Saskia Limbach

Government Use of Print

Official Publications in the
Holy Roman Empire, 1500–1600

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Abbreviations and Editorial Conventions

Archives and libraries

DHM   Deutsches Historisches Museum Berlin
HAStK   Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln
HStASt   Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart
KSM   Kölnisches Stadtmuseum
UAT   Universitätsarchiv Tübingen
USBK   Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln
WLB   Württembergische Landesbibliothek Stuttgart

Collected source editions and bibliographies

BC   BORCHLING, CONRAD and BRUNO CLAUSSEN (eds.) (1976), *Niederdeutsche Bibliographie. Gesamtverzeichnis der niederdeutschen Drucke bis zum Jahre 1800*, 3 vols, Utrecht: Hes Publishers

Briefwechsel   ERNST, VICTOR (ed.) (1899–1907), *Briefwechsel des Herzogs Christoph von Wirtemberg*, 4 vols, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer

GW   Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke, http://www.gesamtkatalogderwiegendrucke.de

Policey K   MILITZER, KLAUS (ed.) (2005), *Repertorium der Policeyordnungen der Frühen Neuzeit. Reichsstädte 2: Köln*, 2 vols, Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann

Policey W   LANDWEHR, ACHIM and THOMAS SIMON (eds.) (2011), *Repertorium der Policeyordnungen der Frühen Neuzeit*. Vol. 4: *Baden und Württemberg*, Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann

RB   GROTEN, MANFRED and MANFRED HUISKES (eds.) (1988–2003), *Beschlüsse des Rates der Stadt Köln, 1320–1550. Die Ratsmemoriale und ergänzende Überlieferung, 1320–1543*, 6 vols, Düsseldorf: Droste

Reske   RESKE, CHRISTOPH (ed.) (2015), *Die Buchdrucker des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts im deutschen Sprachgebiet*, 2nd ed, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz

Reyscher   REYSCHER, AUGUST LUDWIG (ed.) (1828–1851), *Vollständige, historisch und kritisch bearbeitete Sammlung der württembergischen Gese[t]ze*, 19 vols, Stuttgart / Tübingen: Cotta/Fues

VD16	Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachbereich erschienenen Drucke des 16. Jahrhunderts, www.vd16.de
VD17	Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachbereich erschienenen Drucke des 17. Jahrhunderts, www.vd17.de
VE15	EISERMANN, FALK (ed.) (2004), *Verzeichnis der typographischen Einblattdrucke des 15. Jahrhunderts im Heiligen Römischen Reich Deutscher Nation*, Wiesbaden: Reichert
USTC	Universal Short Title Catalogue, www.ustc.ac.uk

The spelling of sixteenth-century German was not standardised except to improve legibility. Contractions, such as 'ā', 'ē', 'ī', 'ō', 'ū', were replaced with the correct omission; abbreviations were resolved wherever possible.

When an early modern edition is cited, the USTC reference is given, supplemented by VD16 and VD17 references for German editions. This permits the use of a uniform reference system for all early modern books and limits verbose descriptions unless required by the context.

Unless otherwise stated, dates are given in the New Style. First names and place names appear (as far as possible) in Anglicised versions with standardised spelling. German quotes from primary and secondary sources have been translated into modern English by the author. All World Wide Web addresses were last accessed on January 31, 2021.

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Introduction

The 1540s were crucial years for John Frederick I, Elector of Saxony: his endorsement of Protestantism as well as his involvement with the Schmalkaldic League placed him in an extremely vulnerable position. He knew that, in order to seek support in these dangerous times, it was of utmost importance to communicate effectively. Therefore, when John Frederick rode into battle throughout these years, he not only took with him the usual supplies like ammunition, armour, and food, but also a printing press, several assistants to work it, as well as type, paper, and ink.[1] With this, the Elector was able to reproduce important letters and announcements on the spot without having to send them to a distant printing house first. This saved him extremely valuable time and enabled him to reach out to his subjects and ask for support as quickly as possible. When the Schmalkaldic War broke out in 1546, the technical innovation proved especially useful, and John Frederick employed the press to order his soldiers to reinforce his army and to instruct his vassals about the new taxes to support the defence of his territory.[2]

The press was not only useful on the battlefield; it also offered great possibilities for governments throughout the entire empire, and rulers seized the opportunities offered by typography almost from the very beginning. Duke Maximilian of Austria made ample use of the new medium from 1478 onwards, especially when he succeeded to the royal throne in the 1490s.[3] Alongside oral communication, Maximilian used printed documents to inform his subjects about recent events, provide war reports, and broadcast victories.[4] The emperor even smuggled pamphlets over the borders to undermine the authority of the

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1   Volz (1963), 'Zur Geschichte des Wittenberger Buchdrucks, 1544–57', p. 116.
2   *Ibid.*, p. 117.
3   Eisermann (2002), 'Buchdruck und Politische Kommunikation', pp. 76–83; see also most recently Limbach (2021), 'New perspectives on broadsheets and political communication at the time of Maximilian I'.
4   Füssel (2005), *Gutenberg and the Impact of Printing*, p. 154; Müller (2004), 'Publizistik unter Maximilian I.', pp. 95–122; Tischer (2012), *Offizielle Kriegsbegründungen in der Frühen Neuzeit. Herrscherkommunikation in Europa zwischen Souveränität und korporativem Selbstverständnis*, pp. 108 ff.

Signoria in Venice.[5] His ambitions did not stop there; the emperor also embarked on numerous costly print projects covering a range of genres. Besides an autobiography, Maximilian had an epic poem published as well as his *Honour Arch*, a series of over 100 printed woodcuts. These many publications helped the emperor to solidify his political position and to establish himself as a memorable example for posterity.[6]

The use of the press was not confined to the imperial government; other authorities in the Holy Roman Empire quickly realised the advantages of the new technical communication and followed Maximilian's example.[7] The multiplicity of jurisdictions in the Holy Roman Empire created a surge of publications from official bodies. The USTC currently lists some 700 official publications printed in fifteenth-century Europe.[8] Whereas 138 of these editions were printed in Spain and 83 in France, the overwhelming majority of official publications, some 450 items, were printed in Germany. Among them are publications from the city magistrates in Nuremberg, Augsburg, and Cologne; the territorial rulers of Saxony, Bavaria, and Württemberg; and religious authorities such as the bishops of Bamberg and Würzburg. With the expansion of government activities in the sixteenth century, this already high number of publications increased exponentially. Many rulers perceived the printing press as the ideal means to spread announcements, invitations, and instructions and, above all, to implement law and order. As a result, Germany was flooded with official publications which were commonly posted on walls and on the doors of town halls and churches.

For many rulers in the sixteenth century, the printing press played a central role in their government activities. Despite the importance of this new technology, however, there are very few studies that focus on government use of print. This is especially surprising since the production of single-sheet items was an essential component of sixteenth-century publishing. In many parts of Europe, the printing of forms, official orders, and proclamations underpinned the economics of the industry. A recent survey on publishing in the Low Countries reveals that more than 10 % of the total output was made up by broadsheets.[9] These single-sheet items generated healthy profits for printers, and many were

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5   Füssel (2005), *Gutenberg and the Impact of Printing*, p. 156; Lutter (2002), 'Propaganda Maximilians I. in Venedig', pp. 235–254.

6   Silver (2008), *Marketing Maximilian*.

7   Honemann, Griese and Eisermann (1999), 'Zu Wesen und Bedeutung des textierten Einblattdrucks', p. 341; Seggern (2009), 'Gedruckte Urkunden', pp. 129–144.

8   USTC search: Subject - Ordinances and Edicts, Date - 1450–1500.

9   Pettegree and Walsby (eds.) (2010), *Netherlandish Books*, I, p. xvii.

keen to secure these lucrative deals. Even Gutenberg paused the production of his famous Bible to print indulgences for religious authorities.[10] This way, he could generate more money for his ambitious project.

This study will address this research deficiency and investigate government use of print through two case studies: official publications printed in the Duchy of Württemberg and in the Imperial City of Cologne. These two contrasting jurisdictions – one a major princely state, the other, one of the greatest of the commercial cities – used print for a variety of different purposes, most importantly for publishing new legislation.[11] In this context, it is important to stress the interplay of various media in the sixteenth century. During that time, oral proclamations remained an essential means for authorities to communicate with their subjects. Comparing and contrasting Württemberg and Cologne will show us how various factors influenced the use of different media and enable us to trace the tentative beginnings of collaboration between rulers and printers in the Holy Roman Empire.

By focussing on governments and the use of media in the sixteenth century, this study will contribute to three different fields:

Book history

Already in the early days of print history, researchers had emphasised the economic side of the book business. Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin pointed out that in the printing industry, just like in any other industry, the producers faced two key problems: finance and costing.[12] Similarly, Rudolf Hirsch argued in his influential study on printing, selling, and reading that printers not only need the necessary skills to produce books but also business sense, intelligence, and a good understanding of the market.[13] These traits were vital to overcome the problems of selling printed books since the trade differed so decisively from the manuscript trade.

Although considered important from the very beginning, the financial aspect of the book business remained elusive for decades. When Elizabeth Eisenstein depicted the press as an agent of change and portrayed the printing house as a place where ambitious intellectuals did their best to democratise knowledge, she was criticised for paying far too little attention to the economic realities of the

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10   Ing (1983), 'The Mainz Indulgences', pp. 14–31.
11   The Cologne council issued a very high number of police ordinances in contrast to other magistrates, such as those in Ulm, Frankfurt and Nördlingen, see Härter (2010b), 'Statut und Policeyordnung', p. 132.
12   Febvre and Martin (1958), *L'apparition du livre*, p. 204.
13   Hirsch (1974), *Printing, Selling and Reading*, p. 27.

early modern print industry.[14] In the following years, however, scholars did little to correct this mistake. We can only rely on a handful of studies which offer us glimpses into the finances of the trade, the sale of books, or their prices.[15] Sources are either scarce or fragmented, like the account book of Peter Drach, or so abundant that they have not yet been analysed with regard to production and sales, such as the Amerbach correspondence.[16]

Only recently did the economics of the industry attract more attention from international scholars. The book trade in particular became a focal point of many studies, with a special emphasis on the national and local trade as well as individual print shops.[17] Two large projects are particularly noteworthy: Christina Dondi and her research team currently investigate the book trade in the fifteenth century.[18] One of the focal points of the project is a bookshop's ledger recording nearly 7,000 sales between 1484–1488.[19] The second project, led by Angela Nuovo, reconstructs the economic and juridical framework of the European book market.[20]

For the German-speaking areas, only a small number of scholars have tried to address this omission more generally. Our knowledge of the financial trans-actions of printers, especially in the early age of print, rests only on a few studies.[21] Recently, Lucas Burkart has shown how quickly a successful printer in

14   Eisenstein (1979), *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*; Grafton (1980), 'The Importance of Being Printed', pp. 265–286.

15   For instance, Krieg (1953), *Materialien zu einer Entwicklungsgeschichte der Bücher-Preise*; Widmann, Kliemann and Wendt (eds.) (1965), *Der deutsche Buchhandel in Urkunden und Quellen*. Also the new edition of Christoph Reske's standard work includes many references to singular payments, tax records, housing costs, and business transactions, see Reske.

16   Geldner (1964), 'Das Rechnungsbuch', col. 1–196; *Die Amerbachkorrespondenz*, ed. Hartmann and Jenny; Duntze highlights this lacuna of the Amerbach correspondence in his 'Verlagsbuchhandel und verbreitender Buchhandel', pp. 201–256.

17   For Germany, one of the standard works is Künast (1997), *'Getruckt zu Augspurg'*. Also, more recently, Bangert (2019), *Buchhandelssystem und Wissensraum in der Frühen Neuzeit*. For England, see for instance, Raven (2007), *The Business of Books*. For the Low Countries, see for instance, Bowen and Imhof (2008), *Christopher Plantin and Engraved Book Illustrations*. For a European perspective, see for instance the results of the USTC conference, Graheli (ed.) (2019), *Buying and Selling. The Business of Books in Early Modern Europe*.

18   http://15cbooktrade.ox.ac.uk/

19   Dondi and Harris (2014), 'Exporting Books from Milan to Venice', p. 121.

20   http://emobooktrade.unimi.it

21   See, amongst others: Keunecke (2015), 'Wirtschaftlicher Erfolg und Wohlstand bei deutschen Inkunabeldruckern', p. 64; Künast (1997), *'Getruckt zu Augs-purg'*.

Basel could run into debt.[22] This reminds us, once again, that printers were businessmen and their first and foremost aim was to run a viable business that would yield enough profit to support the printer and his family. Many did not succeed in the new business and, as Andrew Pettegree argues convincingly, due to the economic hardship of the trade, it was not even certain that print would continue to exist in the sixteenth century.[23]

One way to survive in this cut-throat business was to seek the patronage of the state. Governments usually ordered an exact amount of copies and paid for the entire edition upon delivery. Printers, therefore, did not have to judge the size of the market and risk ending up with unsold stock. Many official publications were also short so that the production would only take a few days. This quick cash return offered printers much needed security and allowed them to embark on larger, more ambitious projects. Although present-day historians consider these smaller print jobs 'ephemera' or 'cheap print', they were, at the time, sought after by respected producers in the print industry. The celebrated typographer and publisher Christopher Plantin in Antwerp and his heirs printed hundreds of ordinances for the authorities and kept a file copy of almost every publication for posterity.[24] The high number of official broadsheets was not confined to Antwerp. In many parts of Europe, these publications formed an integral part of political life. We have ample evidence for the publishing activities of local governments in Bologna, Florence, Venice, Rome as well as the rulers in England and Ireland.[25] Just like in Antwerp, the producers of these documents were in many cases prolific printers. So, for example, Antonio Blado in Rome ran a successful and long-lasting business and also produced many ordinances for the popes.[26]

This plausible business strategy of early modern printers has long been overlooked by historians of print. When examining the interaction between authorities and printers, scholars have traditionally focussed on aspects of

22   See for instance, BURKART (2019), 'Early Book Printing and Venture Capital', pp. 23–54.
23   PETTEGREE (2010), *The Book in the Renaissance*, p. 53.
24   VOET (ed.) (1980–1983), *The Plantin Press (1555–1589)*; IMHOF (2014), *Jan Moretus and the Continuation of the Plantin Press*; COCKX-INDESTEGE, GLORIEUX and BEECK (eds.) (1968–1994), *Belgica typographica*.
25   ZANARDI (ed.) (1996–2014), *Bononia Manifesta*; GRILLO (2014), *Leggi e bandi di antico regime*; HUGHES and LARKIN (eds.) (1964–1969), *Tudor Royal Proclamations*; SALZBERG (2014), *The Ephemeral City*, p. 63; MILNER (2013), 'Town Criers and the Information Economy of Renaissance Florence', p. 113; KELLY and LYONS (eds.) (2014), *The Proclamations of Ireland 1660–1820*.
26   BRUNI (2017b), 'In the Name of God', pp. 143–161. SANTORO (2013), *Die Geschichte des Buchhandels in Italien*, p. 77.

regulation, censorship, and control.[27] To be sure, some studies emphasise that the regulation of the print industry was not simply a top-down imposition of order, but rather a dynamic process.[28] But only in recent years have historians concentrated on the common interests of rulers and printers. In France, officials and printers developed a mutually beneficial relationship.[29] Similarly, in England, the king's printers enjoyed a number of benefits and, in turn, ensured that the Crown's business went on smoothly.[30] In Spain, the printers worked closely with the Castilian Crown to edit, produce, and market legislation.[31]

It is, therefore, a more than welcome change that book historians are now dedicating more attention to the importance of ephemera and job printing. Although 'popular print' (or 'cheap print') has been the subject of study for decades (see, for instance, Margaret Spufford's work), the significance of these inexpensively-produced texts for their producers remained understudied.[32] Recently, Peter Stallybrass pointed to the importance of the 'little jobs' which kept the presses running.[33] In many cases, these were broadsheets produced for public display to reach as large an audience as possible. Additionally, new in-depth studies illuminate the production, distribution, and reception of cheap print as well as how it contributed to the creation of a public sphere.[34]

This study will contribute to these new research trends and present the first systematic examination of official print in sixteenth-century Germany. For this, I unearthed hundreds of broadsheet editions which were hitherto unknown to

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27   GRENDLER (1981), *Culture and Censorship in Late Renaissance Italy and France*; PATTERSON (1984), *Censorship and Interpretation*; TODD (1991), *Political Bias, Censorship and the Dissolution of the 'Official' Press in Eighteenth Century France*. A notable exception is Karl Schottenloher whose work is cited throughout this study.

28   CREASMAN (2012), *Censorship and Civic Order in Reformation Germany*.

29   McLEOD (2011), *Licensing Loyalty*.

30   REES and WAKELY (2009), *Publishing, Politics, and Culture. The King's Printers in the Age of James I and VI*.

31   RIAL COSTAS (2017), 'Marketing a New Legal Code in Fifteenth-Century Castile', pp. 87–108.

32   SPUFFORD (1981), *Small Books and Pleasant Histories*. For an overview of this area of research as well as new research trends, see ROSPOCHER, SALMAN and SALMI (eds.) (2019), *Crossing Borders, Crossing Cultures*.

33   STALLYBRASS (2007), '"Little Jobs": Broadsides and the Printing Revolution', pp. 315–341.

34   RAYMOND (ed.) (2011), *Cheap Print in Britain and Ireland to 1600*; SALZBERG (2014), *The Ephemeral City*; PETTEGREE (ed.) (2017), *Broadsheets. Single-Sheet Publishing in the First Age of Print*; WEDUWEN (2018), *State Communication*; BELLINGRADT (2011), *Flugpublizistik und Öffentlichkeit um 1700*, for more on the public sphere, see subchapter 'political culture' below.

book historians.[35] This new material provides a comprehensive overview of the official broadsheets published in Cologne and Württemberg over the space of 100 years. The study will not only analyse this rich material but also take into consideration lost editions, which have not survived until the present day, and larger publications financed by the authorities. The study also draws on extensive manuscript sources, such as drafts of ordinances, distribution lists, and instructions for circulation. An unparalleled source is the account book of the Württemberg government detailing over 300 individual payments to printers. Taken together, these sources provide invaluable insights into the composition, financing, printing, and distribution of government publications. These findings will be compared and contrasted with evidence from other territories and cities in the Holy Roman Empire, such as Nuremberg and Augsburg, as well as the Low Countries, France, and England. This way, I hope to provide a much more nuanced picture of the interaction between rulers and printers in the sixteenth century.

Legal history

Although bibliographers have paid little attention to official publications, the student of early modern ordinances can rely on some fruitful studies from other historical fields. Since the 1990s, legal historians have focussed increasingly on ordinances that were issued in the name of the *Gute Policey*. This expression does not refer to our modern day police forces – armed forces that ensure law and order – but to an altogether different concept: the 'common good' (*gemein Wohl*).[36] To contribute to the common good, authorities progressively intervened in nearly all spheres of public life; there were few areas of life left untouched by regulation.

This research has led to the publication of a formidable research tool: a repertory of early modern police ordinances issued in the Holy Roman Empire, Denmark, Sweden, and the Swiss Confederation. Since 1996, the project team at the Max Planck Institute for European Legal History has collected data on ordinances for some thirty jurisdictions, including secular and religious territories as well as imperial cities.[37] The repertories are based on printed compen-

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35   See appendix. I am grateful to Andrew Pettegree, who supervised the first development of this study during my time at the University of St Andrews and generously agreed to integrate the broadsheets I found into the USTC online.

36   HÄRTER (2010a), 'Security and 'Gute Policey' in Early Modern Europe', p. 42.

37   Twelve repertories have been published so far. A full list of the repertories is available at https://www.rg.mpg.de/publikationen/repertorium_der_policey ordnungen. In addition, see WEBER (ed.) (2002), *Die Reichspolizeiordnungen von 1530, 1548 und 1577*.

dia, such as Reyscher's collection of ordinances passed in Württemberg, and complemented by archival records.[38] The volumes provide their readers with a basic overview of the ordinances: their issue date, a few key points concerning their subject matter, as well as the call number of the document and/or a reference to literature. This has been an on-going project; the latest volume was published in 2017. It has also inspired similar ventures in other countries, such as Poland.[39]

The repertories have provided the essential data for a number of in-depth studies addressing different aspects of criminal history and conflict regulation.[40] Achim Landwehr has investigated the effects of police ordinances on Leonberg, a district in Württemberg. Based on court records, Landwehr's study shows, among many other things, that the dukes did not simply impose new regulations onto the inhabitants of Württemberg; instead, they negotiated the implementation of new legislation with their officials and subjects.[41]

This important point was also observed for other territories and countries. The fruitful research on early modern ordinances showed that these texts were much more than just norms composed by governments;[42] they also fulfilled a symbolic function.[43] The publications were testimonies to the fact that rulers wanted to appear as if they were actively trying to improve the lives of their subjects. According to their view, the new legislation would make it safer and more secure to live in the territory.

This focus on media and its importance can also be observed in other areas. In the past decades, early modern media became an important focal point for legal historians investigating crime and justice.[44] It also became increasingly clear that the material aspects of law books played an important role in the contemporary

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38 Reyscher.
39 Zapnik (ed.) (2016), *Repertorium der Policeyordnungen der pommerschen Städte*; Kotkas (2014), *Royal Police Ordinances in Early Modern Sweden*. Although the Kings of France also passed many police ordinances, scholars have not paid much attention to this aspect, see Kropf (2003), 'Der Begriff aus der politischen Theorie – das Konzept aus der administrativen Praxis. Zum Entstehen der *police* im frühneuzeitlichen Frankreich'; Kim (2008), *French Royal Acts printed before 1601*. This thesis includes an overview of some 6,000 royal acts published in sixteenth-century France.
40 Up until 2020, the series included 26 titles, see: https://www.rg.mpg.de/pub likationen/policey-und-policeywissenschaft.
41 Landwehr (2000), *Policey im Alltag*, p. 315.
42 See for instance Schilling (2002), 'Gesetzgebung als Kommunikation', pp. 133–165.
43 Weber (2006), '"Bekennen und thun hiemit kunth und offentlich"', pp. 281–311.
44 For a comprehensive overview, see Härter (2018), *Strafrechts- und Kriminalitätsgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit*, chapter six.

interpretation of their texts. The creation of knowledge remains elusive if one only concentrates on the authors and disregards the context of legal books.[45] To understand the conditions that shaped the production and dissemination of legal knowledge, historians of the law need to consider the material aspects of books, the limitations of local markets, the censorship legislation, and the printer's role in the production.[46]

This study will contribute to these new research trends by analysing the formats of legal publications, their design, their print runs, as well as instructions for circulation. These important aspects of police ordinances have largely been overlooked. Only a handful of studies address the dissemination of ordinances.[47] In these studies, however, the production of official documents remained opaque and important points have gone unnoticed. One of these points includes the sometimes quite significant time difference between issue date and actual publication date, which only becomes obvious when looking for sources beyond the printed text. It also remained opaque when and why the production of printed ordinances increased, as previous studies mostly focussed on material drawn from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[48] Through the bibliographical approach adopted in this study, however, we can gain more insights into the mechanisms of early modern administration in the sixteenth century. We can trace the process from the urge to pass a new law, the decision-making process of rulers and their councils, the creation of a draft announcement, its production in print, and finally its distribution.

Such a bibliographical approach can reveal interesting facts. For instance, in some cases, ordinances were distributed weeks and even months after the date shown in the text. A bibliographical analysis also allows us to see that some ordinances were distributed for free by the authorities, whereas other publications had to be bought. These are important points to keep in mind for further studies on the implementation of new legislation.

This analysis further sheds light on the immense scope of government print. In many cases rulers sought not only to inform their subjects, but also to explain their policies, seek support, and shape public opinion well beyond the boundaries of their territories. This becomes especially clear in 1534 when Duke Ulrich tried to win back his duchy and widely distributed publications that depicted

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45   HESPANHA (2008), 'Form and Content in Early Modern Legal Books', p. 38.
46   BECK VARELA (2016), 'The Diffusion of Law Books in Early Modern Europe. A Methodological Approach', p. 221.
47   SCHENNACH (2008), 'Zuschreiben von Bedeutung: Publikation und Normintensität frühneuzeitlicher Gesetze', pp. 133–180; HÄRTER (2002), 'Gesetzgebungsprozess und gute Policey', pp. 1–32.
48   See chapter three.

him as the rightful ruler. By broadening the scope of inquiry beyond police ordinances and considering other official publications as well, we can gain a more complete picture of the publishing activities of early modern governments.

In addition, the chapters that follow will bring into focus the printers who worked for governments at a time when the position of an official printer was not yet institutionalised. The study will reconstruct the printers' production of official publications, consider their overall production, and, most importantly, their relationship with the authorities. In many cases, the interaction was mutually beneficial, but there were also various problems associated with publishing official documents. Indeed, it was not always straight forward to have an important publication printed. For some authorities, finding a suitable printer was rather difficult; printers needed to be reliable, produce the documents quickly, keep the government's secrets, and resist the temptation to move to a far-off city with better economic opportunities. By focussing on these difficulties, I hope to present a more nuanced picture of the relationship between rulers and printers.

Political culture

Apart from legal history, this study both benefits from and contributes to another historical field that recently experienced a surge of interest: political culture.[49] The field witnessed a paradigm shift in the past century when the attention of scholars moved away from studying the political elites and instead gave centre stage to actors from the lower end of the social spectrum.[50] This turn in attention has shown that, in many parts of Europe, political power rested on negotiation between rulers and subjects conducted often within the context of established rituals and processions.[51] A key element of these negotiations was

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49   For a comprehensive overview of the field, see Kümin (2009), 'Political Culture in the Holy Roman Empire', pp. 131–144.

50   See, for example, Peter Blickle's numerous studies such as Blickle (1973), *Landschaften im Alten Reich*; Blickle (2004), *Die Revolution von 1525*; Harris (ed.) (2001), *The Politics of the Excluded*; Te Brake (1998), *Shaping History: Ordinary People in European Politics*; Pettegree (2005), *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion*; Beik (1997), *Urban Protest in Seventeenth-Century France*.

51   For instance, Blockmans, Holenstein and Mathieu (eds.) (2009), *Empowering Interactions* and more recently, Hardy (2018) *Associative Political Culture in the Holy Roman Empire. Upper Germany, 1346–1521*. See also the work of the SFB 496 *Symbolische Kommunikation und gesellschaftliche Wertesysteme vom Mittelalter bis zur Französischen Revolution*, such as Stollberg-Rilinger, Neu and Brauner (eds.) (2013), *Alles nur symbolisch?*. For Württemberg in particular, see Rublack (1997), 'Frühneuzeitliche Staatlichkeit und lokale Herrschaftspraxis in Württemberg', pp. 347–376.

communication, and early modern authorities went to great lengths to try and influence as well as persuade their subjects.[52]

The question about the existence of a 'public sphere' before the eighteenth century remains hotly debated. Ever since its publication in 1962, and particularly since its English translation in 1989, Jürgen Habermas' work on the public sphere has been challenged by numerous historians.[53] Among many other aspects, critics have questioned the homogeneity of the involved actors and pointed to the decisive role of developing infrastructure (especially post courses and networks of correspondence) as well as emerging newspapers.[54] A consensus seems to have been reached that both the rulers and ruled employed a variety of media in various places to make their opinion known.[55]

This extensive communication leaves modern day historians with an abundance of sources such as petitions, grievances, paintings, material records, letters, and plays.[56] Although print and script became more and more important in these negotiation processes, the interaction between rulers and subjects, especially in the cities, took place largely in face-to-face settings employing oral means of communication.[57] In the case of Cologne, for example, numerous studies exist that investigate political communication within the context of the

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52   For England, see Doig (1998), 'Political Propaganda and Royal Proclamations in Late Medieval England'; Dooley and Baron (eds.) (2001), *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe*; Peacey (2004), *Politicians and Pamphleteers*; Raymond (2003), *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain*; for Italy, see De Vivo (2007), *Information and Communication in Venice*; for France, see Beik (1997), *Urban Protest in Seventeenth-Century France*; for Germany, see Pettegree (2005), *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion*.

53   Habermas (1962), *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*; Habermas (1989), *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*; Raymond (1999), 'The Newspaper, Public Opinion, and the Public Sphere in the Seventeenth Century'; Lake and Pincus (2006), 'Rethinking the Public Sphere in Early Modern England'; Helmers (2015), *The Royalist Republic: Literature, Politics, and Religion in the Anglo-Dutch Public Sphere*, pp. 22–24; Deen (2015), *Publiek debat en propaganda in Amsterdam tijdens de Nederlandse Opstand*, pp. 12–13. Schwerhoff (ed.) (2011), *Stadt und Öffentlichkeit in der Frühen Neuzeit*.

54   For an overview, see Gestrich (2006), 'The Public Sphere and the Habermas Debate'.

55   Dumolyn et al. (eds.) (2014), *The Voices of the People in Late Medieval Europe. Communication and Popular Politics*; Freist (1997), *Governed by Opinion*; Zaret (2000), *Origins of Democratic Culture*; Rospocher (ed.) (2012), *Beyond the Public Sphere*; Bellingradt (2012) 'The Early Modern City as a Resonating Box'.

56   See, amongst others: Kümin and Würgler (1997), 'Petitions, Gravamina and the Early Modern State'.

57   Schlögl (2008), 'Politik beobachten. Öffentlichkeit und Medien in der Frühen Neuzeit'; and his more extensive Schlögl (2014), *Anwesende und Abwesende. Grundriss für eine Gesellschaftsgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit*.

large imperial city. Among them are the various surveys of Gerd Schwerhoff in which he establishes Cologne as a communication centre.[58]

Yet, in the communication process that took place in the sixteenth century, the use of print has been misunderstood. Focussing on the different media available, Robert Giel offers great insights into the interaction between council and inhabitants in Cologne.[59] However, it has been argued that the magistrates in Cologne progressively used printed ordinances from the early 1520s onwards; from then on, print became the dominant medium to spread information.[60] This argument requires significant refinement. As we will see in chapter three, the council only used print to a very limited degree until the 1560s. Special circumstances, such as the influx of migrants and looming war, forced the magistracy to change their practice of communication with their subjects, relying more on the technical innovation.

The rulers in Württemberg, on the other hand, employed the new technology to a much larger degree. Sixteenth-century Württemberg has recently gained much attention due to various anniversaries and celebrations. The 500th anniversary of Luther's Reformation movement spurred various publications focussing on the rapid adoption of the new faith in the southern duchy. In addition, in 2009, scholars celebrated the 450th anniversary of the Great Church Order, one of the most influential ordinances in the sixteenth century, which served as the impetus for a number of recent publications.[61] Duke Christoph in particular was a focal point in these studies, as historians see him as an illustrious Renaissance ruler who introduced long-lasting legal change.[62] To commemorate his achievements, the duke was celebrated with a large exhibition in 2015.[63]

In these studies, however, the importance of the printing press for introducing such long-lasting legal change has not been extensively treated. It was especially under Christoph that the press became an indispensable tool for the ducal administration. This study provides new insights into the creation of ordinances, the finances of the print production, and the distribution of official work in Württemberg. It shows that Duke Christoph invested a significant

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58   See, for example, Schwerhoff and Mölich (eds.) (1999), *Köln als Kommunikationszentrum*.
59   Giel (1998), *Politische Öffentlichkeit im spätmittelalterlich-frühneuzeitlichen Köln*.
60   *Ibid*., p. 95.
61   Arend and Dörner (eds.) (2015), *Ordnung für die Kirche*; Arend, Haag and Holtz (eds.) (2013), *Die württembergische Kirchenordnung von 1559*.
62   See, for instance, Langensteiner (2008), *Für Land und Lutherthum*.
63   The exhibition was shown in the Landesmuseum Württemberg from October 2015 – April 2016, see https://www.landesmuseum-stuttgart.de/ausstellungen/rueckblick/Christoph.

amount of money in the production of books, which he then circulated widely beyond the territory. In this way, print helped him to convey the picture we have of him today: the picture of an illustrious ruler.

Method and sources

The sixteenth century presents a very interesting period for official publications. At that time, administrations faced great challenges. Rulers had to react quickly to profound religious change, revolts, riots, plagues, famine, and harvest failure, to name but a few. To establish and maintain good order in these turbulent times, governments issued an increasing number of ordinances and announcements. It was essential that these official orders were communicated effectively and thus many rulers turned to the press. Yet, the enthusiasm and speed with which governments all over Europe embraced the new technical innovation varied considerably from place to place.[64]

One of the main reasons for this, as this study shows, is the fact that in the sixteenth century, having ordinances printed was not always straight forward. The position of an official printer who received an annual salary was not yet established widely, either in the cities as *Ratsdrucker* or in the territories as *Hofdrucker*. Only around 1600 did more authorities create such a position. Prior to this, most men and women working for the local authorities produced publications on the basis of individual orders. This meant that governments had only limited power over the press and that the publication of announcements and new legislation was determined by the economics of the industry. The ideal arrangements between rulers and printers were often negotiated over a considerable span of time. The sixteenth century was a period of experimentation, as governments attempted to find the most suitable printer for their work; in many parts of the empire, this period of trial and error lasted until the very end of the century.

To evaluate what factors influenced the use of the press in the sixteenth century, this study investigates government use of print through two case studies: official publications printed in an imperial city and in a territorial state. The different aspects of power exercised by a hereditary ruler and an elected council have prompted a number of scholars to study territories and cities in a comparative way.[65] This is especially true for legal historians, who have

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64   Pettegree (2017b), 'Broadsheets: Single-Sheet Publishing in the First Age of Print. Typology and Typography', p. 17.

65   See, for instance, Chittolini and Willoweit (eds.) (1992), *Statuten, Städte und Territorien zwischen Mittelalter und Neuzeit in Italien und Deutschland*.