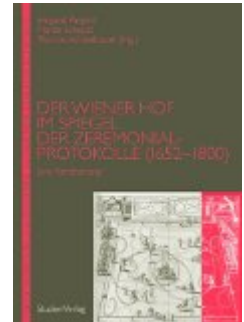


Irmgard Pangerl, Martin Scheutz, Thomas Winkelbauer, eds.. *Der Wiener Hof im Spiegel der Zeremonialprotokolle (1652-1800): Eine Annäherung.* Forschungen zur Landeskunde von Niederösterreich 31. Forschungen und Beiträge zur Wiener Stadtgeschichte 47. Innsbruck: StudienVerlag, 2007. 672 pp. EUR 68.90, paper, ISBN 978-3-7065-4471-9.



Reviewed by Benjamin Marschke

Published on H-German (September, 2012)

Commissioned by Benita Blessing (Oregon State University)

This book is based on a research seminar on the ceremonial protocols of the Habsburg court in Vienna, led by Martin Scheutz and Thomas Winkelbauer. The introductory essays were written by instructors and their teaching assistant (Jakob Wührer), and the bulk of the book is made up of chapters by students on various aspects of periods of the Viennese court, based on the ceremonial protocol. Most of the undergraduate students who were in the seminar do appear as authors, but six of them (!) are co-authors of one article-length chapter. Because this book is based on one seminar and on one body of primary sources, it is much more cohesive than most edited volumes.

The first chapter, by Scheutz and Wührer, introduces the audience to court studies in general and to the ceremonial protocols in particular. This chapter is deliberate and clear—no one would call this fast-paced (or pleasurable) reading. This is a good basic introduction to the field, but one has to ask whether anyone new to court studies is really going to start with a 672-page volume like this. Fi-

nally, at points, it is preposterously elementary. For example, discussing the hierarchy of ranks at court, the authors explain, "Das gegenseitige Verhältnis der Hofbediensteten drückt sich durch Überordnung (Vorgesetzter), Nebenordnung oder Unterordnung aus" (p. 39). Is this not self-evident?

The first chapter also serves as an introduction to and reproduction of the ceremonial protocols, but these sources are discussed and presented rather uncritically. Indeed, much of this volume is a typescript of the sources themselves, which include not only the 135-page *Editionsteil*, but also sizeable appendixes to most of the individual chapters. In sections where the protocols are discussed, they are often taken at face value, as if whatever is described in the protocols is exactly how things were conducted. Indeed, at several points one wonders why the same admonitions and orders were issued again and again, but finds not even the most basic critical analysis.

The second chapter, "Much of the same?" (co-written by the six students), is admittedly a fail-

ure. From the start, their study seems to have been methodologically ill-conceived, in that it is trying to get at the everyday life of the court by reading entries from the ceremonial protocols. Their choice of *Stichproben* does not really make sense either, because these are centered on abnormal times (successions, war, etc.). On the other hand, Pangerl's chapter effectively mixes architectural and archival evidence to show changes over time in formality at court, as evidenced by access to the emperor's chambers and dress codes.

Astrid Wielach's chapter is on the initiation ceremonies of the Order of the Golden Fleece. This chapter is short and sweet, and mostly description, with very little analysis. Wielach's chapter is complemented by Anna-Katharina Stacher-Gfall's longer chapter on the Order of the Golden Fleece's feast day of St. Andreas. Stacher-Gfall's chapter, too, offers a great deal of detailed description, straight from the protocols, but not much analysis.

Ruth Frötschel's chapter on the kissing of hands at the court in Vienna is a terrific work of cultural history. Rather than recapping one section of the ceremonial protocols, as many of the articles here do, Frötschel has combed through a cross-section of protocols to reconstruct the meanings of kissing hands (and changes in those meanings over time). Stefan Seitschek's lengthy chapter is based on the mentions of tournaments (Carousel/Karussell) and sleigh rides in the index of the protocols. In great detail Seitschek has reconstructed the regular conduct and rules and the typical participants and prizes of the tournaments, as well as the occasions, routes, equipment, and precedence of the sleigh rides. Seitschek thereby touches on a number of relevant issues, such as the public nature of tournaments and the problems of precedence and rank on such occasions, and the role of gender when women took part in martial tournaments.

Christina Schmücker's chapter on the carnivalesque Wirtshaus provides an excellent explo-

ration of the circumvention of precedence or the loosening of formality when the Habsburgs played at the role reversal. Ines Lang's look at the celebrations of the Virgin Mary (the presentation of Jesus, the annunciation, the ascension, her birth, and the immaculate conception) and Pentecost is oddly organized and pedantic. Rather than tracing all the changes in these festivals over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Lang inexplicably examines each festival in turn, which makes her presentation disjointed.

Irene Kubiska's chapter is about the celebrations and ceremonies surrounding the birth and baptism of members of the imperial family. Kubiska thoroughly explores the changing style of the ceremony (the increasing militaristic tinge, and celebrations regardless of the gender of the newborn) and the accommodations of various disturbances (concurrent mourning, precedence disputes, death of the newborn). Conversely, Michaela Kneidinger and Philipp Dittinger trace the court's mourning for eight emperors and empresses. Like some of the other chapters here, Kneidinger and Dittinger stay very close in organization and content to the primary sources, and their chapter reads more like a research report than an academic article.

Hansdieter Körbl's chapter focuses on the visit of the Muscovite envoy in 1679. The planning of the visit was characterized by both sides' misunderstanding of what was "normal" and simultaneous sensitivity to any ceremonial offense. Only so many problems could be anticipated and alleviated through ceremonial "tricks" to avoid either side losing face, and the visit itself was punctuated by a series of reciprocal escalations which resulted in a couple of incidents of bloodshed and, ultimately, manslaughter. Körbl extensively (and entertainingly) describes the preparations (and negotiations) of dozens of ceremonial details and sticking points, the ceremonies before the visit, and terrific examples of ceremonial breakdowns, stand-offs, and one-upmanship during the visit.

Finally, Karin Schneider's chapter on the Viennese court ceremonial protocols of the nineteenth century wraps up the book. She concludes that the end of the Holy Roman Empire changed little of the ceremony at the court in Vienna, where the same sixteenth-century court regulations remained in effect up until 1918. In fact, many of the problems that she describes (regarding rank at court, access to court, and the institutionalization of roles at court) seem to be the same issues explored in the preceding chapters. Nonetheless, court ceremony did change in the late nineteenth century, in that the Habsburgs became more demotic and the court was forced to accommodate (or resist) the new press's interest in imperial ceremonies.

On the whole this book is an impressive effort to explore the ceremonial protocols of the Viennese court. Several of the chapters are simply outstanding, and though the organization and/or analysis (or lack thereof) of some of the chapters is problematic, all of them are valid works of scholarship. The wealth of information here is a real aid to understanding the Viennese court (and the workings of courts in general). This book should be of interest to anyone studying the Habsburgs, the Holy Roman Empire, or the early modern court.

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at <https://networks.h-net.org/h-german>

Citation: Benjamin Marschke. Review of Pangerl, Irmgard; Scheutz, Martin; Winkelbauer, Thomas, eds. *Der Wiener Hof im Spiegel der Zeremonialprotokolle (1652-1800): Eine Annäherung*. H-German, H-Net Reviews. September, 2012.

URL: <https://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=32999>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 United States License.