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THE POLITICS OF BODIES AT THE EARLY MODERN COURT

Early modern courts created bodies that were as specific to their environment as they were political. The princely body stood at the center of many complex corporeal practices charged with meaning, but the ruler also inhabited a continuum with princely peers and noble courtiers. Members of the court mediated, produced, and represented differences in status continuously everywhere they went. Clothing and ornament, posture, beauty, health, and physiognomy at different times and to varying degrees played crucial roles in this process. Yet the courtly body did not merely assist the production of hierarchical order at court. It also lived and breathed a life of its own, often disrupting and destabilizing dynastic strategies with its unpredictable agency. From this perspective, bodies and corporeality reveal themselves to be an integral part of all political interactions at court. The systematic study of political bodies, however, is a complex undertaking that can point in many distinct directions.

Our introductory article to this collection reflects on the challenges and opportunities of a historiography of courtly, political bodies, and in it we have two distinct aims. The first is one of synthesis. We consider here the broad historiography on courts and dynastic power in its French, English, and German dimensions, with a focus on what the lens of body history has thus far contributed to the field. Since quite a lot of work has been done in each of these three traditions on our subject, we hope that this article will offer some steps toward a closer integration of these approaches and provide some vital work of translation. The second objective is an analytical one. We wish to take stock of previous developments and to propose avenues for further research that seem the most promising from our point of view.

The burgeoning historiography on premodern courts as centers of dynastic power has only recently become explicitly interested in the (historically constructed) bodies of those inhabiting them. The field as a whole, by contrast, has encountered the body at various important junctions since its inception. In his seminal work, Elias treated the taming of bodily functions as a key element in what he called a »civilizing process«[1]. Many political historians have also written about the body, owing to its sheer prevalence in the sources. Geoffrey Elton, for example, would most likely have expressed his sincere horror at the thought of historicizing the body. Yet his seminal scholarship on Tudor kings, queens, and ministers at times touched upon some of the explanatory potential of corporeality: for instance, when he explored the complex problem of Elizabeth I's succession, which was intensified by the queen's refusal to contemplate her own mortality; or when he attributed Robert Dudley's rise in favor to his »handsome« appearance, although he judged him to be a man of »very little sense«[2]. In France,

1 Norbert Elias, Die höfische Gesellschaft. Untersuchungen zur Soziologie des Königtums und der höfischen Aristokratie, Neuwied 1969 (Soziologische Texte), p. 140–160.

2 Geoffrey Elton, England under the Tudors, London [3]1955, p. 282; similar arguments could be made about studies on the Tudor and Stuart dynasties presented by Elton's contemporaries, as well as about the next generation of British scholarship, as for instance about John Morrill's dating of Oliver Cromwell's conversion experience to 1630–1631, which saw the Lord Protector-to-be undergo a personal and bodily crisis characterized by relative poverty and illness. See John

Roland Mousnier considered Henri IV's extremely tenuous blood relationship with Henri III, and his resulting lack of legitimacy as king, to be one of the central reasons why a situation could arise in which a king of France was murdered by a subject[3]. Studies such as these did not fail to notice the importance of the body, yet they also did little to enhance our understanding of how to situate corporeality within early modern court culture and politics. Since their engagement with the body remained dictated by happenstance, rather than research interest, it is not possible to draw from these studies broader conclusions about how contemporaries themselves engaged with corporeality, and how their view and experience of the body informed their interactions.

Recently, there have been many more studies engaging with the body at court in a much more explicit manner, and some of them will be reviewed below. It must be noted here that some approaches appear to have greater potential for answering the above questions than others. For instance, in the German research landscape, theories of media have proved popular within court studies, and it is above all systems theory that has helped fold space and body into one medium of interaction, as Rudolf Schlögl puts it[4]. Systems theory conceptualizes the body (as it does other phenomena) as a matter of observation: the construct of an observer. Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger's influential work on symbolic communication emphasizes the conflictual element of princely gatherings, where a contested order of rank had to be made visible through a complex choreography involving bodies, ceremonial attire, and space, as well as many other factors[5]. This line of thought is now prominently echoed and developed for Bourbon France in Giora Sternberg's work[6]. Historians working within this tradition readily affirm the importance of the body, and some among them make elaborate attempts to conceptualize it, such as, for instance, Rudolf Schlögl and Mark Hengerer[7]. Yet, since their view of the body is entirely constructivist, their approaches do not allow for a perspective that recognizes the agency of the body itself. The body here serves as an analytical means to an end, a carrier of cultural symbolism, or an object to be disciplined and formed into a specific shape so as to attract devotion and radiate authority. Corporeality itself remains opaque and readers are left unsure of whether courtly bodies remained stable over time, and were merely treated differently by varying courtly fashions, or whether they have their own stories to tell.

The studies mentioned so far point to two different problems at opposite ends of a spectrum. First, we have considered historical works that do not see the body at all. Although they might

MORRILL, The Nature of the English Revolution. Essays by John Morrill, London 1993, ch. 6 (The Making of Oliver Cromwell), p. 118–147.

3 Roland MOUSNIER, L'Assassinat d'Henri IV. Le problème du tyrannicide et l'affermissement de la monarchie absolue, Paris 1964, p. 91–94.

4 Rudolf SCHLÖGL, Anwesende und Abwesende. Grundriss für eine Gesellschaftsgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit, Konstanz 2014, p. 258: »Raum und Körper verschmelzen auf diese Weise zu einem Medium der Interaktionskommunikation«; ID, Der frühneuzeitliche Hof als Kommunikationsraum. Interaktionstheoretische Perspektiven der Forschung, in: Frank BECKER (ed.), Geschichte und Systemtheorie. Exemplarische Fallstudien, Frankfurt 2004, p. 185–226.

5 Barbara STOLLBERG-RILINGER, Des Kaisers alte Kleider. Verfassungsgeschichte und Symbolsprache des Alten Reiches, Munich 2008.

6 Giora STERNBERG, Status Interaction during the Reign of Louis XIV, Oxford 2014 (The Past & Present Book Series); also ID., Manipulating Information in the Ancien Regime. Ceremonial Records, Aristocratic Strategies and the Limits of the State Perspective, in: Journal of Modern History 85 (2013), p. 239–279.

7 Mark HENGERER, Zur Konstellation der Körper höfischer Kommunikation, in: Johannes BURKHARDT, Christine WERKSTETTER (ed.), Kommunikation und Medien in der Frühen Neuzeit, Munich 2005 (Historische Zeitschrift. Beihefte), p. 519–546; in the same volume, see also Rudolf SCHLÖGL, Resümee: Typen und Grenzen der Körperkommunikation in der Frühen Neuzeit, p. 547–560.

refer to situations and challenges shaped by aspects of the subject's physicality, such works do not consider the body as a research subject, most often because they take the body to be an anthropological given: it set limits to human action and interaction, but (in their authors' perception) it remained stable across time and space. Located on the other end of the spectrum exist those studies that abstract the bodies under investigation to such an extent that they shed their material corporeality and appear to dissolve completely in the corresponding social and cultural contexts. We propose that the most advantageous way to approach these matters lies, in fact, somewhere between these extremes. We argue, with Lyndal Roper and Dror Wahrman, that it is possible and indeed urgent to find a position that mediates between body-»essentialists« and body-»constructivists«[8].

We argue that an increased focus on lived corporeality can provide such a position. In our view, it is unnecessary to agree on a single definition of the body, as this would necessarily reduce the multifaceted impact of corporeality in an unhelpful manner. Instead, our contributors shed light on the body's place within established fields of court history, with a particular view to how lived corporeality (i.e. the material presence of the body in practice) challenges and modifies received narratives in these historiographies. In particular, this perspective helps us to distance ourselves from a top-down view that has long dominated the study of courts, since attention to corporeality guides our focus to numerous important political actors besides the monarch himself. Furthermore, it allows us to create research perspectives that transcend our (at times anachronistic) focus on single actors that resemble the modern individual and its sense of self, since the boundaries between early modern bodies were oftentimes extremely fluid. This is particularly apparent when we consider in detail how contemporaries viewed concepts such as family or dynasty.

In this introductory article, we go back over a range of historiographical developments in the encounter between body and court history over the last decades. Since this material is so extensive, it is not possible to review all studies in the field; rather, we select the strands that speak with the most clarity to the tension between the abstracted body as an analytical tool and the perspective on lived corporeality. First, we revisit the extensive discussion around the imagined body of the king, which is often considered to be an extension of the kingdom itself. In that section, we argue that these longstanding debates have made it clear that neat distinctions between different dimensions of the king's body could not comfortably be maintained across longer periods of time. Secondly, we examine a range of studies and source examples that help us explore the tension between the ordinary and the extraordinary in relation to royal bodies. Here, we are particularly interested in the corporeal practices that were informed by this tension. In the third section, we consider the role that lived corporeality played in shaping courtly interactions on all social levels, eschewing a top-down perspective.

Imagined Bodies

The idea that the human body could serve as a helpful metaphor for thinking about society and the state dates back at least to antiquity. While we cannot be sure of its origins, historians can trace its import through the renewed interest in the classical tradition in early modern Europe[9]. One of the oldest incarnations of the idea appears to be one of Aesop's fables (though its author-

8 Lyndal Roper, Oedipus and the Devil. Witchcraft, Sexuality and Religion in Early Modern Europe, London 1994, p. 17; Dror Wahrman, Change and the Corporeal in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Gender History. Or, Can Cultural History Be Rigorous?, in: Gender & History 20 (2008), p. 584–602.

9 Ian Maclean, Logic, Signs and Nature in the Renaissance. The Case of Learned Medicine, Cambridge 2002, e.g. ch. 2.

ship is not established beyond reasonable doubt), which tells the story of the Belly whose leisurely life was envied by the Members. They promptly decided to stop feeding it, and as a result withered away to the point that, by the time they realized their mistake, they were too weak to resume their work of finding sustenance[10]. This narrative makes explicit the interconnectedness between seemingly disparate parts of a whole. This crucial layer of meaning of the body as a metaphor remained intact across many subsequent interpretations of the theme, spanning numerous centuries, and it will continue to remain important for our analysis here. In the early modern period, metaphors linking individual bodies to larger collectives were used by so many key luminaries that we can safely view them as part of the early modern mental landscape. If we accept Mikhail Bakhtin's analysis, the great emphasis on the eating, drinking, and excreting body in François Rabelais's literary work should not be taken to refer to biological notions of a specific body, but rather constitutes a continuous reference to the collective vitality of the people[11]. Famously, Thomas Hobbes likened his »Leviathan« to a collective body, stating that a commonwealth was »[…] but an Artificiall Man; though of greater stature and strength than the Naturall, for whose protection and defence it was intended; and in which, the Sovereignty is an artificial soul, as giving life and motion to the whole body […]«[12]. Shakespeare's Macbeth drew a parallel between the land of Scotland and a patient in need of the right purgative medicine in order to be rid of the English[13].

Thinking with the body in order to explain matters of society and the state thus has a long history, which certainly paved the way for modern scholars interested in dynastic power to adapt the device for their own purposes. No one has been more instrumental to this process than Ernst Kantorowicz and his monograph »The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology«, which was published in 1957[14]. Kantorowicz traced the religious notion of the double body of Christ – whose mystical body was the Church, paralleled by his real body present in the Eucharist – in the writings of medieval theologians, and he demonstrated how this notion came to be secularized over time and applied to temporal kingship. His relatively short analysis of Plowden's report illustrated how Tudor jurists had become accustomed to using the concept of the duality of the king's body (which featured both a natural, ephemeral, and a political, enduring dimension) in their argument. Kantorowicz's analysis gained enormous traction in the historical discipline; yet, as Bernhard Jussen and others have since pointed out, this notion of the king's doubled body was relevant for Kantorowicz only in so far as it helped him to consider the origins of early modern statehood[15]. Thus, it has to be noted that while Kantorowicz did not use the two-body model to make sense of the idiosyncrasies of early modern rulers, many historians who refer to him have sought to do just that. It is their debates that will be the object of discussion in this part of the essay, always keeping in mind that these

10 As discussed in Arnold David Harvey, Body Politic. Political Metaphor and Political Violence, Newcastle 2007, p. 4–5.

11 Mikhail Bakhtin, Rabelais and his World, transl. by Hélène Iswolsky, Bloomington, IN 1984, p. 26.

12 Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan. Revised student edition, ed. by Richard Tuck, Cambridge 1996, p. 9, original emphasis.

13 William Shakespeare, The Tragedy of Macbeth, ed. by Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine, Folger Shakespeare Library: https://shakespeare.folger.edu/shakespeares-works/macbeth [last accessed 23.06.2020], Act 5, Sc. 3, lines 62–69. For further examples and analysis of how body images were used to think about society in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Harvey, Body Politic (as in n. 23), p. 23–38; Ernst Kantorowicz, The King's Two Bodies. A Study in Medieval Political Theology, Princeton, NJ 1957, republished Princeton, NJ 2016, with new introductions by Conrad Leyser and William Chester Jordan, ch. 2.

14 Kantorowicz, King's Two Bodies (as in n. 13).

15 Bernhard Jussen, The King's Two Bodies Today, in: Representations 106 (2009), p. 102–117.

have developed a life of their own, and exist removed to some degree from their purported founder's reflections.

In the first instance, the notion of the monarch's doubled body was applied in order to think about moments of dynastic vulnerability. How could early modern monarchy simultaneously lay claim to permanent authority and at the same time be invested in the frail body of a mortal person? In a pioneering study of French royal funerary rites, Kantorowicz's student Ralph Giesey developed the argument that the conception of the presence of two royal bodies helped to solve this problem. When a king died in France, it was assumed that his eternal, political body lived on without any interruption. The body might be mourned, but the king lived on. This was why the late king's successor could not take part in the funerary rites. For as long as the mortal body was present, and the political body was represented in the form of a funeral effigy, the successor found himself in a sort of limbo as an incarnated, living royal body, but not yet invested with the enduring political body[16]. As early as 1977, Marie Axton called attention to the fact that the concept of the duality of the monarch's body gained specific relevance at Elizabeth I's ascension to the throne. The jurists in the Crown's service relied on the pre-existing broad diffusion of the concept of the monarch's dual person in order to grapple with the problem that a female body was now the exalted ruler of England[17]. Sergio Bertelli chose a transcultural perspective in his book on the body of the king, first published in 1990, which found significant convergences in cultic rituals focused on the king's body at princely courts across Europe[18]. His specific attention to the rare, but crucial, events of regicide are particularly instructive. They reveal the potential of the two-body theory to legitimize violence against a monarch's natural body, given that it could be interpreted to state that the political body would survive even an assassination fully intact[19].

Hard on the heels of the stimulating research produced by various interpretations and applications of the two-body problem followed the critiques that came to be levelled against the theory. Alain Boureau argued determinedly that the splitting of the royal body never extended beyond the realm of legal fiction, and that it was not possible to detect any sacralized forms of worship of the king's bodies in the medieval and early modern French monarchy[20]. Paul Kléber Monod, on the other hand, dated the crisis of the French sacral monarchy to the wars of religion and specifically to the moment of the assassination of Henri III[21]. According to Kléber Monod, Catholic hardliners objected to Henri's lifestyle and his acceptance of a Protestant successor, and because of the perceived connection between the body of the king and the polity, it was feared that the impure monarch would adversely affect the entire kingdom[22]. After his

16 Ralph E. Giesey, The Royal Funeral Ceremony in Renaissance France, Geneva 1960; Sarah Hanley, The *Lit de Justice* of the Kings of France: Constitutional Ideology in Legend, Ritual, and Discourse, Princeton, NJ 1983, esp. p. 256–257. This study built on Giesey's work and included body politics of the *lit de justice* in her analysis.

17 Marie Axton, The Queen's Two Bodies. Drama and the Elizabethan Succession, London 1977, p. 15.

18 This work was published in an English translation: Sergio Bertelli, The King's Body. Sacred Rituals of Power in Medieval and Early Modern Europe, transl. by R. Burr Litchfield, University Park, PA 2001.

19 See Ibid. p. 253–269; also see Regina Schulte, Introduction. Conceptual Approaches to the Queen's Body, in: Regina Schulte (ed.), The Body of the Queen: Gender and Rule in the Courtly World, 1500–2000, New York 2006, p. 1–15, here p. 3.

20 Alain Boureau, Le Simple corps du Roi. L'impossible sacralité des souverains français, XVe–XVIIIe siècle, Paris 2000, for instance, p. 42f.

21 Paul Kléber Monod, The Power of Kings. Monarchy and Religion in Europe, 1589–1715, New Haven, CT 1999, p. 33–78.

22 Ibid., p. 34f.

demise it became clear that in post-Reformation France new concepts of kingship were needed, which were soon provided by the legal conception of sovereignty[23]. Another line of criticism aimed at the two-body model has been articulated more recently by the art historian Kristin Marek, who reconsidered the royal funeral effigies used by the English kings of the late medieval period[24]. Since these effigies were closely modelled on the living monarchs, Marek argues that it would make no sense for them to represent an abstract entity such as the enduring political body, as had previously been suggested by Ralph Giesey[25]. Instead, she suggests that such effigies were used to stand in for the living, sacralized body of the king, which was made particularly explicit when the effigies were dressed up in coronation robes, thus referring to the moment in time when sacral power was activated in the king's body through anointment. Marek thus adds a third, living and sacral body to the natural and the political bodies previously identified.

Historians of gender raised further questions about the two-body model, as they found that it was not easily adapted to reflections about the female royal body. Regina Schulte argued that many queens derived their authority from the very fusion between their natural and political bodies[26]. Abby Zanger and Rachel Weil further questioned the use of viewing the body natural as consistently opposed to the body politic, as both of them identified examples of how a monarch's flesh could be made to serve rulership, rather than destabilize it[27]. Finally, the influential work of Lynn Hunt on Marie-Antoinette suggested that two bodies are not enough to contain the complexities of some female monarchs, who could serve as screens on which could be projected a great range of anxieties centered around court society, including dissimulation, decadence, and deviant sexuality[28].

In line with these developments, scholars interested in dynastic power and court society began, in the late 1990s, to map out the limits of the explanatory potential of perspectives invested in the doubling of the royal body. Once the watershed moments of any reign, such as death and succession, had been analyzed, it turned out that it was less obvious how an internal separation of the royal body would contribute to the fulfillment of more ordinary tasks of rulership. For instance, the collaborative enterprise of Sara E. Melzer and Kathryn Norberg focused on the everyday spectacle of rule at the French court, and here they located the specific power of the royal body precisely in its simultaneous incorporation of lived corporeality and its extraordinary claims to authority[29]. The contributors to their important volume focused on dance and dress and showed how in these dynamic situations it was the wholeness and liveliness of the royal body that made the monarchical fiction come to life, rather than the separation of the king's or queen's body into its component parts. It is this adjusted notion of body politics that is beginning to make sense to historians working on the Holy Roman Empire, who have never

23 The ebb and flow of the sacral in conceptions of monarchy is now the object of interesting further scholarship that reaches beyond the roles of royal bodies. See Ronald G. Asch, Sacral Kingship between Disenchantment and Re-enchantment. The French and English Monarchies 1587–1688, New York 2014.

24 Kristin Marek, Die Körper des Königs. Effigies, Bildpolitik und Heiligkeit, Munich 2009.

25 Ibid., p. 22f.

26 Regina Schulte, Introduction (as in n. 19), p. 3.

27 Rachel Weil, Royal Flesh, Gender and the Construction of Monarchy, in: ibid., p. 88–100; Abby E. Zanger, Scenes from the Marriage of Louis XIV. Nuptial Fictions and the Making of Absolutist Power, Stanford, CA 1997, p. 6f.

28 Lynn Hunt, The Many Bodies of Marie-Antoinette. Political Pornography and the Problem of the Feminine in the French Revolution, in: Dena Goodman (ed.), Marie-Antoinette. Writings on the Body of a Queen, London 2003, p. 117–138.

29 Sara E. Melzer, Kathryn Norberg (ed.), From the Royal to the Republican Body. Incorporating the Political in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century France, Berkeley, CA 1998.

embraced the two-body model in the same manner as their colleagues studying the French and English courts. In Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger's seminal work on Maria Theresa of Austria, a multidimensional image of the incredibly fertile body of this notable ruler emerges, which is then analyzed as a central asset for the queen's representational program[30]. Motherhood did not detract from Maria Theresa's status as a ruler, but rather it served as a flexible and embodied device that could create a sympathetic situation when asking the (male) Hungarian Estates for help in wartime, as well as serve as an argument when demanding obedience from her adult children once they had become ruling princes and princesses in their own right[31]. Natural and political bodies, this suggests, could engage in practices of power because of their fusion, not despite it.

So which insights should we retain from this discussion, more than sixty years after the publication of Kantorowicz's »The King's Two Bodies«? While fictions of a split royal body have helped us understand aspects of transitional phases in monarchy, such as the moment of a ruler's death, these thought constructs have not proved themselves to be particularly useful in analyzing everyday practices of power, nor, in fact, in examining how elites and subjects sought to prepare for dynastic transitions beyond the realm of legalities and rituals. Those who engaged with the two-body model have certainly revealed to us the great diversity of projections aimed at the royal body, which is undoubtedly why, even now, the possibilities of adding further »bodies« to the model are currently discussed[32]. As the research agenda of court and monarchical studies moves on from models of absolutism, it remains crucial to remember this point. For no matter how many different bodies kings or queens had to unite within themselves, it has become evident that the expectations, offices, and orders invested in them were a crucial influence on how the vitality and fragility of their corporealities were interpreted. This has proved itself to be a curiously persistent feature in the political sphere, where bodies remain of great importance, no matter how much we would like to believe that we have moved on from red-blooded kings to anonymous bureaucrats. To name just one example, during the US presidential elections of 2016 the testimony of Donald Trump's physician as to the candidate's health was widely discussed. At the same time, one of the central points of critique leveled against Hillary Clinton by her opponent suggested that she lacked physical stamina and a »presidential look«[33]. Evidently, political bodies remain both gendered and tightly fused with flesh and blood, thus indicating that an endeavor of paying close attention to lived corporeality carries highly topical implications.

30 Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, Maria Theresia. Die Kaiserin in ihrer Zeit. Eine Biographie, Munich 2017.

31 Ibid., p. 90–94 and 768–780 respectively.

32 Marie-Claude Canova-Green, Faire le roi. L'autre corps de Louis XIII, Paris 2018, p. 257–260, suggests that we might need to pay attention to a third body of the king, namely the body of dignity, which comprises all the learned behaviors and the bodily control that sets the king apart; also on March 7, 2019 a round table discussion took place at the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme in Grenoble on the topic of »Combien de corps au roi?«, where Martin Wrede, Marie-Claude Canova-Green, Stanis Perez, Yann Lignereux, and Gérard Sabatier discussed the possibility of adding a body of memory to the other two bodies of the king.

33 In an interview with ABC's David Muir, which was broadcast on September 6, 2016, Donald Trump made the following comment: »Well, I just don't think she has a presidential look, and you need a presidential look«; During the presidential debate on September 26, 2016, Trump also stated that he did not believe she had the stamina for the position. See also Eric Nelson, The Royalist Revolution. Monarchy and the American Founding. Cambridge, MA 2014, on the significance of monarchical arguments in American history.

(Extra)ordinary Bodies

The history of bodies and corporealities has also proved itself instrumental in the debates surrounding what is perhaps the most fundamental question concerning early modern kingship: how did early modern rulers legitimize their extraordinary claims to power? In order to distinguish themselves from noble elites, rulers relied on a range of markers that they claimed were both innate and bestowed by the grace of God. Family lineage, anointment, and exceptional martial skills were all crucial to their special status[34]. As the previous section has shown, dynasts could not escape the reality of their all-too-human bodies[35]. Corporeal knowledge and practices were key to navigating the tension that was inherent in the ruling body, and in order to analyze this dynamic advantageously, we propose to decenter the court and focus on the whole range of practices including actors at all levels of court society surrounding the dynast's body. This approach will allow historians to assess how ordinary or extraordinary early modern observers perceived their rulers to be, with more sensitivity to change over time and local specificity within a comparative framework. The extraordinary (epitomized in theories of divine rights), it seems, emerged gradually and often faded again within intense debates about how to define and harness corporeality in everyday courtly interactions[36].

Here, we begin with a consideration of the corporeal images attached to the office of kingship, which ran the gamut from the merciful judge, all the way to the battlefield hero. Then we consider the manifold ways in which dynastic reproduction supported, and simultaneously complicated, claims to legitimacy. Thereafter, we move beyond the bodies of the ruling dynasty and consider how various stakeholders at court sought to find ways to prepare for the hazards of dynastic illnesses, births, and deaths. Finally, we draw attention to the role of other extraordinary bodies at court, and to the broader corporeal practices that helped to bind all actors at court into a complex, relational network.

Firstly, let us consider the corporeal dimensions of kingship itself. At first glance it may seem that – in contrast to the discourse about courtiers[37] – corporeality did not feature centrally in how early modernity conceptualized office. Ideas of office were intimately tied to the virtue of justice, which knew a particularly powerful body imagery. The incorruptibility of the king and the corruptibility of his advisers formed the central standard by which to measure good government[38]. In the proliferating literature on courts at the time, courtly sociability was often

34 Jay M. Smith, Nobility Reimagined. The Patriotic Nation in Eighteenth-Century France, Ithaca, NY 2005; Id., The Culture of Merit. Nobility, Royal Service, and the Making of Absolute Monarchy in France, 1600–1789, Ann Arbor, MA 1996; Ronald G. Asch, Europäischer Adel in der Frühen Neuzeit, Cologne 2008.

35 John Morrill, »Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown«. Dynastic Crises in Tudor and Stewart Britain, 1504–1746, Reading 2005; on the royal touch, see Stephen Brogan, The Royal Touch in Early Modern England. Politics, Medicine and Sin, Woodbridge 2015.

36 Andreas Pečar, Dynastie: Norm und Wirklichkeit im Hause Hohenzollern, in: Michael Kaiser, Jürgen Luh (ed.), Friedrich der Große und die Dynastie der Hohenzollern (Friedrich 300 Colloquien, 5), 2011: https://www.perspectivia.net/publikationen/friedrich300-colloquien/friedrich-dynastie/pecar_dynastie, [last accessed: May 5th, 2020].

37 Helmuth Kiesel, »Bei Hof, bei Höll«. Untersuchungen zur literarischen Hofkritik von Sebastian Brant bis Friedrich Schiller, Tübingen 1979.

38 John H. Elliott, Lawrence W. B. Brockliss (ed.), The World of the Favourite, New Haven, CT 1999; Hillard von Thiessen, Der entkleidete Favorit. Legitimation von Günstlings-Herrschaft und politische Dynamik im Spanien des Conde-Duque de Olivares, in: Ronald G. Asch, Birgit Emich, Jens Ivo Engels (ed.), Integration – Legitimation – Korruption. Politische Patronage in Früher Neuzeit und Moderne, Frankfurt 2011, p. 131–147.

associated with vice, underhand dealings, and continuous *dissimulatio*[39]. For the deep corporeality of these ideas, consider the example of the corrupt Persian judge Sisamnes, who was sentenced to death for taking bribes. In this legend, popularized in art and historical writing, King Cambyses makes the perpetrator's son take his father's seat on a chair covered in the corrupt judge's skin. In Britain and elsewhere, allegations of corruption against officeholders were underscored by the fact that the connection between religious concepts of sin and office-centered ideas of corruption shared a powerful body imagery[40]. Beyond this point, but connected to ideas of a virtuous life, certain medical conditions were believed to grow from the combination of great affluence, proximity, and social pressure at court[41]. The language of office, of virtues and vices, was connected to religious, medical, and scatological repertoires, and so the moral impurity of courts could hardly be thought of without evoking corporeal impurity as well.

Alongside the impartial judge, the hero formed another ideal type of male virility[42]. When Duke Johann Friedrich of Württemberg surprised his councilors and the local estates in 1620 with his decision to lead an army division for the Protestant Union, after a political career that had previously shied away from military conflict, his reasoning was firmly rooted in the language of dynastic corporeality: »[…] our resolution springs from us alone, but also from the heroic blood of our ancient predecessors of Württemberg […] God provided us with a suitably ordered body and courage so that we can trust in being their equal«[43]. Such displays of virility often drew in wider court society, and they heightened at moments of dynastic weakness. Nicolas Le Roux suggests that the later king Henri III of France had to form his body on the battlefield[44] as the heir apparent, and comparable observations hold true for British dynastic history as well. William III of Orange stressed his capacity to defend Protestantism on the battlefield in an attempt to make up for his foreign origins[45]. As Hannah Smith has shown, the Hanoverian succession likewise brought a reinvigoration of the motif of the *Protestant soldier-king* in its wake[46]. In all these cases, the specific emphasis on heroic-cum-reproductive qualities

39 Christiane Hille, Visions of the Courtly Body. The Patronage of George Villiers, First Duke of Buckingham, Munich 2012; Jon R. Snyder, Dissimulation and the Culture of Secrecy in Early Modern Europe, Berkeley, CA 2009.

40 Mark Knights, Religion, Anti-popery, and Corruption, in: Michael J. Braddick, Phil Withington (ed.), Popular Culture and Political Agency in Early Modern England and Ireland. Essays in Honour of John Walter, Woodbridge 2017, p. 181–202; Niels Grüne, »Und sie wissen nicht, was es ist«. Ansätze und Blickpunkte historischer Korruptionsforschung, in: Id., Simona Slanicka (ed.), Korruption. Historische Annäherungen an eine Grundfigur politischer Kommunikation, Göttingen 2010, p. 11–34.

41 Werner Friedrich Kümmel, *De Morbis Aulicis*. On diseases found at court, in: Vivian Nutton (ed.), Medicine at the Courts of Europe, 1500–1837, London 1990, p. 15–48.

42 Ronald G. Asch, Herbst des Helden. Modelle des Heroischen und heroische Lebensentwürfe in England und Frankreich von den Religionskriegen bis zum Zeitalter der Aufklärung, Würzburg 2016; Martin Wrede (ed.), Die Inszenierung der heroischen Monarchie. Frühneuzeitliches Königtum zwischen ritterlichem Erbe und militärischer Herausforderung, Munich 2014 (Historische Zeitschrift Beihefte, 62).

43 Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart, A 90a Bd. 29, fol. 171r.

44 Nicolas Le Roux, La Faveur du roi: mignons et courtisans au temps des derniers Valois (vers 1547–vers 1589), Paris 2013, p. 129–131; Ghislain Tranié, »L'honneur que le Roy me faict aittre marry de mon aspesansse me consolle et m'afflige«. Les effets de l'infécondité sur les corps de Louise de Lorraine et de Henri III, in: Pascale Mormiche, Stanis Perez (ed.), Naissance et petite enfance à la cour de France. Moyen Âge–XIXe siècle, Villeneuve d'Ascq 2016, p. 109–123, 113.

45 Esther Mijers, David Onnekink (ed.), Redefining William III. The Impact of the King-Stadholder in International Context, Aldershot 2006 (Politics and Culture in North-Western Europe 1650–1720).

46 Hannah Smith, Georgian Monarchy. Politics and Culture, 1714–1760, Cambridge 2006, ch. 4.

found a particularly vocal form at moments of dynastic weakness, be it the French Wars of Religion, the flight of James II Stuart, or the exclusion of around fifty Catholics that the Hanoverian succession necessitated. As these practices signaled male virility, they were thus directly related to the question of princely reproduction.

The numerous uncertainties and dangers associated with childbearing were especially problematic in a political system founded on inheritance through the direct male line[47]. This peculiar system of (agnatic) primogeniture spread widely in Europe over the course of the early modern period, slowly reaching into most remaining pockets of partible inheritance[48]. Yet, before a legitimate child could even be conceived a marriage had to be concluded, and this process itself had to be guided by religious, medical, and ceremonial experts. When, for instance, the Habsburg court facilitated a suitable marriage alliance for Archduke Joseph, the future Holy Roman Emperor, the choice of a suitable bride was not predicated on noble rank alone. It fell on physician Pius Nicolaus Garelli to travel to Italy to inspect potential brides. His secret mission inspired reports back and forth from other European courts interested in making a good Habsburg match. In the context of other important matters in Imperial politics, Rudolf Christian von Imhoff, the Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel's envoy, for instance, noted that »personal physician Medicus Carelli has been sent to Italy to examine the constitution of the Hanoverian princesses as well as that of the Guastala«[49]. In another letter he detailed the »strong opposition« and »intrigues« against the marriage alliances. Garelli played his part, since he had »reported very favorably about the princess of Hanover«, but had lost credibility in the envoy's eyes »since one had reports that he had been promised« money for it in Modena[50]. A lack of complete corporeal information rendered the reports even more suspicious, Imhoff added, since »he [Garelli] had been sent to understand her complexion (*complexion*) and nature, but not her beauty (*Gestalt*) and character (*Wesen*)«. All of these factors, Imhoff's letter suggested, could play a major role, and leaving out even one called the whole report into question.

Reproduction in Europe's ruling families, even more than it does today, invited intense public scrutiny centering on both female and male members of the dynasty[51]. These processes, however, involved a large group of family members, courtiers, medical experts, and foreign observers. Aloys Thomas Raimund von Harrach, the Austrian Habsburg envoy at the court of Charles II of Spain, the heirless last Spanish Habsburg, wrote home to his father in Vienna that the »king enjoyed perfect health in the Escorial and had already slept with the Queen three times (*a deia dormi trois fois avec la Reyne*)«[52]. Laura Oliván-Santaliestra and others have focused

47 Jennifer Evans, »They are called imperfect men«. Male infertility and sexual health in early modern England, in: Social History of Medicine 29 (2014), p. 311–332.

48 Paula Sutter Fichtner, Protestantism and Primogeniture in Early Modern Germany, New Haven, CT 1989; Ralph Giesey, The Juristic Basis of Dynastic Rights to the French Throne, in: Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 51 (1961), p. 3–47.

49 Rudolf Christian von Imhoff to Duke Anton Ulrich of Brunswick-Luneburg, Vienna, 12/22.01.1698, in: Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv (NLA), Wolfenbüttel (WO), 2 Alt, Nr. 444 (Relationes).

50 This and the following

51 Morrill, »Uneasy lies the head« (as in n. 35) and id., Dynasties, Realms, Peoples and State Formation, 1500–1720, in: Id., Robert von Friedeburg (ed.), Monarchy Transformed. Princes and their Elites in Early Modern Western Europe, Cambridge 2017, p. 17–43; Mary E. Fissell, Vernacular Bodies. The Politics of Reproduction in Early Modern England, Oxford 2004, carefully ties seismic political events to changes in the conceptualization of reproduction; Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, Nur die Frau des Kaisers? Kommentar, in: Bettina Braun, Katrin Keller, Matthias Schnettger (ed.), Nur die Frau des Kaisers? Kaiserinnen in der Frühen Neuzeit, Cologne 2016, p. 245–251, 246 and id., Maria Theresia (as in n. 30), ch. 6.

52 Letter from Aloys Thomas Raimund von Harrach to his father Ferdinand Bonaventura von Harrach, (Madrid), 08.10.1699, in: Vienna, Österreichiches Staatsarchiv (OeStA), Familienarchiv (FA) Harrach 242.

not on this scrutiny but on the »diplomacies of motherhood«, the ways in which female correspondents complemented the diplomatic exchanges between Spain and Vienna[53]. Spain was not alone in this. Examples also abound for Britain, the Holy Roman Empire, and France[54]. Historians have recently also discussed the extent to which diplomacy itself was structured by and built around bodily practices[55].

Once a pregnancy could no longer be hidden, courts put the female body under particularly critical scrutiny. Focusing on Renaissance Italy, Valeria Finucci's work on the Duke of Mantua, Vincenzo Gonzaga, has shown how reproduction could justify deeply invasive procedures that involved religious and medical experts[56]. Recent research, however, has also come to re-evaluate the gendered nature of the birthing chamber to give spousal relations a more important role: for instance, in the case of miscarriages. Early modern medicine gave all sorts of factors a role in successful reproduction, but men also had a marital responsibility to care for and console their spouses[57]. As Ghislain Tranié has shown for Louise de Lorraine and Henri III, the experience of infertility could even bring royal couples closer together[58]. The sources bear out that, in interactions between royal couples, Galenic corporeality played its part as well. In 1701, for instance, the King of the Romans, Joseph, was reluctant to tell his wife about the death of a young archduke since she was pregnant again and negative emotions were believed to leave a negative imprint on the unborn child[59]. This heightened attention during pregnancy applied to the bodies of royal women, but it also extended to female courtiers[60]. Consider, for instance, the example that Leslie Tuttle details for Louis XIV's court. In 1661, Mademoiselle de Guerchi, a lady-in-waiting to the Queen Mother, Anne of Austria, died in mysterious circumstances[61]. As the scandal unfolded, information broke that the unmarried courtier had died when she attempted an abortion with a potion; the event led to a trial and, ultimately, the execution of a well-known

53 Laura Oliván-Santaliestra, Lady Anne Fanshawe, Ambassadress of England at the Court of Madrid (1664–1666), in: Glenda Sluga, Carolyn James (ed.), Women, Diplomacy and International Politics since 1500, London 2015, p. 68–85; Silvia Z. Mitchell, Habsburg Motherhood. The Power of Mariana of Austria. Mother and Regent for Carlos II of Spain, in: Anne J. Cruz, Maria Galli Stampino (ed.), Early Modern Habsburg Women. Transnational Contexts, Cultural Conflicts, Dynastic Continuities, New York 2013, p. 175–194; id., Queen, Mother, and Stateswoman: Mariana of Austria and the Government of Spain, University Park, PA 2019.

54 E.g. Corina Bastian, Verhandeln in Briefen. Frauen in der höfischen Diplomatie des frühen 18. Jahrhunderts, Cologne 2013; Nadine Akkerman, Birgit Houben (ed.), The Politics of Female Households. Ladies-in-waiting across Early Modern Europe, Leiden 2013 (Rulers and Elites, 4); Sluga, James, Women, Diplomacy and International Politics (as in n. 53); Helen Watanabe O'Kelly, Adam Morton (ed.), Queens Consort, Cultural Transfer and European Politics, c. 1500–1800, London 2017.

55 E.g. Julia Heinemann, Von Impotenz, Schönheit und Komplexion. Körper in Eheanbahnungen in den Briefen des französischen Gesandten Raymond de Fourquevaux am spanischen Hof (1565–1572), in: Frühneuzeit-Info 29 (2018), p. 57–74 as part of a special issue on the politics of corporeality in early modern diplomacy.

56 Valeria Finucci, The Prince's Body. Vincenzo Gonzaga and Renaissance Medicine, Cambridge, MA 2015.

57 Jennifer Evans, Sara Read, »Before midnight she had miscarried«. Women, Men, and Miscarriage in Early Modern England, in: Journal of Family History 40 (2015), p. 3–23.

58 Tranié, Effets de l'infécondité (as in n. 44).

59 Daniel Erasmi (von Hulde[n]berg), Vienna, 06.08.1701, in: NLA, Hannover (HA), Fürstentum Calenberg (Cal.), Lt. 24 n. 4882/3, fol. 118r–121v; See also Stollberg-Rilinger, Maria-Theresia (as in n. 30), p. 294f.

60 Mareike Böth, Erzählweisen des Selbst. Körperpraktiken in den Briefen Liselottes von der Pfalz (1652–1722), Cologne 2015.

61 Leslie Tuttle, Conceiving the Old Regime. Pronatalism and the Politics of Reproduction in Early Modern France, Oxford 2010, ch. 1.

midwife. As Tuttle convincingly shows, the intensity with which the law responded to the case had to do with the proximity to the royal court as a place of dynastic reproduction. When the birth of a royal heir was at stake, recognizing symptoms became a central and widespread practice, reaching far beyond medical experts.

Using »retrospective medicine« (which is the application of modern medical knowledge onto a condition in the past), modern probabilism, and concepts like »dynastic roulette« hint at the unpredictable nature of princely politics. But they do little to explain how subjects at the time actually dealt with or conceptualized the many uncertainties of dynasty[62]. Owing to the personal interests involved in, and severe political consequences of, incapacitating illness or death within ruling families, foreseeing such disasters turned into a veritable (if morally charged) business. Subjects often responded with creative ways of collecting valuable information about ruling families. Diplomats, spies, and those connected to them turned tidbits of hearsay into a medium of exchange. Monica Azzolini, whose groundbreaking book investigates astrology in Renaissance Italy, states that the burgeoning »predictive market« in early modern Europe »responded to the need, felt by most people, to cope with the uncertainty and precariousness of their time«[63]. Measuring the reach of popular almanacs, Paul Kléber Monod posits that by around 1700 the British astrology market had diminished in prestige, but not in popularity[64]. These attempts to obtain knowledge about the condition of not only ruling families, but also courtiers and politicians, skirt the fraught boundaries between the occult and early modern science, the irrational and the Enlightened. Together, they formed expanding and sophisticated practices that were all predicated on *opinio*, uncertain information about the human body[65].

The density of observational practices influenced the courtly environment in such a way that the dynastic family and its young heirs always stood at the center of attention. It is evident that a significant part of the »extraordinary« dimension of dynastic bodies lay, quite literally, in the eyes of its beholders. Tom Tölle's contribution focuses on the wavering health and demise of William, Duke of Gloucester, a Protestant prince in Stuart Britain, in order to detail how subjects near and far could credibly inform one another about changing princely health. Overall, the article shows that – unlike modern historiography that is still influenced by assumptions about British exceptionalism – contemporaries perceived the Stuart crisis to be comparable to that of the Spanish Habsburgs.

Beyond these onlookers and rumor-mongers, princely offspring and their families also relied on their own initiative in order to shape, reorder, and adorn their bodies in a way that emphasized their special status. The importance of training at arms and military prowess for male dynasts has already been discussed above, but many other corporeal practices contributed to the production of princely bodies. French historians have been pioneers in considering the effects of medical and hygienic practices on courtly hierarchies[66]. For instance, Georges Vigarello has found that the frequent purging of the royal body was one of the practices that gradually came

62 E. g. John Morrill, Dynasties, Realms, Peoples and State Formation, 1500–1720, in: Id., von Friedeburg (ed.), Monarchy Transformed (as in n. 51), p. 17–43; Michael Stolberg, Möglichkeiten und Grenzen einer retrospektiven Diagnose, in: Waltraud Pulz (ed.), Zwischen Himmel und Erde. Körperliche Zeichen der Heiligkeit, Stuttgart 2012, p. 209–227.

63 Monica Azzolini, The Duke and the Stars. Astrology and Politics in Renaissance Milan, Cambridge, MA 2013, p. 66.

64 Paul Kléber Monod, Solomon's Secret Arts. The Occult in the Age of Enlightenment, New Haven, CT 2013, p. 120.

65 Richard Serjeantson, Proof and Persuasion, in: Lorraine Daston, Kathrine Parke (ed.), The Cambridge History of Science. Early Modern Science, vol. 3, Cambridge 2006, p. 132–176.

66 See especially Catherine Lanoë, Mathieu da Vinha, Bruno Laurioux (ed.), Cultures de cour, cultures du corps XIVe–XVIIIe siècle, Paris 2011; Stanis Perez, La Santé de Louis XIV une biohistoire du Roi-Soleil, Paris 2010 (Mythes, Critique et Histoire).

to replace the emphasis on martial skill. A purged body was a pure body, thus turning the frequency of this treatment into a marker of status[67]. Stanis Perez has further examined the external cleaning of the royal body, which proceeded according to parameters that can appear quite alien to us. In Louis XIV's lifetime, washing with water was viewed with suspicion, as it was believed to open up the porous body too widely and to provide an avenue for infection. Full baths were thus a rare event in the king's life, but his hands and face were cleaned daily with a damp cloth, and at times measures were taken to make the king sweat, as transpiration was believed to have cleansing properties[68]. In the holistic understanding of health that marked the early modern period, such external measures had to be complemented by strict control of dietary regimes and physical activity in order to attain an ideal balance of the bodily fluids. The court, however, was not always the ideal location to attain optimal health; it was widely known, for instance, that courtly meals were too rich in meat and fat[69]. Still, it was necessary for the food on the king's table to reflect his exalted status, thus revealing one of the many tensions inherent in dynastic bodily practices. Clothing, furthermore, was understood as an extension of the body across all societal groups, and it was absolutely crucial to render social distinctions visible through sartorial choices[70]. Fabrics that reflected the light were particularly coveted by men and women of the courtly elite, as shine and luster were not only thought to be aesthetically pleasing, but also represented a physical manifestation of divine goodwill[71].

In addition to the monarch, other extraordinary bodies (foreign envoys, dwarfs, hirsutes, and enslaved people) also played a role in delineating the boundaries between ordinary and extraordinary at European courts. Literature on these agents has taken a decidedly new turn in recent years, however. The historiography has long treated court dwarfs as figures that lacked agency and were meant to underline the monarch's power and importance[72]. Dwarfs played many different roles, however, and the size and proportions of their bodies were not the only markers of difference. These bodily features could matter in day-to-day interaction, but often – as Eva Seemann has shown – they did not[73]. Most importantly, Seemann's work draws attention to the concept of intersectionality, disentangling how ways of producing differences interacted, and thus opening up assumptions about the otherness of such figures as dwarfs. Seemann shows with precision that court dwarfs, for example, were often considered by standards of office and not by their bodily difference alone.

European courts had much in common when it came to matters of the body. Yet, it may also be worthwhile to pay attention to differences between courts, depending on their size and affluence, the social pull they developed upon elites, and their change over time. The exclusivity

67 Georges Vigarello, Histoire du corps. De la Renaissance aux Lumières, Paris 2005, p. 402–404.

68 Stanis Perez, L'Hygiène de Louis XIV, in: Lanoë, da Vinha, Laurioux (ed.), Cultures de cour (as in n. 66), p. 85–96.

69 Kümmel, *De Morbis Aulicis* (as in n. 41), p. 15–48, 21f (on food).

70 Philip Mansel, Dressed to Rule. Royal and Court Costume from Louis XIV to Elizabeth II, New Haven, CT 2005.

71 Timothy McCall, Brilliant Bodies. Material Culture and the Adornment of Men in North Italy's Quattrocento Courts, in: I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance 16/1 (2013), p. 445–490; also see Katy Bond, Fashioned with Marvelous Skill. Veils in the Costume Books of Sixteenth-century Europe, in: Susanna Burghartz, Lucas Burkart, Christine Goettler, Ulinka Rublack (ed.), Materialized Identities. Objects – Affects – Effects in Early Modern Culture, 1450–1750 (forthcoming).

72 Janet Ravenscroft, Dwarfs – and a *Loca* – as Ladies' Maids at the Spanish Habsburg Court, in: Akkerman, Houben (ed.), Politics of Female Households (as in n. 54.), p. 147–177.

73 Eva Seemann, Der kleine Unterschied. Zur Stellung von ›Hofzwergen‹ an Fürstenhöfen der Frühen Neuzeit, in: Matthias Bähr, Florian Kühnel (ed.), Verschränkte Ungleichheit, Berlin 2018 (Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung, Beihefte, 56), p. 55–87.

of social roles forms another aspect: it struck us in our discussions that marriage regulations for female courtiers differed between France and the Habsburg court, with the result that marriage age, number of children at court, and lived experience also may have varied greatly, and merit being studied[74]. This echoes Jeroen Duindam's insight that court historians may wish to study the specific, but always ought to do so in a comparative framework[75].

Adapting, mending, and shaping bodies became a central occupation at court. Crucially, it involved the bodies of rulers and courtiers alike. Royal representation, studied in the first section, we posit, extended far and wide into individual courtly practices. Valerio Zanetti's contribution shows how – under the impression of female rule in France – specific forms of exercise for aristocratic women even sought to achieve a reform of female bodies: a corporeal side to the so-called *querelle des femmes* often overshadowed by more conservative pedagogy. We call the level of observation, in which the body featured so centrally as an underlying category and structured all aspects of day-to-day life, »lived corporeality«. At court, alive with ideas about fluxes, humors, and emotions, bodies should be restored to their place as structuring agents of courtly life and rulership. The next part deals with the tangible effects they yielded on sociability.

Relational Bodies

Many recent studies of court politics consider the regulation of relationships between the monarch(s) and their dynastic family, courtly elites, subjects, and the wider society of princes to be *the* key practice of power in the early modern period[76]. Courts, wherever they rose to prominence, provided an arena in which people could meaningfully and regularly interact, but they also set limits to how such interactions could play out in practice[77]. The focus on interpersonal relationships as political motors is most influentially argued in Lucien Bély's work, which demonstrates that any study of early modern European foreign policy must be anchored within the familial and personal networks of the various European ruling dynasties. The body is implicitly very present in Bély's work, as he dedicated a third of his thorough study on the European *société des princes* to the life cycle of the prince[78]. From this and other studies it is thus evident that the body played a key role in negotiating, maintaining, and improving courtly relationships, and in this section we consider the state-of-the-art research on relational corporeality at court, and we point to some avenues for further consideration.

It is in the context of early modern marriage-making that the body's relational qualities are perhaps most apparent. Matrimony has, of course, been studied extensively as an important site of early modern dynastic rulership; but can corporeality tell us something new about its specific relevance to the practice of power? As the example of Garelli's trips to Italy have already suggested above, health concerns played a role in finding a suitable match. It was even rumored that certain ills ran in families and – of course, without our underlying understanding of ge-

74 Martin Scheutz, Jakob Wührer, Zu Diensten ihrer Majestät. Hofordnungen und Instruktionsbücher am frühneuzeitlichen Wiener Hof, Cologne 2011; Leonhard Horowski, Die Belagerung des Thrones. Machtstrukturen und Karrieremechanismen am Hof von Frankreich 1661–1789, Stuttgart 2012; on lived experience e.g. Mary E. Fissell, Women in Healing Spaces, in: Laura Lunger Knoppers (ed.), The Cambridge Companion to Early Modern Women's Writing, Cambridge 2009, p. 153–166.

75 Jeroen Duindam, Vienna and Versailles. The Courts of Europe's Dynastic Rivals, 1550–1780, Cambridge 2003.

76 E.g. Jeroen Duindam, Rulers and Elites in Global History. Introductory Observations, in: Maaike Berkel, Jeroen Duindam (ed.), Prince, Pen, and Sword: Eurasian Perspectives, Leiden 2018, p. 1–31.

77 Sternberg, Manipulating Information (as in n. 6).

78 Lucien Bély, La Société des princes. XVIe–XVIIIe siècle, Paris 1999.

netics – that these ills could be passed on from generation to generation[79]. Marriages could be dissolved if one or other of the spouses could not fulfill their marital duties[80]. Julia Heinemann further argues that the very changeability of early modern bodies turned them into important diplomatic resources during dynastic marriage negotiations. Such references to specific corporeal conditions could keep negotiations alive, since the body might always change, and with it the position of the negotiator[81]. While Mareike Böth's work on Liselotte of the Palatinate acknowledges that European politics motivated the marital match, she also shows in painstaking detail how Liselotte engaged in bodily practices that emphasized her Germanic heritage and set her apart at the French court. For instance, she refused to use make-up to lighten her complexion, as was the fashion at the court of Versailles, thus making a visible, corporeal statement about her sense of belonging[82].

While the dynastic system built fundamentally on the question of inheritance, parent-child, as well as sibling, relationships were not as exclusive or clear-cut as we might imagine. As Stanis Perez's contribution shows, the breasts of the queen – despite not serving the corporeal function of nourishing the royal heir – nevertheless were endowed with powerful symbolic clout, as they could stand for abundance and fertility, as well as the vulnerability of the royal line and the entire polity. In Galenic medicine, a theory centered on imbalances in bodily fluids or humors, milk held a special place, comparable to blood or semen[83]. Finding a suitable wetnurse could, thus, prove difficult since the health and lactation of the candidates played a central role. Worried about exhausting a trusted intimate, the Bavarian physician von Walther, for instance, wrote about young Prince Joseph Ferdinand of Bavaria that »he still drinks from the same wetnurse (*Amel*)« adding »with the hope that she will last longer«[84]. Julia Gebke has researched wetnurses in early modern Spain and shows how concerns about the purity of the milk encouraged physicians to prescribe to wetnurses a certain diet, regular moderate exercise, and limited exposure to upsetting news[85]. These trusted women, her research shows, could increase their own social standing and also pass on some of their prestige to family members. Gebke has published a letter from the wetnurse Dona Teresa Vázquez to Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II, in which she recommended her daughter as a wetnurse to the emperor's daughter Anna, future wife of Philipp II of Spain. Most strikingly, Dona Teresa describes her daughter as being »of the milk of serene prince don Ferdinand« (*de la leche del serenisimo princepe don Fernando*), suggesting that they had both been nursed by the same woman. As Nadine Amsler's research on European courts continues to show, milk allowed wetnurses to establish social relations of »milk brother- and sisterhood« that went well beyond social constructivism[86]. Owing to the

79 Staffan Müller-Wille, Hans-Jörg Rheinberger, A Cultural History of Heredity, Chicago, IL 2012; Olivia Weisser, Ill Composed. Sickness, Gender, and Belief in Early Modern England, New Haven, CT 2015.

80 Finucci, The Prince's Body (as in n. 56).

81 Julia Heinemann, Von Impotenz (as in. 55), p. 57–74.

82 Böth, Erzählweisen des Selbst (as in n. 60), p. 240–244.

83 David Warren Sabean, Descent and Alliance. Cultural Meanings of Blood in the Baroque, in: Id., Christopher H. Johnson, Bernhard Jussen, Simon Teuscher (ed.), Blood and Kinship. Matter for Metaphor from Ancient Rome to the Present, Oxford 2013, p. 144–174.

84 Dr Johann von Walther to Bavarian Elector Maximilian Emanuel, Vienna, 07.03.1693, in: Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv (Bayer. HStA), München, Geheimes Hausarchiv (GHA), Korrespondenz (Korr) 689.

85 Julia Gebke, Das Erbe der Milch. Ammen und Ärzte im königlichen Haushalt der spanischen Habsburger, in: Frühneuzeit-Info 27 (2016), p. 153–169.

86 Nadine Amsler, Allaiter des princes. Les carrières volatiles des nourrices à la cour de Vienne vers 1700, in: Yasmina Foehr-Janssens et al. (ed.), Allaiter: Histoire(s) et cultures d'une pratique, Turnhout 2020 (forthcoming).

humoral understanding of milk outlined above, early modern observers understood them to be as constitutive as blood relations.

All attention to royal corporeality went hand in hand with the management of the royal bodies' relationship with the wider world[87]. Seen in this context, practices such as hygiene, retreats into baths and spas, and pilgrimages take on new significance. On the one hand, they had the ability to stabilize imbalanced humoral regimes that threatened bodies at court. On the other, they allowed those who tended such bodies so expertly to win access and trust, and establish exclusivity. When Holy Roman Empress Elisabeth Christine, born a princess of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, traveled to a spa the social setting led envoys into self-contradictory statements[88]. They already drew formal boundaries between public and familial affairs, even though the latter carried rich political overtones. Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel's envoy Daniel Erasmi (von Huldeberg), for instance, wrote that the empress »could not discuss (public) affairs there, or have those presented to her« since she bathed regularly and was too tired afterwards to address such matters. At the same time, the envoy also noted that both dowager empresses regularly came to visit and that, despite the continued rain, »many of our local ladies« made an appearance. As historians have noted, claiming illness and seeking the solitude of spa pools, prayer, and pilgrimage could liberate female political figures at court from constant demands to be present[89]. Especially in this case, they offered a chance for an exchange about pregnancy across generations and an avenue for the politics of court women.

»Doing dynasty«, the participatory forms by which the abstract concept came to life, also included a dimension of relational corporeality[90]. As Jonathan Spangler argues for the case of Marie de Lorraine, Mademoiselle de Guise, the noble »house« (as well as its ruling counterpart) went well beyond the immediate family, but »embodied also its domestics […] and indeed its lawyers, creditors, suppliers, clients and tenants«[91]. Even the deaths of members of the ruling family spun a similarly dense network of redistribution and social interaction. The English College of Arms, an institution of ceremonial experts, provides a particularly intriguing example for how material redistribution, interaction, and social belonging intersected. Since the fifteenth century, the King of Arms had been in charge of granting arms on behalf of the Crown. Over time, heralds also came to acquire the right to collect fees for changes in noble and royal status, say for coronations or royal marriages, but also for the first presentation of noble banners, or *funeral droits* [dues] for every burial[92]. At the death of heirs, such interments were often less lavish, private affairs; in the case of ruling family members, the rewards were more handsome, such as, for example, *the standing herse* [hearse] […] *timber-work and rails, palls, sheet, canopy, cusheons, chairs, stools, stands, sconces* [i.e. light fixtures], *bier* [i.e. moveable frame for a coffin], *crown and cap* […] *with the table and carpets that Achievements are laid on* and so forth[93]. In practice, redistribution connected every official involved directly to the dead, but it often led to vociferous conflicts. In the case of William, Duke of Gloucester's funeral, for

87 Sebastiaan Derks, Dries Raeymakers (ed.), The Key to Power? The Culture of Access in Princely Courts, 1400–1750, Leiden 2016.

88 This and the following Relatio[n] 11, Vienna, 08.09.1714, in: NLA WO, 1 Alt 3 19, fol. 78r–79v.

89 Watanabe O'Kelly, Morton (ed.), Queens Consort (as in n. 54).

90 Echoes »doing gender« as in Candaca West, Don H. Zimmerman, Doing Gender, in: Gender and Society 1 (1987), p. 125–151.

91 Jonathan Spangler, Points of Transferral. Mademoiselle de Guise's Will and the Transferability of Dynastic Identity, in: Liesbeth Geevers, Mirella Marini (ed.), Dynastic Identity in Early Modern Europe. Rulers, Aristocrats and the Formation of Identities, London 2015, p. 131–152.

92 A detailed description of these rights and their change over time in Anthony Wagner, Heralds of England. A History of the Office and College of Arms, London 1967, p. 72–122.

93 »The Claim of the Kings, Heralds and Pursuivants of Arms to certain Fees and Droits for their Service«, in: London, College of Arms, »Funerals« (ID 1248), unpaginated (fol. 1r–3r).

instance, the sheer mass of material objects, especially precious fabrics, sparked old rivalries[94]. The College of Arms' chapter book for that year details the ensuing conflict between Wardrobe officials and heralds[95]. The immediacy of connection was, perhaps, never stronger than when distributing the clothes of a deceased heir.

Elias argued that such conflicts did not usually erupt in violence, and historians have since brought nuance to that view[96]. Yet, as Regine Maritz's contribution shows, physical fights were still part and parcel of how virility and status interaction were practiced and conceptualized in the seventeenth century. Male honor features here as an embodied concept that could be touched. As a result, reconciliation could be achieved only through close observation and judgment of corporeality.

Taking our approach, beauty at court, becomes relevant in its relational quality. It was, as the late Alex Cowan framed it, both observatory and participatory since both the person seen and the gazing subject had powers and roles[97]. Justus Lipsius, by way of Tacitus, framed it thus in a chapter on the »defects« of princes, discussing facial features, age, and health as well as the popular responses to such defects (laughter, aversion, blame)[98]. As Colin Jones has shown for the shifting significance of teeth in early modern Paris (if not exclusively in a courtly context), concepts of beauty changed significantly over time. Jones discusses how the old regime of teeth, with its tight-lipped face, rotten cavities, and disdain for the idiotic grin gave way to a new place for smiling in urban and courtly culture[99]. In his narrative, material changes in dental hygiene and medicine, consumption and nutrition, and shifting cultural attitudes – foremost, the mid-eighteenth century cult of sensibility – intersect to explain change over time. The involvement of observers and onlookers corroborates Anu Korhonen's insights about urban beauty, noting that »despite the common opinion that beauty was a women's issue, those worrying about it in early modern culture were mostly men«[100]. The focus on beauty – Isabelle Paresys and Natacha Coquery flesh this out in a volume on courtly dress – calls for an extension of studies into luxury and consumption, thus far often centered on urban spaces. With the mobility of luxury goods and the dynamism of commercial practices associated with these goods, such an extension would yield the added benefit of opening up additional avenues for research on a European scale[101]. As Hannah Smith has shown, even the Hanoverian court, stripped of Stuart splendor, was meant to communicate a political message. It conveyed that this royal court – dressing deliberately so to be seen as bare of all *decorum*, inhabited by patriots, and maintained by a public purse controlled by parliament – formed the antithesis to Bourbon France. It helped such sartorial cohesion that every courtier could adapt, shape and present body and attire in a way that publicly confirmed this message[102].

94 The Treasury lists in »Provisions for the Funeral of His Highness The Duke of Glocester«, in: The National Archives (TNA), Kew, Lord Chamberlain (LC) 2/14/1 and »Received from his Majestys Great Wardrobe [Gregory King, Lancaster Herald]«, in: London, Kew, TNA, LC 2/14/1.

95 »Chapter Book«, in: London, College of Arms, Chapter Book 2L3, vol. 2 (1696–1711), fol. 69.

96 Summarized e.g. in Ronald G. Asch, Europäischer Adel in der Frühen Neuzeit. Eine Einführung, Cologne 2008, p. 218–234.

97 Alex Cowan, Gossip and Street Culture in Early Modern Venice, in: Journal of Early Modern History 12 (2008), p. 313–333.

98 Justus Lipsius, Politica. Six Books of Politics or Political Instruction, Assen 2004, p. 497–505.

99 Colin Jones, The Smile Revolution in Eighteenth Century Paris, Oxford 2014.

100 Anu Korhonen, To See and to Be Seen. Beauty in the Early Modern London Street, in: Journal of Early Modern History 12 (2008), p. 335–360, here p. 359.

101 Isabelle Paresys, Natacha Coquery, Se Vêtir à la cour en Europe (1400–1815). Une Introduction, in: Apparance(s): Histoire et culture du paraitre 6 (2015), p. 5–24.

102 Smith, Georgian Monarchy (as in n. 46), ch. 2.

Finally, we should also consider how the relational body could give shape to the relationship between dynastic elites and their subjects. Historians have known for some time that the notion of parenthood served as an important tool for both rulers and subjects to think about their hierarchical relationship. Especially in the Protestant areas of the Holy Roman Empire, the alignment between the roles of the *Hausmutter* and the *Landesmutter*, as well as the *Hausvater* and the *Landesvater*, have been under discussion for some time[103]. This simple thought device was powerful because of its ability to tap into religious, familial, and hierarchical normativities of the early modern period. Every Christian person knew of the respect and obedience owed to one's parents, which made it easy to imagine how one was expected to behave in relation to the »parents« of the territory. Paying attention to the role of the *Landesmutter* has allowed historians of women and gender to demonstrate that dynastic women regularly, rather than exceptionally, held authority, when they acted as part of a ruling couple. The significance of corporeality in this dynamic is only now being discovered. A princess's experience of pregnancies, childbirths, lactation, and motherhood could be extrapolated to serve as emotionally charged links between her and her subjects[104]. The bodily implications of male rulers positioning themselves as fathers to their subjects have not yet been studied with the same attention as has been devoted to dynastic women, and it would be extremely interesting to see more work being done on this perspective. A focus on lived corporeality could also help historians come to terms with what »subjecthood« meant in early modern Europe. In recent years, subjecthood has been increasingly discussed, not just in its role as an opposition to citizenship[105]. As Stanis Perez, Volker Sellin, Ronald Asch, and others argue, ruling families – toward the end of the early modern period – increasingly came to be defined through links to their subjects, rather than to the heavens[106]. Considering corporeality suggests that these bonds need not be reduced to representation and legal fiction, nor confined to the Age of Revolutions. They were, one could argue, rooted in a much longer tradition of corporeal bonds that connected the extraordinary bodies of rulers directly and in day-to-day practices to those of their many subjects.

Conclusion

The topic of corporeality at the early modern court has risen to prominence in recent years, with the waning of teleological arguments that viewed dynastic rule as but a way station on the path to modern statecraft[107]. Of course, the body as an image that helped people think about

103 Claudia Opitz, Hausmutter und Landesfürstin, in: Rosario Villari, Andreas Simon (ed.), Der Mensch des Barock, Frankfurt 1999, p. 344–370; Joel Harrington, Hausvater and Landesvater: Paternalism and Marriage Reform in Sixteenth-century Germany, in: Central European History 25/1 (1992), p. 52–75; Paul Münch, Die »Obrigkeit im Vaterstand« – Zu Definition und Kritik des »Landesvaters« während der Frühen Neuzeit, in: Daphnis 11 (1982), p. 15–40.

104 Judith Aikin, The Welfare of Pregnant and Birthing Women as a Concern for Male and Female Rulers. A Case Study, in: The Sixteenth Century Journal 35/1 (2004), p. 9–41; Denis Crouzet, »A Strong Desire to Be a Mother to All Your Subjects«. A Rhetorical Experiment by Catherine de Medici, in: Journal for Medieval and Early Modern Studies 38/1 (2008), p. 103–118; Julia Heinemann examines Catherine de Medici's effective use of the concept of motherhood in rulership in her book-length study: Julia Heinemann, Verwandtsein und Herrschen. Die Königinmutter Catherine de Médicis und ihre Kinder in Briefen, 1560–1589, Heidelberg 2020 (Pariser Historische Studien, 118), https://doi.org/10.17885/heiup.691.

105 Hannah Weiss Muller, Subjects and Sovereign. Bonds of Belonging in the Eighteenth-century British Empire, Oxford 2017.

106 Stanis Perez, Symbolique(s) de la naissance princière dans le système de la cour (XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles), in: Mormiche, Id. (ed.), Naissance et petite enfance (as in n. 44), p. 125–137.

107 E.g. summarized in Jean Bérenger, Die Habsburger und ihre Erbfolgekrisen als Formationsphase des neuen europäischen Staatensystems, in: Peter Krüger (ed.), Das europäische Staaten-

statecraft, and as an unchanging material parameter, has long been present in scholarship concerned with courtly rulership. We have tried to show that this latter perspective is something quite distinct from an approach that historicizes the body. We have also suggested that the most fruitful avenues for further debate refrain from abstracting this body into an analytical tool that neither breathes nor bleeds. A focus on lived corporeality directs our gaze toward new ways of establishing social differences in courtly societies – ways that go beyond what historians can learn from an analysis of symbolic communication alone. Practices aimed at anticipating questions of fertility and reproduction framed the bodies of rulers, but, in turn, they also bring into view a range of actors implicated in dynastic reproduction that are otherwise easily forgotten. Furthermore, bodily practices of hygiene and the enhancement of beauty and health give insights into subtle ways of affirming the extraordinary status of royal bodies; these methods were adapted in myriad forms by actors of lower rank for their own purposes. Recent research has also brought to light the fact that attention to lived corporeality was a primary focus of the dynastic practice of power, which was concerned, above all, with relationship management. Dynastic relationships were grounded in early modern notions of kinship, but if we consider the implications of contemporary concepts of corporeality, such as the Galenic theory of humors, we find that concepts of kinship at court were much more permeable than was previously assumed. Moreover, when many European rulers claimed to be acting as fathers or mothers of their territories they did not merely develop their power as intellectual exercises (as discussed in the first section of this article), but also grounded it in corporeal notions such as shared experiences of pregnancy, birthing, and nursing.

How, then, can historians further develop the study of lived corporeality in courtly politics? First, we feel that it is necessary to overcome the notion of body history as an additional, but separate, field of enquiry within the discipline. Far rather, it should feed into and hopefully enrich legal and political history. For at the early modern court, as we have seen, the boundaries between political, legal, and bodily concerns were often not clearly drawn. Secondly, we advocate for more comparative studies of lived corporeality at the early modern courts of Europe, in order to sharpen our understanding of whether, and when, practices were truly specific to certain territories. For instance, French historians have pioneered the consideration of hygienic and medical practices at the French court, and it would be timely to consider whether these were exceptionally well developed at Versailles, or whether we might find equivalent practices at the Imperial court, the princely courts of the German lands, the English court, or elsewhere, and whether the answer to this shifts our understanding of the rivalries and collaborations between these dynastic centers. This brings us to our final point. We propose that it is crucial that historians concerned with the politics of early modern bodies enhance their collaboration across linguistic boundaries. French and anglophone historians' research, which is steeped in the sources, would certainly benefit from the close attention to methodological questions present in the German tradition. Vice versa, the strong current of communication theory in German court studies could be usefully complemented by findings that challenge the notion of the body as a mere medium of communication. Many more opportunities for collaboration could readily be envisaged, particularly on topics such as reproduction and fertility, and the gendered, corporeal educational pathways of princes and princesses at courts across Europe. We hope that our conference and the resulting publications make some inroads toward such a development.

system im Wandel. Strukturelle Bedingungen und bewegende Kräfte seit der Frühen Neuzeit, Munich 1996, p. 63–88.