet of Regensburg during the summer and autumn of 1576, Edel, for example, has stated: "The empire's political prelude to the Thirty Years' War began not in 1602 or 1608/09, but as early as 1576."²⁸ The reason for this is that, for the first time, single members of the Protestant imperial estates (Electorate Palatinate, Hesse, Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel) made their votes for the proposed taxes, which were approved by the majority, "contingent upon their own compensatory political (confessional) demands".²⁹ The Diet of Regensburg is therefore of primary importance for understanding the history of the imperial polity in the period between the Religious Peace of Augsburg and the beginning of the Thirty Years' War.

2. More recent research on the diet of 1576 has also illustrated the importance of the preparations in understanding the diet's actual proceedings. The reticence to compromise on confessional political issues and the consolidation of the confessional parties—in case of the Catholics, largely represented in the Landsberger Bund (*alliance*)—can only be adequately interpreted in light of events taking place before the diet.³⁰ The digital edition of the estates' instructions, published in their entirety, will make it possible to outline these events more clearly than ever before. As the situation demanded, substantial preparations were undertaken in the imperial court prior to the diet: Maximilian II. solicited expert opinions; the Privy Council met repeatedly; imperial emissaries traveled to the courts of Munich, Dresden, and Cölln an der Spree, and an emissary of Electoral Saxony visited Vienna.³¹ Unfortunately, there have been no comprehensive studies on the exact nature of these preparations.

²⁶ Rauscher (2003); idem (2004).

²⁷ Lanzinner (1993), 474; compare esp. Rauscher (2004), 324-328, 361.

²⁸ Edel (1997), 414.

²⁹ Gotthard (2004), 385 (Verbanden ihre Zustimmung "mit ihren eigenen religionspolitischen Anliegen kompensatorisch"); also compare *ibid.*, 355, 382f.; Lanzinner (1993), 499-504; Edel (1997), 413f., 443.

³⁰ Edel (1997), 371-384; Heil (1998), 535-538; Schmidt (1989), 294; Moritz (1895) (as already mentioned), 185-229, 239-261.

³¹ Lanzinner (1993), 477f; Moritz (1895), 232-239.

3. Finally, more recent research has resulted in a better understanding of just how informal the proceedings at the diet still were and how little institutional autonomy it had. The Electorate of Saxony had disagreements with both the Electorate of the Palatinate and the Electoral of Mainz (religious negotiations, *Ansagestreit*³²); these played out on different but nonetheless interwoven levels. The emperor, who was already gravely ill and died the very day that the recess was read, intervened repeatedly in the negotiation process.³³ Both factors speak volumes to the continuing openness and fluidity of the diet's proceedings, and to the considerable authoritative power³⁴ some actors wielded within the confessional—i.e. imperial, political—framework, with which they influenced not only the nature but also the outcome of the event. The demonstrative distance exhibited by the Saxons beginning in September towards the Palatinate's attempts to forge a single confessional Protestant party—for example, Saxony boycotted a personal meeting of adherents to the Augsburg Confession who were invited to a personal meeting with the emperor³⁵—paved the way to the most comprehensive tax to defend the empire from the Turks in its history up to that point. It also put an end to all attempts to establish confessional freedom (*Freistellung des Bekenntnisses*). Furthermore, the history of the Diet of Regensburg illustrates that the Saxon elector's authoritative power as “head” of the Protestants was a good deal more fragile than that of the emperor. Rumors and speculations geared towards discrediting Elector August's integrity appeared in August and September: his conduct was characterized as a sort of “treason” of his position, for, since the age of the Reformation, the Saxon prince-electors had been recognized as the highest-ranking Protestant estate.³⁶

1.1.3 Cf. FWF-proposal

³² Concerning the dissent between Electoral Saxony and Electoral Palatinate, see Edel (1997), 398f., 406; the “*Ansagestreit*” has hitherto played little role in the literature; however, it is already well documented in the archival records (esp. HHSTA Vienna: MEA RTA 1576, Fasz. 73).

³³ Edel (1997), 387f., 404, 408, 421; see also Lanzinner (1998); regarding the emperor's death and funeral see Aulinger (1980), 317-322.

³⁴ Regarding the concept of authoritative power and its distinction from other forms of power see Popitz (1992), 24-29, esp. 28f.

³⁵ Moritz (1895), 370-378; Edel (1997), 421-424.

³⁶ Edel (1997), 417-421; Moritz (1895), 326f.

2. Goals and Operational Program

2.1 Goals

1. It is the project's primary goal to develop methods of digitally editing early modern non-serial sources and to facilitate use of these sources to gain insights into the history of the imperial diets in the latter half of the sixteenth century. This goal can be fulfilled through the close cooperation of experts on the imperial diets and others whose field of expertise is the digital humanities. The binational project team is a pool of such knowledge. The experiences gained by the team while working on the project may not only be of use for the Historical Commission's editors in their future work, but also, to name just one example, for the planned digital edition of the Everlasting Imperial Diet as part of a project proposed by Christoph Kampmann and Michael Rohrschneider (North Rhine-Westphalian Academy of Sciences, Humanities and the Arts / Academy of Sciences, Humanities and Arts Mainz; cooperation partner: Gabriele Haug-Moritz).

2. While preserving the high editorial standards of the extant editions of imperial diet records, innovative digital technologies will help reduce the numerous editorial measures hitherto necessary to publish the work in print (summaries, abridgements, regests). Central source groups which play a crucial role in understanding the proceedings of the imperial diets and which have until now only been presented in introductions and annotations are to be made accessible to scholars; this complements the current editorial concept. This approach will, however, reduce extensive, time-consuming commentary work.³⁷

Given the pilot project's specific character, as well as the decision for a hybrid medium (i.e. published both in book form and on the Internet; as explained below), it is clear that it is not the project's goal to document all relevant source materials in their entirety, but to expand upon the current available content in a considered manner. Source groups which shed light on the diet's preliminary history and the emperor's actions, as well as on the imperial diet's proceedings in its openness and dynamics, are therefore presented additionally in the (digital) edition in their full length. The participants' correspondence which is central to this aspect—i.e. that of the emperor, the Elector of Mainz, and the Elector of Saxony—is presented in its entirety. Other correspondence is presented as well, including: 1) verification (*Nachweis*); 2) contextualizing information; and

³⁷ App. II (Editorial concept – current, proposed) illustrates this in detail.

3) content analysis (via captions, “*Betrefftitle*”). In addition, the correspondences of the prince-electors’ (which are not edited as full text) are to be cataloged systematically according to the persons involved and the communication situations described above. Appendix II (“Editorial Concept – Synopsis”) contains a synopsis of the current and proposed editorial concepts.

3. DH → cf. FWF-Proposal

4. The decision to publish a print edition in addition to the online version has been thoroughly considered. The project uses a “digital first” workflow with a hybrid result. The problems involved in the long-term archiving of digital data have not yet been sufficiently resolved to create general trust in this editorial form. One open question concerns the ongoing availability of public funding to provide for the continual cost of the required data storage and maintenance. For this reason, the book is to be retained as a medium, even though the digital edition follows current recommendations for long-term preservation. The digital edition of the records of the Imperial Diet of 1576 (like all future editorial work) will allow for the printing out of individual files, file groups, or the entire edition.

In addition to the digital edition with printing capabilities, a further (extended) volume—financed by funds of the Historical Commission (Josef Leeb)—is planned, the structure of which will correspond to the current editorial concept. This decision stems from the fact that the proposed project will conclude the series of editions for the imperial diets’ records for the period of the successful religious peace, which is also meant to be demonstrated in the edition itself. The increase in editorial work resulting from this decision will be limited, however, since the print edition can largely be extracted from the digital version. The setting copy will be created with XSLT-transformations and the typesetting program TeX.

3. Literature

3.1 Sources (selection)

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